



INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Community Engagement Report

February 2016

Introduction

Wingecarribee Shire Council's roads, footpaths, buildings, drainage and other community assets are getting old and need significant additional funds spent on them to ensure they do not fall into a state of disrepair. Condition assessments and asset modelling have indicated that while Council currently spends around \$24.3million on the maintenance and renewal of community assets each year, there is a need to invest an additional \$8.5million per year to ensure the number of assets in a poor condition does not continue to grow.

Council has now completed three phases of community engagement for its 'Investing in our Future' project. During these phases we sought community feedback on which asset types they thought were important, and whether they were willing to pay increased rates to ensure roads, footpaths and community buildings had sufficient funding so they remained serviceable in the future.

Consultation began in late August 2015 and during the first two phases of engagement, the community confirmed its willingness to pay increased rates to ensure assets are well maintained. In response to this community feedback at its meeting on 9 December 2015 Council resolved to notify the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) of its intent to apply for a Special Rate Variation. Following this decision Council commenced its third phase of consultation which involved the exhibition of key Integrated Planning and Reporting documents from 11 December 2015 and 1 February 2016.

This report includes:

- background information about the 'Investing in our Future' project
- an overview of project phases, engagement principles and Council's approach
- a summary of communication and engagement methods plus their outcomes
- a record of community responses received via survey, submission and petition.

Background

Over the last few years Council has been reviewing the condition of community assets to determine whether the amount of money it planned to spend on infrastructure such as roads, buildings and playgrounds was sufficient.

Industry benchmarks were used to review the condition of infrastructure assets. The outcome of this analysis is that a large proportion of community assets were at risk of falling into a poor condition. These asset types included:

- Stormwater drainage
- Buildings, parks and open spaces
- Water and sewer networks
- Roads, bridges, footpaths, cycleways and road drainage

Under the 'Fit for the Future' reforms introduced by the NSW Government, councils across the State have had to meet a series of 'fitness' criteria relating to scale, capacity and financial health. The associated review found that Council needed to spend more money on existing infrastructure such as our roads and footpaths or face a larger bill down the track as they deteriorate with age. Council's 'Fit for the Future' Improvement Plan submitted to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in June 2015 identified key improvement strategies. This included an application for a Special Rate Variation, with additional funds to be allocated in order to address the infrastructure funding shortfall.

At its meeting on 26 August 2015 Council approved the commencement of a community engagement process for a proposed Special Rate Variation commencing in 2016/17, consistent with its 'Fit for the Future' Improvement Proposal.

The multi-phased community engagement program was based on the following principles:

- Community engagement will be *open, transparent* and underpinned by *fact* so the community can make an informed decision
- Community engagement will be *genuine* and seek to elicit the views from a *broad and representative cross section* of the community
- Community engagement will be *reliable* and *accessible* utilising a variety of community engagement tools to provide a range of opportunities for input and feedback
- Community engagement will involve *regular feedback* to the community and Council on the outcomes of each engagement phase.

Council prepared a Communication and Engagement Plan which addressed IPART guidelines for community awareness and consultation, and based on best practice community engagement principles. The plan was built around the key message of informed decision making, where the community and Council together explored options for 'Investing in Our Future'.

In accordance with the agreed engagement principles, a range of communication methods were identified to ensure target audiences were aware of the 'Investing in our Future' project. An extensive list of stakeholders were identified including:

- General community (reflect demographics)
- Ratepayers – residential, business, mining and farmland
- Community groups and business organisations
- State and Federal Government departments and representatives
- Local members of parliament
- Council staff and Councillors
- Council Committees and Volunteers (including halls and bushcare)
- Media – radio, print and television

Community Engagement- a structured approach

Council embarked on a structured and considered community engagement program to ensure decision making was based on feedback that reliably reflected community sentiment. The key engagement activities and timeframes are summarised below in **Table 1** below.

Table 1 – ‘Investing in our Future’ community engagement summary

Phase	Purpose	Timeframe	How	Who	Status
Phase 1 Asset Survey	To seek feedback from the community on Council’s asset management approach and further test Council’s Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal assumptions.	End August – September 2015	Telephone Survey. Participants were provided with information in relation to Council assets prior to participating in this survey. This research was undertaken by an independent third party ‘Micromex Research’.	Representative sample of 400 residents will be recruited to participate in this survey.	Completed
Phase 2 SRV Engagement & Community Awareness	To provide information to residents about the proposed SRV and seek their feedback and level of acceptance towards the proposed scenarios	October 2015	Information sent to all households and non-resident ratepayers Random telephone survey undertaken by independent third party ‘Micromex Research’ On-line and print survey Engagement opportunities included kiosks, information sessions for community to seek further information and provide feedback Media releases & advertising Radio interviews Radio commercials E-newsletters and email alerts Social Media and Website Online consultation page	All residents and non-resident rate payers Representative sample of 400 residents randomly recruited for telephone survey	Completed
Phase 3 Exhibition of revised draft IPR documents	Public exhibition of revised draft Delivery Program and Resourcing Strategy including SRV scenarios	December 2015 to end January 2016	Public exhibition of documents Media releases Newspaper advertising Radio interviews Radio commercials Social Media and Website Online consultation page E-newsletters and email alerts Distribution of information to phase 1 and 2 participants	Survey participants Broad community	Completed

Community Engagement- a phased approach

The following part of this report provides a detailed breakdown on the engagement phases and the strategies and tactics employed to elicit meaningful community feedback.

PHASE 1	Asset Management Survey August to September 2015
Objective:	To explore community support for improvements including the identification of priority assets service levels and funding sources and further test assumptions on which Council's Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal was based.

An information booklet was prepared to provide a snapshot of community asset conditions and Council's current investment in across asset categories (see Appendix 1). An independent research company, Micromex Research was engaged to explore and record the community's sentiment about the information provided.

Specifically the research quantitatively aimed to:

- Explain the level of current investment in community assets, establish relative priority for asset categories and seek an understanding of community satisfaction with current asset service levels
- Gain an understanding of community support for Council's funding position in regards to four key asset categories
- Identify community endorsed revenue options for Council to explore in order to address funding requirements.

This key engagement activity consisted of a three-stage methodology:

- Stage 1: Initial recruitment of a random representative sample of 602 Wingecarribee residents. Participants answered several questions relating to Council's assets via a telephone phone survey
- Stage 2: Mail-out of an information booklet explaining the various asset management challenges and options. Recipients were requested to read the booklet before responding to the next phone survey
- Stage 3: Recontact telephone interviews with 401 of the initial 602 (a statistically reliable representative sample).

Data collection and sampling

Participants were recruited via a computer based random selection process using the electronic White Pages in late August. To improve sample efficacy this included respondents without landlines and 18-49 year olds who were sourced via face-to-face intercepts in town centres.

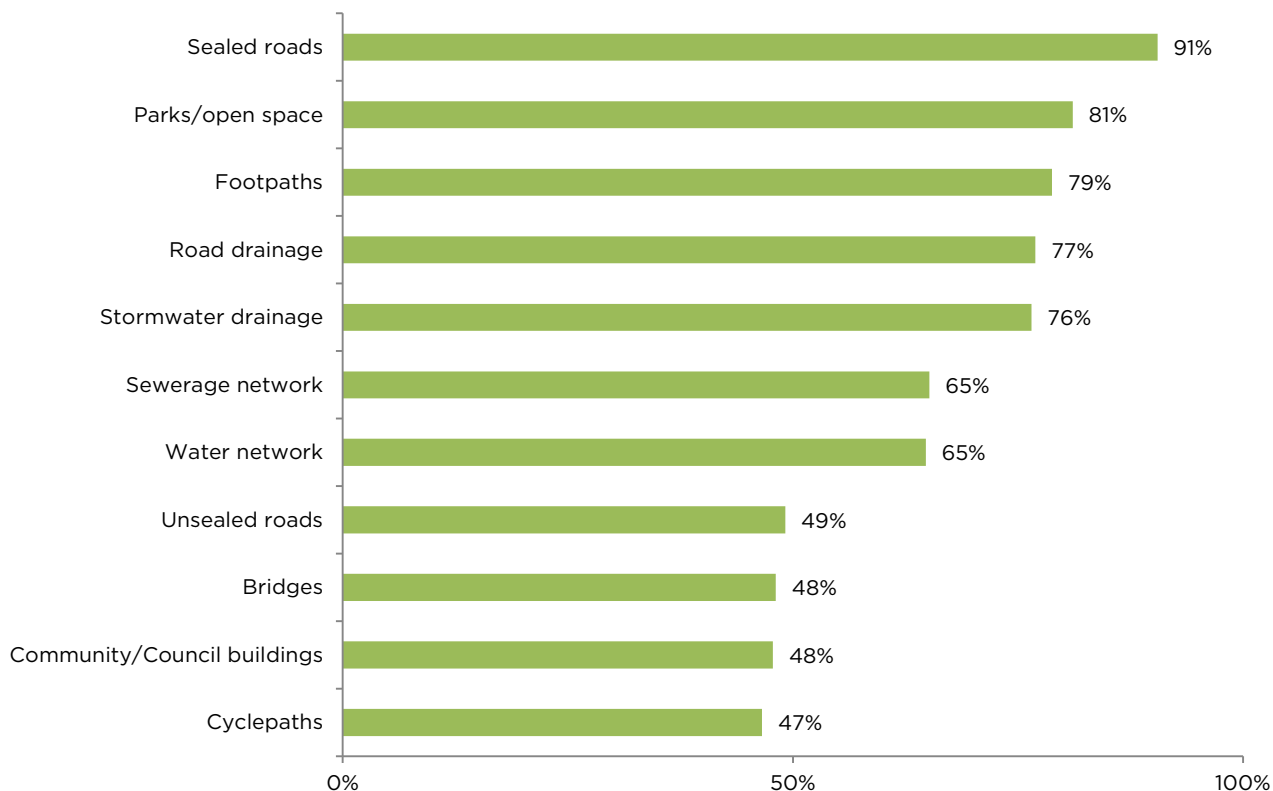
A total of 602 information kits were posted to the recruited participants. The information booklet provided a snapshot of asset conditions and the present level of funding allocated for each asset type. Information was provided for sealed roads, unsealed roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridges, road drainage, buildings, stormwater drainage, the water network, parks, the sewerage network and open spaces.

The call back interview was conducted between 10 and 19 September 2015. A representative sample of 401 participants were recontacted to complete the survey following receipt of the information kit.

Community Response

Residents were asked about which assets were a priority for them. Results are outlined in Table 2 below. These results indicate that sealed roads (91%), parks and open spaces (81%), footpaths (79%), road drainage (77%), stormwater drainage (76%) were a priority for the majority of respondents.

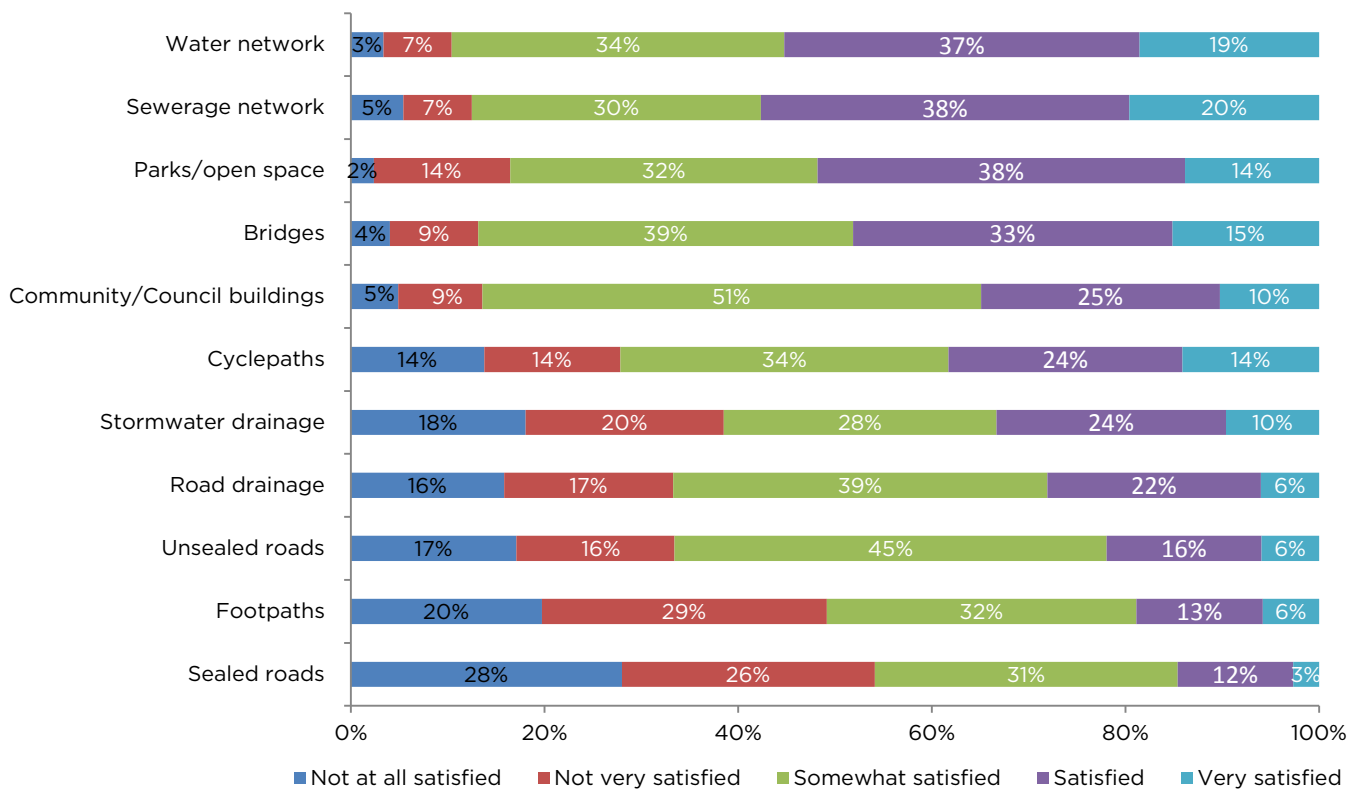
Table 2: Priority Assets – Hierarchy of response



While there is clearly a hierarchy of priorities, with scores ranging from 91% for sealed roads to 47% for cyclepaths, the challenge for Council is that even those assets with the lowest priority scores are still seen as a priority by almost half the community.

When asked about satisfaction with assets, residents were most satisfied with the water and sewerage networks while least satisfied with a number of transport assets including sealed roads, footpaths, unsealed roads, and road drainage (see Table 3).

Table 3: Satisfaction with Current Assets



When asset priority and satisfaction are compared it shows that respondents were often least satisfied with the assets that were the highest priority (Table 4 below). Indicating that these are areas Council needs to focus on and improve in order to meet the expectations of the community.

Table 4: Asset Priority and Satisfaction

Asset Type	Priority	Satisfaction*
Road drainage	77%	2.86
Sealed roads	91%	2.36
Unsealed roads	49%	2.77
Footpaths	79%	2.56
Stormwater drainage	76%	2.86
Parks/open space	81%	3.47
Sewerage network	65%	3.59
Water network	65%	3.60
Bridges	48%	3.46
Community/Council buildings	48%	3.27
Cycle paths	47%	3.11

*Satisfaction Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

Residents were asked how supportive they were of proposals to invest more money into various asset types. Proposed funding increases are outlined in Image 1 below. The increased level of investment proposals for the asset types were a result of the asset and financial modelling undertaken as a part of Fit for the Future.

Image 1: Excerpt from Asset Survey and Proposed Increase in Level of Investment

WHICH COMMUNITY ASSETS IS COUNCIL PROPOSING TO INCREASE ITS LEVEL OF INVESTMENT?

Council is proposing to increase funding for the following assets.

- Transport (sealed roads, unsealed roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridges and road drainage)
- Stormwater Drainage
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Buildings

Increasing the level of funding for these assets will allow council to renew those which are currently in a poor condition. It will also ensure that the number of assets in poor condition does not continue to grow. It is essential that our community assets are safe, in working order and meet community expectations.

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED FUNDING INCREASE?

The table below shows the current amount of funding allocated each year, towards renewal and maintenance work across our main asset types, as well as recommendations for increases to improve their condition.

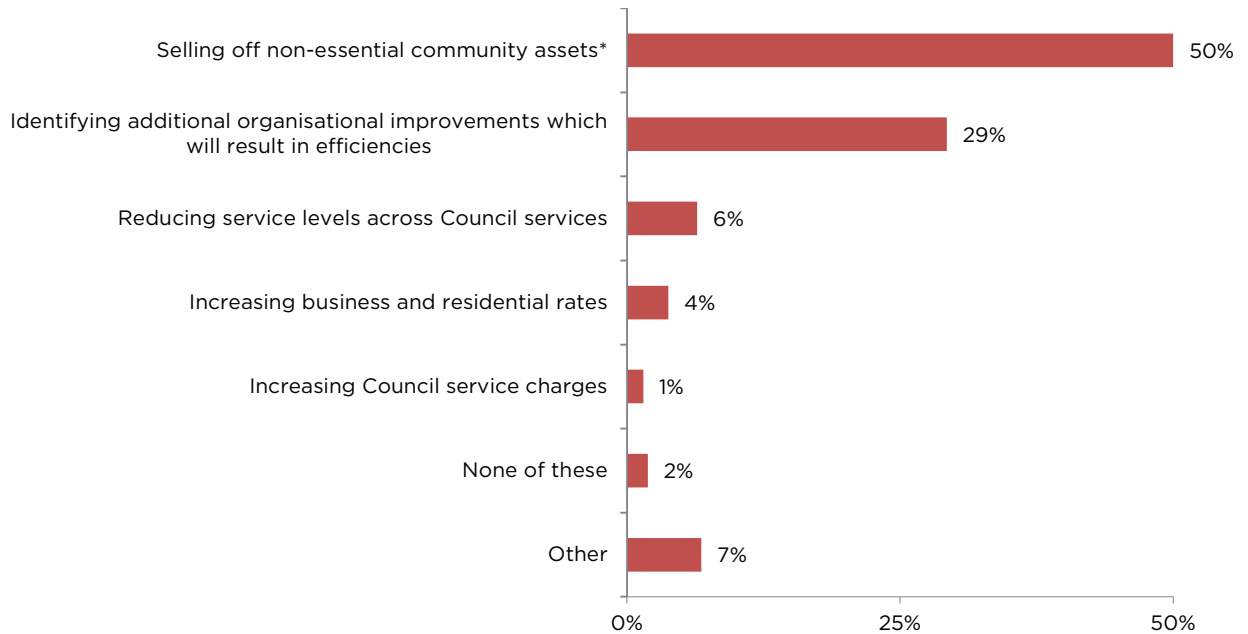
ASSET TYPE	CURRENT MAINTENANCE & RENEWAL BUDGET (PER ANNUM)	PROPOSED INCREASE IN INVESTMENT (PER ANNUM)	PROPOSED TOTAL INVESTMENT (PER ANNUM)	PROPOSED (%) INCREASE IN INVESTMENT
Transport	\$10,930,000	\$5,034,000	\$15,964,000	46%
Stormwater Drainage	\$1,190,000	\$1,165,000	\$2,355,000	98%
Parks and Open Space	\$760,000	\$412,000	\$1,172,000	54%
Buildings	\$1,400,000	\$2,037,000	\$3,437,000	145%

Results showed:

- 81% of respondents supported increased investment in transport assets (roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridges and road drainage)
- 73% of respondents supported increased investment in stormwater drainage
- 68% of respondents supported increased investment in parks and open spaces
- 46% of respondents supported increased investment in buildings

In addition, 85% of research participants agreed it was important or very important for Council to implement plans and strategies that will maintain and enhance our infrastructure and facilities for the Shire. Following this, participants were asked about the support for revenue options to support the additional funding requirements. Half of the residents supported Council selling non-essential community assets to address funding requirements and 29% supported organisational improvements which would result in efficiencies. Only 4% supported increased investment being funded via rate increases (see Table 5).

Table 5: Support for Revenue Options



The research clearly demonstrates that the community wants increased investment and better quality community assets. However at the time of the survey (August 2015) a majority wanted this funded via selling off non-essential community assets and identifying additional organisational improvements which will result in efficiencies.

For further information refer to Appendix 2 – *Micromex Research Asset Management, September 2015*, for the full survey report.

PHASE 2	‘Investing in our Future’ Options and Community Awareness
Objective:	8 October to 2 November 2015 Determine the community’s preferred scenario for funding asset management and improvements.
Goals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve community understanding of services and assets provided by Council and the financial challenges faced in maintaining existing levels of service or improving assets into the future. • Ensure that the community is effectively engaged about the options for ‘Investing in our Future’ using a variety of communication and engagement methods which meet IPART requirements and suit the timeframe. • To measure community support for a Special Rate Variation. • To provide opportunities for residents to express their views on the ‘Investing in our Future’ options.

Using information obtained during Phase 1, detailed financial modelling was undertaken to develop three funding and asset management options. These are summarised below:

Option 1: Deteriorate (*Rate Peg - No Special Rate Variation*)

Under this option, community assets would continue to decline and more assets would fall into the poor condition category. The focus would be on managing risk, including the possible closure and removal of unsafe assets. Council’s ability to look after the environment would diminish as only options 2 and 3 contemplate continuation of the Environmental Levy in 2019/20. Rates would increase by the annual rate peg amount of an estimated 2.5% per year. Over the four year period this is a cumulative increase of 10.4%.

Option 2: Maintain

Council would stabilise the deterioration of community assets and would be able to fund most of the required asset renewal and maintenance and continue to look after the environment.

This option would include a Special Rate Variation of 7.75% each year for three years and 10.65% in the fourth year. This includes the estimated 2.5% rate peg. Over the four year period this is a cumulative increase of 38.42% (or 28.04% over the estimated rate peg). This option also includes the continuation of the Environmental Levy in year four (2019/20) which residents are currently paying. At the end of the four year period the Special Rate Variation increases would be built into the rate base. This option would generate \$74.7 million over 10 years and would allow an additional spend of:

- \$45.5 million on roads, road drainage, footpaths and shared pathways
- \$9.3 million on stormwater drainage
- \$15.8 million on buildings
- \$4.1 million on parks and open spaces.

Option 3: Improve

Council would improve the quality of our community assets by being able to fund the required asset renewal and maintenance. It would continue to look after our environment and be able to undertake some new work to fill essential asset gaps.

This option would include a Special Rate Variation of 9.25% each year for three years and 12.15% in the fourth year. This includes the annual estimated 2.5% rate peg. Over the four year period this is a cumulative increase of 46.24% (or 35.86% over the estimated rate peg). This option also includes the continuation of the Environmental Levy in year four (2019/20) which residents are currently paying. At the end of the four year period the Special Rate Variation increases would be built into the rate base. This option would generate \$98.4 million over 10 years and would allow an additional spend of:

- \$51.6 million on roads, road drainage, footpaths and shared pathways;
- \$26.9 million on stormwater drainage;
- \$15.8 million on buildings;
- \$4.1 million parks and open spaces.

Phase 2 Communication and Engagement Methods

A number of methods were utilised to increase community awareness about the Special Rate Variation proposal. A brief description of each method and the outcomes of each are provided below.

‘Investing in our Future’ information booklet

A booklet of information was prepared for distribution to residents. The booklet included information about:

- The need for a Special Rate Variation and results of the phase 1 asset survey
- Organisation efficiencies and the services and assets funded by general rates
- Previous special rate variations for infrastructure renewal and environmental works
- The three options, effect of land valuations and Council’s financial hardship processes
- Ways the community could provide feedback or seek additional information including a list of kiosk dates
- A postage paid survey postcard for residents to return, outlining their preferred option and reasons for this choice



A total of 30,000 booklets were printed. 3,234 of these were posted direct to non-resident ratepayers and a further 26,300 were lodged with Australia Post for distribution throughout Shire. Remaining copies were displayed at libraries, saleyards, pools, kiosks or provided for distribution by community groups. Please see Appendix 3 for a copy of the ‘Investing in our Future’ booklet.

YourSayWingecarribee site

A project page, including document library, key links and an online survey was set up for the ‘Investing in our Future’ project at www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/SRV and actively publicised via media releases, the information booklet, emailed newsletters and alerts. Registration was required before people could complete an online survey in order to reduce the number of multiple completions and capture contact information for future notifications about the Special Rate Variation and other consultations. See Appendix 10 for a summary of all ‘Investing in our Future’ Fact Sheets and Exhibited Materials.

More than 1,250 visits to the site occurred between 8 October and 2 November by 970 individual visitors. 397 documents were downloaded, 326 surveys completed, seven questions asked and much interest recorded in the FAQs and fact sheets provided.

Information Kiosks

Fourteen information kiosks were conducted across the Shire during October 2015. Kiosks were promoted via the booklet issued to all households and supported by newspaper and radio advertising outlined later in this report.

The earlier kiosks provided staff with an opportunity to encourage residents to look for the booklet and learn more about the 'Investing in Our Future' project. Kiosks held later in the month were attended by residents with specific questions and requests. The kiosks program and attendance rates are outlined in Table 6.



Table 6: 'Investing in our Future' Kiosk Program

Kiosk Date & Time	Venue	Attendance
Saturday 10 October, 8am to 1pm	Bowral Markets	49 visitors
Saturday 10 October, 10am to 4pm	Home and Garden Show	Visitors unrecorded
Sunday 11 October, 9am to 2pm	Robertson Markets	13 visitors
Sunday 11 October, 10am to 4pm	Home and Garden Show	Visitors unrecorded
Tuesday 13 October, 10am-12noon	Highlands Market Place	11 visitors
Wednesday 14 October, 10am-12noon	Corbett Plaza	17 visitors
Wednesday 14 October, 6.30-7.30pm	Hill Top Community Centre	9 visitors
Thursday 15 October, 2pm-6pm	Highlands Market Place	11 visitors
Friday 16 October, 2pm – 4pm	Corbett Plaza	7 visitors
Sunday 18 October, 9am to 1pm	Bundanoon Markets	26 visitors
Wednesday 21 October, 2pm-4pm	Civic Centre, Moss Vale Information Sessions	14 Visitors
Wednesday 21 October, 6pm-8pm	Civic Centre, Moss Vale Information Sessions	13 Visitors
Sunday 25 October, 9am to 2pm	Berrima Schoolyard Markets	46 visitors
Thursday 29 October, 4pm – 6pm	Robertson CTC	9 visitors

More than 225 residents were engaged in conversations about aspects of the 'Investing in our Future' project during the 14 kiosks held in small village halls, shopping centres, main streets and at market days. The kiosks held on Wednesday 21 October at the Civic Centre were attended by executive staff and professional officers who were able to provide detailed information about various aspects of 'Investing in our Future' options.

Emailed alerts and newsletters

A number of electronic messages were shared with key stakeholder groups and individuals via email or newsletter, reaching the people who have subscribed for Council newsletters, joined the YourSayWingecarribee consultation hub or listed on contact databases held by Council. A summary of this activity is provided below in Table 7.

Table 7: Email Alerts and Newsletters

Email/Newsletter	Distribution and Reach
Emailed Newsletters issued	23/10/15 to 922 subscribers 27/10/15 to 851 Environment and Sustainability Update subscribers 30/10/15 to 902 subscribers
YourSayWingecarribee online engagement hub – <i>emailed alerts to registered members</i>	22/10/15 to 1579 registered YourSayWingecarribee members 22/10/15 to 1668 registered YourSayWingecarribee members 30/10/15 to 1740 registered YourSayWingecarribee members <i>NOTE: During the period 8 October to 2 November, registrations for the YourSayWingecarribee website increased by 250 members.</i>
Emailed alerts	137 on town and village contact list 53 from other community contact lists 306 people who had provided email addresses for re-contact during Community Satisfaction (179) and Assets (127) telephone surveys earlier in the year. 19 Street Tree Master Plan participants Over 50 members of Council committees

Radio

Research has confirmed that local commercial radio station 2ST is the principal source of timely, local news and information for local residents. A number of scheduled interviews (09/10/15 and 20/10/15) were conducted on 2ST throughout phase 2. These were also supported by unscripted chats with the radio show host.

Two 30 second radio commercials were scripted and aired by 2ST over 7 weekdays. Scripting for the two radio commercials was as follows:

SCRIPT 1

ATTENTION ALL RESIDENTS! Watch your mail box over the coming week for an information booklet from Wingecarribee Shire Council.

It contains important information about your rates and offers you the opportunity to comment about managing the Shire's assets.

Do you want local roads, buildings, parks and drainage Infrastructure to improve, be maintained or deteriorate?

Your choice of funding option will help Council make important decisions.

Read through the booklet and have your say.

Learn more at "[your say wingecarribee](#)" dot com dot A-U or call 4868, 0888.

SCRIPT 2

Time is running out for you to have your say on how you'd like our Shire to look.

Do you want local roads, buildings and parks to be maintained, improved or left to deteriorate?

Are you willing to pay higher rates for improvements?

Wingecarribee Shire Council wants to hear from you.

Return the reply paid survey found in the Investing In Our Future booklet delivered to your home or complete an online survey.

Your voice matters and will help Council make important decisions about managing the Shire's assets and infrastructure for future generations.

To complete the online survey and to learn more visit "[your say wingecarribee](#)" dot com dot A-U or call 4868 0888.

Twelve live radio reads were also scheduled with 2ST. This provided additional detail in a 60 second slot and instigated calls to the radio station, allowing the host to discuss on air and further raise awareness with listeners.

Social Media

Council's corporate Facebook page currently has 3803 likes and there are 404 twitter followers. Four posts about the opportunity to comment on the Special Rate Variation reached 792 people. Community Facebook pages independent of Council also shared or posted SRV information including:

- Hill Top Residents
- Hill Top Village Association
- Robertson Commons

Media releases

Three media releases were issued, focussing on a number of themes:

- Information Kiosks kick off Special Rate Variation discussions (08/10/15)
- Special Rate Variation Information Kiosks continue (19/10/15)
- Wingecarribee Shire LGA to remain unchanged (20/10/15)

Weekly Newspaper Columns (General Manager and Mayor)

Three columns in the Wednesday edition of Southern Highland News featured information about the Special Rate Variation. These were written from the Mayor or General Manager's perspective and were themed.

- 28/10/15
- 21/10/15
- 14/10/15

Wingecarribee Today

Council's quarterly newsletter is distributed across the shire to more than 23,000 households. An article featuring information about 'Investing in our Future' was inserted into the September 2015 issue and a further update was scheduled for the December issue. Both provided links for ongoing information and encouraging sign-up to Council's e-newsletter or the online consultation hub for updates about the 'Investing in our Future' project.

Newspaper advertisements

Information about the SRV was included in Council's weekly advertising page in the Southern Highland News on 7, 14, 21 and 28 October 2015. Separate display advertising about the SRV was placed in the Southern Highland News on 7, 9, 12, 26, 28, and 30 October 2015 as well as the Highlands Post on 15 and 29 October 2015.

See Appendix 9 for a summary of all media coverage.

Table 8: Other Phase 2 Engagement Activities

Engagement Activity	Details
Information Displays	Display materials were developed for the Civic Centre foyer space and Saleyards, providing large scale copies of fact sheets and images.
'Investing in our Future' Business Cards	Were provided to Councillors and first contact staff for distribution and in case of enquiries. These were also useful at displays and kiosks. The business card included details of how to access information on the project.
Phone and counter enquiries	The SRV project team was available to respond to questions throughout phase 2. During this time 16 enquiries were received regarding the Special Rate Variation.
Staff briefings and advisory emails	Staff were kept informed via five briefings conducted by the General Manager or direct email for those who were unable to attend.

Phase 2 Engagement Results

A number of methods were used to record the community's preferences regarding the 'Investing in our Future' options. A brief description of each method and the responses received are provided below.

Feedback on the options was sought in the form of a random demographically representative telephone survey undertaken by an independent research company, Micromex Research. Residents could also complete a postal or online survey and written submissions were also accepted.

Telephone Survey

A total of 403 resident interviews were completed via telephone between 22 and 27 October 2015 by Micromex Research.

321 of the 403 of respondents were selected via a computer based random selection process using the electronic White Pages. In addition to this, 82 respondents were sourced via face-to-face intercepts at a number of locations, i.e. Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre, Highlands Market, Corbett Plaza and Moss Vale train station/Leighton Gardens. This technique acknowledges the increasing number of people who only have a mobile or unlisted telephone number.

Of the 403 telephone respondents:

- 77% of residents were at least 'somewhat satisfied' with the performance of Council. Residents aged 18-34, non-ratepayers, and those living in a 'town' were significantly more satisfied
- 73% of residents rated the quality of infrastructure and facilities provided by Council in the local area at least 'somewhat satisfactory'. Residents aged 18-34 were significantly more satisfied with Council's provision of infrastructure and facilities
- Residents predominantly believed it was important for Council to provide better infrastructure and facilities, with the majority giving a rating of 'very important' (65%) and only 1% indicating it was 'not very important'
- Residents were almost equally aware (48%) and unaware (51%) of Council exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation. Residents aged 65 and over (66%), and ratepayers (52%), were significantly more likely to be aware, whilst residents aged 18-34 (27%) were significantly less likely to be aware.
- Of those who were aware, 50% indicated they were informed of the Special Rate Variation via a 'mail out'

Residents were read a concept statement prior to being asked to rate their support for each option (please refer to Appendix 3 for concept statements). Results indicated:

- 53% of residents indicated they were at least 'somewhat supportive' of 'Option 1 – Rate Peg Only'. Support for this option was steady across the demographics
- 71% of residents were 'somewhat supportive' to 'very supportive' of 'Option 2 – Maintain'. Support for this option across demographics was parallel to the overall mean score
- 56% of residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of Council proceeding with 'Option 3 – Improve'. Residents aged 18-34, and non-ratepayers, were significantly more supportive of this option, whereas those aged 65 and over were significantly less supportive
- 'Option 2 – Maintain' was provided with the highest level of support from the Wingecarribee community
- That 71% of residents preferred an increase above the rate peg, i.e their first preference was either option 2 or 3.

Verbatim responses for open questions were collated and entered into analytical software. This analysis ‘counts’ the number of times a particular word or phrase appears and, based on the frequency of that word or phrase, a font size is generated. The larger the font, the more frequently the word or sentiment is mentioned.

Reasons for Preferring Option 1

‘Most affordable/realistic option for the community’ (18%) and ‘Council’s financial mismanagement’ (17%) were residents’ most mentioned reasons for preferring ‘Option 1 – Rate Peg Only’



Reasons for Preferring Option 2

25% of residents who chose ‘Option 2 – Maintain’ as their first preference stated this option was the ‘most affordable/realistic option for the community’

Reasons for Preferring Option 3

Of those who chose ‘Option 3 – Improve’ as their preferred option, 30% indicated the reason for their selection was ‘improvements from the rate increase will benefit the local community/the growth of Wingecarribee’

The independent research company concluded that the vast majority of the community are supportive of Council making an application to IPART to increase rates in return for continuing current service levels.



1. Residents were most supportive of ‘Option 2 – Maintain’
 - 71% of residents were ‘somewhat supportive’ to ‘very supportive’ of Wingecarribee Shire Council proceeding with Option 2
 - 56% of residents were at least ‘somewhat supportive’ of Council proceeding with Option 3
 - 53% of residents were at least ‘somewhat supportive’ of Council proceeding with Option 1
2. Overall, residents preferred ‘Option 2 – Maintain’
 - 37% of residents nominated ‘Option 2 – Maintain’ as their preferred option, in total 95% chose it as their first or second preference
 - 55% of residents chose ‘Option 3 – Improve’ as their first or second preference
 - 51% of residents chose ‘Option 1 – Rate Peg only’ as their first or second preference

For further information refer to Appendix 4 – *Micromex Research Telephone Survey Special Rate Variation Report November 2015*, for the full survey report.

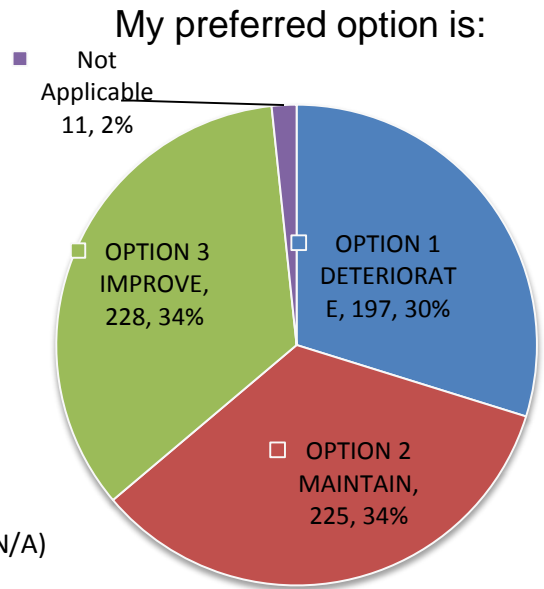
Postal Surveys

A reply paid postcard was provided within the 'Investing in our Future' booklet distributed to all residents. Residents were asked to choose their preferred option and provide brief comments before returning the survey postcard by 2 November 2015.

661 postal surveys were returned between 8 October and 2 November 2015. These returns were entered into a database and analysed by Micromex Research to identify key reasons for preferences.

Of the 661 responses:

- 30% (197) supported Option 1 – Deteriorate
- 34% (225) supported Option 2 – Maintain
- 34% (228) supported Option 3 – Improve
- 2% (11) did not choose an option or added a different 'option' (N/A)



Verbatim responses for 'comments' were collated and entered into analytical software. This analysis 'counts' the number of times a particular word or phrase appears and, based on the frequency of that word or phrase, a font size is generated. The larger the font, the more frequently the word or sentiment is mentioned. For further information refer to Appendix 5 – *Micromex Postal Survey Special Rate Variation Report, November 2015*, for the full survey report.



Reasons for Preferring Option 1



Reasons for Preferring Option 2



Reasons for Preferring Option 3

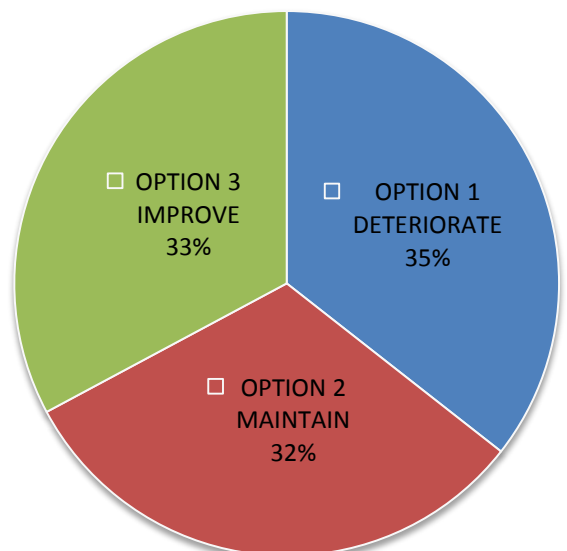
Online Surveys

Wingecarribee Shire Council's online community engagement hub was used to host a survey alongside associated documents and frequently asked questions at www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/SRV.

326 online survey responses were received between 8 October and 2 November 2015.

Participants were asked to choose their preferred option and summarise their reasons for this choice.

My preferred option is:



Of the 326 responses:

- 35% (116) supported Option 1 – Deteriorate
- 32% (103) supported Option 2 – Maintain
- 33% (107) supported Option 3 – Improve



Reasons for Preferring Option 1



Reasons for Preferring Option 2



Reasons for Preferring Option 3

For further information refer to Appendix 6– *Micromex Research Online Survey Special Rate Variation Report November 2015*, for the full survey report.

Survey Results Comparison

Table 9 below provides a comparison of the preferred options across the three surveys. These results indicate that across all surveys almost two thirds of the community was supportive of some level of rate increase to at least ‘maintain’ assets.

Table 9: Preferred ‘Investing in Our Future’ Option			
Survey Type	Telephone Survey	Online Survey	Postal Survey
Number of Participants	403 Residents*	326 Responses**	661 Responses**
Option 1: Deteriorate (Rate Peg)	29%	35%	30%
Option 2: Maintain	37%	32%	34%
Option 3: Improve	34%	33%	34%
No Preference	N/A	N/A	2%
Total percentage of respondents preferring some level of rate increase above rate peg	71%	65%	68%

* Micromex Research telephone survey was based on a random and representative sample of residents

** Non representative sample of self-selected survey participants.

Late Postal Survey Returns

An extra 70 surveys were returned via the post after the closing date, bringing the total received to 731 between 8 October 2018 and 8 January 2016. These additional returns did not change the overall level of support.

Of the 731 responses:

- 30% (221) supported Option 1 – Deteriorate
- 33% (239) supported Option 2 – Maintain
- 35% (258) supported Option 3 – Improve
- 2% (13) did not choose an option or added a different ‘option’

Submissions

In total 21 submissions were received via email and letter. The majority of these submissions did not support an increase in rates or did not state a preferred option however raised concerns relating to the proposed increases. Common themes from submissions included:

- Affordability of rate increase, especially for pensioners
- Suggestions for alternative funding strategies
- Requests for information about organisational efficiencies
- Concerns about the consultation process or 'Investing in our Future' Terminology

Details of submissions can be found in Appendix 7– *Investing in our Future Summary of Submissions, December 2015*.

Petition

A petition with approximately 615 signatures opposed to the proposed increase was received by Wingecarribee Shire Council and reported to Council at its meeting on 25 November 2015.

The signatories' objection was recorded as:

"The undersigned object to any rate increase other than the Rate Peg during the 4 year period to 30.06.2020, as stated in WSC "Investing in Our Future", and certainly not increasing the WSC rates by 46% over 4 years due to:

- *WSC rates have increased 93%, whereas ABS CPI increase 30.22% and WSC wages increased 30.17% increase for the period June 2006 to June 2014.*
- *Garbage & Recycling bins unnecessarily replaced in June 2014 after only 10 years with a life expectancy of 25+ years. Cost in excess of \$2,000,000.*
- *WSC average rates 16th highest out of 150 Councils in NSW in 2012/13.*
- *WSC Governance & Administration Expenditure was \$626 per capita, whereas group average of \$266.44. Out of 70 LGA's above 30,000 residents WSC is the highest.*
- *Insufficient information in the "Investing in our future" to make an informed decision.*
- *A fairer system of rate revenue raising needs to be adopted in NSW generally.*

25/10/2015."

Newspaper Articles and Letters to the Editor

In response to the Council's communication and engagement activities the following newspaper articles and letters to the Editor appeared in the local newspaper, Southern Highlands News

Newspaper Articles

Two newspaper articles and one editorial appeared in the Southern Highland News about the SRV:

- *No amalgamation for council (21/10/15)*
- *Rate heartache for residents (23/10/15)*
- *The importance of independence (28/10/15) - editorial*

Letters to the Editor

Two letters were written to the Editor of the Southern Highland News about the SRV and these appeared in the 21 and 28 October 2015 editions.

See Appendix 9 for a summary of all media coverage.



Phase 2 promotional tools



WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE SOME IMPORTANT DECISIONS

Over the coming week all households will receive a booklet of information which outlines a number of funding options for looking after the Shire's assets to meet the expectations of our community.

Do you want the Shire's assets to improve, be maintained or deteriorate?

Please carefully read through the information provided and have your say about the proposal to seek a Special Rate Variation.

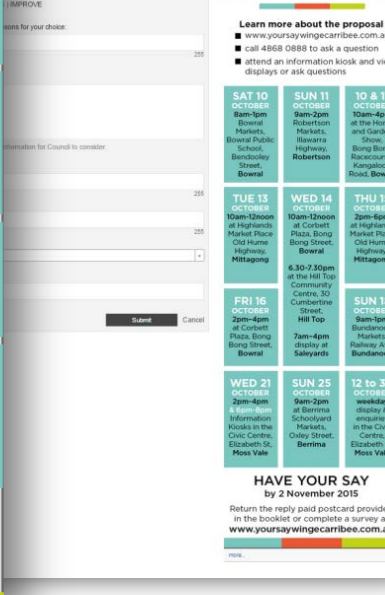
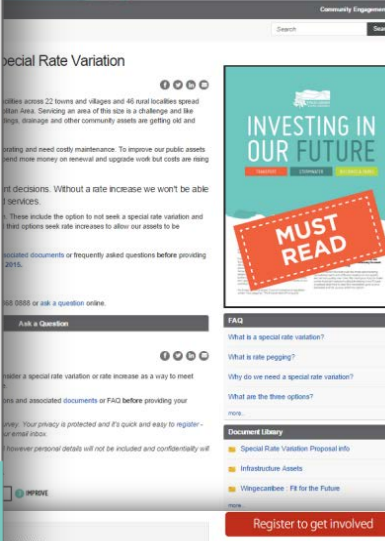
Learn more about the proposal
www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au
 call 4868 0888 to ask a question
 attend an information kiosk and view displays or ask questions

SAT 10 OCTOBER 8am-1pm Bowral Markets, Bowral Public School, Bendooley Street, Bowral	SUN 11 OCTOBER 9am-2pm Robertson Markets, Illawarra Highway, Robertson	10 & 11 OCTOBER 10am-4pm at the Home and Garden Show, Bong Bong Racecourse, Kangaloon Road, Bowral
TUE 13 OCTOBER 10am-12noon at Highlands Market Place Old Hume Highway, Mittagong	WED 14 OCTOBER 10am-12noon at Corbett Plaza, Bong Bong Street, Bowral	THU 15 OCTOBER 2pm-6pm at Highlands Market Place Old Hume Highway, Mittagong
FRI 16 OCTOBER 2pm-4pm at Corbett Plaza, Bong Bong Street, Bowral	FRI 16 OCTOBER 2pm-4pm at Corbett Plaza, Bong Bong Street, Bowral	SUN 18 OCTOBER 9am-1pm Bundanoon Markets, Railway Ave, Bundanoon
WED 21 OCTOBER 2pm-4pm & 6pm-8pm Information Kiosks in the Civic Centre, Elizabeth St, Moss Vale	SUN 25 OCTOBER 9am-2pm at Berrima Schoolyard Markets, Oxley Street, Berrima	12 to 30 OCTOBER weekday display & enquiries in the Civic Centre, Elizabeth St, Moss Vale

HAVE YOUR SAY
 by 2 November 2015
 Return the reply paid postcard provided in the booklet or complete a survey at www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au



INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE



Have you received your booklet yet?

It outlines a number of funding options for looking after the Shire's assets to meet the expectations of our community. Ask staff for a copy, view more information in the Civic Centre gallery space or visit www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE SOME IMPORTANT DECISIONS

All households will soon receive an information booklet which outlines a number of funding options for looking after the Shire's assets to meet the expectations of our community.

Do you want the Shire's assets to improve, be maintained or deteriorate?

Please carefully read through the information provided and have your say about the proposal to seek a Special Rate Variation.

HAVE YOUR SAY
 by 2 November 2015
 Return the reply paid postcard provided in the booklet or complete a survey online at www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au

INFORMATION KIOSKS
 Staff will be on hand to answer questions and provide information at the following locations:

SAT 10 OCTOBER 8am-1pm Bowral Markets, Bowral Public School, Bendooley Street, Bowral	SUN 11 OCTOBER 9am-2pm Robertson Markets, Illawarra Highway, Robertson	10 & 11 OCTOBER 10am-4pm at the Home and Garden Show, Bong Bong Racecourse, Kangaloon Road, Bowral
TUE 13 OCTOBER 10am-12noon at Highlands Market Place Old Hume Highway, Mittagong	WED 14 OCTOBER 10am-12noon at Corbett Plaza, Bong Bong Street, Bowral	THU 15 OCTOBER 2pm-6pm at Highlands Market Place Old Hume Highway, Mittagong
FRI 16 OCTOBER 2pm-4pm at Corbett Plaza, Bong Bong Street, Bowral	FRI 16 OCTOBER 2pm-4pm at Corbett Plaza, Bong Bong Street, Bowral	SUN 18 OCTOBER 9am-1pm Bundanoon Markets, Railway Ave, Bundanoon
WED 21 OCTOBER 2pm-4pm & 6pm-8pm Information Kiosks in the Civic Centre, Elizabeth St, Moss Vale	SUN 25 OCTOBER 9am-2pm at Berrima Schoolyard Markets, Oxley Street, Berrima	12 to 30 OCTOBER weekday display & enquiries in the Civic Centre, Elizabeth St, Moss Vale

PHASE 3

Exhibition of revised draft Integrated Planning & Reporting Documents

Objective:

11 December 2015 to 1 February 2016

Goals:

- Raise awareness and seek community feedback during the exhibition of:
 - *Draft Delivery Program 2013-17 (Revised December 2015)*
 - *Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2016-2026*
 - *Draft Strategic Asset Management Plan 2016-2026*
- Provide additional detail about the projects and programs which will be delivered under each scenario
- Seek and receive submissions from residents about the exhibited IP&R documents and identify key issues for community
- Increase awareness about Special Rate Variation
- Increase knowledge about decisions made and yet to be made by Council, as well as the SRV process / timeline

At its meeting on 9 December 2015 Council considered a report which outlined the response received via surveys and submissions during Phases 1 and 2. A copy of *Investing in our Future Community Engagement Report December 2015* was attached to the report to provide further detail.

Councillors unanimously voted to notify IPART of Council's intention to apply for a Special Rate Variation by 11 December 2015. Council also endorsed the Draft Delivery Program 2013-17 (Revised December 2015), Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2016-2026 and Draft Strategic Asset Management Plan 2016-2016 for public exhibition from 11 December until 1 February 2016. The documents were placed on public exhibition for a period of 53 days. Legislative requirement is a 28 days exhibition period and this was extended to account for the Christmas/New Year break.

The draft documents included information relating to Council's proposed Special Rate Variation *Investing in our Future* and provided greater level of detail about projects and programs which would be delivered for each scenario and included detailed financial and asset management information and capital programs. The documents were available at Council's customer service centre and libraries and copies could also be downloaded or viewed online at www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/SRV



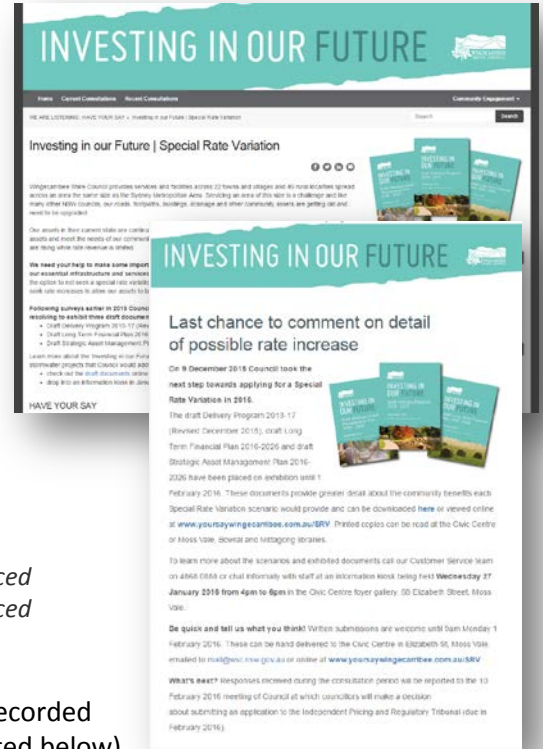
Phase 3 Communication and Engagement Methods

A number of methods were utilised to increase community awareness about the Special Rate Variation proposal and seek feedback. A brief description of each method provided below.

YourSayWingecarribee

The project page www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/SRV used for Phase 2 of the project was updated with additional information about the opportunity for the community to learn more about the documents exhibited during Phase 3. Associated documents and the community engagement report for Phase 1 and 2 also hosted on the site for viewing and downloading. An online form was also made available to assist residents to make a formal submission.

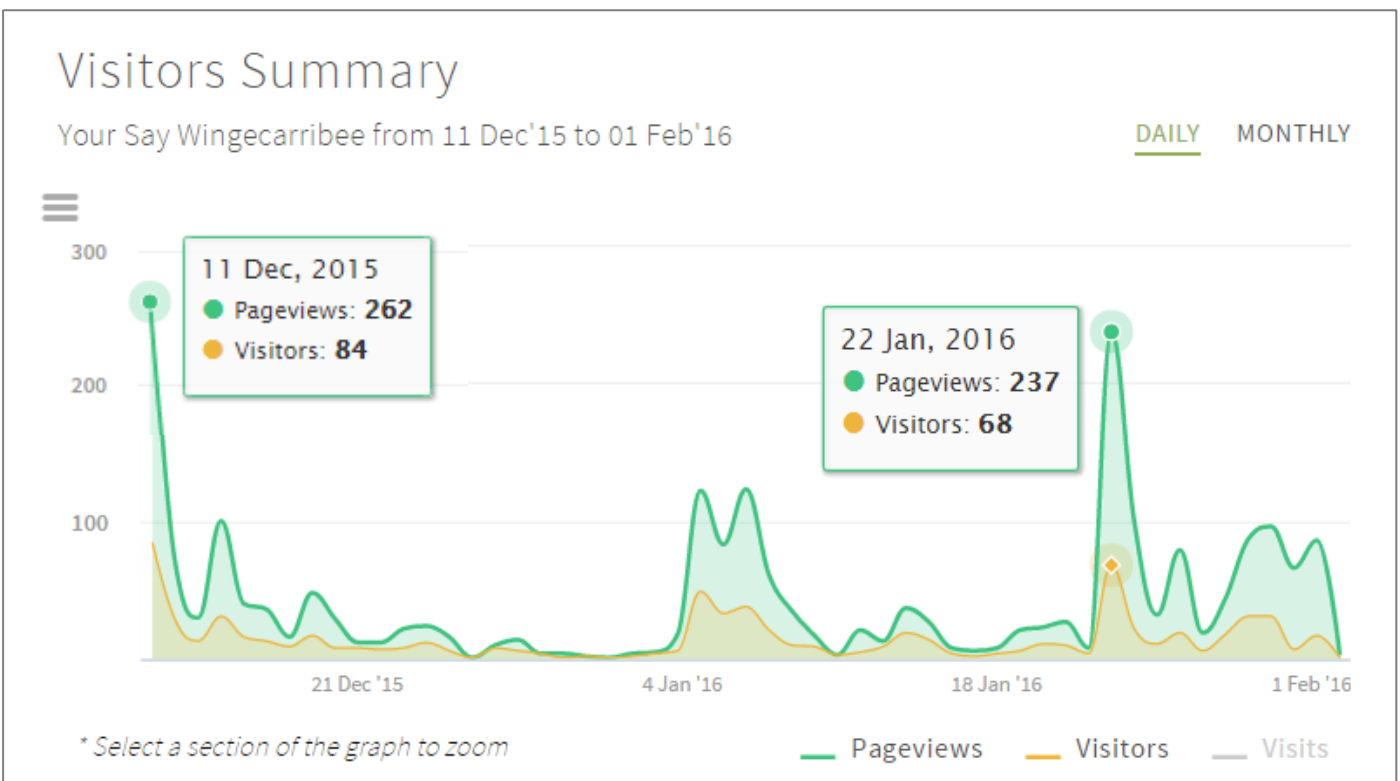
See Appendix 10 for a summary of all 'Investing in our Future' Fact Sheets and Exhibited Materials.



Four notifications (example on right) were issued to between 1740 and 1830 registered members of the online engagement hub:

- 04/12/2015 *Rate variation surveys reported and Council to consider next week*
- 11/12/2015 *Next phase of consultation for Special Rate Variation has commenced*
- 04/01/2016 *Next phase of consultation for Special Rate Variation has commenced*
- 22/01/2016 *Opportunity to comment closes soon - have your say*

Between 11 December 2015 and 1 February 2016 there were 860 visits recorded for the www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/SRV page. Analytics (illustrated below) show an immediate response to notifications, with 84 visitors accessing the site on the first day of Phase 3. As expected interest dropped during the Christmas to New Year period and then rose again with each reminder in January. Over the exhibition period 539 documents were downloaded, 3 questions asked and 23 online submissions made.



WSC website

Links were provided from www.wsc.nsw.gov.au to the YourSayWingecarribee project page.

Social Media

Four posts were placed on Facebook and Twitter during this phase of the project, reaching between 82 and 1014 people. Refer to Appendix 9 'Investing in our Future' Media Coverage, October 2015 – February 2016 for details.



Radio

Research has confirmed that local commercial radio station 2ST is one of the principal sources of timely, local news and information for local residents. Therefore one 30 second radio commercial was scripted and aired 33 times by 2ST over 11 weekdays within the period 16/12/15 and 28/01/2016.

SCRIPT 1

Like most councils across the State, many of our Shire's roads, footpaths, buildings and drains are getting old and need to be renewed.

Over the years the cost of maintaining and upgrading these assets has increased more than our income.

To bring our assets up to scratch in-line with community expectations, Council needs an extra \$8.5 million per year.

In brief, we need to spend more money on our existing infrastructure or face a larger bill down the track.

This means we have to make some tough decisions.....

To view and comment on our three different rating scenarios and learn how they'd affect you, visit www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au or phone 4868 0888.

Wingecarribee Shire Council – Investing in our Future

Four radio interviews, which included promotion of the opportunity to comment on the SRV and publicly exhibited documents, were conducted by the Wingecarribee Mayor with 2ST Radio on Friday 11 and 18 December 2015 as well as 15 and 22 January 2016.

One radio interview was completed by the Group Manager Corporate and Community Services with ABC Illawarra on 28 January 2016.

Newspaper advertising

Information was included in Council's weekly advertising page in the Southern Highland News on 16 and 23 December 2015 plus 6, 13, 20 and 27 January 2016.

Separate display advertisements (artwork shown on right) were placed in the Southern Highland News on 16 December 2015 plus 13 and 27 January 2016 as well as in the Highlands Post on 17 December 2015 plus 14 and 21 January 2016.



Media releases (<http://media.wsc.nsw.gov.au/>)

Four media releases were issued:

- 11/12/2015 *Council responds to increase focus on assets*
- 08/01/2016 *IPART announces 2016/17 rate pegging amount*
- 14/01/2016 *Information Kiosks to discuss Special Rate Variation projects*
- 27/01/2016 *Final Information Kiosk before 1 February deadline*

Weekly Newspaper Columns

Columns appearing in the Southern Highland News for the General Manager and Mayor mentioned the opportunity to view and make submissions about the exhibited documents, attend information kiosks or attend relevant Council meetings on 9 and 16 December 2015, 20 January and 3 February 2016.

See Appendix 9 for a summary of all media coverage.

Direct emails

A number of electronic messages were shared with key stakeholder groups and individuals via email or newsletter, reaching the people who have subscribed for Council newsletters, joined the YourSayWingecarribee consultation hub or listed on contact databases held by Council. A summary of this activity is provided below in **Table 10**.

Table 10	Distribution and Reach
Village Associations	All village associations were provided with information about the current consultation and invited to comment on the exhibited documents via an email on 6 January 2016. A number of the associations then shared this information with members and included details in their community newsletters.
Participants re-contacted	Information about the opportunity to comment on the exhibited documents was also emailed to people who had participated in phase 1 and 2 consultations and agreed to be re-contacted.
Emailed Newsletters <i>(sample images below)</i>	<p>04/12/15 to 1328 subscribers - <i>Rate variation surveys reported & Council to consider next week</i></p> <p>11/12/15 to 1337 subscribers - <i>Next phase of consultation for Special Rate Variation has commenced</i></p> <p>06/01/16 to 1335 subscribers - <i>Next phase of consultation for Special Rate Variation has commenced</i></p> <p>13/01/16 to 1327 subscribers - <i>Opportunity to chat with staff at kiosks in Mittagong and Moss Vale about detail of rate variation proposal</i></p> <p>22/01/16 to 1324 subscribers - <i>Chat with staff at Moss Vale re possible rate increase</i></p> <p>22/01/16 to 872 Environment and Sustainability Update subscribers</p> <p>28/01/16 to 1328 subscribers - <i>Last chance to comment on detail of possible rate increase</i></p>





Display and promotion

Posters were put up throughout the Civic Centre and at libraries and pool to promote Phase 3 of the project. Information was also placed on the Customer Service digital display board.

Display materials were developed for the Civic Centre foyer space, providing large scale copies of fact sheets and images for visitors to read. The display also invited people to make a submission about the exhibited documents. The foyer gallery space was also used to host an information kiosk.



Info Kiosks

Two SRV Information Kiosks were held from 4pm to 6pm at:

- Mittagong Visitor Welcome Centre on Wednesday 20 January 2016 with 2 people in attendance, and
- Civic Centre foyer gallery on Wednesday 27 January 2016 with 17 people in attendance.

Table 11: Other Phase 3 Activities

Engagement Activity	Details
Phone and counter enquiries	The SRV project team was available to respond to questions throughout phase 3. During this time three enquiries were received regarding the Special Rate Variation.
Staff briefings and advisory emails	Staff were kept informed via an email from the General Manager following the Council resolution to move to the public exhibition stage.
Information Kit for Councillors	Councillors were provided with a kit of information to assist with resident enquiries about this latest stage of the special rate variation project. The kit included FAQ and fact sheets, copies of the draft documents and a summary of display material.



EXHIBITION DOCUMENTS

Copies available for viewing at council

The NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPRF) requires that all councils develop long, medium and short term plans which detail how the community's vision, aspirations and priorities will be delivered via projects and services.

Key documents have been reviewed and edited to include the three funding scenarios for a Special Rate Variation.

These documents are on exhibition for you to view and provide feedback on. You can view the documents online or ask at Customer Service to read a copy.

Ask the Customer Service Team to show you the exhibition documents

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Information Kiosk here today

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

ON EXHIBITION
Council has taken the next step towards a possible rate increase by resolving to exhibit three draft documents:

- Draft Delivery Program 2016-2026
- Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2016-2026
- Draft Strategic Asset Management Plan 2016-2026

Learn more about the Investing in our Future proposal and specific transport, housing, park, environment and recreational projects that Council intend to deliver as provided under a special rate variation.

Call 4855 0888 to ask a question or email community@wingecarribee.nsw.gov.au

HAVE YOUR SAY by 1 February 2016

Write to Council, email or call to provide your views on the documents. For further information please call 4855 0888

www.your.say.wingecarribee.nsw.gov.au

Your Say Wingecarribee

Wingecarribee Shire Council's community engagement hub

Home Current Consultations Special Consultations Community Engagement

WE ARE LISTENING: HAVE YOUR SAY

We value your involvement and encourage you to have your say. Our current consultations are:

- Investing in our Future - special rate variation proposal

If you prefer to engage with Council using traditional methods, simply pop into the council office in Bourke, Alibon and Lake View or visit the Customer Service Centre in our Civic Centre in Elizabeth Street, Murrumbidgee. For further information please call 4855 0888

News & Updates Ask a Question

Consultation continues for SRV. Exhibited documents provide detail.

On Wednesday 9 December 2015 Wingecarribee Shire Council resolved to notify the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) of council's intent to apply for a Special Rate Variation in the new year. Council, considering a rate increase must comply with the requirements set out in Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) guidelines, including a notification confirming their "intention to apply" while they continue with consultation. Wingecarribee Shire Council has confirmed this intention and will now notify IPART. The actual application (due in February 2016) cannot be submitted until Council makes a formal resolution to do so.

A Draft Delivery Program... Continue reading

Sign in to have a say! Register to get involved!

Current Consultation List: Investing in our Future | Special Rate Variation Proposal

Have your say Wingecarribee

The dedicated website is one method Wingecarribee Shire Council is using to connect with our community, providing a direct line to Council's decision-making processes. We hope you will find the website and community site to contribute your ideas, thoughts and opinions about key projects and services. Take a look around and see how others have already participated. View our list of current and recent consultations.

It's quick and easy to register and contribute anonymously with a username of your choice. Registration is required if you wish to complete surveys and feedback forms, post comments in the online discussion forums, upload photos and photos or share a story about an experience or idea. Your privacy is protected and the discussion forums are moderated externally, and independent of Council.

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Home Current Consultations Special Consultations Community Engagement

WE ARE LISTENING: HAVE YOUR SAY | Investing in our Future | Special Rate Variation

Investing in our Future | Special Rate Variation

Wingecarribee Shire Council provides services and facilities across 22 towns and villages and 45 rural localities spread across an area the same size as the Sydney Metropolitan Area. Servicing an area of this size is a challenge and like many other NSW councils, our roads, footpaths, buildings, storage and other community assets are getting old and need to be upgraded.

Our assets in their current state are continually deteriorating and need costly maintenance. To improve our public assets and meet the needs of our community we need to spend more money on renewal and upgrade work but costs are rising while the revenue is limited.

We need your help to make some important decisions. Without a rate increase we won't be able to maintain our essential infrastructure and services. Three scenarios have been developed for consideration. These include the option to not seek a special rate variation and allow our assets to DETERIORATE. The second and third scenarios seek rate increases to allow our assets to be MAINTAINED or IMPROVED.

Following surveys earlier in 2015 Council has taken a further step towards a possible rate variation by resolving to exhibit three draft documents:

- Draft Delivery Program 2016-17 (Revised Dec 2015)
- Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2016-2026
- Draft Strategic Asset Management Plan 2016-2026

Learn more about the Investing in our Future proposal and specific transport, housing, park, environment and recreational projects that Council intend to deliver as provided under a special rate variation.

- check out the draft documents online or in print at the Civic Centre and libraries
- stop into an information kiosk in January

HAVE YOUR SAY

Complete an online submission form, email community@wingecarribee.nsw.gov.au or write to PO Box 191, Murrumbidgee 2517 by 1 February 2016

Need more information? Have a chat to us on (02) 4855 0888 or ask a question online. Please take a look at the fact sheets and associated documents or frequently asked questions and ensure you are registered to receive further updates.

News Feed Have your say Ask a Question

Consultation continues for SRV. Exhibited documents provide detail.

On Wednesday 9 December 2015 Wingecarribee Shire Council resolved to notify the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) of council's intent to apply for a Special Rate Variation in the new year. Council, considering a rate increase must comply with the requirements set out in Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) guidelines, including a notification confirming their "intention to apply" while they continue with consultation. Wingecarribee Shire Council has confirmed this intention and will now notify IPART. The actual application (due in February 2016) cannot be submitted until Council makes a formal resolution to do so.

A Draft Delivery Program 2016-17 (Revised December 2015), Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2016-2026 and Draft Strategic Asset Management Plan 2016-2026 have now been placed on exhibition until 1 February 2016. These

Document Library

- Council report and exhibition date: 9 December 2015
- Stage 2: Special Rate Variation Proposal info
- Stage 1: Infrastructure Assets

FAQ

What is a rate pegging?

What is a special rate variation?

Why do we need a special rate variation?

What are the three special rate variation scenarios?

Register to get involved

Key Dates

- Public exhibition commences: 01 February 2016
- SRV Kiosk at Murrumbidgee: 27 January 2016
- SRV Kiosk at Alibon: 27 January 2016
- SRV Kiosk at Murrumbidgee: 27 January 2016
- Public exhibition commences: 11 December 2015

Phase 3 promotional tools



Phase 3 Engagement Results

Submissions

Written submissions were sought between 11 December 2015 and 1 February 2016 via email, letter or online submission form at www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/SRV.

In total 56 submissions were received, of these 16 stated an opposition to the proposed Special Rate Variation and four supported the proposed increase to improve services. The main themes emerging from submissions and number of comments by theme and subtheme outlined in Table 12 below.

Table 12 Phase 3 Submissions Key Themes and Staff Response

Key Themes (total number of comments) & Subthemes (number of comments)	Staff Response
<p>Investing in our Future Project (48)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical of terminology used (11) • Critical of survey methodology or company conducting the research (10) • Concerns that Council will disregard feedback opposed to SRV (9) • Challenge to interpretation of survey results (6) • Concerns that extensive detail in SRV Information Kit made it difficult to comprehend (3) • Concerns that Draft Delivery Program 2013-17 is not detailed enough(3) • Concerns about transparency (2) • Request for more information online (1) • Advertising was inadequate (1) • Query about community consultation methods(1) • Community consultation did not resolve concerns(1) 	<p>A variety of communication and engagement methods were utilised to ensure as many members of the community were aware of and had an opportunity to have input into the <i>Investing in our Future</i> project. Communication techniques included distribution of a brochure to all households, media releases, radio interviews, newspaper and radio advertisements, email newsletters and social media.</p> <p>To ensure all community members had an opportunity to have their say feedback was sought via a number of mechanisms telephone, postal and online surveys, and formal submissions and at information kiosks. A random telephone survey was undertaken to ensure that feedback from canvassed from a representative and statistically significant cross section of the community. The results of the telephone survey were similar to that the online and postal surveys conducted during phase 2. Further details communication and engagement strategy and outcomes are outlined in Attachment 1.</p> <p>Following the publication of communication materials during Phase 2, Council received feedback that highlighted some members of the community were concerned about the option terminology, in particularly ‘deteriorate’. As a result, this terminology was removed from the telephone survey and instead participants were read ‘Option 1 – Rate Peg Only’. ‘Rate peg only’ was subsequently included to the scenario labels during phase 3.</p> <p>Feedback from all phases of the project have been presented to Council in briefing sessions and detailed in Attachment 1 for their determination.</p>
<p>Efficiency of Council’s operations (31)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management (14) • Request that Council more closely analyse its expenditure with reference to desirable environmental and economic characteristics of the Shire(5) • Request that Council review its services for potential efficiencies(3) • Internal expenditure too high (2) • Reduce staff /committee numbers (2) • Critical of Council’s management (2) • Perceptions of staff productivity (2) • Query regarding how Council evaluates the success of its initiatives (1) 	<p>Council’s <i>Fit for the Future</i> Improvement Proposal included a number of strategies which aim to improve the efficiency its operations. In particular, Council committed to “undertake a comprehensive service review program to ensure that Council is delivering services in the most efficient and effective manner”. A report of the project approach is being considered at the Council meeting on 10 February 2016.</p> <p>The comprehensive organisational service review will commence in 2016. This will include an examination of service levels and service delivery models with consideration also given to service consolidation and partnerships with other councils or service providers.</p>

Key Themes (total number of comments) & Subthemes (number of comments)	Staff Response
<p>Infrastructure / Services (24)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More services/improvements should be offered (7) • Particular roads/areas neglected either historically or in the SRV proposal (5) • Works not carried out efficiently (5) • Query as to whether Council's forward planning is adequately considering technological change, job creation and environmentally-friendly transport options (4) • Resources wasted on infrastructure of limited use (1) • RMS should take on more responsibility (1) • Query about future increases in water and sewerage charges (1) 	<p>As outlined above Council is committed to commencing a comprehensive organisational service review, this will include critical analysis of how services are currently delivered and consideration of the most efficient and effectively delivery models for future service delivery.</p> <p>Council's revised Delivery Program outlines a range of organisational improvements, including those related to the management of assets, such as structural testing evaluation of pavements, CCTV sewer main assessments and ice pigging.</p> <p>The <i>Investing in our Future</i> project related to Council's General Fund only, as such water and sewerage charges are not part of the Special rate Variation.</p>
<p>SRV rate rise (23)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oppose rate rise (16) • Support higher rate rise to improve services (4) • Recommend SRV proposal should be a Council election issue (2) ▪ Propose additional SRV rate rise options (1) 	<p>A Special Rate Variation was considered after extensive asset and financial modelling as a part of the NSW Governments <i>Fit for the Future</i> local government reform program. Council's three phased <i>Investing in our Future</i> project commenced in August 2015 to genuinely explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community sentiment towards the need to increase funding to asset renewal and maintenance ▪ Preferred funding scenarios ▪ Community capacity to pay increased rates. ▪
<p>Concerns about affordability (19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in cost of living (5) • Low Income earner (4) • Self-funded retiree / Pensioner (3) • Rate increase higher than inflation (3) • Impact on local businesses(2) • Impact from previous rate variation (1) • High rates compared with other NSW councils (1) 	<p>Council has carefully considered the impact of the proposed rate increased on the community, in particular the community's desire and capacity pay increased rates. This was explored throughout the 3 phases of the <i>Investing in our Future</i> project. While data suggests there are some financially disadvantaged members of the community, analysis of this data indicates a desire and ability to pay for the majority of the community.</p> <p>Council acknowledges that any rate increase may adversely impact some community members and has mechanisms in place to assist ratepayers should they incur difficulty in keeping up with their rates payments, including a Financial Hardship Policy and the mandatory \$250 pensioner rebate (set by the NSW State Government) which certain classes of pensioners are eligible.</p>
<p>Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested (19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational savings (10) • Productivity improvements (3) • Land value increase (3) • Benefits of amalgamation (1) • Support growth of industry (1) • Enable savings by better utilising community groups (1) 	<p>Council's <i>Fit for the Future</i> Improvement Proposal identified a number of strategies to improve efficiency and productivity, this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking a comprehensive service review program • Implementing Work Health Safety initiatives to reduce workers compensation premiums to at or below industry average • Developing and implementing a flexible Resource Strategy, including workforce structure and work practices to deliver works program • Participating in Joint Organisations and other regional collaborative approaches • Implementing business improvement strategies as part of Council's Internal Risk and Audit Program • Revise and enhance procurement practices to ensure best value is achieved. <p>In recent years Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of workers compensation and return to work functions which have resulted in a significant reduction in lost time injuries and a \$734,592.37 premium refund in 2014/15. Council will continue to explore organisational savings through its service review program.</p>

Key Themes (total number of comments) & Subthemes (number of comments)	Staff Response
General criticisms relating to Local Government / FFTF / WSC being deemed 'fit' (9)	The NSW Government deemed Wingecarribee Shire Council to be fit on the basis of it implementing its Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal. This proposal included a number of strategies in order for Council to meet the benchmarks set by the state government within the specified timeframes. Central to Council's proposal is a Special Rate Variation.

A summary of submissions is provided in **Appendix 8** – Summary of Submissions Phase 3, February 2016

Newspaper Articles and Letters to the Editor

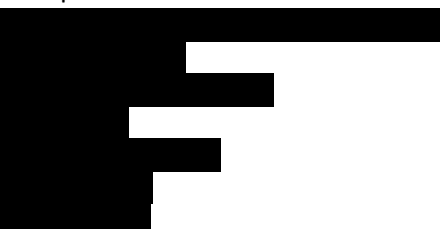
In response to the Council's communication and engagement activities the following newspaper articles and letters to the Editor appeared in the local newspaper, Southern Highlands News

Southern Highland News published stories focussed on the SRV:

- 11/12/2015 *Rate rise plans continue*
- 15/01/2016 *Action to avoid budget deficit*
- 18/01/2016 *Ask questions about the future of the Highlands*
- 29/01/2016 *Put your words into action* (Editorial)
- 29/01/2016 *Time running out to have your say*

Southern Highland News also published 'Letters to the Editor':

- 16/12/2015 Attributed to
- 13/01/2016 Attributed to
- 18/01/2016 Attributed to
- 22/01/2016 Attributed to
- 27/01/2015 Attributed to
- 29/01/2016 Attributed to
- 29/01/2016 Attributed to



Latte Life, a monthly newspaper, published stories:

- December 2015 *The added cost of infrastructure*

A summary of all media articles is included in Appendix 9 – 'Investing in our Future' Media Coverage, October 2015 – February 2016.

CONCLUSION

Wingecarribee Shire Council has now completed three phases of its *'Investing in our Future'* project. Council sought information from the community using demographically representative methods during Phase 1 and Phase 2. Results of the first phase indicated that residents want increased investment and better quality community assets. During the second phase, Council's largest ever consultation and communication program was undertaken to provide information to all households and ratepayers so they would be aware of the opportunity to inform the decision making process.

A comprehensive engagement approach offered many ways for the community to provide feedback including face-to-face kiosks, email, phone and mail, as well as telephone, postal and online surveys.

Submissions and comments provided via surveys were generally supportive of a rate increase however additional information was sought regarding proposed capital works to be undertaken using additional funds, organisational efficiencies and Council accountability for future spending. Submissions made via email or letters were largely unsupportive and raised a number of concerns, in particular affordability issues for pensioners, suggestions for alternative funding methods and requests for information relating to organisational efficiencies. One petition was received which was opposed to any rate increase.

A continuation of engagement activities into Phase 3 provided a further opportunity for the community to consider the detail of Special Rate Variation scenarios in exhibited documents and make submissions. In total 56 submissions were received. Key themes emerging from the submission included concerns about the Investing in our Future project methodologies, efficiency of Council's operations, current infrastructure and services and opposition to the rate increase. 1 Petition opposed to the rate increase with 44 signatures was received during Phase 3.

Appendices

1. "Investing in our Future" Asset Management Booklet, August 2015
2. Micromex Research Asset Management Survey Report, September 2015
3. "Investing in our Future" Options Booklet, October 2015
4. Micromex Research Telephone Survey Special Rate Variation Report, November 2015
5. Micromex Research Postal Survey Special Rate Variation Report, November 2015
6. Micromex Research Online Survey Special Rate Variation Report, November 2015
7. 'Investing in our Future' Summary of Submissions Phase 2, December 2015
8. 'Investing in our Future' Summary of Submissions Phase 3, February 2016
9. 'Investing in our Future' Media Coverage, October 2015 – February 2016.
10. 'Investing in our Future' Fact Sheets and Exhibited Materials, October 2015-February 2016

Appendix 1

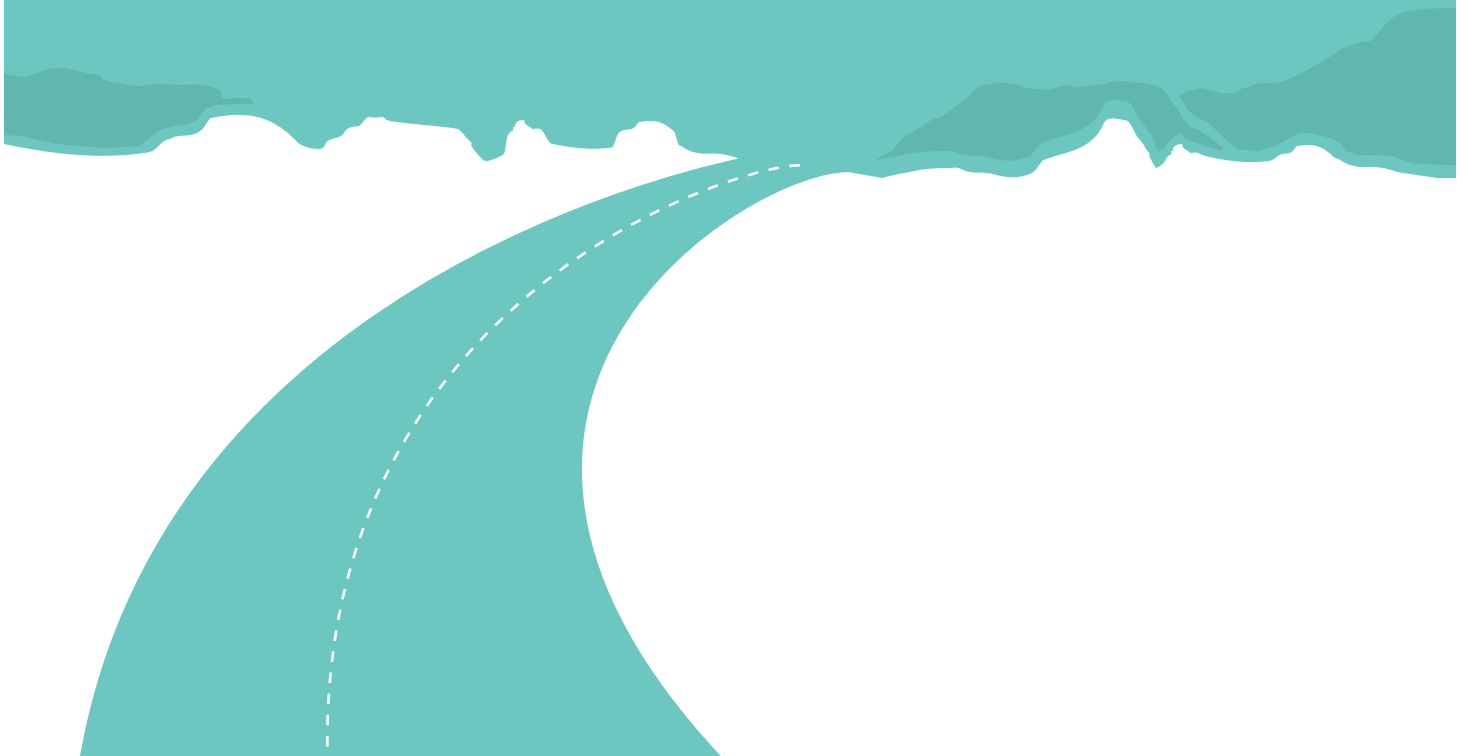
Investing in our Future Asset Management Booklet

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

TRANSPORT

STORMWATER

BUILDINGS & PARKS



THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR COMMUNITY ASSET SURVEY.

In early September 2015, a representative from Micromex Research will contact you to ask if you would like to participate in a short telephone survey about Community Assets. Ideally you will have read this brochure before you participate in the survey. Also keep this brochure handy so you can refer to it when answering the survey questions.

Council provides a range of community assets including roads, bridges, parks, playgrounds and buildings. We want to understand your thoughts on how we should continue to look after these assets now and into the future. The researcher will ask a number of questions which will help us understand:

- Whether you are happy with the current quality of these assets
- What state you think these assets should be in
- What you believe are the asset funding priorities for future

Your feedback will directly influence Council's future decision making on how we spend money on community assets such as roads, bridges, parks, playgrounds and building.

ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY ASSETS

Over the last few years Council has been reviewing the condition of its community assets to determine whether the amount of money we plan to spend on infrastructure such as roads, buildings and playgrounds is sufficient. Put simply, we are trying to determine if we need to allocate more money to maintain or renew our community assets. So what does asset maintenance and renewal mean?

- **Maintenance** is work performed on an asset that keeps it in a useable condition e.g. painting buildings, filling potholes, repairing broken water pipes or fixing playgrounds and swings.
- **Renewal** is work performed on an asset to bring it back to its original condition e.g. the replacement of a building, reconstructing a segment of road, replacing a whole section of water pipe or replacing a playground.

Using industry benchmarks, we have reviewed the following asset types to work out if they are in good, fair or poor condition:

- Transport which includes roads, bridges, footpaths, cycleways and road drainage
- Stormwater drainage
- Parks and open spaces
- Buildings
- Water network
- Sewer network

The following pages include information about the outcomes of this review for each of our asset types.

The issue facing Council is that while a lot of the assets are in good or fair condition, a large proportion are at risk of falling into poor condition.

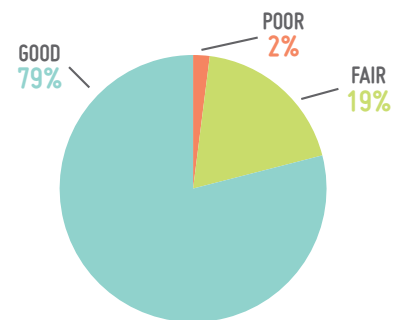
WHERE ARE WE NOW?

A snapshot of community asset conditions and investment level

SEALED ROADS

Council is responsible for 815km of sealed roads which costs \$6.8 million per year to maintain and renew. Generally our roads are in good condition, however there is a small proportion in a poor condition (2% or around 16km). We have identified that many roads currently in fair condition need additional maintenance and replacement to prevent them from degrading to a poor condition.

CONDITION OF SEALED ROADS



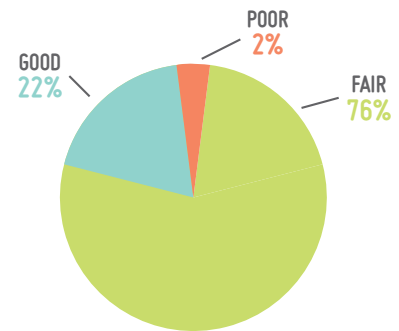
How would you rate council's current spend for sealed roads?

GOOD CONDITION	FAIR CONDITION	POOR CONDITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Minimal cracking ✓ Minimal surface defects ✓ Smooth travel experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moderate cracking and pothole repairs ● Moderate roughness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Heavy cracking and severe surface defects like large potholes and heavy patching ✗ Rough travel experience

UNSEALED ROADS

Council currently spends \$2.47 million each year to maintain 347km of unsealed roads in the Shire. Our road condition is assessed as road segments, e.g. from one intersection to another. Our unsealed roads are in fair condition overall and only 2% are considered to be in a poor condition. However many unsealed roads in fair condition need additional maintenance and/or replacement to prevent them from degrading to a poor condition.

CONDITION OF UNSEALED ROADS



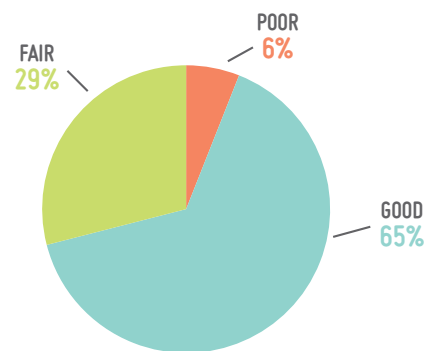
How would you rate Council's current spend for unsealed roads?

GOOD CONDITION	FAIR CONDITION	POOR CONDITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Even surface ✓ Good gravel coverage ✓ Few potholes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moderately uneven surface ● Frequent potholes ● Minimal gravel coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Very uneven surface ✗ Significant size and frequency of potholes ✗ No gravel cover or guideposts

FOOTPATHS

Council currently owns and maintains 83km of footpaths across the Shire. We spend approximately \$375,000 per year on footpaths. The majority of our footpaths are in a fair to good condition with only 6% in poor condition. However some footpaths currently in fair condition need additional maintenance and replacement work to ensure they do not deteriorate into a poor and unsafe condition.

CONDITION OF FOOTPATHS



How would you rate Council's current spend for footpaths?

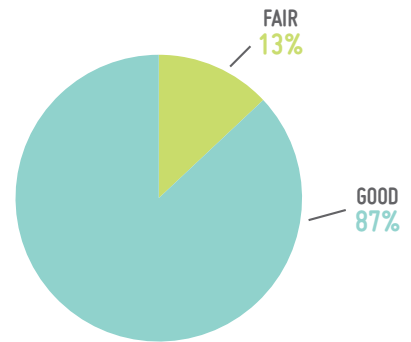
GOOD CONDITION	FAIR CONDITION	POOR CONDITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No pavement movement or trip hazards ✓ Minor to no cracking ✓ Smooth surface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minor pavement movement or trip hazards ● Moderate cracking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Moderate pavement movement or trip hazards ✗ Severe cracking and edge wear

CYCLEWAYS

Council currently owns and maintains 28km of cycleways across the shire. Most of our cycleways are in good condition with around 13% in fair condition. Council currently spends approximately \$215,000 per year on cycleways.

How would you rate Council's current spend for cycleways?

CONDITION OF CYCLEPATHS



GOOD CONDITION

- ✓ No pavement movement or trip hazards
- ✓ Minor to no cracking
- ✓ Smooth surface



FAIR CONDITION

- Minor pavement movement or trip hazards
- Moderate cracking



POOR CONDITION

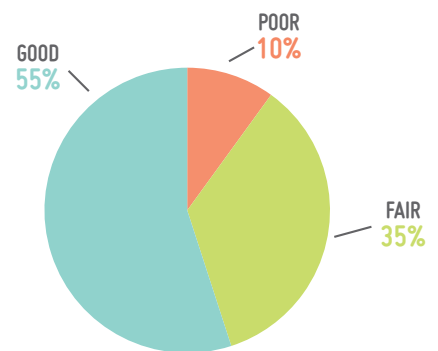
- ✗ Moderate pavement movement or trip hazards
- ✗ Severe cracking and edge wear

BRIDGES

Council owns and maintains 62 bridges. The majority of these are rated as being in a fair to good condition, however 10% are rated as poor. Council currently spends approximately \$695,000 per year on bridges.

How would you rate Council's current spend for bridges?

CONDITION OF BRIDGES



GOOD CONDITION

- ✓ No cracking or wear
- ✓ Minor or no edge wear



FAIR CONDITION

- Some superficial cracks
- Minor deterioration of concrete or timber
- Moderate edge wear



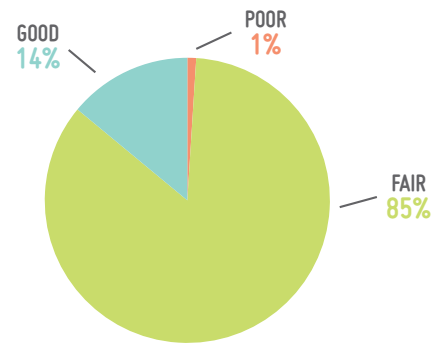
POOR CONDITION

- ✗ Advanced deterioration of timber or concrete
- ✗ Severe edge wear

ROAD DRAINAGE

Council currently owns and maintains 1044km of road drainage infrastructure across the shire. This includes gutters, under-road pipes, kerb drainage and table drains. Council currently spends approximately \$375,000 on road drainage. Most of our road drainage is rated fair however much of the road drainage network in fair condition needs additional maintenance and replacement work undertaken to prevent it from degrading to a poor condition.

CONDITION OF ROAD DRAINAGE



How would you rate Council's current spend for road drainage?

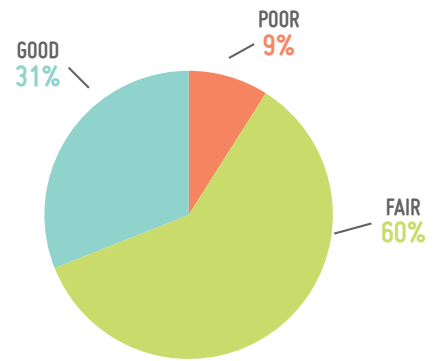
GOOD CONDITION	FAIR CONDITION	POOR CONDITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ No concrete deterioration ✓ Undamaged grates ✓ No blockages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minor cracking ● Moderate grate damage ● Moderate blockages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Severe concrete deterioration ✗ Major blockages ✗ Significant cracking

BUILDINGS

Council owns and maintains 294 buildings including:







- Community centres
- Public toilets
- Commercial buildings
- Children's centres
- Emergency services, e.g. rural fire service sheds and headquarters
- Swimming pools
- Sports fields
- Parks, gardens & reserves buildings
- Cemeteries
- Works depots
- Waste and recycling facilities
- Southern Region Livestock Exchange

CONDITION OF BUILDINGS



The majority of our buildings are currently in a fair to good condition, with 9% considered to be in a poor condition. However around half of those buildings currently in fair condition need additional maintenance and replacement of major components such as roof, internal finishes or servicing in order to avoid them slipping into a poor condition. Council currently spends approximately \$1.4 million on buildings.

How would you rate Council's current spend for buildings?

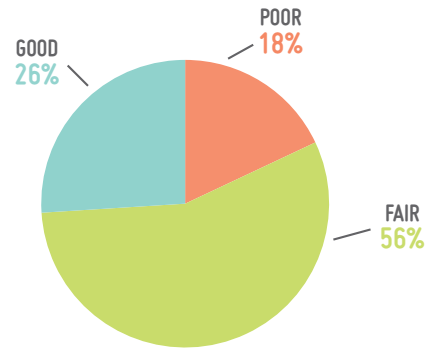
		
		
GOOD CONDITION	FAIR CONDITION	POOR CONDITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Structurally reliable and fit for purpose ✓ Showing minor deterioration, wear and tear 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Structure adequate for purpose ● Evidence of foundation movement and cracking ● Moderate damage to surfaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Structural problems ✗ Significant cracking ✗ Roof leaks and breaches of waterproofing ✗ Badly damaged features

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Council currently owns and maintains 4 floral gardens, 74 parks, 27 sporting facilities, 21 bushland reserves, 12 reserves and 54 playgrounds. We spend approximately \$760,000 on our parks and open spaces.

The majority of our parks and open spaces are in a fair to good condition with 18% rated as poor. Approximately one third of the parks rated in fair condition require additional works to facilities such as playgrounds, fencing, park furniture and sporting assets.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES



How would you rate Council's current spend for parks and open spaces?

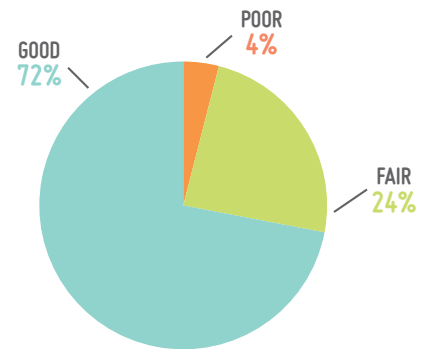
GOOD CONDITION	FAIR CONDITION	POOR CONDITION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New or near new condition ✓ Minor wear and tear ✓ Minor surface deterioration ✓ Compliant with Australian safety standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Useable condition ● Evidence of wear and tear ● Function affected by age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Very bad condition ✗ Cannot be repaired ✗ Does not comply with Australian safety standards ✗ Unsightly and visibly worn

WATER NETWORK

Council owns and maintains a significant water distribution network throughout the shire. This network includes 3 water treatment plants, 29 water reservoirs, 655km of pipes and more than 17,000 water meters. We currently spend approximately \$4.5 million on maintenance and renewal. Our assessment has confirmed that almost three quarters of the water network is in good condition. It is estimated that current investment will allow Council to renew poor condition water asset and ensure adequate services are provided.

How would you rate Council's current spend for the water network?

CONDITION OF WATER NETWORK



GOOD CONDITION

- ✓ Little to no physical deterioration
- ✓ No water leaks



FAIR CONDITION

- Moderate deterioration
- Minor leaks



POOR CONDITION

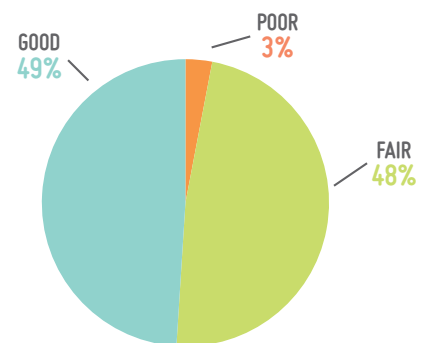
- ✗ Major water leaks and water shutdown or service interruptions
- ✗ Heavy deterioration

STORMWATER DRAINAGE

Council owns and maintains a stormwater network including 152km pipes, 54.3km open channels, 5,234 pits and 25 detention basins. We currently spend approximately \$1.19 million on maintenance and renewal. The majority of our stormwater assets are considered to be in fair to good condition with 3% rated as poor condition. While our stormwater drainage assets are currently in good condition additional maintenance and renewal work needs to be undertaken to ensure they do not deteriorate to a poor standard which could result in decreased flood protection.

How would you rate Council's current spend for stormwater drainage?

CONDITION OF STORMWATER DRAINAGE



GOOD CONDITION

- ✓ No concrete deterioration
- ✓ No pipe movement
- ✓ Clear approaches and entrance



FAIR CONDITION

- Minor cracking
- Minor pipe movement
- Moderate blockages



POOR CONDITION

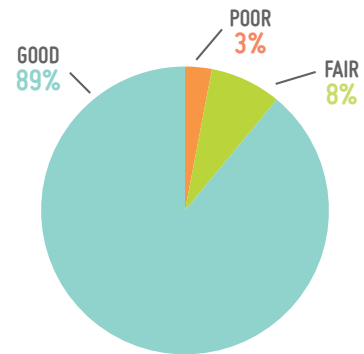
- ✗ Severe deterioration and movement
- ✗ Significant cracking

SEWERAGE NETWORK

Council owns and maintains a vast sewer distribution network. This network includes 6 sewage treatment plants, more than 580km of sewer pipes and over 15,000 service lines, connecting houses and businesses to the sewer network.

Sewer assets are primarily in good condition, with only 11% in the fair or poor categories. While our sewerage network is in good condition, population growth in our shire coupled with increased environmental compliance requirements means 3 sewage treatment plants will need to be upgraded in the next 10 years. Sewage treatment plant upgrades will result in corresponding increases in operation and maintenance costs. Council currently spends \$5.5 million on the sewer network.

CONDITION OF SEWERAGE NETWORK



How would you rate Council's current spend for the Sewerage Network?

<p>GOOD CONDITION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Little to no physical deterioration ✓ No blockages 	<p>FAIR CONDITION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moderate deterioration and blockages ● Short service interruptions 	<p>POOR CONDITION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Heavy deterioration ✗ Severe blockages and lengthy service interruptions

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Council maintains a vast network of community assets such as roads, bridges, community halls and playgrounds.

In 2014 the NSW State Government initiated its Fit for the Future local government reform program. In preparing its Fit for the Future submission, which demonstrated Council's plan to achieve long term financial sustainability, we identified a gap in the current investment required to keep community assets in an acceptable condition.

There is no easy solution to addressing this funding gap. Put simply, if we do not address this gap now, our community assets will deteriorate, and in the future become unusable. We currently spend approximately \$24.3 million on the maintenance and renewal each year however we should be investing an additional \$8.6 million per year.

Council wants to understand from the community how we should prioritise expenditure on our different asset types. We need a clear mandate for future spending, based on the community's views on acceptable asset conditions. This is why Council wants your thoughts on its proposal to invest in the maintenance and renewal of our community assets and how this should be funded.

WHICH COMMUNITY ASSETS IS COUNCIL PROPOSING TO INCREASE ITS LEVEL OF INVESTMENT?

Council is proposing to increase funding for the following assets.

- Transport (sealed roads, unsealed roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridges and road drainage)
- Stormwater Drainage
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Buildings

Increasing the level of funding for these assets will allow council to renew those which are currently in a poor condition. It will also ensure that the number of assets in poor condition does not continue to grow. It is essential that our community assets are safe, in working order and meet community expectations.

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED FUNDING INCREASE?

The table below shows the current amount of funding allocated each year, towards renewal and maintenance work across our main asset types, as well as recommendations for increases to improve their condition.

ASSET TYPE	CURRENT MAINTENANCE & RENEWAL BUDGET (PER ANNUM)	PROPOSED INCREASE IN INVESTMENT (PER ANNUM)	PROPOSED TOTAL INVESTMENT (PER ANNUM)	PROPOSED (%) INCREASE IN INVESTMENT
Transport	\$10,930,000	\$5,034,000	\$15,964,000	46%
Stormwater Drainage	\$1,190,000	\$1,165,000	\$2,355,000	98%
Parks and Open Space	\$760,000	\$412,000	\$1,172,000	54%
Buildings	\$1,400,000	\$2,037,000	\$3,437,000	145%

Civic Centre, 68 Elizabeth St.
Moss Vale, NSW 2577
PO Box 141, Moss Vale.

Ph: (02) 4868 0888
mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au
www.wsc.nsw.gov.au



Appendix 2

Asset Management Survey Report

September 2015

Appendix 2

Wingecarribee Shire Council

Asset Management

Prepared by: Micromex Research

Date: September 2015



Background



Objectives and Approach

Background

Wingecarribee Shire Council wished to conduct community consultation in order to identify and inform their long-term management/resourcing strategies for the assets of the LGA.

Research Objectives

Specifically the research quantitatively explored:

- Level of current investment, relative priority and satisfactions of key community assets
- Understanding support for Council's funding position in regards to 4 key asset areas
- Identifying any community endorsed revenue options for Council to explore in order to address funding requirements

Data collection

Micromex Research, together with Wingecarribee Shire Council, developed the questionnaire.

Research Design

This study consisted of a three-stage methodology:

- Stage 1: Initial recruitment of 602 Wingecarribee residents via a random phone survey, collection of several 'pre' measures
- Stage 2: Mail-out by Council of a brochure explaining the various asset management options
- Stage 3: Recontact telephone interviews with 401 of the initial 602, collection of numerous 'post' measures



Methodology & Sample

Data collection and Sampling

Participants were recruited to take part in the survey via telephone interviews in late August. To improve sample efficacy this included respondents without landlines and 18-49 y/o sourced via number harvesting in town centres.

The callback interview was conducted between the 10th – 19th September 2015.

- A sample size of 600 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.1% at 95% confidence.
- A sample size of 401 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.9% at 95% confidence.

This means that if the callback survey was replicated with a new universe of N=401 residents, that 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.9%. This means for example, that the answer 'satisfied' (46%) to 'satisfaction with the community consultation' could vary from 41% to 51%.

Interviewing

491 of 602 of respondents were selected by means of a computer based random selection process using the electronic White Pages. In addition to this, 111 respondents were number harvested via face-to-face intercept at a number of areas around the Wingecarribee LGA. They were then recontacted to undertake the recruitment survey.

Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

Percentages

All percentages are calculated to the nearest whole number and therefore the total may not exactly equal 100%.



Interviewing was conducted in accordance with the
AMRS Code of Professional Conduct

Sample Profile



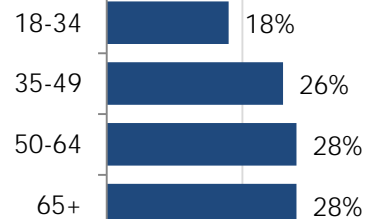


Sample Profile

Gender



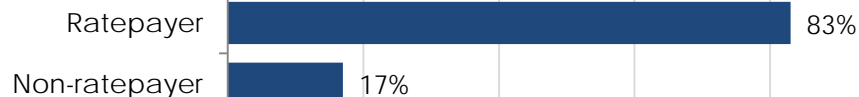
Age



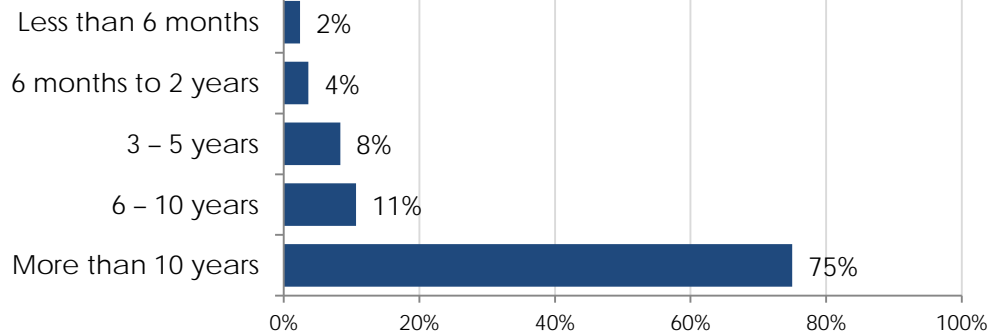
Location



Ratepayer status



Time lived in the area



The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2011 ABS community profile of Wingecarribee Shire Council

Summary



Summary

At an overall level, residents are generally satisfied with the current quality of assets in the Wingecarribee Shire Council area, with nearly 9 in 10 indicating they are at least 'somewhat satisfied'. However only 4% of residents **committed** to the top response of 'very satisfied', indicating an opportunity for Council to improve the community's satisfaction with assets.

99% of residents indicated it is at least 'somewhat important' for Council to implement plans and strategies that will maintain and enhance infrastructure and facilities for the Wingecarribee Shire.

All asset classes were seen to be priorities and there is clear community support for Council to increase investment.

Once advised the majority indicated they were at least somewhat supportive of Council's proposed funding increases across the areas of Transport (94%), Parks (92%), stormwater drainage (91%), and buildings (80%)

In order to generate the funds required for increasing investment, around half supported the selling off of non-essential assets followed by 29% supporting the identification of organisational improvements to increase efficiency.

Overall satisfaction with Council has significantly increased between the recruitment and the recontact interview, as residents felt Council was listening to the community and providing an opportunity for community input.



Key Findings



Dashboard of Key Findings

Top 3 Priorities



91% - Sealed roads



81% - Parks and Open Space



79% - Footpaths

Base: n=602

Satisfaction with Assets



Highest Satisfaction:
Water network
Mean rating: 3.60

Lowest Satisfaction:
Sealed roads
Mean rating: 2.36



Base: n=593
Scale: 1 = Not at all satisfied/ 5= Very satisfied

Council Investment

'More' Investment - Top 3

Pre-Information Pack



0.83 - Sealed roads



0.69 - Footpaths



0.64 - Stormwater drainage

Base: n=602

Post-Information Pack



0.69 - Sealed roads



0.68 - Road drainage



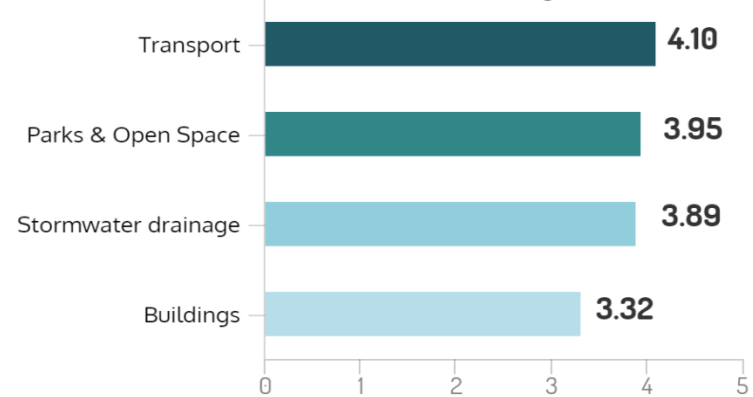
0.61 - Unsealed roads

Base: n=401

Scale: -1 = Less investment, 0=Same investment, 1=More investment

Support for Funding

Mean ratings



Scale: 1 = Not at all supportive/ 5= Very supportive

Base: n=401

Asset Management - Priority Mapping

(Priority, Satisfaction and Investment)

The following slide is a 3 dimensional mapping of the 'position' of the 11 asset areas that residents were asked to rate as a priority, their satisfaction with these areas, and the level of investment they feel should be applied. The inputs in the map use the data from the recruitment survey.

Priority is mapped on the vertical axis, and satisfaction is mapped on an 'inverted' horizontal axis – by 'inverted' we mean it runs from highest at left to lowest at right. The size of the bubble indicates the level of investment that residents would like spent in each area. This investment mean is also used to colour code the measures into three investment groups:

- 'Gold' investment (significantly above the average required investment)
- 'Silver' investment (within standard error of the average required investment)
- 'Bronze' investment (significantly below the average required investment)

Summary

All assets are priorities, however from a relative perspective 'Sealed roads' are the highest priority, they provide the lowest level of satisfaction and are perceived to require the largest increase in investment.

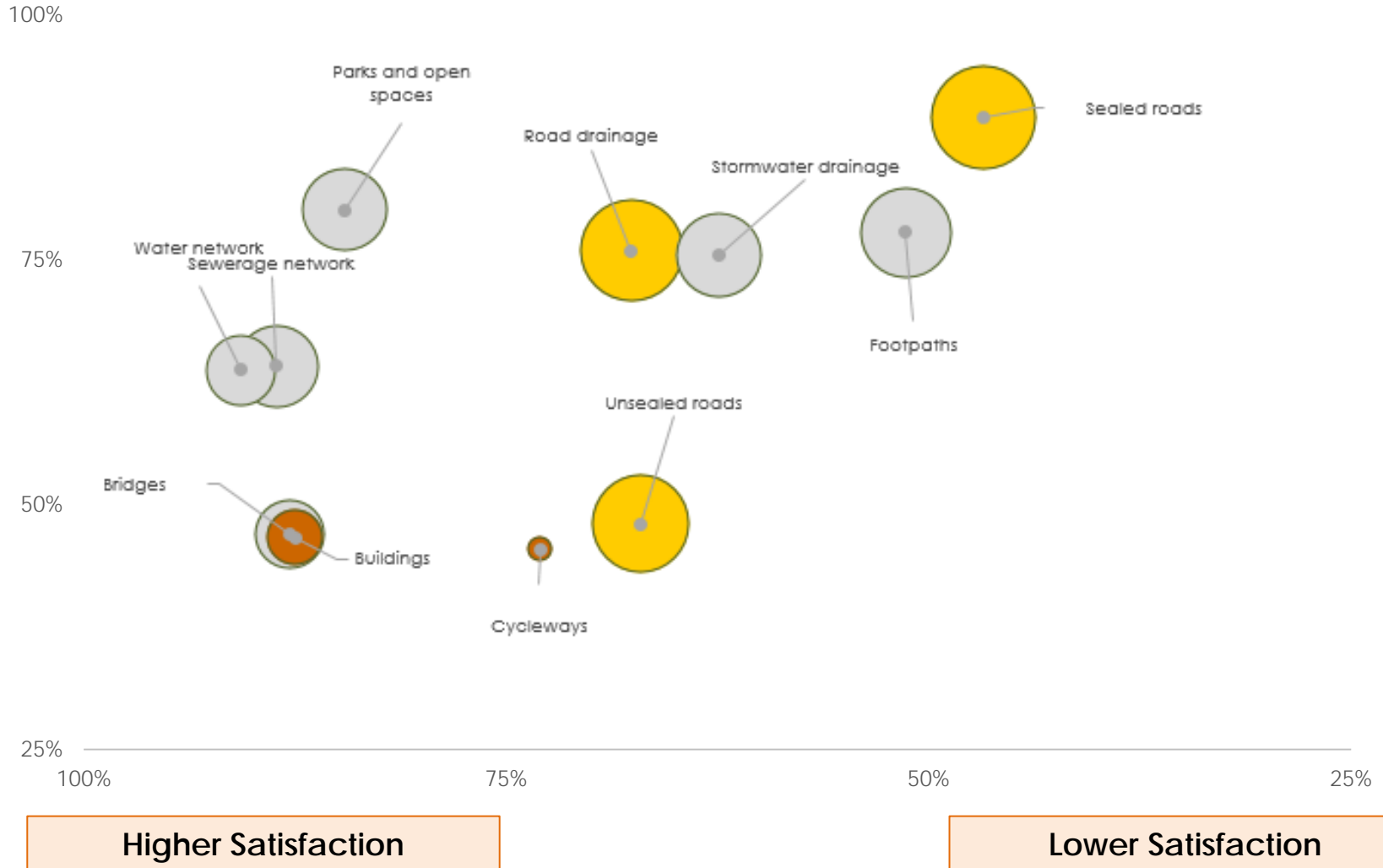
'Footpaths' and 'Stormwater drainage' are also high priorities that are providing relative lower levels of satisfaction, they require an average increase in investment.

'Road drainage' and 'Unsealed Roads' are relatively high priorities, that are providing relative average levels of satisfaction, but still require an above average increase in investment.

The other mapped assets are providing relatively stronger levels of satisfaction, however all are seen to need some increase in Council investment, even those with the lowest relative level of priority

There is clear community support for Council to increase investment, albeit to different relative levels, across all the asset classes

Asset Management - Priority Mapping



All assets are priorities, however from a relative perspective 'sealed roads' are the highest priority, provide the lowest level of satisfaction and require the largest increase in investment

Summary Of Key Outcomes

	Priority	Satisfaction	Pre – invest Increase*	Post - invest Increase*
Road drainage	77%	2.86	0.58	0.50
Sealed roads	91%	2.36	0.83	0.48
Unsealed roads	49%	2.77	0.46	0.41
Footpaths	79%	2.56	0.69	0.39
Stormwater drainage	76%	2.86	0.64	0.32
Parks/open space	81%	3.47	0.52	0.31
Sewerage network	65%	3.59	0.30	0.29
Water network	65%	3.60	0.29	0.21
Bridges	48%	3.46	0.20	0.20
Community/Council buildings	48%	3.27	0.27	0.12
Cycle paths	47%	3.11	0.25	0.07

Base: N=602/401

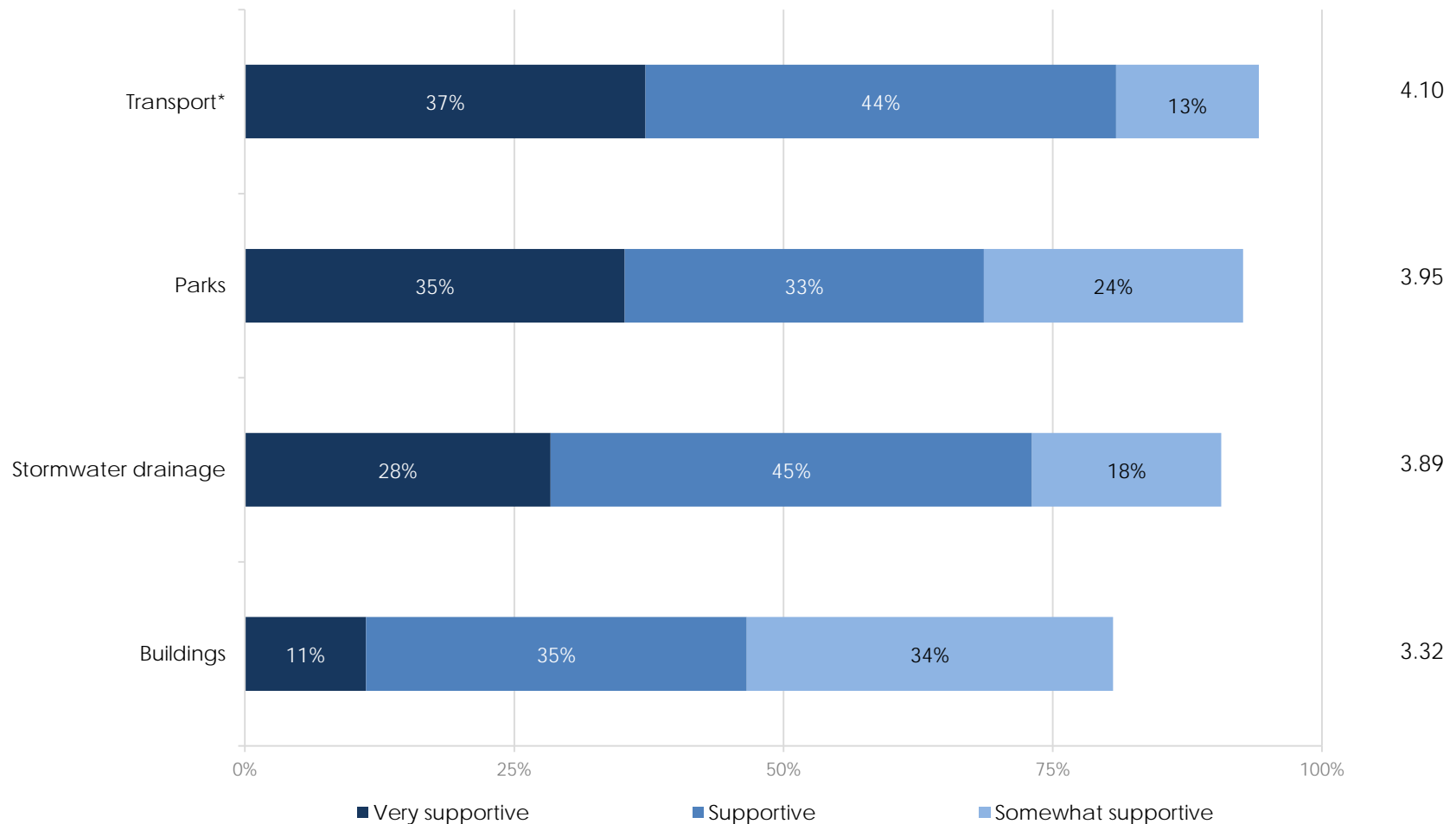
* 'More' is allocated a score of 1, 'Less' is allocated a score of -1. If the resultant Increase score is positive, it indicates more support for increased spending than decreased spending

Even though some declines have been observed in pre versus post investment (red figures in last column above), for the most part there is still the perception that Council needs to put more into all of it's assets

Summary of Support for Council's Investment Positions

Q4. (Recontact survey) How supportive are you of Council's investment position on...

Mean ratings



Base: N=401

*Note: 'Transport' includes roads, bridges, footpaths, cycleways, and road drainage

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive

Support is strong for Council's proposed investment increase across the 4 asset theme areas, with between 80%-94% of residents at least 'somewhat supportive' of Council's position

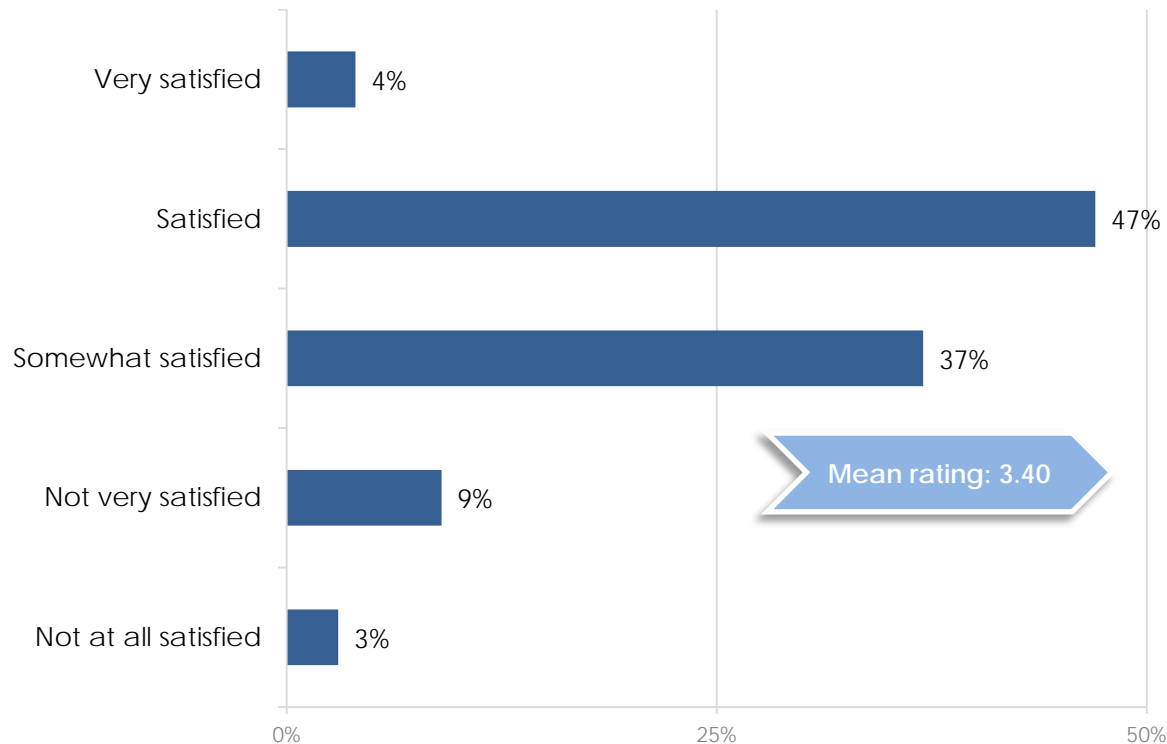
Detailed Findings



Satisfaction with Quality of Community Assets

Q2. (Recontact survey) Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of community assets currently provided by Council?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Town	Village	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean ratings	3.40	3.49	3.32	3.79▲	3.34	3.44	3.17▼	3.35	3.45	3.33▼	3.76▲



Base: N=401

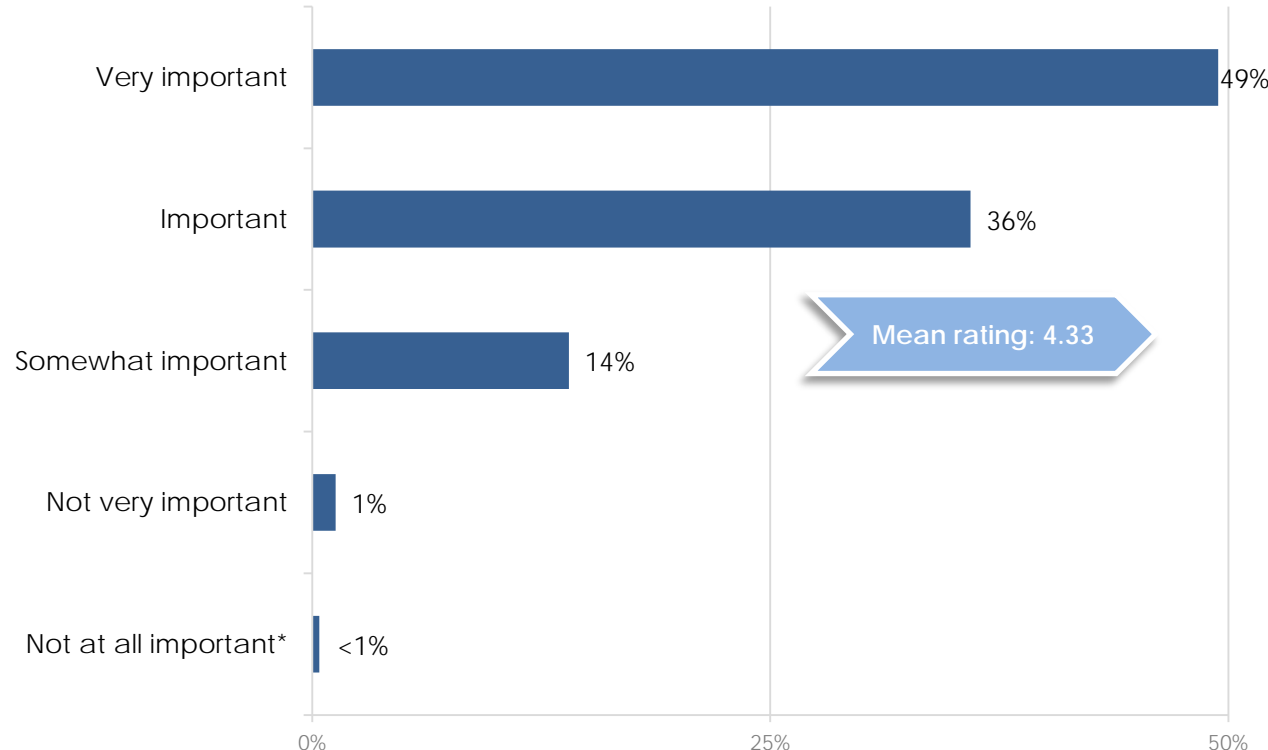
Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied
 ▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

While residents were generally satisfied with the quality of community assets, only 4% committed to the top response 'very satisfied' indicating an opportunity for further improvement

Importance of Maintaining and Enhancing Infrastructure

Q6. (Recontact survey) How important do you believe it is for Council to implement plans and strategies that will maintain and enhance infrastructure and facilities for the Wingecarribee Shire LGA?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Town	Village	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean ratings	4.33	4.30	4.35	4.18	4.35	4.42	4.31	4.38	4.27	4.29	4.51



Base: N=401
 *Note: Two residents selected this option

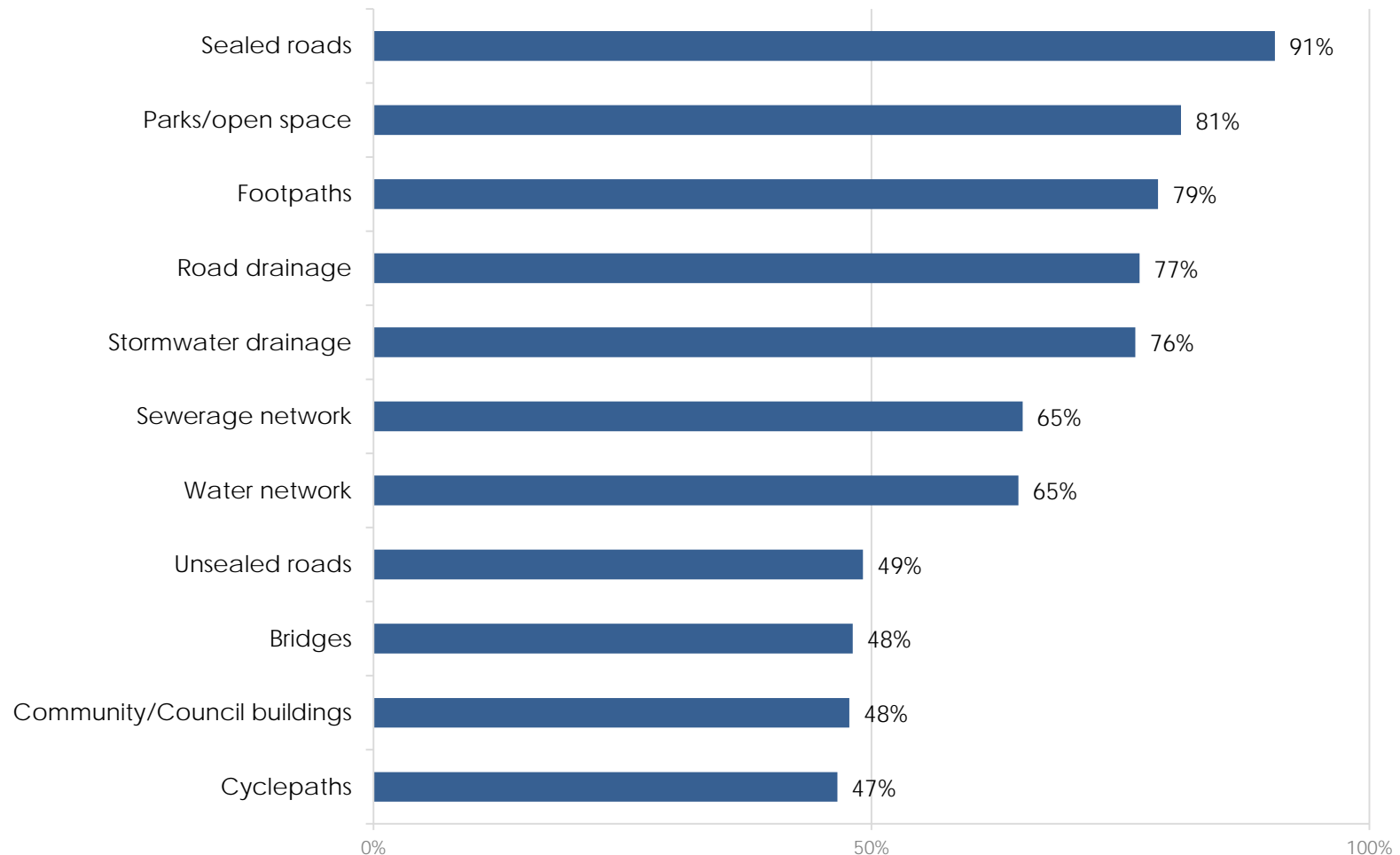
Scale: 1 = not at all important, 5 = very important



99% of residents felt it was at least 'somewhat important' for Council to implement plans and strategies that will maintain and enhance infrastructure and facilities for the LGA

Priority Assets – Hierarchy of Response

Q1. (Recruitment survey) Could you please indicate which of the following assets are a priority for you?



Base: N=602

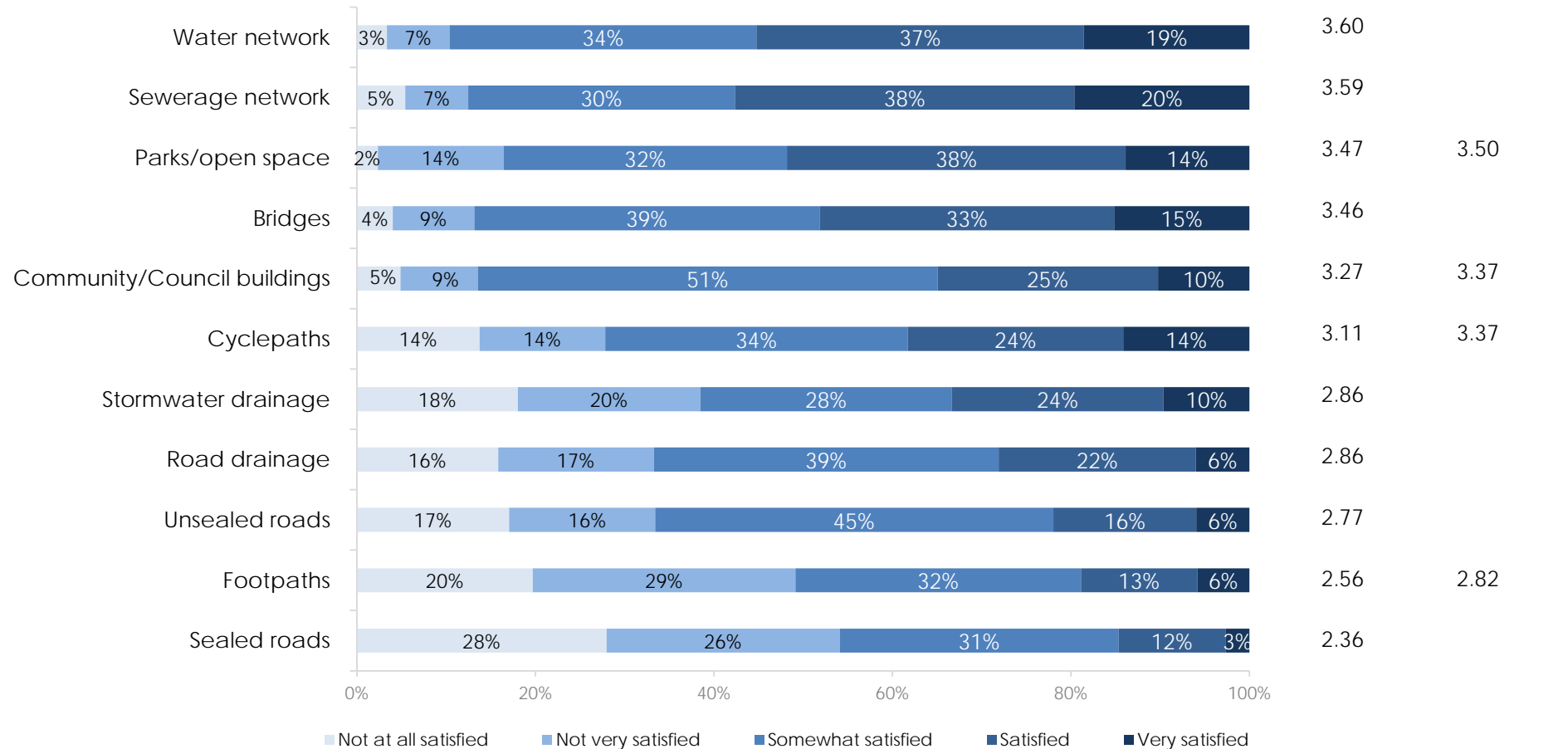
Whilst there is clearly a hierarchy of priorities (with scores ranging from 91% for 'sealed roads' to 47% for 'Cyclepaths'), the challenge for Council is that even those assets with the lowest priority scores are still seen as a priority by almost half the community.

Satisfaction with Current Assets

Mean ratings

Recruitment (N=571-602) 2015 Community (N=407)

Q1. (Recruitment survey) Could you please indicate how satisfied you are with the performance of that asset?



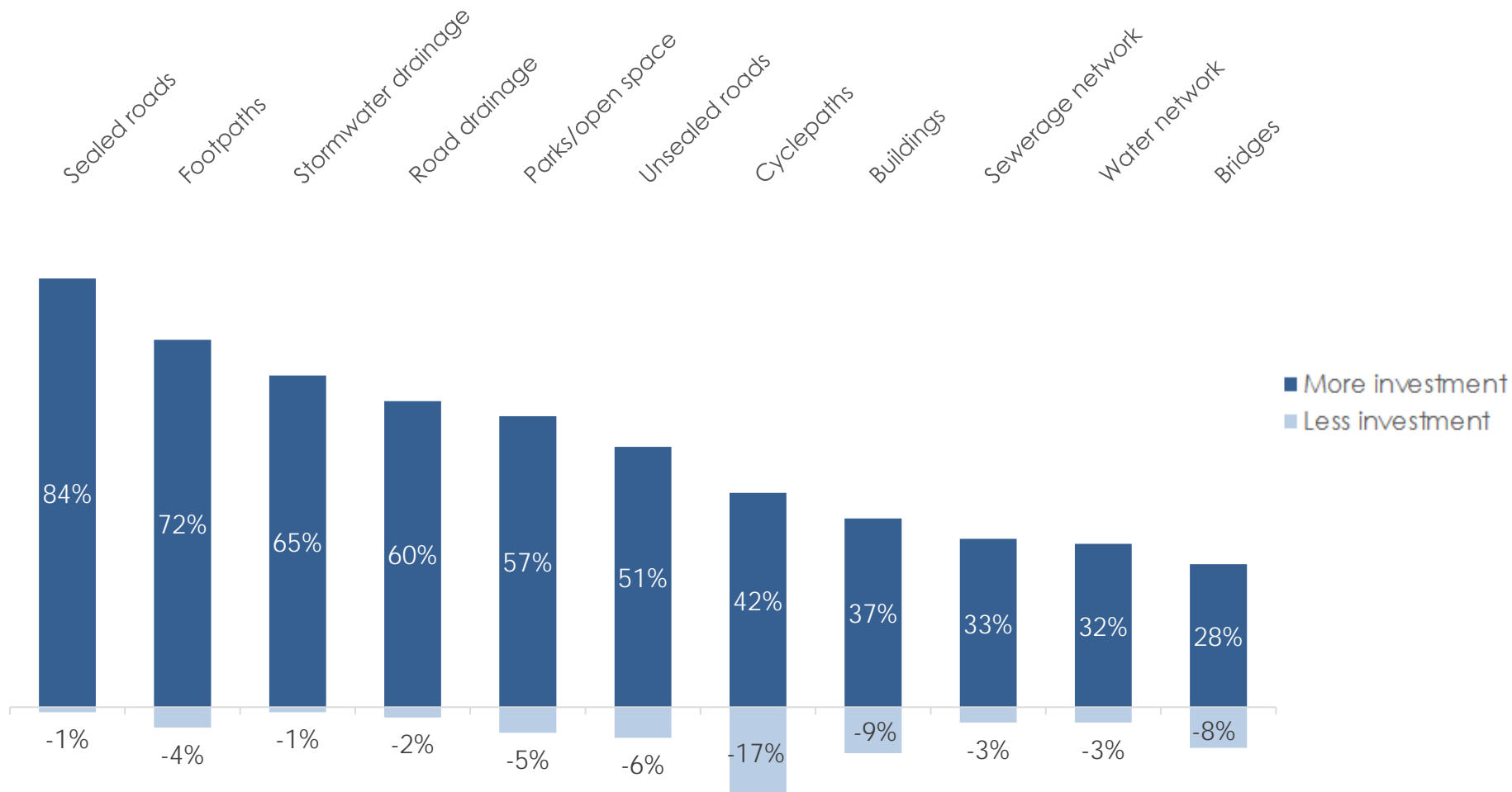
Base: N=571-602

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

Residents were most satisfied with the 'water' and 'sewerage' networks while least satisfied with a number of transport assets including 'sealed roads', 'footpaths', 'unsealed roads', and 'road drainage'

Desired Level of Investment – Pre Information Pack

Q1. Thinking of the following types of council asset for each of these could you please indicate which of the following assets are a priority for you, how satisfied you are with the performance of that asset, and whether Council should invest less, the same, or more than they currently spend/resource for on each.

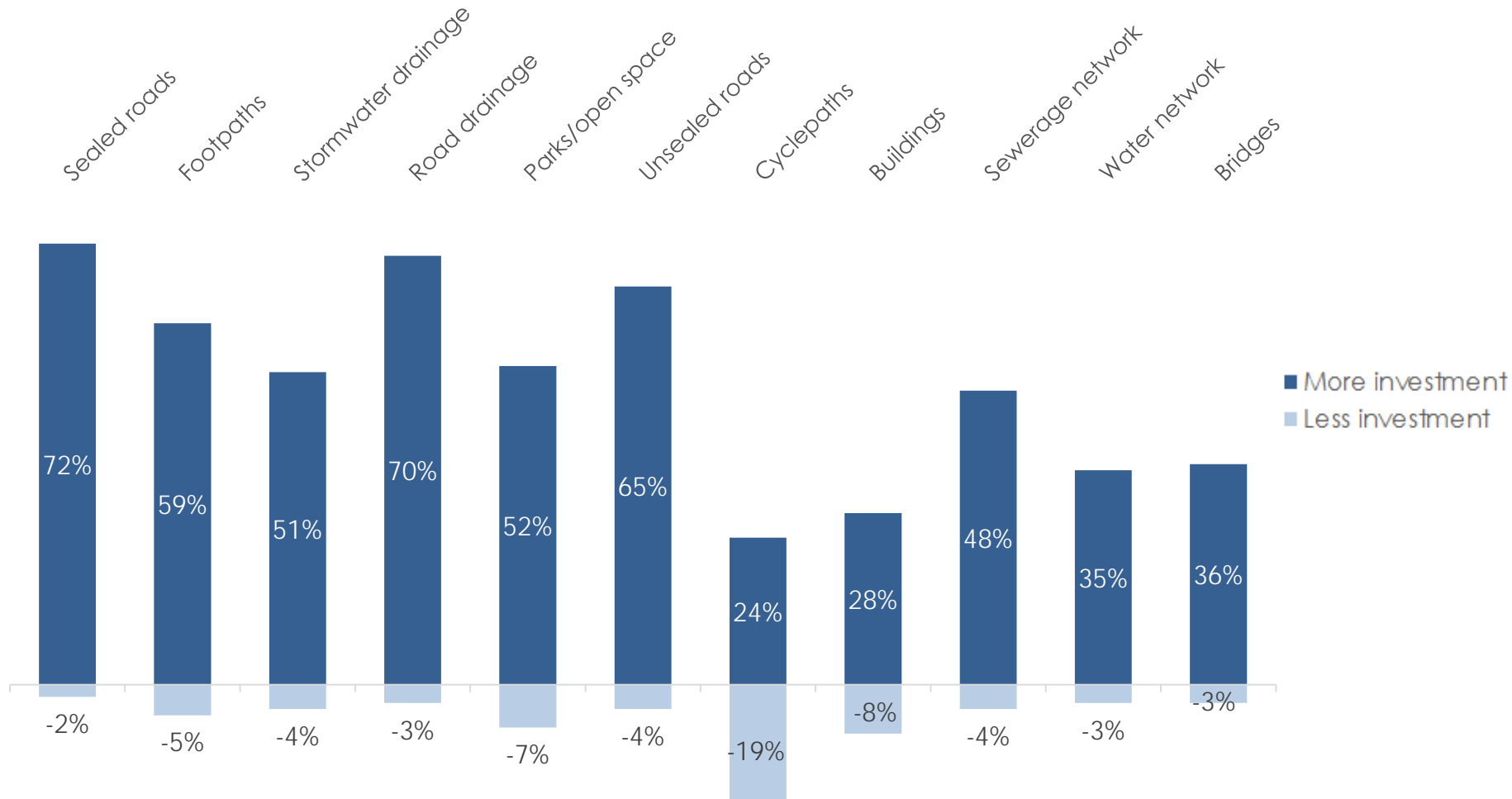


Base: N=602

Very few residents want Council to reduce its investment in local assets – for the most part a significant proportion would like Council to increase investment

Desired Level of Investment – Post Information Pack

Q1. Thinking of the following types of council asset for should Council invest less, the same, or more than they currently spend/resource for on each.



Base: N=602

Once informed of Council's actual spend, while there are slight declines observed there is a consistency with pre information pack outcomes – essentially residents still want increased investment in their local assets

Support for Increased Infrastructure Funding



Concept Outlined in Information Pack

WHICH COMMUNITY ASSETS IS COUNCIL PROPOSING TO INCREASE ITS LEVEL OF INVESTMENT?

Council is proposing to increase funding for the following assets.

- Transport (sealed roads, unsealed roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridges and road drainage)
- Stormwater Drainage
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Buildings

Increasing the level of funding for these assets will allow council to renew those which are currently in a poor condition. It will also ensure that the number of assets in poor condition does not continue to grow. It is essential that our community assets are safe, in working order and meet community expectations.

WHAT IS THE PROPOSED FUNDING INCREASE?

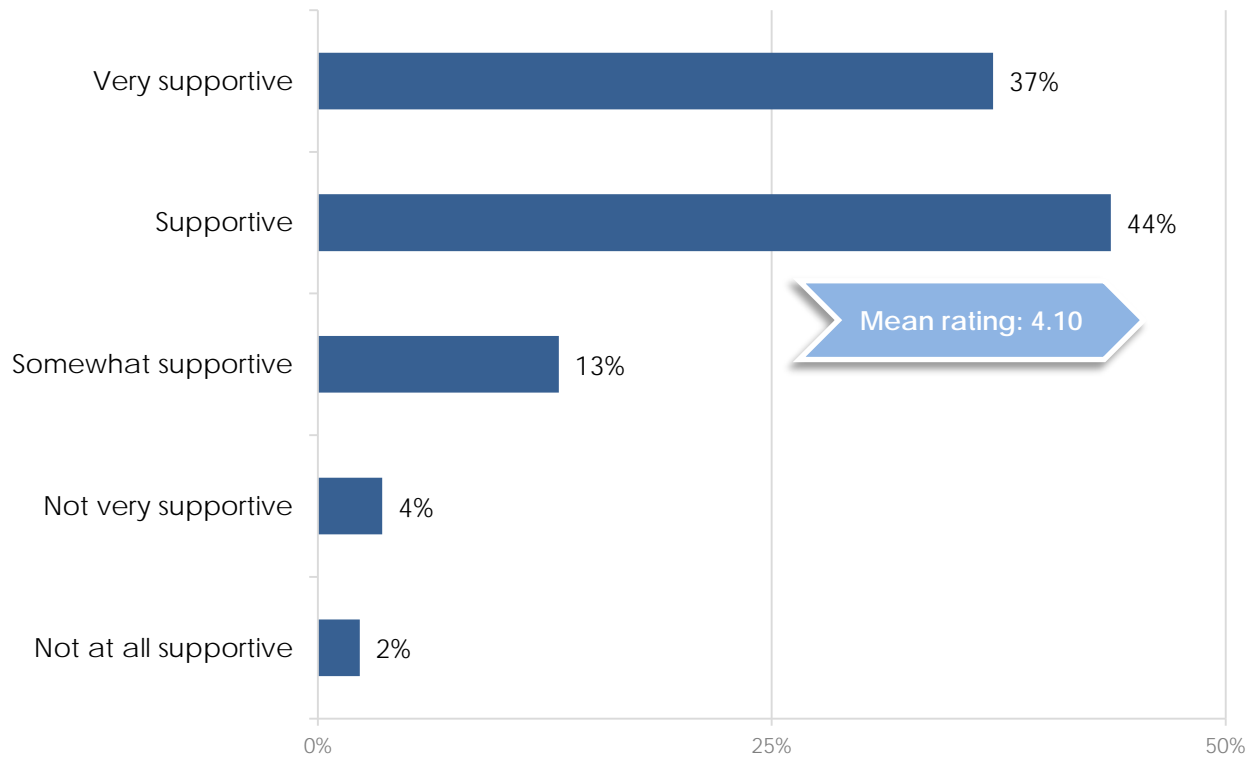
The table below shows the current amount of funding allocated each year, towards renewal and maintenance work across our main asset types, as well as recommendations for increases to improve their condition.

ASSET TYPE	CURRENT MAINTENANCE & RENEWAL BUDGET (PER ANNUM)	PROPOSED INCREASE IN INVESTMENT (PER ANNUM)	PROPOSED TOTAL INVESTMENT (PER ANNUM)	PROPOSED (%) INCREASE IN INVESTMENT
Transport	\$10,930,000	\$5,034,000	\$15,964,000	46%
Stormwater Drainage	\$1,190,000	\$1,165,000	\$2,355,000	98%
Parks and Open Space	\$760,000	\$412,000	\$1,172,000	54%
Buildings	\$1,400,000	\$2,037,000	\$3,437,000	145%

Support for Council's Investment Position on Transport

Q4a. (Recontact survey) How supportive are you of Council's investment position on transport?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Town	Village	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean ratings	4.10	4.00	4.19	4.24	4.13	4.10	3.99	4.04	4.16	4.07	4.26



Base: N=401

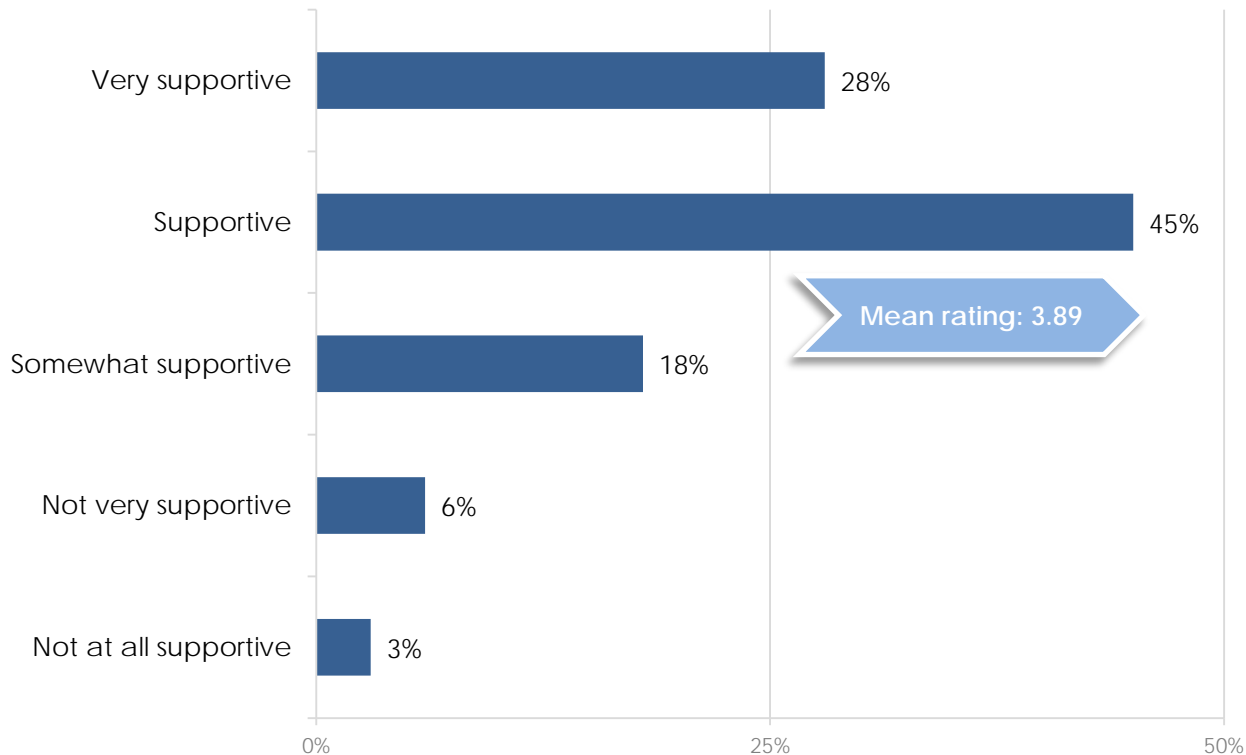
Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive

94% of residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of Council's investment position on transport assets

Support for Council's Investment Position on Stormwater Drainage

Q4b. (Recontact survey) How supportive are you of Council's investment position on stormwater drainage?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Town	Village	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean ratings	3.89	3.76	4.01	3.93	3.98	3.75	3.93	4.02	3.76	3.91	3.81



Base: N=401

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive

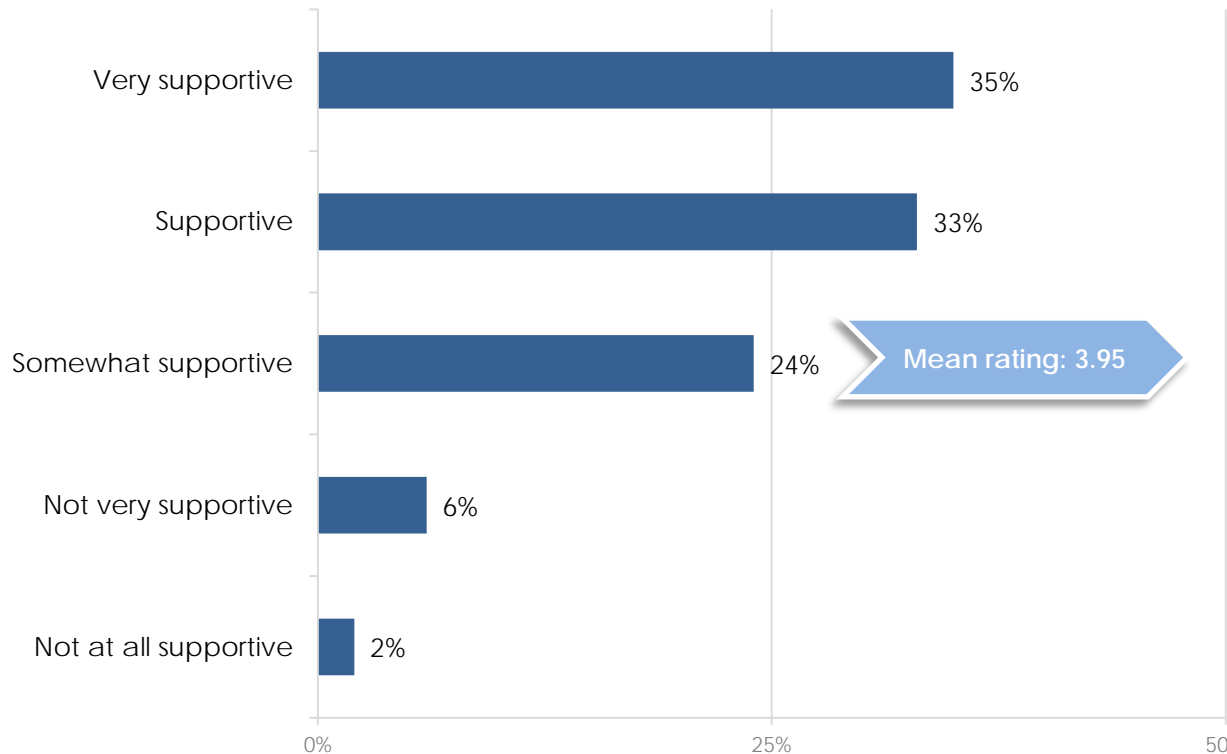
91% of residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of Council's investment position on stormwater drainage



Support for Council's Investment Position on Parks and Open Spaces

Q4c. (Recontact survey) How supportive are you of Council's investment position on parks and open space?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Town	Village	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean ratings	3.95	3.97	3.93	4.41▲	3.98	3.83	3.73▼	4.04	3.85	3.90	4.19



Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive
 ▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

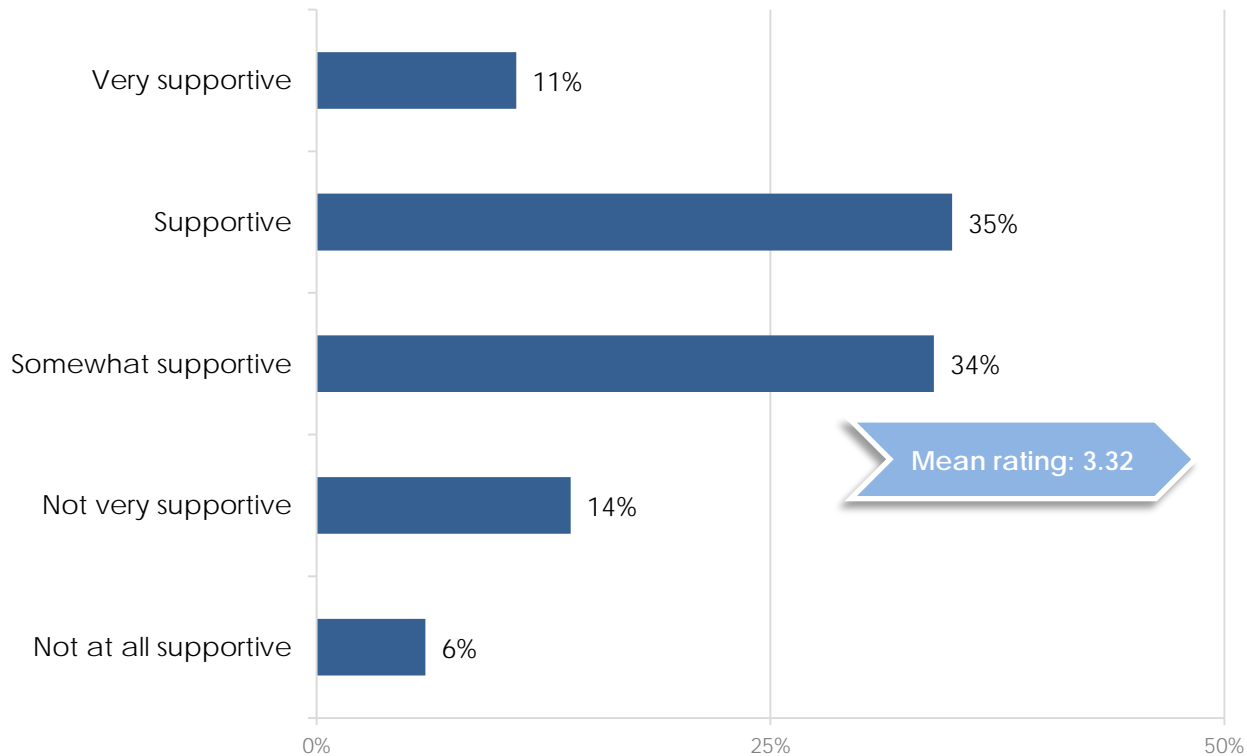
Base: N=401

92% of residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of Council's investment position on parks and open spaces

Support for Council's Investment Position on Buildings

Q4d. (Recontact survey) How supportive are you of Council's investment position on buildings?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Town	Village	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean ratings	3.32	3.18	3.45	3.32	3.40	3.21	3.37	3.40	3.24	3.29	3.47



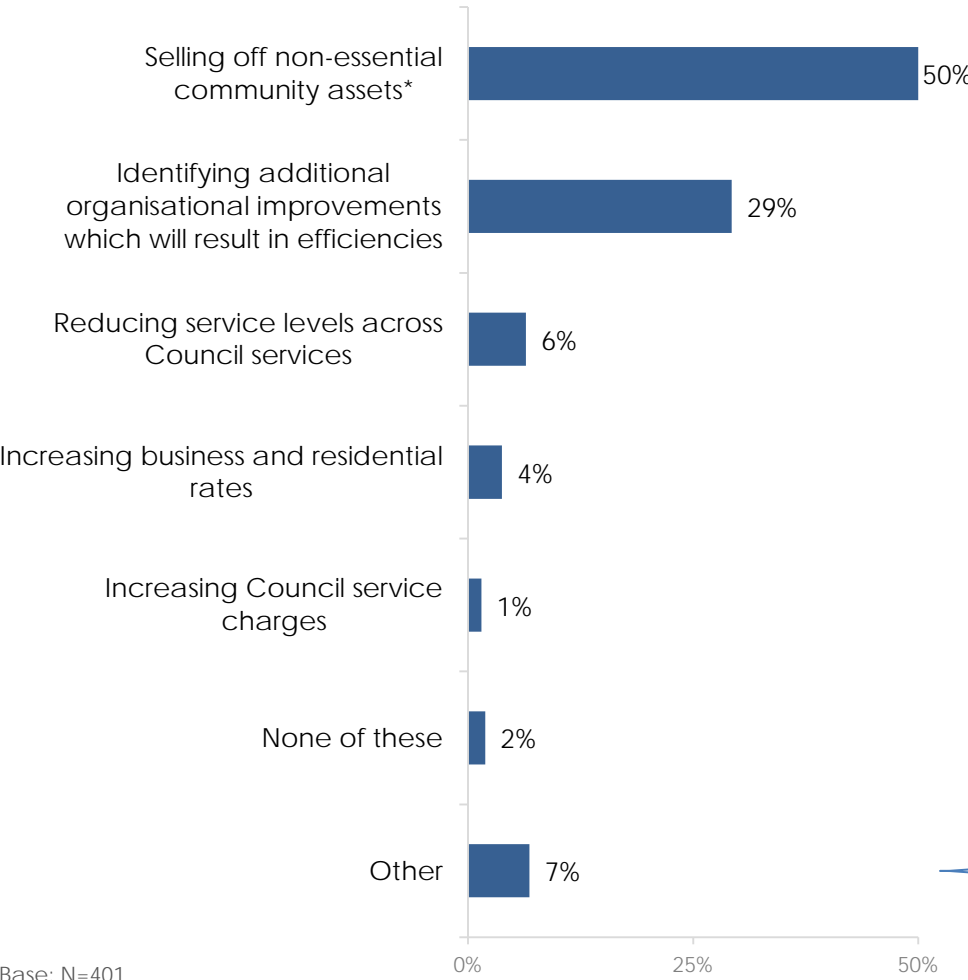
Base: N=401

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive

While buildings received the lowest level of support of the prompted assets, support was still high with 80% of residents at least 'somewhat supportive' of Council's investment position on buildings

Preferred Funding Options

Q5. (Recontact survey) Which of the following revenue options would you support Council exploring in order to address funding requirements?



Other	% of total N=32
Combination of multiple options	4%
Reduce staffing costs	1%
Bring in an administrator to run Council	<1%
Funding from Federal Government	<1%
Amalgamate local councils	<1%
Developers should contribute to infrastructure costs	<1%
Do not think that spending should increase	<1%
Funding from State Government	<1%
Increase parking fees	<1%
Outside investment opportunities	<1%
Revenue from Southern Phone Services	<1%
Tax religious institutions	<1%

Base: N=401

*such as land and buildings that are not required to provide key services or those assets which are duplicated across the Shire



Half of the residents support Council selling non-essential community assets to address funding requirements – at this stage there is little community consideration that the increases in investment need to be funded via rate increases

Community Consultation

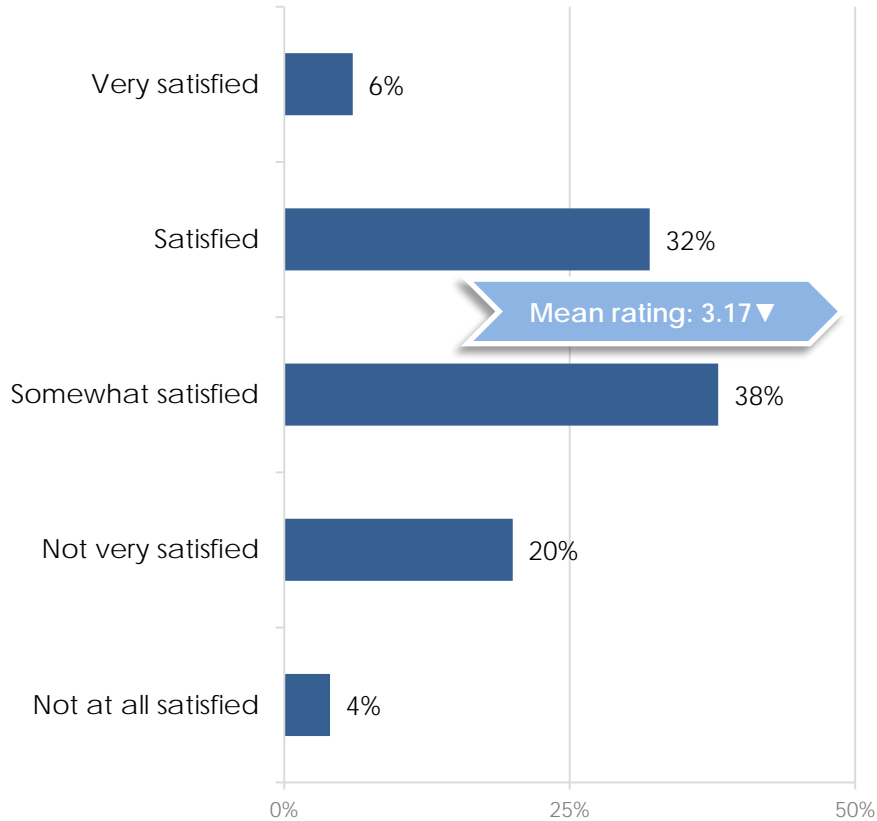


Overall Satisfaction with Council

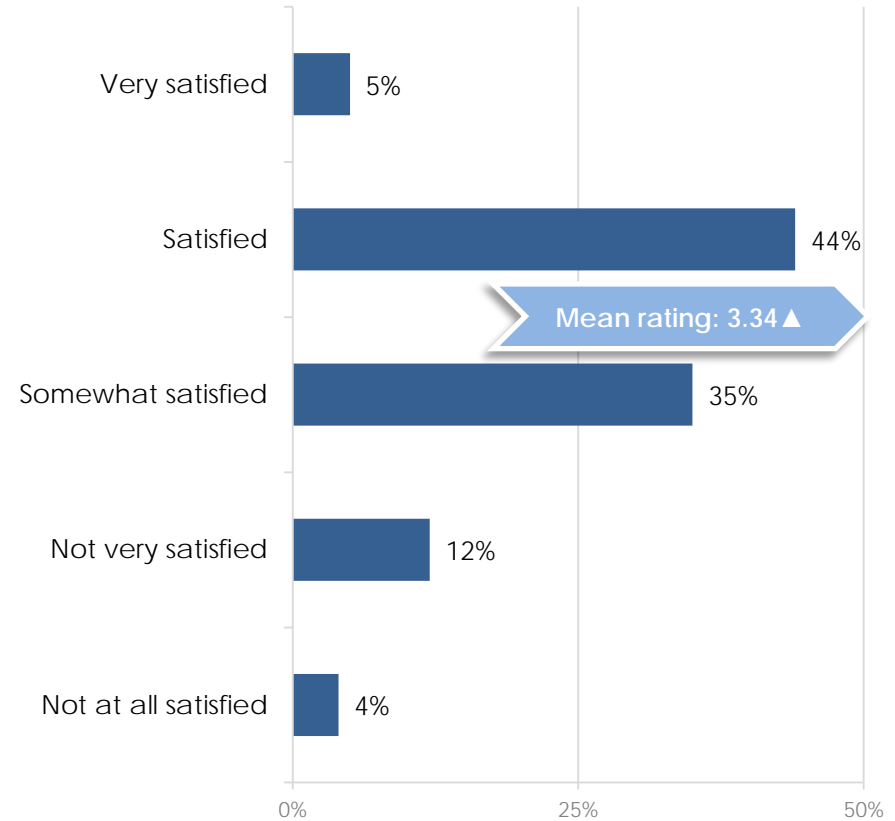
Q2(Recruitment survey) & Q7.

In general, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, and their services, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?

Recruitment Consultation



Recontact Consultation



Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction

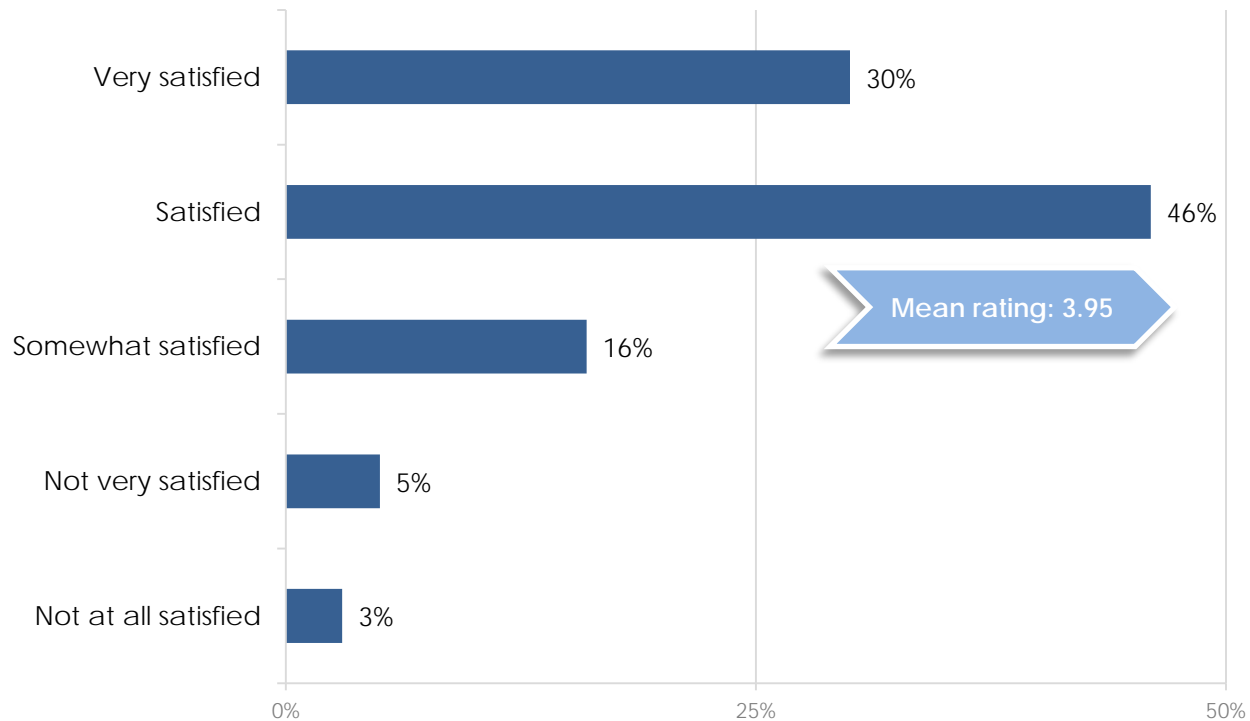
Base: N=401

Residents were significantly more satisfied with the performance of Council after receiving the information packet.

Satisfaction with Consultation

Q8a. (Recontact survey) How satisfied are you with this community consultation undertaken by Council?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Town	Village	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean ratings	3.95	4.00	3.90	4.44▲	3.79	3.86	3.87	3.86	4.04	3.90	4.18



Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

Base: N=401

The majority of residents were at least 'somewhat satisfied' with this community consultation

Satisfaction with Consultation

Q8a. How satisfied are you with this community consultation undertaken by Council?

Q8b. Why do you say that?

Very satisfied/Satisfied (76%)	%
Happy that Council is listening to the community/providing opportunities for residents to give input	56%
Informative process to understand what Council is doing in the area, their responsibilities, ideas for the future, etc.	9%
Information packet was informative, clear, and easy to understand	8%
Comprehensive/in-depth consultation process	5%
Happy with how consultation process was conducted (efficient, professional, timely, well-structured, etc.)	4%
Consultation was relevant to the area and addressed issues in the community	4%
Provided transparency regarding Council spending and plans for the future	3%
Consulted with a range of demographics for opinions	2%

Somewhat satisfied (16%)	%
Happy Council has asked for input from the community	4%
Concerned about the cost of conducting consultation	3%
Information packet was too broad	2%
Unsure if Council will follow through with results of the consultation	2%

Not very satisfied/Not at all satisfied (8%)	%
Information packet was too broad (lacked specific details, dates, deadlines, etc.)	3%
No opportunity to provide reasons for answers given	2%
Consultation was a waste of ratepayers' money	2%
Council should make financial decisions and not rely on residents	2%
Questions were phrased for Council's benefit/to gain a specific result	2%

*Note: Only responses >1% were reported, please see Appendix for remaining data

Base: N=401



Next Steps



Next Steps

It is clear that the community want increased investment and better quality community assets.

The key challenge will be to communicate the necessity for the community to fund the proposed increases and the benefits this increased investment will provide.

Council should look to ensure the community is aware of the increased funding required to maintain the community's asset and communicate the options with some clear options for the future

Based on these outcomes we recommend that Council develops three scenarios that it can communicate to residents.

1. Maintain rates/Decline in asset quality
2. Increase rates/Maintain asset quality
3. Increase rates/ Improve asset quality

Once these scenarios have been communicated Council should seek to engage with the community and gather further community input



Appendix



Sealed Roads - Summary

Priority

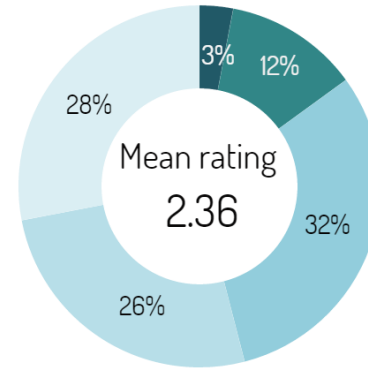


91%

Base: n=602

Satisfaction

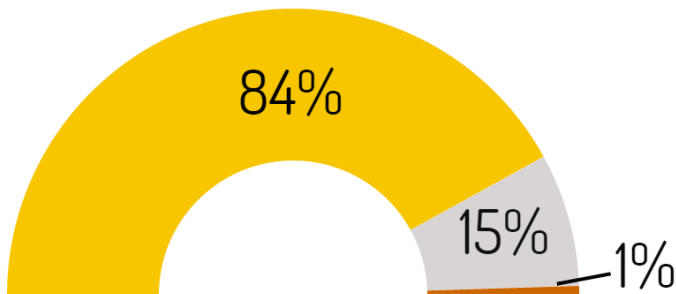
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Not at all satisfied



Base: n=602
Scale: 1 = Not at all satisfied/5 = Very satisfied

Council Investment

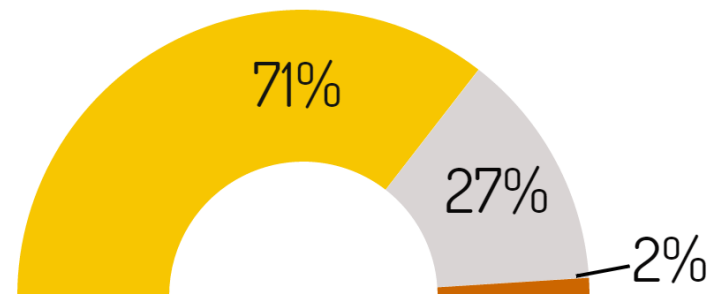
Pre-Information Pack



- More
- Same
- Less

Base: n=602

Post-Information Pack



- More
- Same
- Less

Base: n=401

Unsealed Roads - Summary

Priority

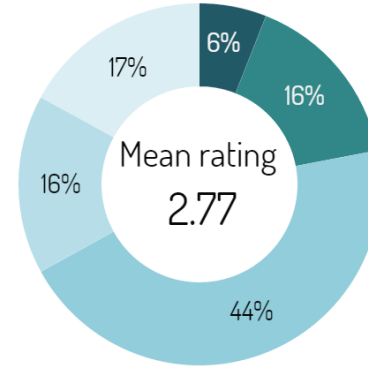


49%

Base: n=602

Satisfaction

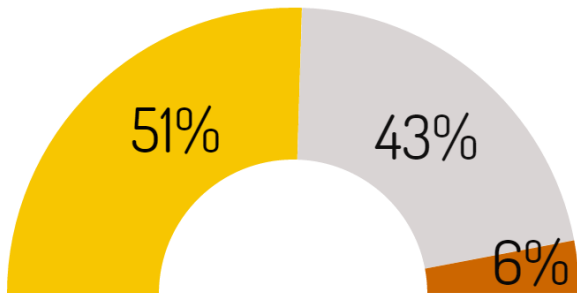
- Very satisfied ●
- Satisfied ●
- Somewhat satisfied ●
- Not very satisfied ●
- Not at all satisfied ●



Base: n=575
Scale: 1 = Not at all satisfied/ 5= Very satisfied

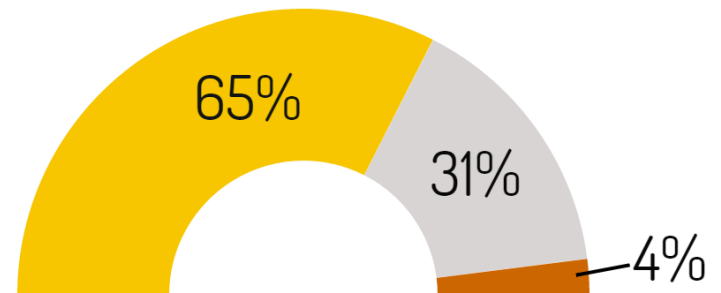
Council Investment

Pre-Information Pack



More Same Less
Base: n=602

Post-Information Pack



More Same Less
Base: n=401

Footpaths - Summary

Priority

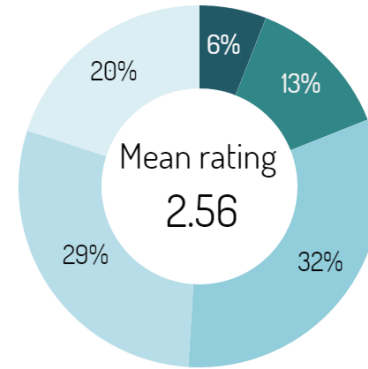


79%

Base: n=602

Satisfaction

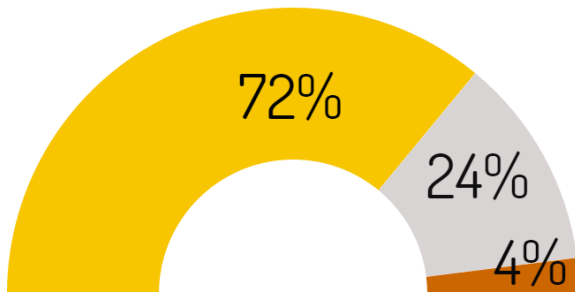
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Not at all satisfied



Base: n=598
Scale: 1 = Not at all satisfied/5 = Very satisfied

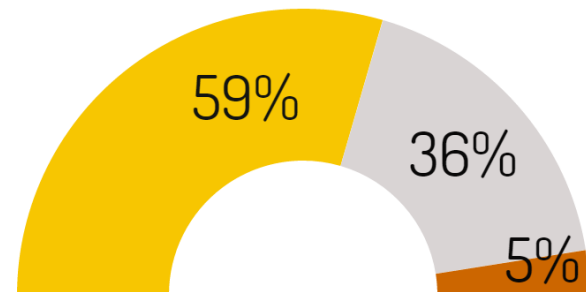
Council Investment

Pre-Information Pack



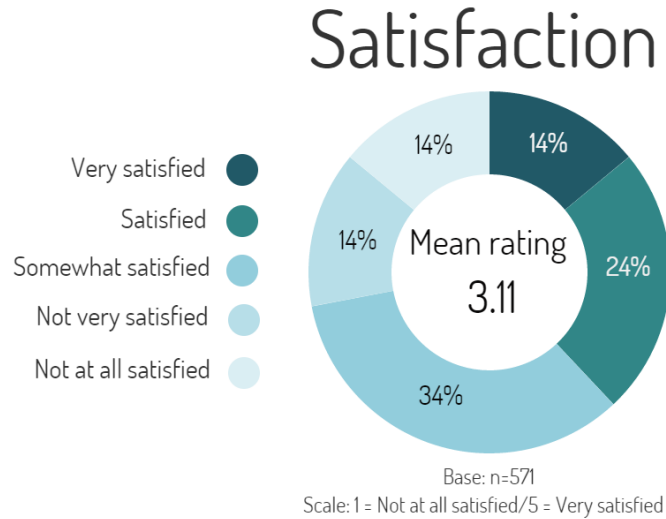
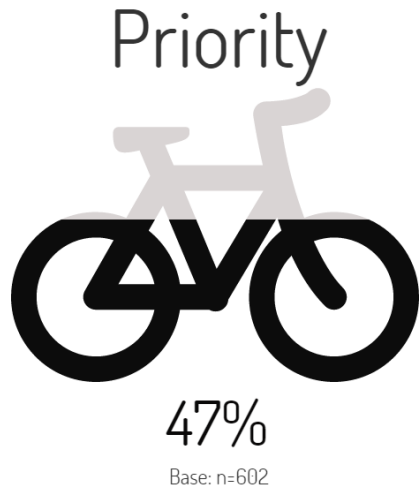
More Same Less
Base: n=602

Post-Information Pack



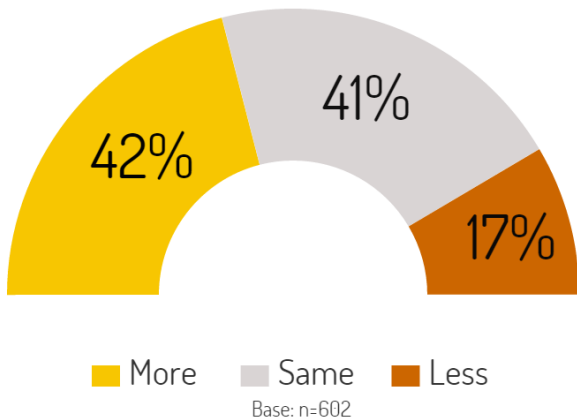
More Same Less
Base: n=401

Cycleways - Summary

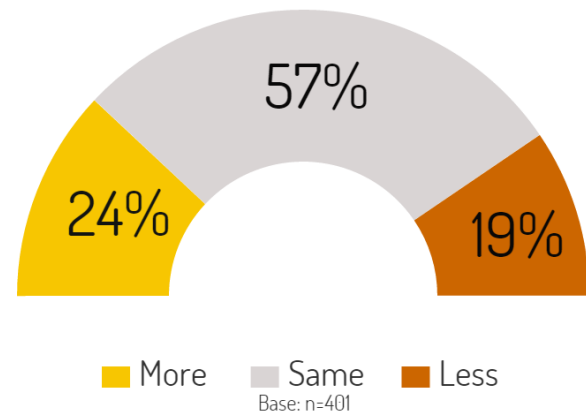


Council Investment

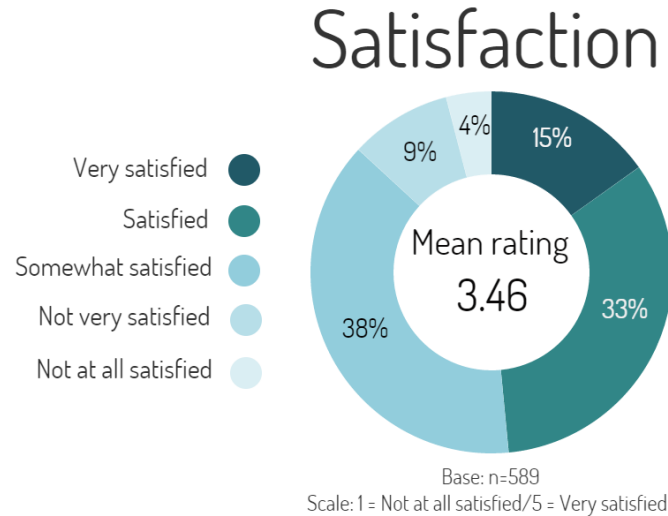
Pre-Information Pack



Post-Information Pack

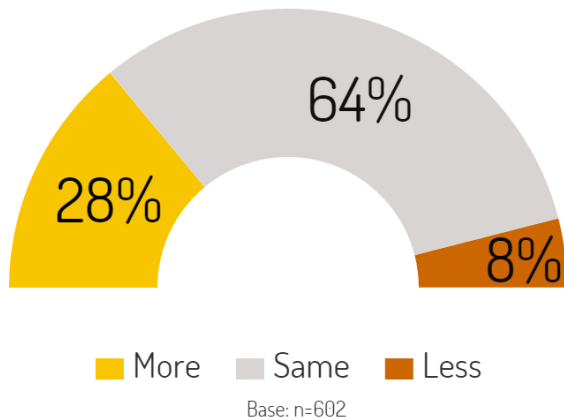


Bridges - Summary

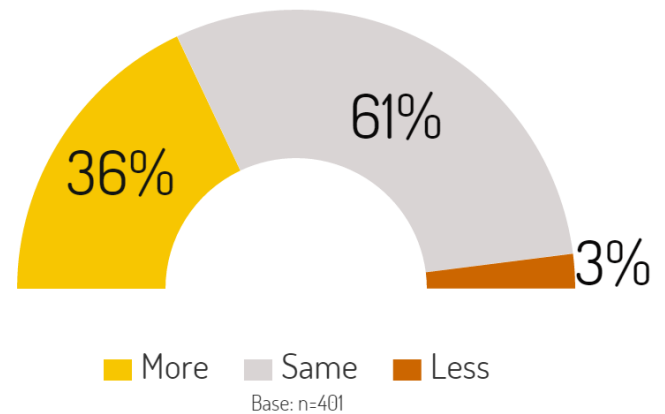


Council Investment

Pre-Information Pack



Post-Information Pack



Road Drainage - Summary

Priority

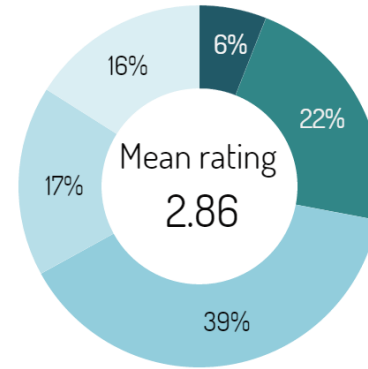


77%

Base: n=602

Satisfaction

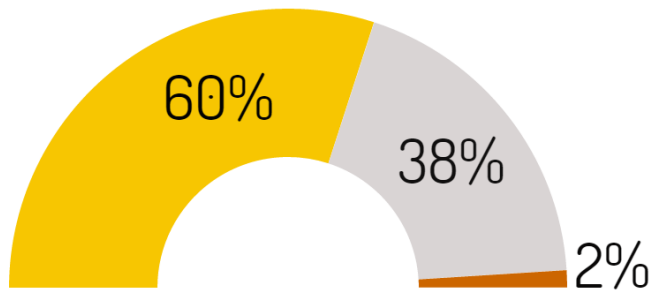
- Very satisfied ●
- Satisfied ●
- Somewhat satisfied ●
- Not very satisfied ●
- Not at all satisfied ●



Base: n=599
Scale: 1 = Not at all satisfied/5 = Very satisfied

Council Investment

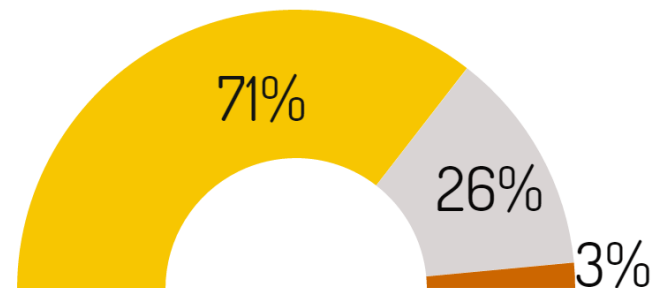
Pre-Information Pack



- More
- Same
- Less

Base: n=602

Post-Information Pack

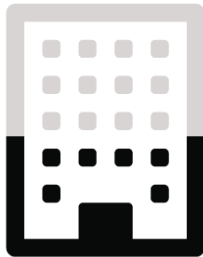


- More
- Same
- Less

Base: n=401

Buildings - Summary

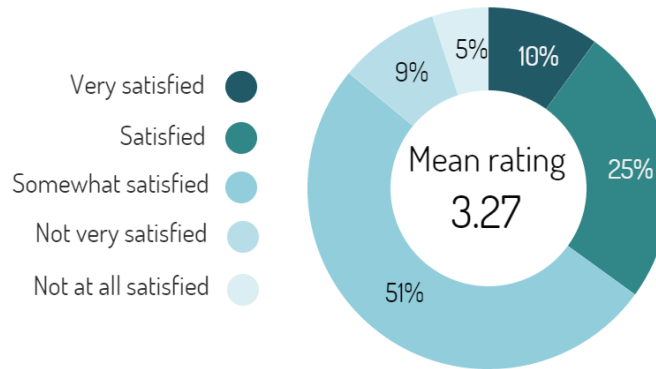
Priority



48%

Base: n=288

Satisfaction

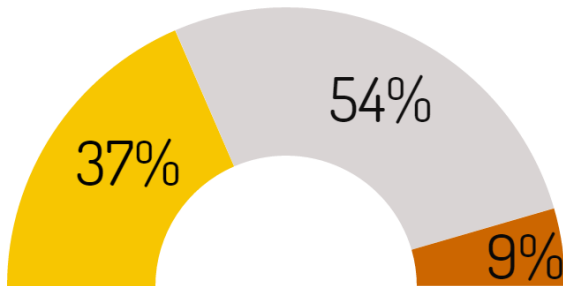


Base: n=589

Scale: 1 = Not at all satisfied / 5 = Very satisfied

Council Investment

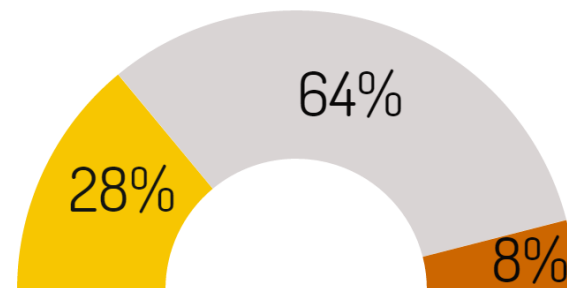
Pre-Information Pack



More Same Less

Base: n=602

Post-Information Pack

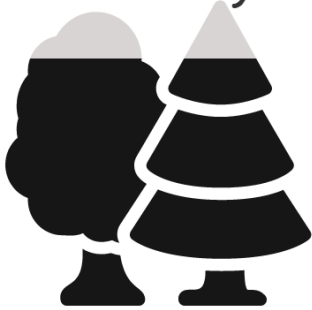


More Same Less

Base: n=401

Parks & Open Spaces - Summary

Priority

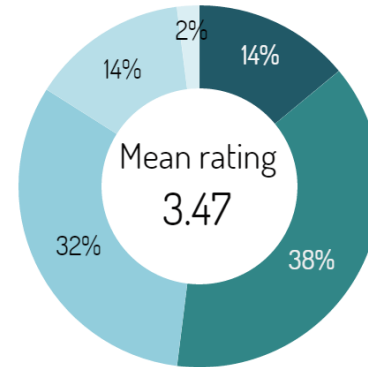


81%

Base: n=602

Satisfaction

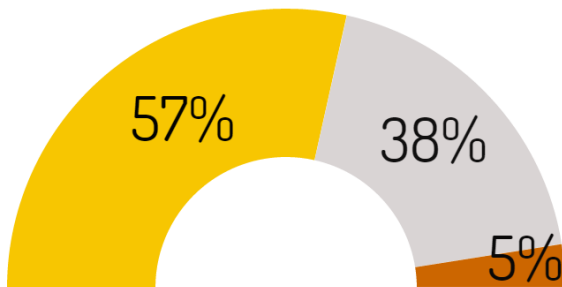
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Not at all satisfied



Base: n=602
Scale: 1 = Not at all satisfied/5 = Very satisfied

Council Investment

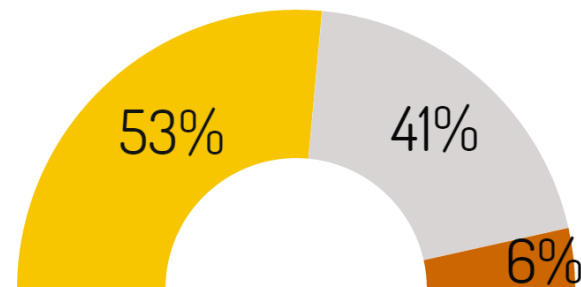
Pre-Information Pack



- More
- Same
- Less

Base: n=602

Post-Information Pack

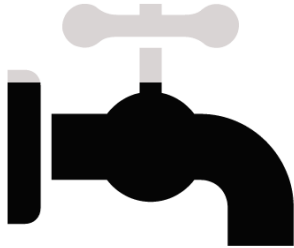


- More
- Same
- Less

Base: n=401

Water Network - Summary

Priority

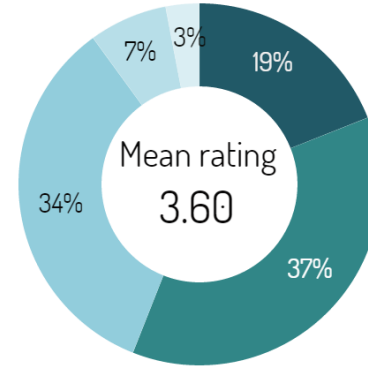


65%

Base: n=602

Satisfaction

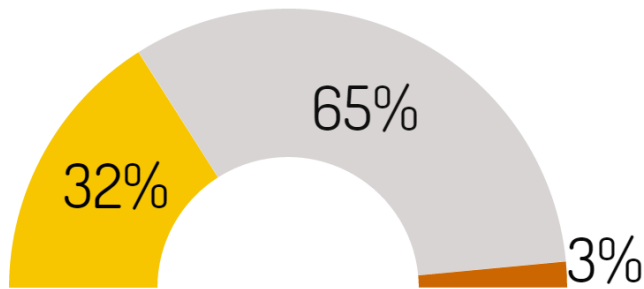
- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Not at all satisfied



Base: n=602
Scale: 1 = Not at all satisfied/ 5= Very satisfied

Council Investment

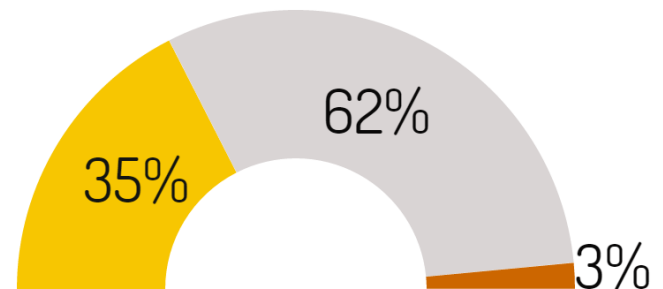
Pre-Information Pack



- More
- Same
- Less

Base: n=602

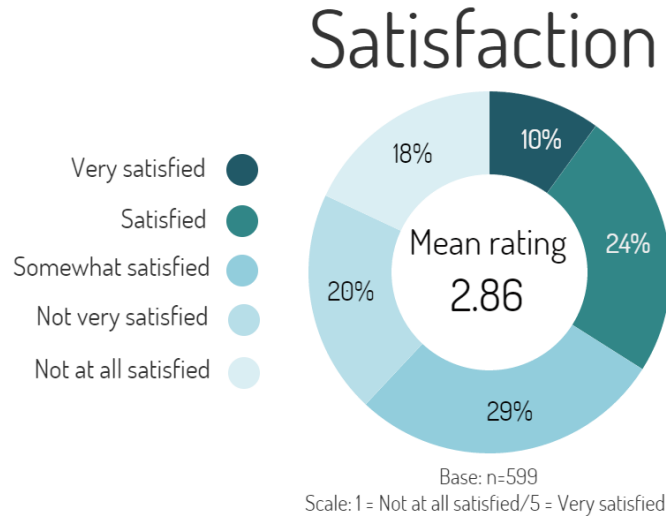
Post-Information Pack



- More
- Same
- Less

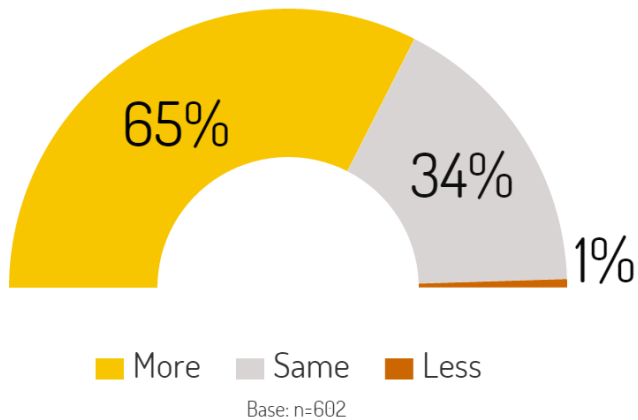
Base: n=401

Stormwater Drainage - Summary

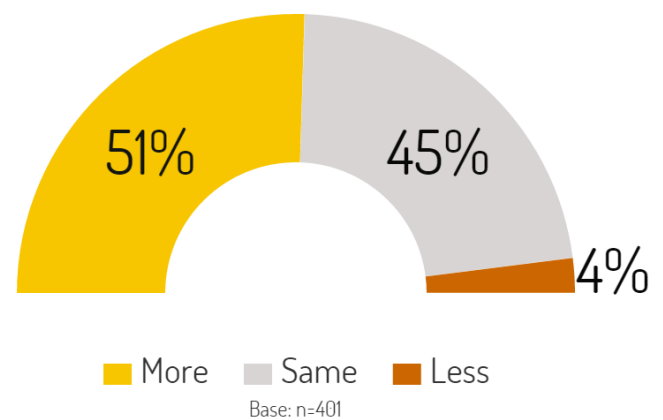


Council Investment

Pre-Information Pack

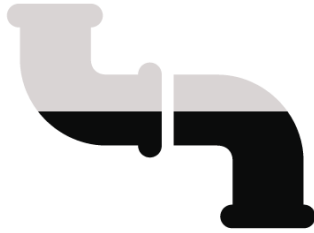


Post-Information Pack



Sewerage Network - Summary

Priority

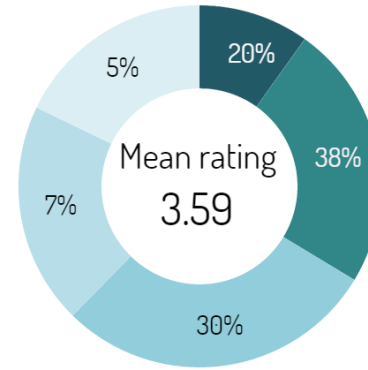


65%

Base: n=602

Satisfaction

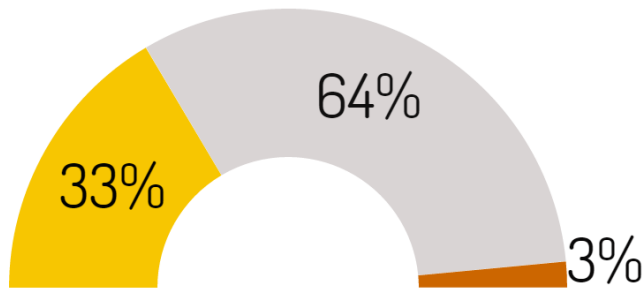
- Very satisfied ●
- Satisfied ●
- Somewhat satisfied ●
- Not very satisfied ●
- Not at all satisfied ●



Base: n=602
Scale: 1 = Not at all satisfied/5 = Very satisfied

Council Investment

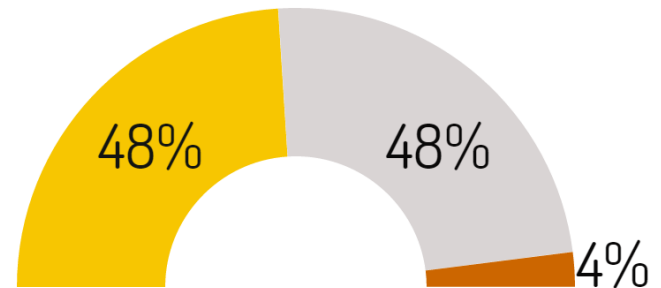
Pre-Information Pack



- More
- Same
- Less

Base: n=602

Post-Information Pack



- More
- Same
- Less

Base: n=401

Satisfaction with Consultation

Q8a. How satisfied are you with this community consultation undertaken by Council?

Q8b. Why do you say that?

Very satisfied/Satisfied	%		%
Easy and quick to participate in the consultation process	1%	Gave insight into Council's decision-making process	<1%
Phone survey was an easy method for participation	1%	Good to have external company conduct the research to avoid bias	<1%
Shows that Council is trying to make positive changes in the area	1%	Initial phone call was confusing but follow-up was clearer	<1%
Would like to have an area to comment and qualify responses	1%	Unsure what will be implemented after research is completed	<1%
Would like to see Council do more community consultation	1%	Was able to speak to a person rather than an automated system	<1%
Consultation will have a positive impact on the community	<1%	Would have liked a chance to re-prioritise assets on follow-up survey	<1%
Council has taken the time to decide what assets need improvement	<1%	Would like more detailed information from Council	<1%
Difficult to answer spending questions without background knowledge or experience	<1%	Would prefer other consultation methods than telephone	<1%

Base: N=401



Satisfaction with Consultation

Q8a. How satisfied are you with this community consultation undertaken by Council?

Somewhat satisfied			
Do not feel consultation was genuine/Council has already made up their mind	1%	Happy with consultation process	<1%
Include more than just infrastructure in consultation	1%	Information doesn't fully explain Council's financial situation	<1%
Should have addressed rural and town assets separately	1%	Issues important to me were not covered in detail	<1%
Unable to provide explanations in the survey	1%	It is a lot of information to process and provide feedback on	<1%
Would like for Council to consult with the community more often	1%	More detailed consultation is needed	<1%
Do not feel consultation was genuine/Council has already made up their mind	1%	Most people do not have informed views about these topics	<1%
Include more than just infrastructure in consultation	1%	No explanation as to where additional funding will come from	<1%
Should have addressed rural and town assets separately	1%	Not enough information provided in the brochure	<1%
Brochure was clear and easy to follow	<1%	Pleased that Council consulted rural areas	<1%
Consultation was too generalised	<1%	Prefer to have Councillors directly consulting with community	<1%
Council does not follow through on what they say they will do	<1%	Questions were too broad	<1%
Council should increase financial efficiencies rather than spending on infrastructure	<1%	Should have provided more selection regarding funding options	<1%
Do not understand how Council classes assets (good/fair/poor)	<1%	The structure of the questions in the survey are leading	<1%
Does not detail Council's financial status	<1%	Uncertain as to Council's motives for consulting with the community	<1%
Elected Council to make decisions, not consult community for answers	<1%	Would like more of the community to be contacted for feedback	<1%
Font on information packet was too small and difficult to read	<1%	Would like to have more information on how funds will be spent/funding generated	<1%
Found it difficult to rate assets across the whole Shire	<1%	Would prefer Council to consult with experts rather than uninformed general public	<1%

Base: N=401



Satisfaction with Consultation

Q8a. How satisfied are you with this community consultation undertaken by Council?

Q8b. Why do you say that?

Not at very satisfied/Not at all satisfied	%		%
Do not have enough previous knowledge of Council costs, expenditure, or average spends to accurately answer	1%	Survey is justification for increasing rates	<1%
Do not feel there was a genuine interest in community opinions	1%	Survey was too long	<1%
A hard copy survey would have been more convenient	<1%	There are contradictions between services needing repair and expenditure increases	<1%
Consultation money should be spent on fixing the roads	<1%	Uncertain about how the information regarding road conditions was ascertained	<1%
Council is not following through on promised services and expenditure	<1%	Unhappy with the efficiency of Council	<1%
Do not feel the entire community has been fully informed of the process	<1%	Was not fully advised of Council's financial status	<1%
Financial figures in the brochure don't seem logical	<1%	Would have preferred one short phone survey	<1%
Not confident that results of the consultation will be put into action by Council	<1%	Would like to have prioritised funding options on Q5 instead of selecting just one	<1%
Questions were repetitive from the original survey	<1%	Would prefer Council to use a less expensive consultation option	<1%
Seems like a superficial way of consulting with the community	<1%		

Base: N=401





micromex research

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Web: www.micromex.com.au

Email: stu@micromex.com.au

Appendix 3

Investing in our Future Options Booklet



INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

TRANSPORT

STORMWATER

BUILDINGS & PARKS

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE SOME IMPORTANT DECISIONS

Wingecarribee Shire Council provides services and facilities to 22 towns and villages and 46 rural localities spread across an area the same size as the Sydney Metropolitan Area.

Like many other NSW councils, our roads, footpaths, buildings, drainage and other community assets are getting old and need to be upgraded. We know that our community places a high value on these assets, in particular our road network. Our assets in their current state are continually deteriorating and need costly maintenance. To improve our public assets we need to spend more money on renewing and upgrading them to ensure they meet the needs of our community.

As things currently stand, Council's revenue is regulated under "rate pegging". The Independent Pricing and

Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) sets a rate peg which limits the amount by which councils can increase their rate revenue from one year to the next. For many years, the rate peg limit has not kept pace with the financial needs of councils in NSW and residents' needs for appropriate services.

We are seeking your feedback on a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a Special Rate Variation (SRV). While we understand that rate rises are never welcome, we believe a Special Rate Variation is necessary to meet the needs of our community.

This information booklet outlines three options being considered, each with different impacts on our assets and service quality over time. We need your input to make some important decisions about Investing in our Future so please take time to read this newsletter, give us your feedback and tell us your preferred option.

WHY DO WE NEED A SPECIAL RATE VARIATION?

Our community has consistently told us that assets like roads, footpaths and drainage are important to them, but we need to improve their condition. In addition to this, in 2014 the NSW State Government initiated its Fit for the Future local government reform program that required all NSW councils to submit a proposal demonstrating plans to achieve long term financial sustainability and meet seven asset and financial benchmarks.

As a part of our Fit for the Future process we reviewed the condition of our assets and detailed long term financial modelling. This information told us while we currently spend around \$24.3 million on the maintenance and renewal of community assets each year, we have a funding gap and need to invest an additional \$8.5 million per year. This additional investment will ensure that the number of assets in poor condition does not continue to grow. On the 26 June 2015, Council submitted its Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal. This Proposal identified a number of strategies including an application to IPART for a Special Rate Variation to fund the asset maintenance and renewal gap.

In September 2015, we undertook some focused research to seek community views on the current condition of our assets and asset funding priorities. The research was based on a random and representative sample of residents. Research participants were asked how supportive they were of proposals to invest more money into various asset types.

81%

of respondents supported increased investment in transport assets (roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridges and road drainage)

73%

of respondents supported increased investment in stormwater drainage

68%

of respondents supported increased investment in parks and open spaces

46%

of respondents supported increased investment in buildings

85%

of research participants agreed it was important or very important for Council to implement plans and strategies that will maintain and enhance our infrastructure and facilities for the Shire.

You can see the full survey results by visiting www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au

The proposed Special Rate Variation is an important step to help maintain and manage our current assets to ensure that we deliver services in line with community expectations and remain financially sustainable into the future.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING TO IMPROVE OUR FINANCIAL SITUATION?

We are continuing to drive organisational efficiencies and have committed to a long term service review program to ensure we are delivering services and facilities that meet our community's needs in the most efficient way possible.

In recent years Council has focused on making significant savings and efficiencies, including initiatives such as:

- entering into joint contracts and purchasing agreements with neighbouring councils e.g. joint waste contract with Wollondilly, Camden and Campbelltown;
- maximising external funding and grant opportunities e.g. Council received \$7.5 million for Bowral Distributor Road and \$4.8 million for covering the Moss Vale Saleyards;
- reducing energy consumption and being smart about how we reinvest these savings e.g. Council Revolving Energy Fund which reinvests energy savings to fund future energy saving projects;
- using technology and systems to improve productivity e.g. on-line DA tracker and section 149 certificates;
- making use of subsidised loans such as the Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme to fund the refurbishment of Mittagong Pool (\$2.5 million) and road resealing works (\$4 million);
- undertaking internal audits of all our key activities and processes;
- focusing on Work Health and Safety to reduce incidences, return staff to work sooner and reduce insurance premiums.

Despite these savings we still do not have sufficient funds to continue to provide the current standard of assets and services.

WHAT YOUR GENERAL RATES PAY FOR

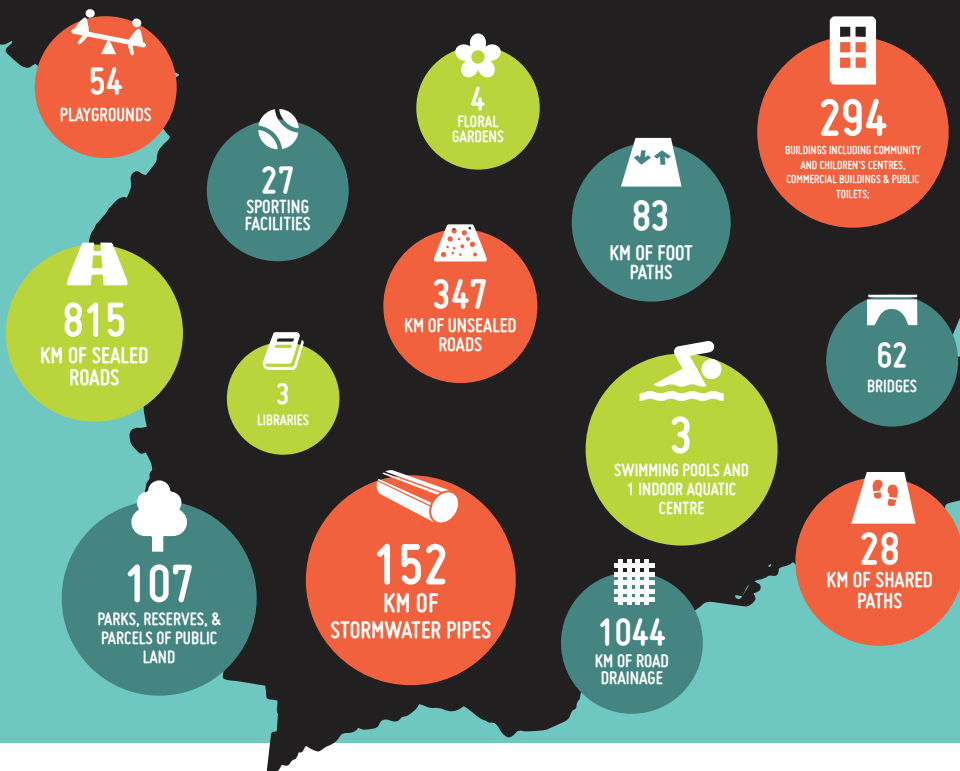
The role of local councils has come a long way since the days of roads, rates and rubbish. Today, we now fund many more services to meet our community's needs and expectations. Some of these include:

- parks, sports grounds, playgrounds, community halls;
- libraries, arts and culture;
- community development services for youth, older people, people living with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People;
- children's services;
- public and environmental health;
- environmental sustainability projects and invasive species management;
- transport services including roads, footpaths, car parks, road safety and traffic facilities;
- business development, events and tourism;
- development services, such as development applications and certification;
- land use and natural environmental planning;
- stormwater and flood management;
- emergency management;
- community and council strategic planning;
- executive, communication and support services.

We also provide water, sewer and waste services but they are funded separately through user charges and developer contributions.

DID YOU KNOW?

The main types of assets paid by your general rates are roads, bridges, parks and recreation, building and stormwater. Council provides:



WHAT HAVE WE BEEN DOING TO IMPROVE OUR ASSETS?

For more than a decade we have been working to improve both our traditional assets such as roads, parks and footpaths as well as our environmental assets. This work has been funded through the Infrastructure Renewal Strategy and an Environment Levy.

Infrastructure Renewal Strategy

The last time we applied for a Special Rate Variation to fund additional asset improvements was in 2008. This increase was over a four year period and was called the Infrastructure Renewal Strategy. Some of the projects completed using these funds include:



RENEWAL OF BUNDANOON AMENITIES.



RENEWAL OF MERRIGANG STREET, BOWRAL.



RENEWAL OF THE BUNDANOON OVAL PLAYGROUND.



RENEWAL OF FOOTPATH, KERB AND GUTTER, SEATS AND BINS AT THE MITTAGONG PLAYHOUSE.

Your Environment Levy

Since 2001 we have had an Environment Levy in place to ensure that our environmental assets are maintained. While this Levy is not due to expire until 2018/19, we want you to consider if this should be continued as a part of this proposed Special Rate Variation.

Key activities and programs funded by your Levy include:

- restoration works on nearly 1,000 hectares of bushland a year including weed control and revegetation;
- restoration of public waterways managed by Council including weed removal, tree plantings, bank stabilisation and water monitoring;
- projects to protect threatened species like our koalas and our endangered habitats like Mt Gibraltar forest;
- supporting the work of over 140 local community volunteers who contribute over 3,400 work hours each year;
- working with farmers and rural landholders to support environmental land management activities;
- environmental education programs including Schools Environment Day;
- sustainability initiatives such as the installation of solar electricity on infrastructure, efficiency programs, and small grants that support community initiatives

With such a large task it is essential to make every dollar count. We do this by using Levy funds to attract significant amounts of grant funding and other contributions. Since 2012, we have secured nearly \$600,000 in extra funding; working in partnership with our community and other land management agencies; and using scientific research and best practice land management expertise. Without the Environment Levy, Council would not be able to offer the programs listed above, nor have any capacity to effectively respond to new and emerging environmental issues. Important environmental gains we have achieved through the Environment Levy would be lost.

More information on your Environment Levy can be found at www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au

THE OPTIONS

There are three options that we would like you to consider; each option will have varying impacts on our assets and service quality.

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">1 DETERIORATE</p>	<p>Our assets would continue to decline and more assets would fall into the poor condition category. The focus would be on managing risk, including the possible closure and removal of unsafe assets. Our ability to look after our environment would diminish.</p> <p>No Special Rate Variation. Rates would increase by the annual rate peg amount of an estimated 2.5% per year. Over the four year period this is a cumulative increase of 10.4%.</p>	<p>FUNDING IMPACT</p> <p>This option would provide no additional funding other than the rate peg increase of an estimated 2.5% which does not reflect the increasing cost of Council operations to serve our community. Broader service reductions maybe required to fund emergency works.</p>	<p>MAINTAIN & RENEW</p> <p>Our assets would deteriorate further. This means we would see a decline in the condition of our assets such as roads, town centres, buildings, public toilets, footpaths, stormwater drainage, parks and open spaces including playgrounds.</p>	<p>NEW ASSETS</p> <p>We would have virtually no capacity for new capital works apart from those funded by developer contributions and grants. This means we would have difficulty funding new assets such as footpaths, shared pathways and drainage.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">2 MAINTAIN</p>	<p>We would stabilise the deterioration of our community assets. We would be able to fund most of the required asset renewal and maintenance and continue to look after our environment.</p> <p>Special Rate Variation of 7.75% each year for three years and 10.65% in the fourth year. This includes the estimated 2.5% rate peg. Over the four year period this is a cumulative increase of 38.4%. At the end of the four year period the Special Rate Variation increases would be built into the rate base.</p>	<p>FUNDING IMPACT</p> <p>This option would generate \$74.7 million over 10 years and would allow an additional spend of: \$45.5 million on roads, road drainage, footpaths and shared pathways; \$9.3 million on stormwater drainage; \$15.8 million on buildings; \$4.1 million on parks and open spaces.</p>	<p>MAINTAIN & RENEW</p> <p>The condition of our assets would stabilise. We would be able to fund the essential maintenance and renewal of our assets. This means the current condition of our roads, footpaths, buildings, stormwater drainage and parks and open spaces, including playgrounds, would gradually improve over time. We would also be able to undertake preventative maintenance to reduce future costs to the community.</p>	<p>NEW ASSETS</p> <p>We would have virtually no capacity for new capital works apart from those funded by developer contributions and grants. This means we would have difficulty funding new assets such as footpaths, shared pathways and drainage.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">3 IMPROVE</p>	<p>We would improve the quality of our community assets by being able to fund the required asset renewal and maintenance. We would continue to look after our environment and be able to undertake some new work to fill essential asset gaps.</p> <p>Special Rate Variation of 9.25% each year for three years and 12.15% in the fourth year. This includes the annual estimated 2.5% rate peg. Over the four year period this is a cumulative increase of 46.2%. At the end of the four year period the Special Rate Variation increases would be built into the rate base.</p>	<p>FUNDING IMPACT</p> <p>This option would generate \$98.4 million over 10 years and would allow an additional spend of: \$51.6 million on roads, road drainage, footpaths and shared pathways; \$26.9 million on stormwater drainage; \$15.8 million on buildings; \$4.1 million parks and open spaces.</p>	<p>MAINTAIN & RENEW</p> <p>The condition of our assets would stabilise. We would be able to fund the essential maintenance and renewal of our assets. This means the current condition of our roads, footpaths, buildings, stormwater drainage and parks and open spaces, including playgrounds, would gradually improve over time. We would also be able to undertake preventative maintenance to reduce future costs to the community.</p>	<p>NEW ASSETS</p> <p>We would be able to fund new essential infrastructure gaps, particularly stormwater assets, footpaths, shared pathways and roads.</p>

Important Information about your Rates in 2016/17

Council rates are calculated based on the value of your land, as determined by the NSW Valuer General. Updated land values are provided to Council every three years. A general revaluation is due to effect land valuations to properties throughout the Shire from 1 July 2016. Any significant fluctuation in your land valuations will also have an impact on the amount of rates you pay.



Council acknowledges that any rate increase may adversely impact some community members. Council has mechanisms in place to assist ratepayers should they incur difficulty in keeping up with their rates payments, including a Financial Hardship Policy. Visit www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/services/rates for more information.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

From 2018/19 our ability to undertake restoration works of bushland, natural habitats and waterways would be severely limited. There would be no programs to protect threatened species like our koalas. There would be less weed control and less sustainability initiatives.

HOW THIS WILL AFFECT YOUR RATES

Annual Rate Increase	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Rate Peg (Assumed increase)	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Environment Levy (Not Continued)	-	-	-	-
Additional Rate Increase	-	-	-	-
Total Annual Increase	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%

AVERAGE RATES (INCL. RATE PEG)

Residential Ratepayers	Current	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Annual Rate	\$1,278.63	\$1,310.59	\$1,343.36	\$1,376.94	\$1,363.99
Annual Increase	-	\$31.96	\$32.77	\$33.58	-\$12.95
Business Ratepayers					
Annual Rate	\$3,564.93	\$3,654.06	\$3,745.41	\$3,839.04	\$3,870.03
Annual Increase	-	\$89.13	\$91.35	\$93.63	\$30.99

Over the four years, the cumulative increase in rates under OPTION 1 is 10.4% (rate peg only). The Environment Levy is discontinued, resulting in a slight decrease to rates in 2019/20 and a reduction in our Shire's revenue of \$1.2 million per annum from 2019/20.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

We would be able to protect our environment through the continuation of our Environment Levy from 2018/19. We would spend \$1.2 million annually on restoration of bushland, natural habitats and waterways. We would have the ability to protect threatened species like our koalas, continue weed control, support Bushcare and Landcare initiatives and continue sustainability initiatives.

Annual Rate Increase	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Rate Peg (Assumed increase)	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Environment Levy (Continuation)	-	-	-	2.90%
Additional Rate Increase	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%
Total Annual Increase	7.75%	7.75%	7.75%	10.65%

AVERAGE RATES (INCL. RATE PEG)

Residential Ratepayers	Current	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Annual Rate	\$1,278.63	\$1,377.72	\$1,484.49	\$1,599.54	\$1,712.81
Annual Increase	-	\$99.09	\$106.77	\$115.05	\$113.27
Business Ratepayers					
Annual Rate	\$3,564.93	\$3,841.22	\$4,138.91	\$4,459.68	\$4,790.28
Annual Increase	-	\$276.29	\$297.69	\$320.77	\$330.60

Over the four years, the cumulative increase in rates under OPTION 2 is 38.4% or 28.0% above the allowed increase (rate peg). It also includes the continuation of the Environment Levy that ratepayers are currently paying. This option raises an additional \$20.9 million over four years for the Shire and revenue is retained permanently.

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

We would be able to protect our environment through the continuation of our Environment Levy from 2018/19. We would spend \$1.2 million annually on restoration of bushland, natural habitats and waterways. We would have the ability to protect threatened species like our koalas, continue weed control, support Bushcare and Landcare initiatives and continue sustainability initiatives.

Annual Rate Increase	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Rate Peg (Assumed increase)	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Environment Levy (Continuation)	-	-	-	2.90%
Additional Rate Increase	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%	6.75%
Total Annual Increase	9.25%	9.25%	9.25%	12.15%

AVERAGE RATES (INCL. RATE PEG)

Residential Ratepayers	Current	2016 /17	2017 /18	2018 /19	2019 /20
Annual Rate	\$1,278.63	\$1,396.90	\$1,526.11	\$1,667.28	\$1,809.41
Annual Increase	-	\$118.27	\$129.21	\$141.17	\$142.13
Business Ratepayers					
Annual Rate	\$3,564.93	\$3,894.69	\$4,254.95	\$4,648.53	\$5,064.38
Annual Increase	-	\$329.76	\$360.26	\$393.58	\$415.85

Over the four years, the cumulative increase in rates under OPTION 3 is 46.2% or 35.8% above the allowed increase (rate peg). It also includes the continuation of the Environment Levy that ratepayers are currently paying. This option raises an additional \$27.0 million over four years for the Shire and revenue is retained permanently.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

We are seeking your feedback on your preferred option for Investing in our Future to ensure that we deliver services in line with community expectations and remain financially sustainable for years to come.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

October 2015 - Council has engaged Micromex Research to conduct a telephone survey of a representative sample of local residents. At the same time, submissions and online surveys will be sought from residents and ratepayers.

November 2015 - Community feedback will be collated.

COUNCIL DECISION

December 2015 - Council will decide whether to apply for a rate increase.



IF COUNCIL DECIDES TO SEEK A RATE INCREASE

December and February 2016 - Council's delivery program and financial information would be amended and placed on public exhibition for community feedback.

February 2016 - After assessing community feedback, an application would then be submitted to IPART.

May 2016 - IPART would notify Council of its decision and if approved, the rate increase would be included in the first rates notice issued in July 2016.



IF COUNCIL DECIDES NOT TO SEEK A RATE INCREASE

Some difficult decisions would need to be made about reducing services, maintenance and facilities.

No application would be made to IPART.

TELL US YOUR PREFERRED OPTION

Hearing from you is very important. Your feedback will help Council decide if it should consider a special rate variation as a way to meet community expectations of services and infrastructure.

We are providing a number of ways for the community to obtain the information needed to make an informed decision including this booklet, community kiosks and fact sheets. For more information call us on (02) 4868 0888 or visit www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au

Once you've decided which option you think is best, please tell us by:

- completing the online survey at www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au
- returning the postage paid postcard on the back of this booklet;
- answering a telephone survey conducted by Micromex Research;
- attending one of our information kiosks.



INFORMATION KIOSKS

To find out more about the proposed rate increase have a chat with us at a community market stall or attend an information session:

10 OCT SATURDAY

8AM TO 1PM
at Bowral Markets, Bowral Public School, Bendooley Street, Bowral

10 & 11 OCT SATURDAY & SUNDAY

10AM TO 4PM
at the Home and Garden Show, Bong Bong Racecourse, Kangaloon Road, Bowral

11 OCT SUNDAY

9AM TO 2PM
at Robertson Markets, Illawarra Highway, Robertson

13 OCT TUESDAY

10 AM TO 12NOON
at Highlands Market Place, Old Hume Highway, Mittagong

14 OCT WEDNESDAY

10AM TO 12NOON
at Corbett Plaza, Bong Bong Street, Bowral

14 OCT WEDNESDAY

6.30 TO 7.30PM
at the Hill Top Community Centre, 30 Cumbertine Street, Hill Top

15 OCT THURSDAY

2PM TO 6PM
at Highlands Market Place, Old Hume Highway, Mittagong

16 OCT FRIDAY

2PM TO 4PM
at Corbett Plaza, Bong Bong Street, Bowral

18 OCT SUNDAY

9AM TO 1PM
at Bundanoon Markets, cnr Railway Avenue and Church Street, Bundanoon

21 OCT WEDNESDAY

2PM TO 4PM - 6PM TO 8PM
Information Kiosks in the Civic Centre, Elizabeth Street, Moss Vale

25 OCT SUNDAY

9AM TO 2PM
at Berrima Schoolyard Markets, Oxley Street, Berrima

12-30 OCT

WEEKDAYS INFORMATION
display and staff enquiries in the Civic Centre, Elizabeth Street, Moss Vale

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Tell us your preferred option by 2 November 2015.

My preferred option is (please tick one box):

1 DETERIORATE 2 MAINTAIN 3 IMPROVE

Comments: _____

Name: _____ Postcode: _____

Address: _____

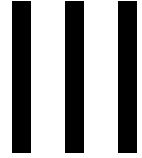
Email: _____

I would like to receive email updates on:

- The outcomes of this consultation
- Council news, events and projects

Delivery Address:
PO Box 141
MOSS VALE NSW 2577

No stamp required
if posted in Australia



Wingecarribee Shire Council
Reply Paid 141
MOSS VALE NSW 2577

Please return the postage paid postcard by cutting it out and popping it in an Australia Post letterbox. No stamp is required. You can also drop it into the Civic Centre or Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale libraries but it must be received by 2 November 2015.

Civic Centre, 68 Elizabeth St.
Moss Vale, NSW 2577
PO Box 141, Moss Vale.

Ph: (02) 4868 0888
mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au
www.wsc.nsw.gov.au



Appendix 4

Telephone Survey Report

November 2015

Appendix 4

Wingecarribee Shire Council

Telephone Survey

Special Rate Variation Research

Prepared by: Micromex Research

Date: November 2015



Background



Methodology & Sample

Data collection

Micromex Research, together with Wingecarribee Shire Council, developed the questionnaire.

Data collection period

Telephone interviewing (CATI) was conducted during the period 22nd – 27th October 2015.

Sample

A total of 403 resident interviews was completed.

321 of the 403 of respondents were selected by means of a computer based random selection process using the electronic White Pages. In addition to this, 82 respondents were number harvested via face-to-face intercept at a number of areas around the Wingecarribee LGA, i.e. Moss Vale Aquatic Centre, Highlands Market, Corbett Plaza, and Moss Vale train station/Leighton Gardens.

A sample size of 403 residents provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.9% at 95% confidence. This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of n=403 residents, 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.9%.

For the survey under discussion the greatest margin of error is 4.9%. This means, for example that the answer 'satisfied' (35%) to the overall satisfaction question could vary from 30% to 40%.

The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2011 ABS census data.

Interviewing

Interviewing was conducted in accordance with the AMSRS Code of Professional Conduct. Where applicable, the issues in each question were systematically rearranged for each respondent.

Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

Percentages

All percentages are calculated to the nearest whole number and therefore the total may not exactly equal 100%.

Word Frequency Tagging

Verbatim responses for open questions were collated and entered into analytical software. This analysis 'counts' the number of times a particular word or phrase appears and, based on the frequency of that word or phrase, a font size is generated. The larger the font, the more frequently the word or sentiment is mentioned.



Sample Profile



Sample Profile

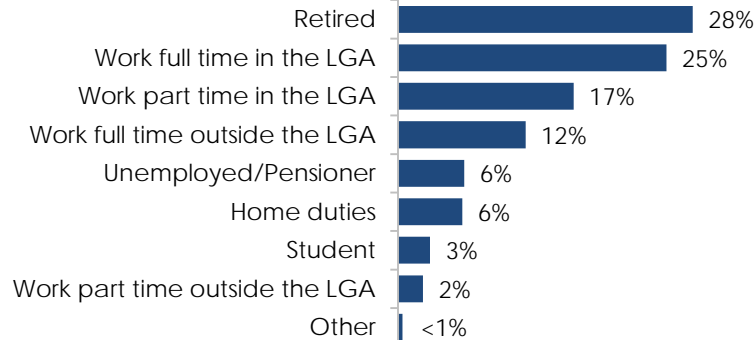
Gender



Age



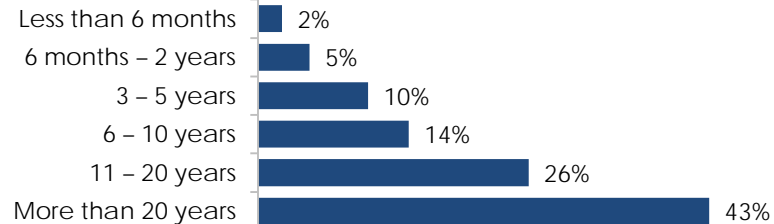
Employment status



Ratepayer status



Time lived in area



Area lived in



0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2011 ABS community profile of Wingecarribee Shire Council

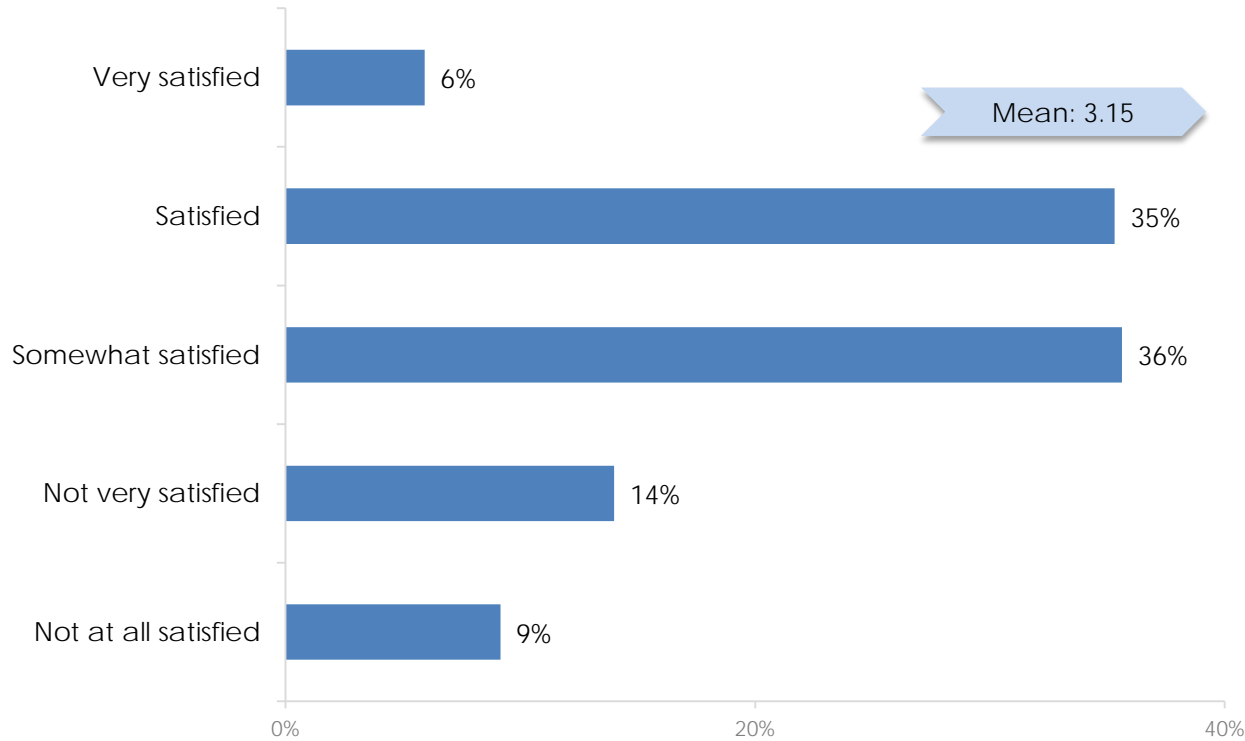
Findings



Overall Satisfaction with Council

Q2. Overall, for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?

	Overall	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Town	Village
Mean ratings	3.15	3.50▲	2.97	3.09	3.14	3.15	3.15	3.09	3.42▲	3.26▲	2.99



	Overall Satisfaction Means
SRV – Overall 2015	3.15
Community Research – 2015	3.22

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group/than the SRV overall)

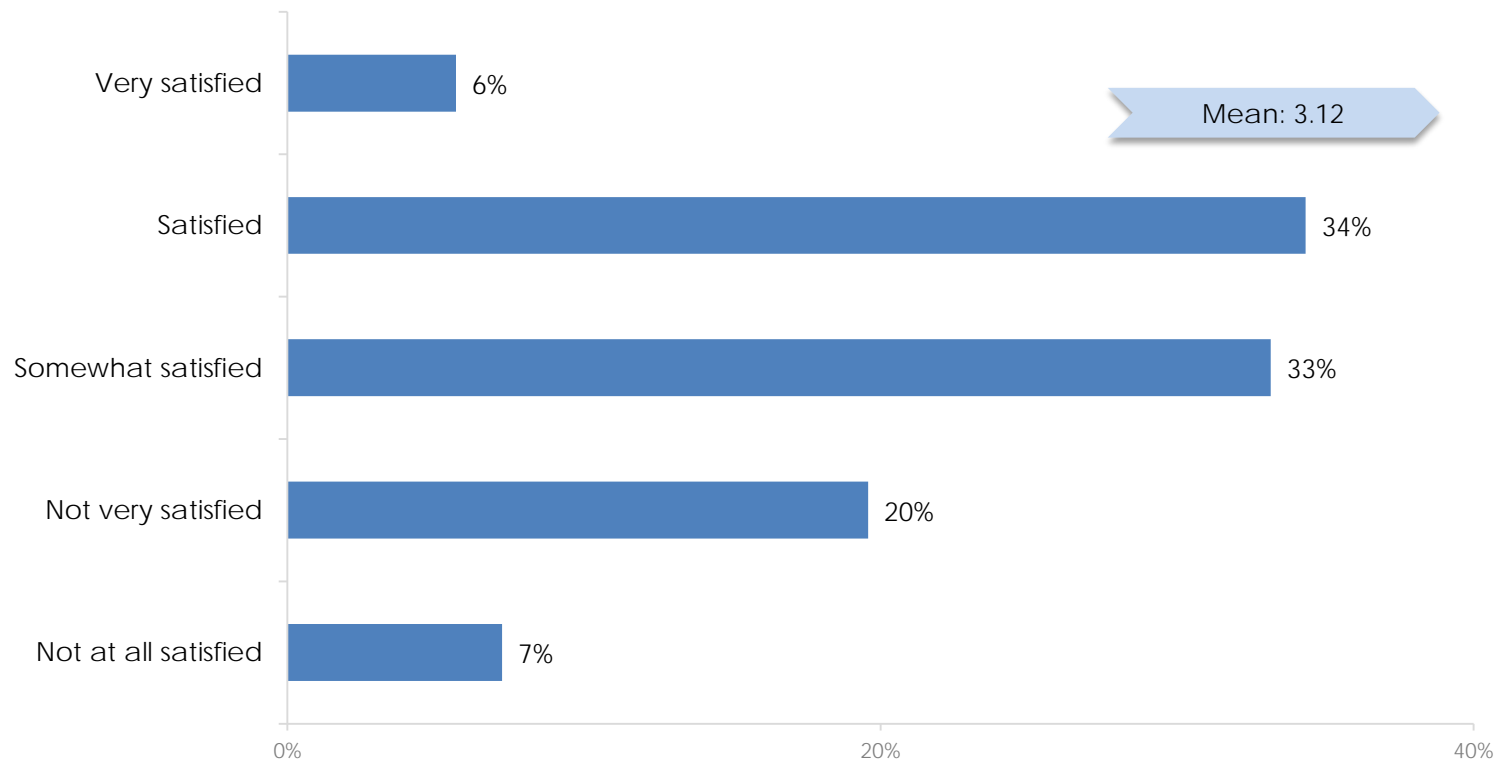
Base: N=403

Overall, 77% of residents were at least 'somewhat satisfied' with the performance of Council. Residents aged 18-34, non-ratepayers, and those living in a 'town' were significantly more satisfied

Quality of Infrastructure and Facilities

Q3. How satisfied are you with the quality of infrastructure and facilities provided by Council in the local area?

	Overall	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Town	Village
Mean ratings	3.12	3.57▲	2.92	3.01	3.11	3.07	3.16	3.07	3.34	3.21	2.98



Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

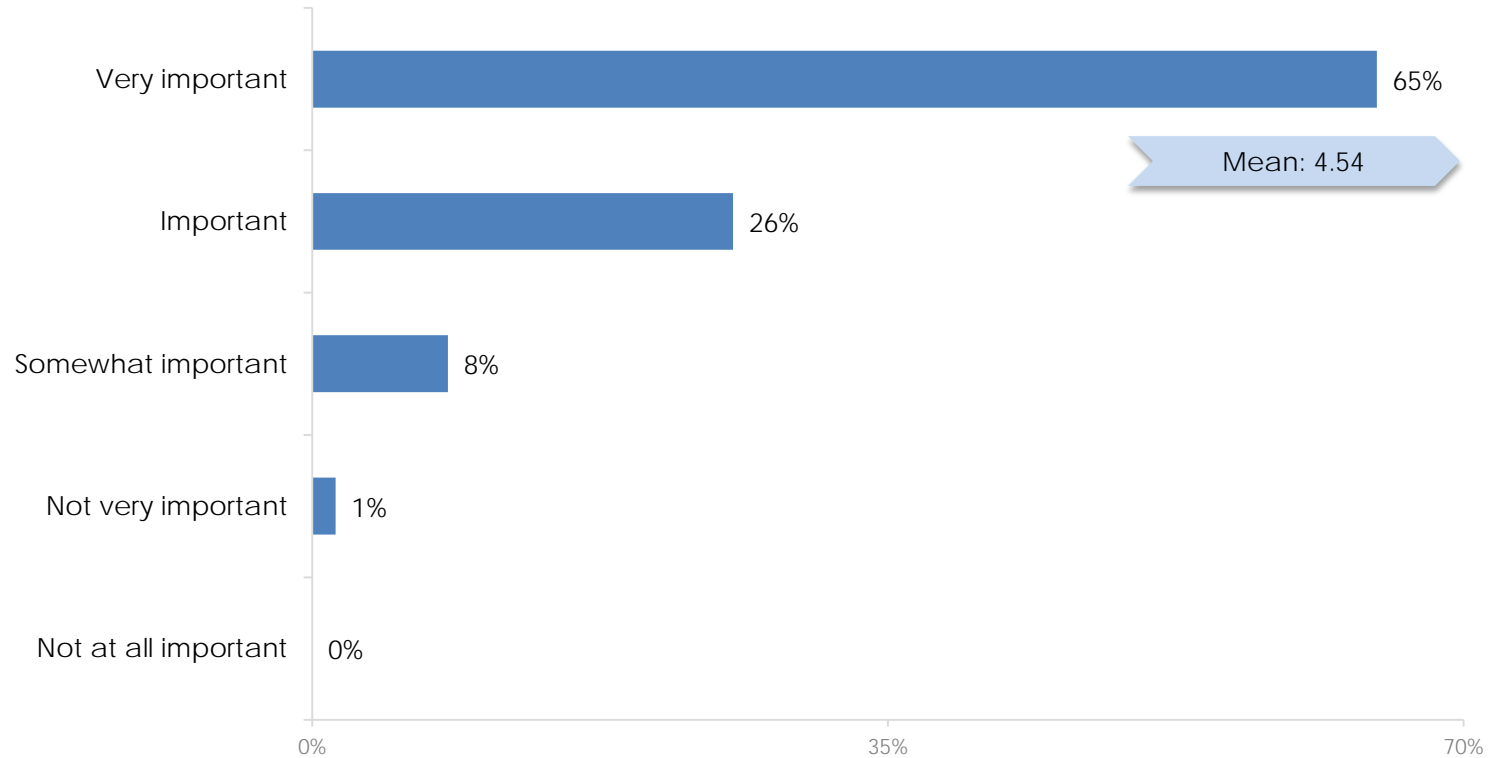
Base: N=403

73% of residents rated the quality of infrastructure and facilities provided by Council in the local area at least 'somewhat satisfactory'. Residents aged 18-34 were significantly more satisfied with Council's provision of infrastructure and facilities

Better Provision of Infrastructure and Facilities

Q4. How important is it for Council to provide better infrastructure and facilities?

	Overall	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Town	Village
Mean ratings	4.54	4.46	4.57	4.60	4.50	4.54	4.53	4.52	4.63	4.55	4.51



Base: N=403

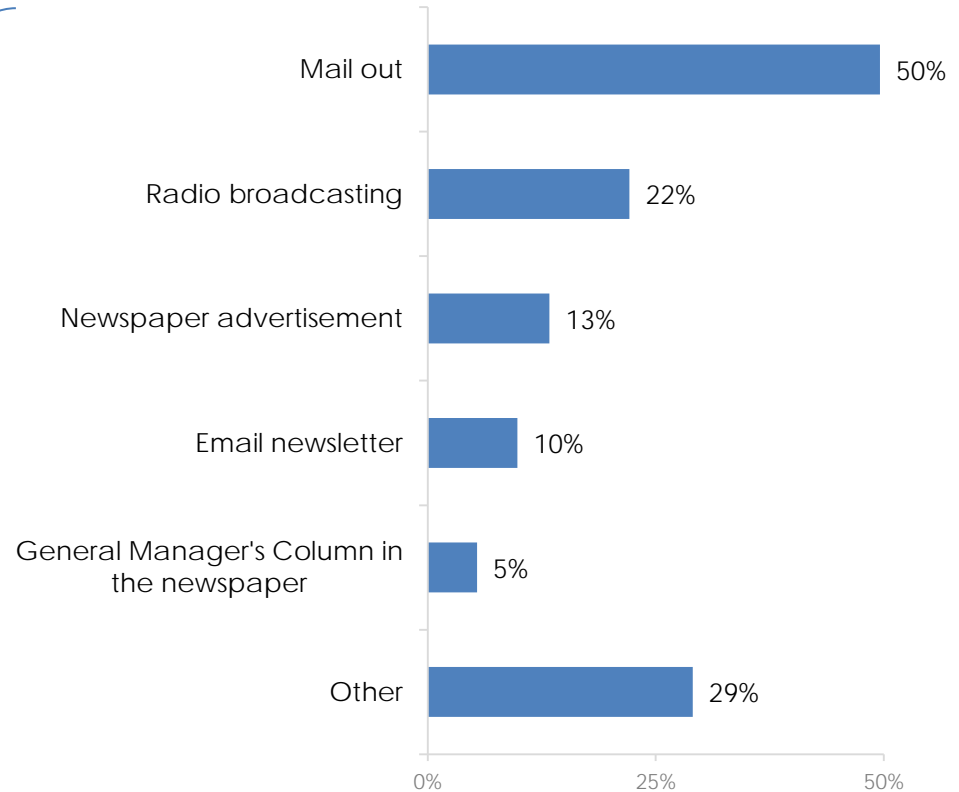
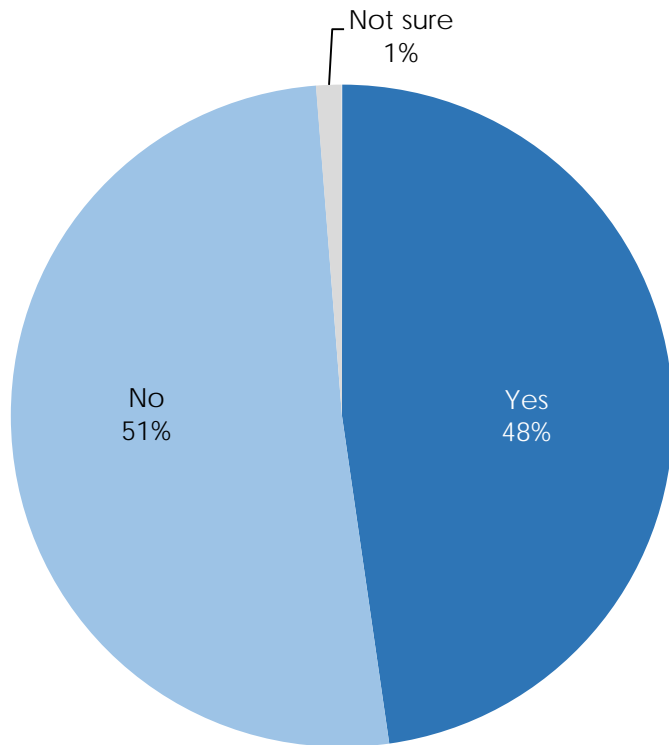
Scale: 1 = not at all important, 5 = very important

Residents predominantly believed it was important for Council to provide better infrastructure and facilities, with the majority giving a rating of 'very important' (65%) and only 1% indicating it was 'not very important'

Awareness of Special Rate Variation

Q7a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?

Q7b. How were you informed of the Special Rate Variation?



Base: N = 192

Base: N=403

Note: 1. For data cross analysed by demographics, please see Appendix
2. For the list of 'other' responses, please see Appendix

Residents were almost equally aware (48%) and unaware (51%) of Council exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation. Residents aged 65 and over (66%), and ratepayers (52%), were significantly more likely to be aware, whilst residents aged 18-34 (27%) were significantly less likely to be aware.

Of those who were aware, 50% indicated they were informed of the SRV via a 'mail out'

Concept Statement

Residents were read the following concept statement prior to being asked to rate their support:

The Wingecarribee community has consistently told Council that assets such as roads, footpaths, and drainage are important to them, but that Council needs to improve their condition. In addition to this, the State Government introduced its Fit for the Future Reform in 2014, which required all NSW councils to assess their current position and submit a proposal demonstrating how they will become Fit for the Future.

Council currently spends approximately \$24.3 million on the maintenance and renewal of local assets and infrastructure each year, however, Council should be investing an additional \$8.5 million per year.

In preparing its submission on how to achieve long term financial sustainability, Council identified that despite its best efforts, the funding available is not enough to keep community assets in an acceptable condition.

There is no easy solution to addressing this funding gap. Put simply, if Council does not address this gap now, Wingecarribee community assets will deteriorate and into the future become unusable. The proposed Special Rate Variation is therefore necessary to maintain and manage current assets to ensure that Council delivers services in line with community expectations and ensures that it remains financially sustainable into the future.

There are three options which I would like you to consider. Each option will have varying impacts on local assets and service quality. Let's look at the options in more detail:

Option 1: RATE PEG ONLY

No Special Rate Variation, and the discontinuation of the existing Environmental Levy. Rates would increase by the annual rate peg amount of 2.5% per year. Over the four year period, this is a cumulative increase of 10.4%. Residential ratepayers who are paying around \$1,280 per year would pay, on average, around \$21 more each year. After 4 years, accounting for the discontinuation of the Environmental Levy, this would amount to an annual charge of \$1,364 by 2019/2020.

Under this option the impact would be further deterioration of assets, including the worsening of:

- Roads
- Town centres
- Buildings
- Public toilets
- Footpaths
- Stormwater drainage; and
- Parks and open spaces, including playgrounds

And reduction in Council's capacity to protect the environment, including:

- No restoration of bushland, habitat and waterways
- No program to protect threatened species like our koalas
- Less weed control; and
- Fewer sustainability initiatives

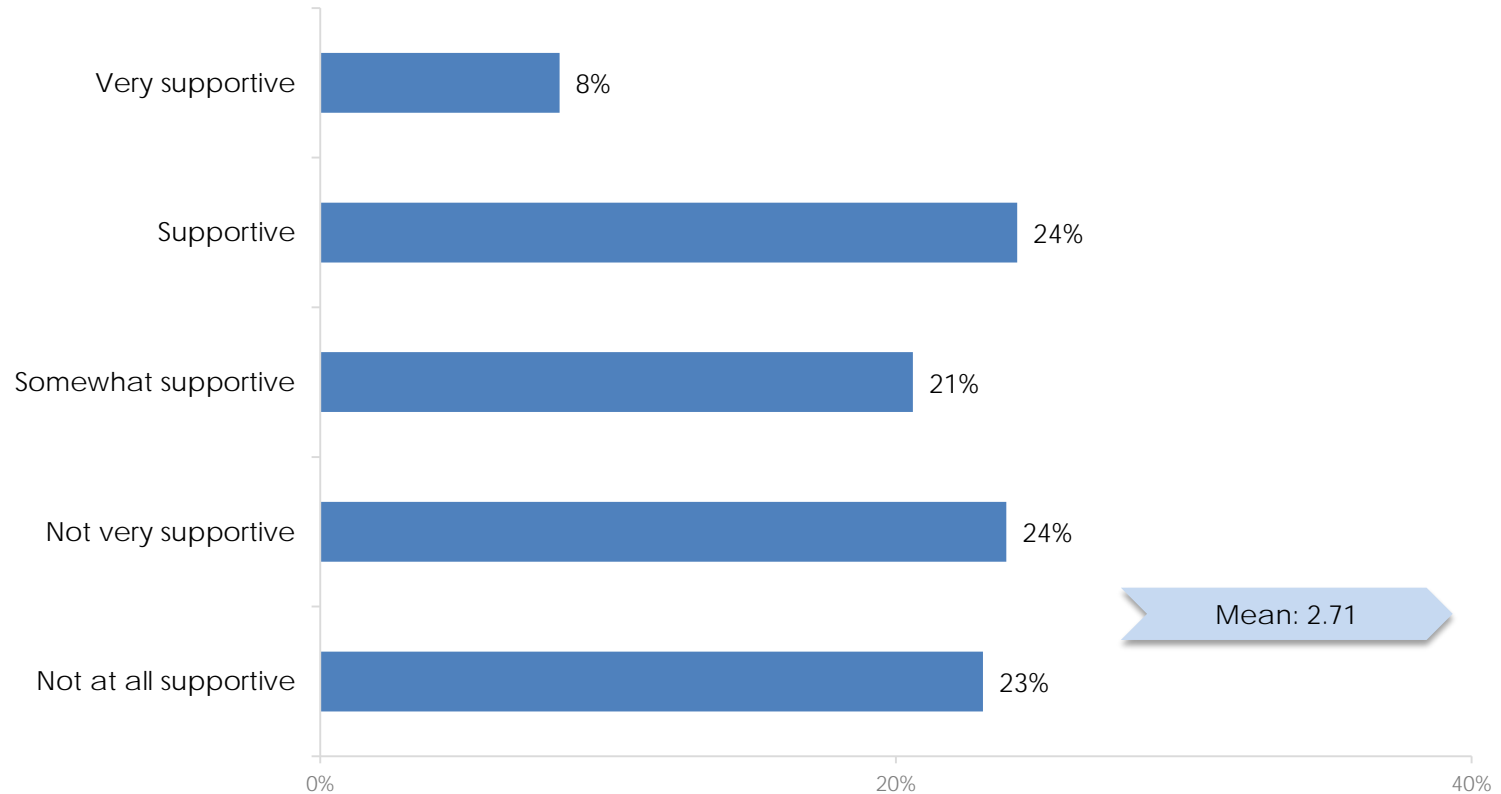
Council would also have virtually no capacity for new capital works, meaning it would have difficulty funding new assets such as footpaths, shared pathways, playgrounds, and community facilities.



Support for Option 1 – Rate Peg Only

Q5a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 1?

	Overall	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Town	Village
Mean ratings	2.71	2.63	2.50	2.78	2.88	2.77	2.66	2.69	2.81	2.70	2.72



Base: N=403

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive

53% of residents indicated they were at least 'somewhat supportive' of 'Option 1 – Rate Peg Only'. Support for this option was steady across the demographics

Concept Statement

Residents were read the following concept statement prior to being asked to rate their support:

Option 2: Maintain

A Special Rate Variation of 7.75% for three years and 10.65% in the fourth year, including the annual 2.5% rate peg. Over the four year period this is a cumulative increase of 38.4%. At the end of the four year period the Special Rate Variation increase would be built into the rate base. Residential ratepayers who are paying around \$1,280 per year would pay, on average, around \$109 more each year. After 4 years, this would amount to an annual charge of \$1,713 by 2019/2020.

This option would generate \$74.7 million over 10 years, and Council would spend:

- \$45.5 million on roads, road drainage, footpaths and shared pathways
- \$9.3 million on stormwater drainage
- \$15.8 million on buildings; and
- \$4.1 million on parks and open spaces

In addition Council would spend \$1.2 million per annum on protecting our environment, including:

- Restoration of bushland and waterways
- The ability to protect threatened species like our koalas
- Continuing weed control
- Supporting Bushcare and Landcare initiatives; and
- Continuing sustainability initiatives

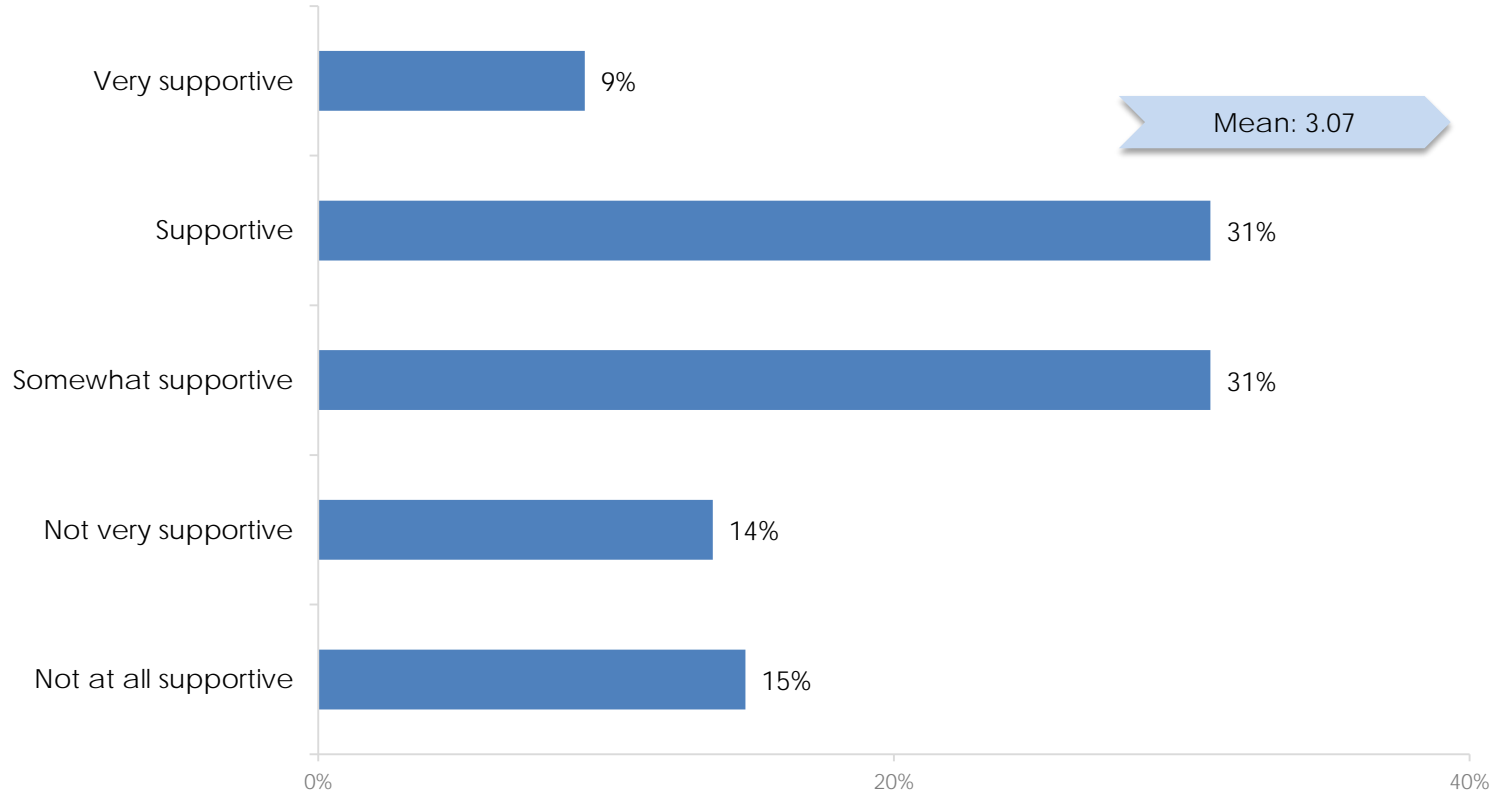
Council would still, however, have virtually no capacity for new capital works, and would therefore have difficulty funding new assets.



Support for Option 2 – Maintain

Q5b. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 2?

	Overall	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Town	Village
Mean ratings	3.07	3.22	3.02	3.11	2.96	3.12	3.02	3.00	3.36	3.09	3.03



Base: N=403

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive



Almost three-quarters of residents were 'somewhat supportive' to 'very supportive' of 'Option 2 – Maintain'. Support for this option across demographics was parallel to the overall mean score

Concept Statement

Residents were read the following concept statement prior to being asked to rate their support:

Option 3: Improve

A Special Rate Variation of 9.25% for three years and 12.15% in the fourth year, including the annual 2.5% rate peg. Over the four year period this is a cumulative increase of 46.2%. At the end of the four year period the Special Rate Variation increase would be built into the rate base. Residential ratepayers who are paying around \$1,280 per year would pay, on average, around \$133 more each year over this 4 year period. After 4 years, this would amount to an annual charge of \$1,809 by 2019/2020.

This option would generate \$98.4 million over 10 years, and Council would spend:

- \$51.6 million on roads, road drainage, footpaths and shared pathways
- \$26.9 million on stormwater drainage
- \$15.8 million on buildings; and
- \$4.1 million on parks and open spaces

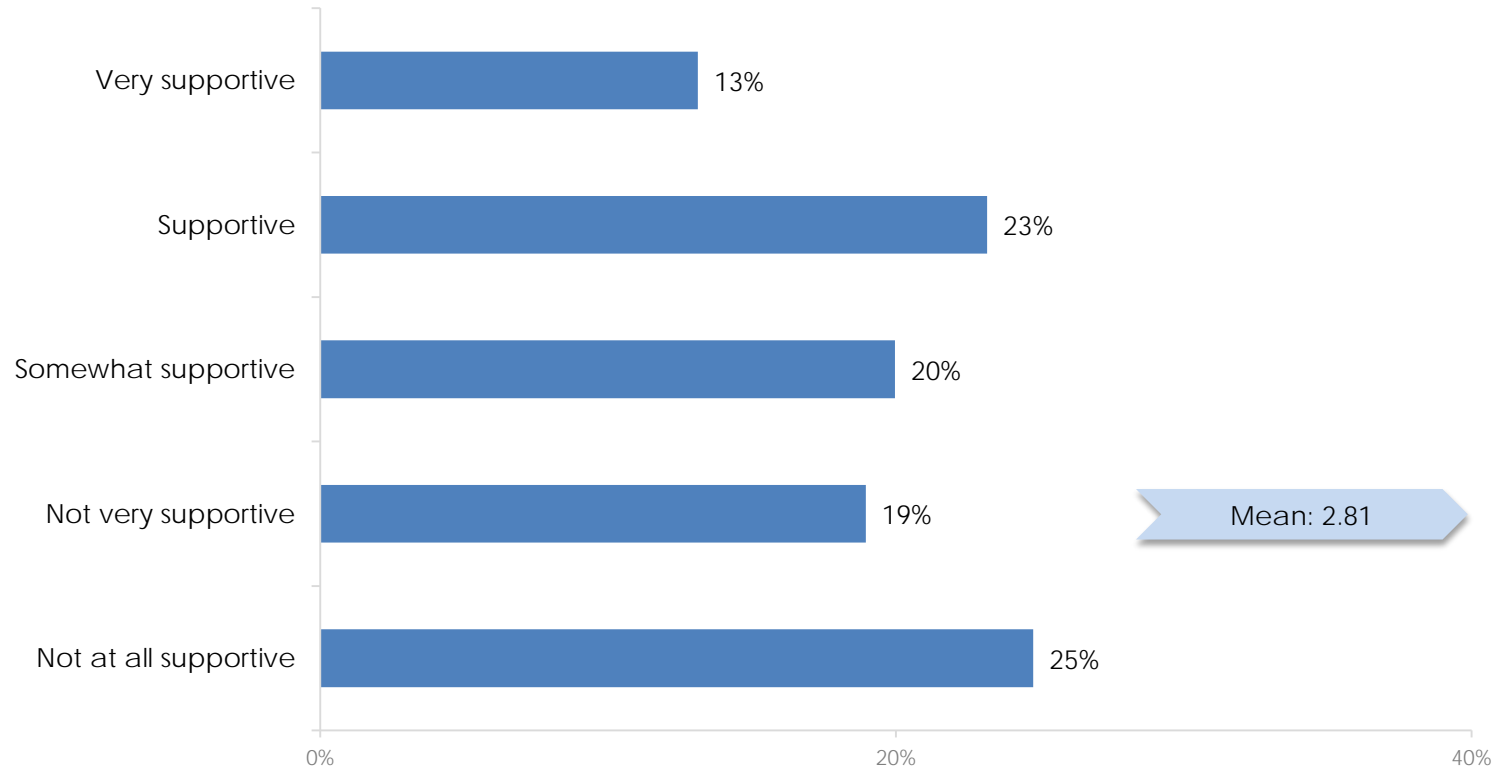
Council would be able to deliver these improvements sooner and bring forward much-needed maintenance, and fund some gaps for new essential assets, particularly stormwater assets, shared pathways and roads. In addition, Council would also spend \$1.2 million per annum on protecting our environment, as in Option 2.



Support for Option 3 – Improve

Q5c. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 3?

	Overall	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Town	Village
Mean ratings	2.81	3.40▲	2.87	2.70	2.48▼	2.97	2.67	2.67	3.49▲	2.90	2.68



Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)

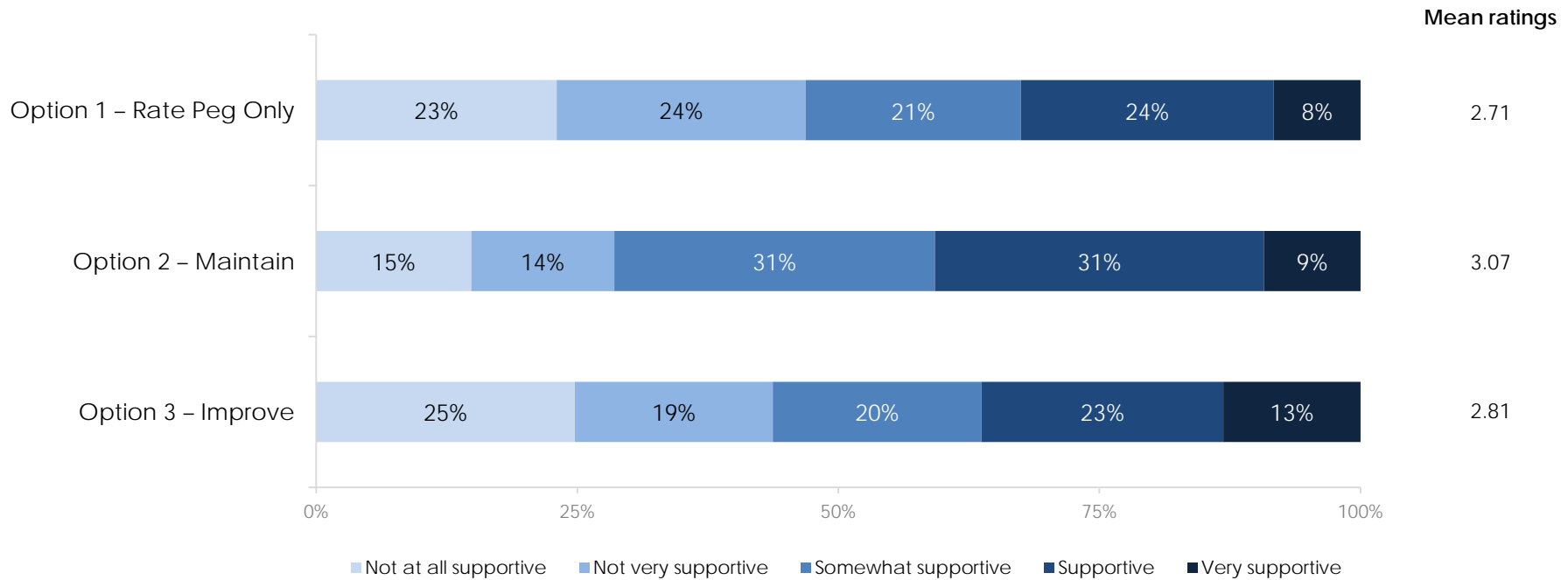
Base: N=403

Over half of the residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of Council proceeding with 'Option 3 – Improve'. Residents aged 18-34, and non-ratepayers, were significantly more supportive of this option, whereas those aged 65 and over were significantly less supportive

Summary of Support

Q5a, Q5b, Q5c. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 1/Option 2/Option 3?

	Overall	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Town	Village
Option 1	2.71	2.63	2.50	2.78	2.88	2.77	2.66	2.69	2.81	2.70	2.72
Option 2	3.07	3.22	3.02	3.11	2.96	3.12	3.02	3.00	3.36	3.09	3.03
Option 3	2.81	3.40▲	2.87	2.70	2.48▼	2.97	2.67	2.67	3.49▲	2.90	2.68



Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)

Base: N=403

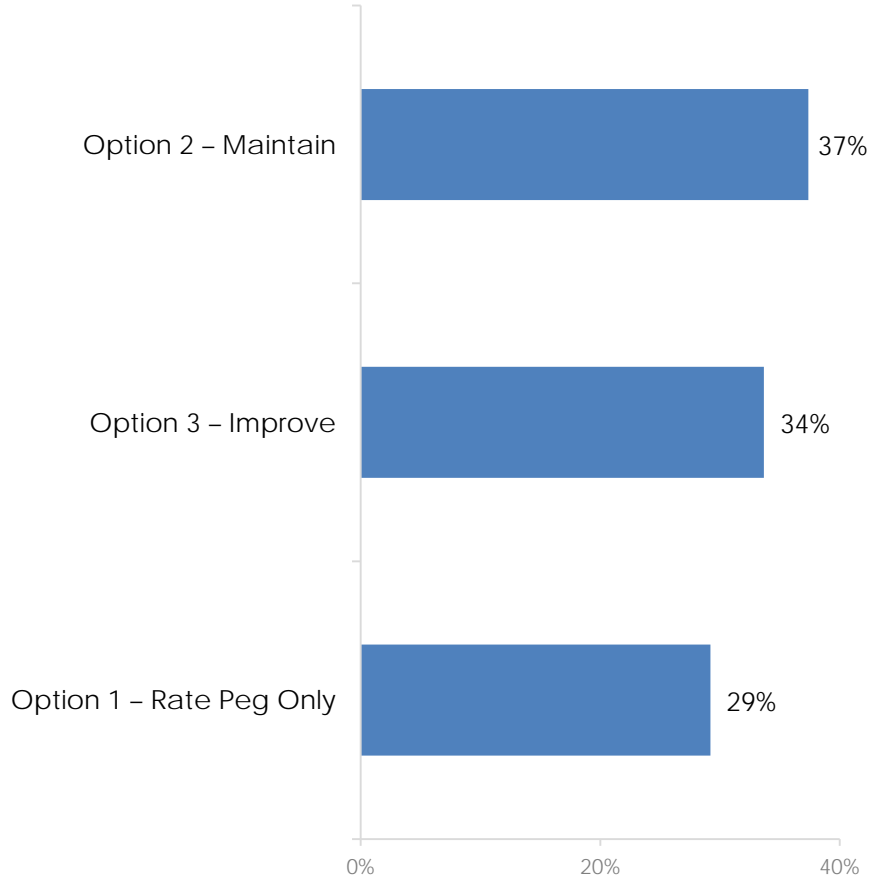
'Option 2 - Maintain' was provided with the highest level of support from the Wingecarribee community



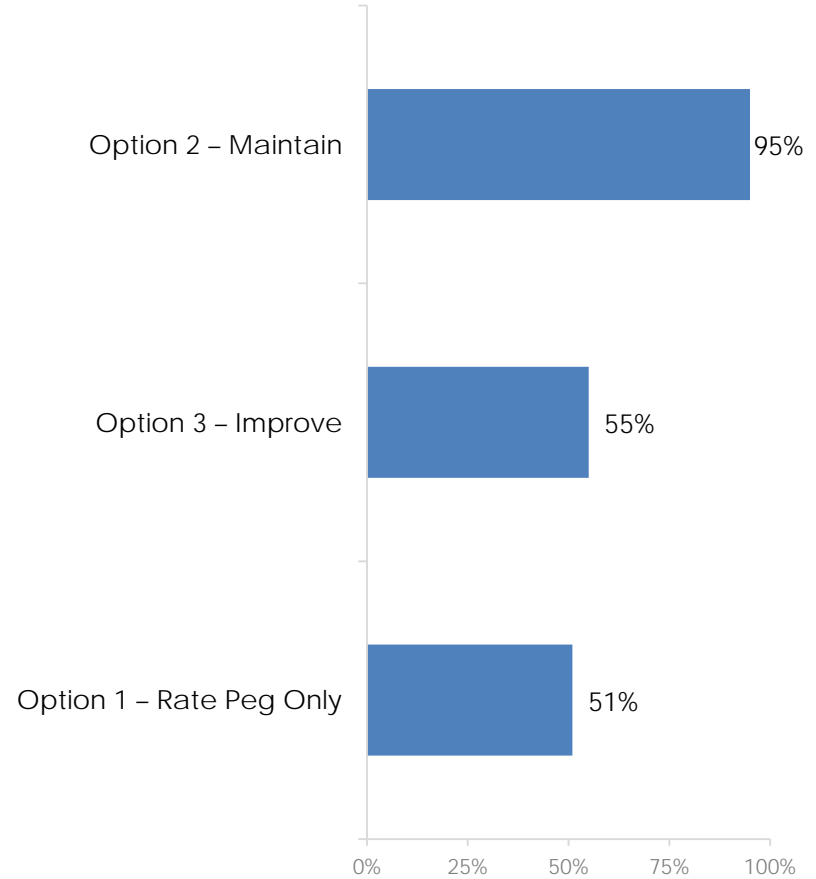
First and Second Preferences

Q6a. Please rank the 3 options in order of preference:

First Preference



Combined – First & Second Preference



Base: First preference (N=402), Second preference (N=401)

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower preference (by group)

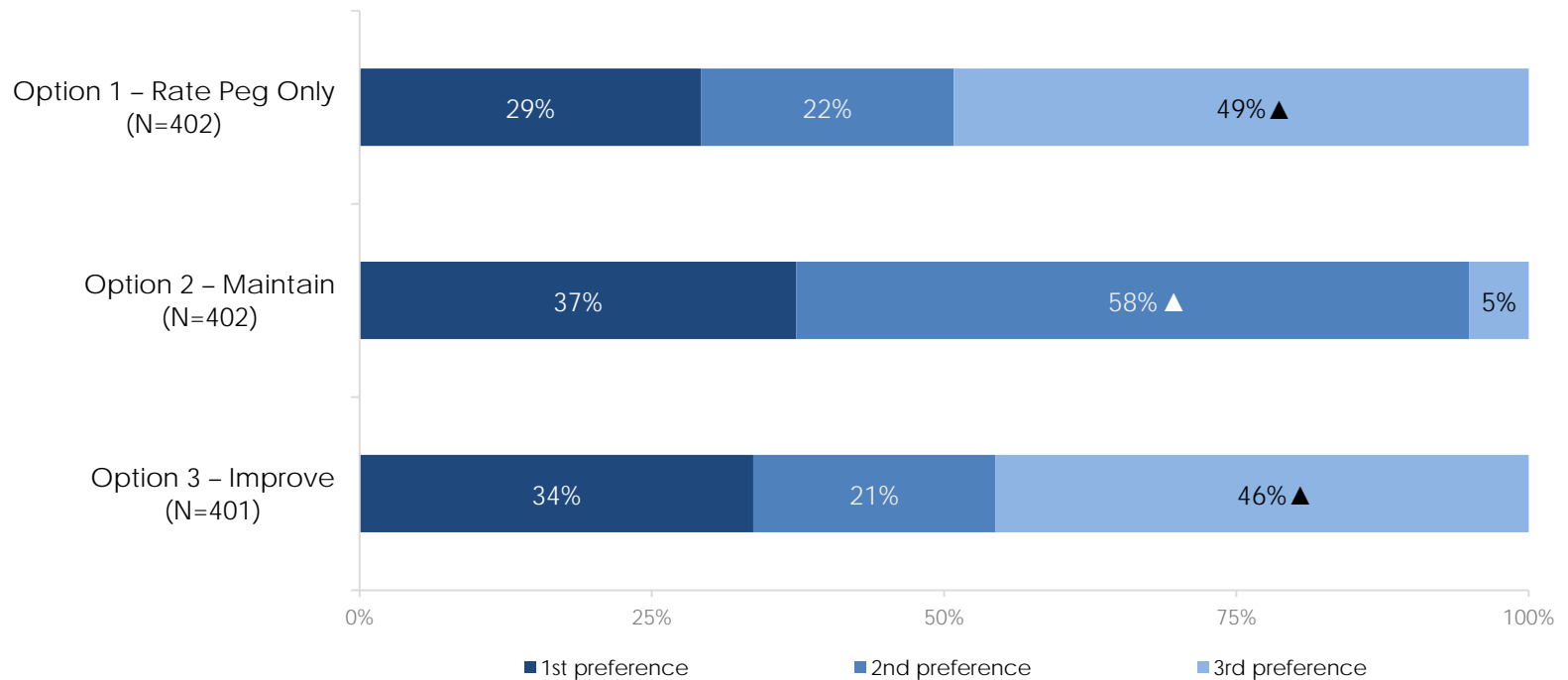
71% first preferred an increase above the rate peg



Summary of Preferred Options

Q6a. Please rank the 3 options in order of preference:

First Preference											
	Overall	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Town	Village
Option 1	29%	24%	26%	31%	34%	30%	28%	31%	20%	28%	32%
Option 2	37%	32%	37%	40%	38%	34%	40%	39%	28%	37%	38%
Option 3	34%	44%	37%	29%	29%	36%	32%	30%	52%▲	36%	31%



Note: Two respondents refused to provide a 2nd or 3rd preference

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower preference (by group)

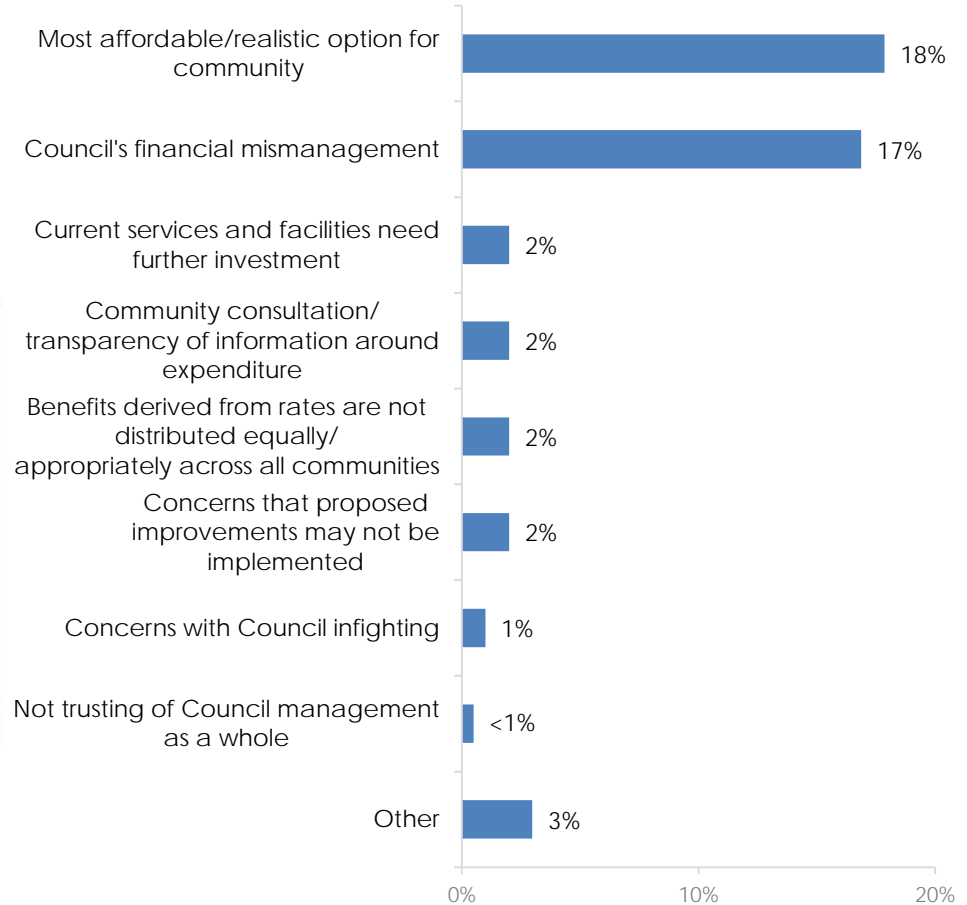
From the way preferences have been assigned it is clear that residents accept that to at least maintain current service levels they accept that they'll need to pay higher rates

Reasons for Preferring Option 1

Option 1 – Rate Peg Only

Q6a. Please rank options in order of preference:

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?



Base: N=403

'Most affordable/realistic option for the community' (18%) and 'Council's financial mismanagement' (17%) were residents' most mentioned reasons for preferring 'Option 1 – Rate Peg Only'

Option 1 – Rate Peg Only

Verbatim Responses

Q6a. Please rank options in order of preference:

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

"Not supportive of any increase until Council can show how they will better manage the funds they are currently receiving"

"Council should be able to maintain their services and assets with better management, not by increasing the rates"

"Road maintenance works are very poor and money could be saved if these were done correctly the first time"

"Council is not spending money in areas that need mending"

"Any rate increase is detrimental to those on pensions as our income would not go up while rates go up"

"Personal family finances are limited so the increase in rates would cause major financial stress"

"Council is wasting too much money currently on court cases fighting amongst themselves"

"The in-house conflict within Council does not encourage community members to be positive towards any proposals made by Council with regards to any financial matters whatsoever"

"Council has spent ratepayer funds in wrong areas so increases do not guarantee improvements"

"Would not like rates to increase as don't believe Council would spend the funding on the areas requiring it"

"Council needs to be more transparent in where current funds have been allocated so residents know what is being done in the area"

"Council is unresponsive to the local community so why should we pay more"

"Money is not evenly spread throughout the Shire as villages are neglected"

"Money is being invested into newer areas rather than maintaining villages assets"

"Lack of trust in Wingecarribee council and therefore lack of trust in any of the options"

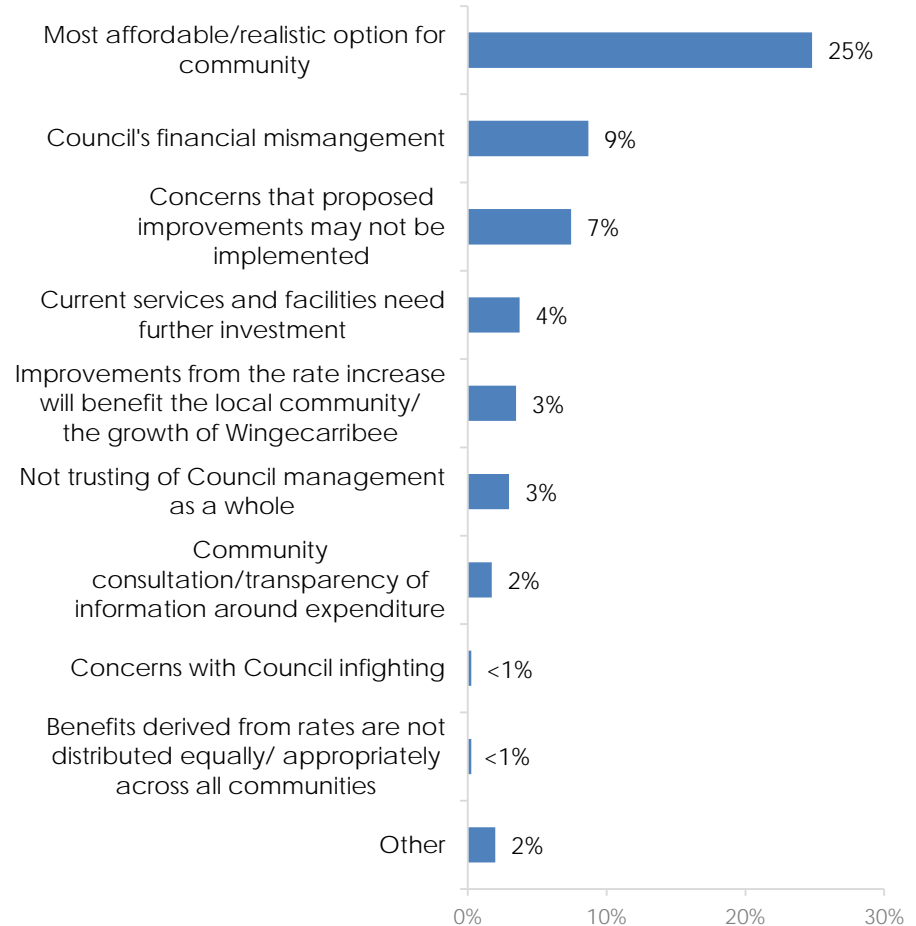


Reasons for Preferring Option 2

Option 2 – Maintain

Q6a. Please rank options in order of preference:

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?



Base: N=403

25% of residents who chose 'Option 2 – Maintain' as their first preference stated this option was the 'most affordable/realistic option for the community'

Option 2 – Maintain

Verbatim Responses

Q6a. Please rank options in order of preference:

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

"Council should be more efficient with the funds they are currently receiving"

"Services need to be maintained, however, Council could also reduce spending from within"

"Council already mismanages their money so shouldn't be given such an increase in money as in option three"

"Don't want the local infrastructure to deteriorate"

"Things aren't built to last so in a couple years it needs to be patched up"

"Need to improve the assets we have but do not want to pay a huge amount of money for this"

"Most suitable option as option 3 is unaffordable and option 1 is undesirable"

"Lack of trust of Council to actually use the money for what they have said they will use it for, so has chosen option 2 over option 3"

Area we are in at the moment receives no services or infrastructure therefore there would be no benefit to us but we would still have to pay the increase

"It's an increase in rates but not too much, although I would be hesitant to believe council would spend more efficiently if given any more money"

"Villages get little attention and repairs compared to towns"

"The funds are needed as it is essential that the infrastructure is maintained for the future"

"Without assets and facilities there would be no income to rebuild in the Shire"

"Better management of Council or better Council will achieve the results of option 3 within option 2."

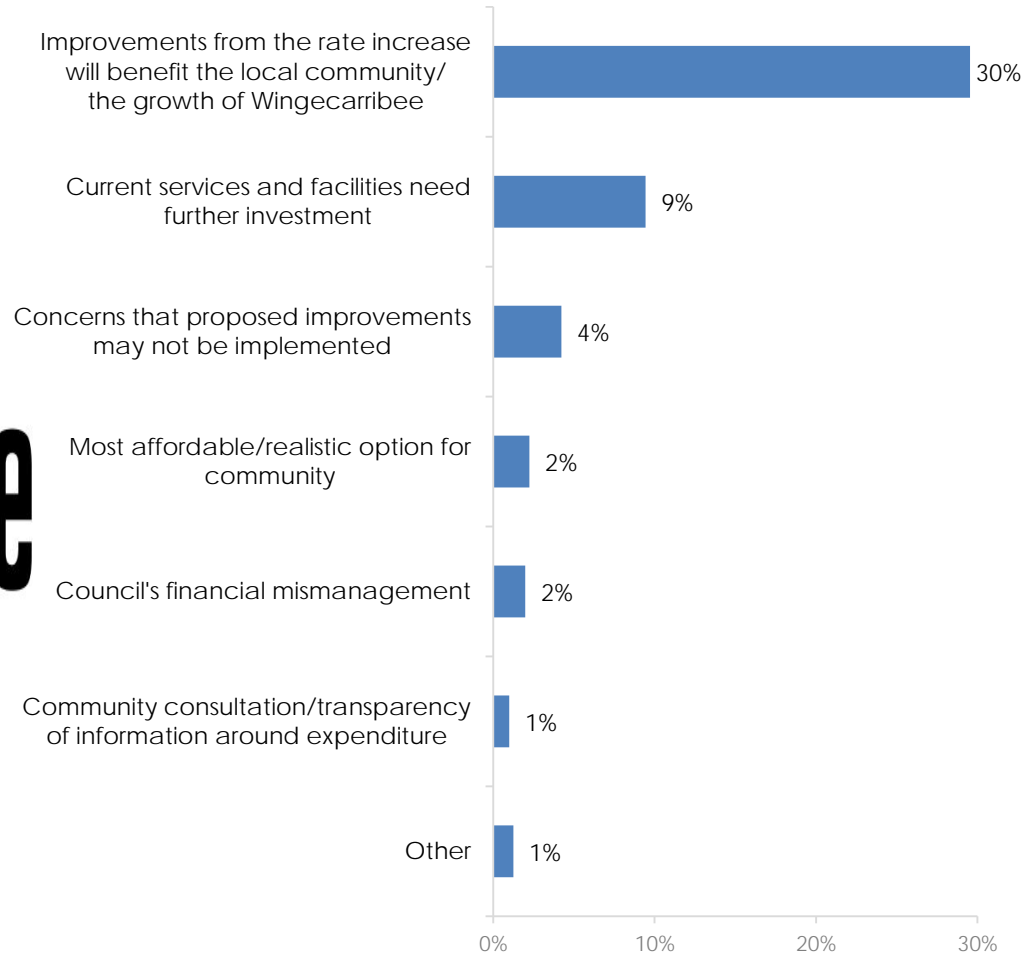


Reasons for Preferring Option 3

Option 3 – Improve

Q6a. Please rank options in order of preference:

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?



Base: N=403

Of those who chose 'Option 3 – Improved' as their preferred option, 30% indicated the reason for their selection was 'improvements from the rate increase will benefit the local community/the growth of Wingecarribee'

Option 3 – Improve

Verbatim Responses

Q6a. Please rank options in order of preference:

Q6b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

"Council's financial management needs rectifying and improvement to manage these increases"

"Feels this option is the best for the community but am not happy that the community has to pay for Council's investment mistakes"

"It is the best option for the local community but feel that Council should not be responsible for the management of the extra money"

"Want more disclosure on how and where the money would be spent"

"There would be more money to achieve their goals, although I would be cynical of them actually doing what they say"

"Willing to pay the extra money but the council has to prove that they are being more cost effective and efficient with their resources"

"The most productive and sustainable of the options"

"With more funding I hope that Council would have the ability to become more involved in community related matters and services"

"Council's community assets should be more evenly divided amongst the smaller towns and villages"

"Council needs to improve road maintenance and option 3 may provide this"

"Infrastructure in the villages is sub-standard and so the increased amount of money should be used to combat this"



Conclusion



Conclusion – Special Rate Variation

Special Rate Variation

Awareness of SRV

- 48% of residents stated they had prior knowledge of Council exploring the community's outlook on a Special Rate Variation, with half of these residents indicating they became aware through the 'mail out'
- Residents aged 65 and over, and ratepayers, were significantly more likely to have been aware of the SRV prior to Micromex's call, whilst residents in the younger age group (18-34) were significantly less likely to have been aware

Support for, and Preference of, Proposed Options

1. Residents were most supportive of 'Option 2 – Maintain'

- ⇒ 71% of residents were 'somewhat supportive' to 'very supportive' of Wingecarribee Shire Council proceeding with Option 2
- ⇒ 56% of residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of Council proceeding with Option 3
- ⇒ 53% of residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of Council proceeding with Option 1

2. Overall, residents preferred 'Option 2 – Maintain'

- ⇒ 37% of residents nominated 'Option 2 – Maintain' as their preferred option, in total 95% chose it as their first or second preference
- ⇒ 55% of residents chose 'Option 3 – Improve' as their first or second preference
- ⇒ 51% of residents chose 'Option 1 – Rate Peg only' as their first or second preference

The vast majority of the community are supportive of Council making an application to IPART to increase rates in return for continuing current service levels - A significant sector would like to see an improved outcome

Demographics



Demographics

Q1a. In which town/village do you live in/near?

Town	%	Village (cont'd)	%
Bowral	22%	Glenquarry	1%
Mittagong	21%	Joadja	1%
Moss Vale	17%	New Berrima	1%
Village	%	Welby	1%
Bundanoon	6%	Avoca	<1%
Robertson	6%	Berrima	<1%
Burradoo	4%	Braemar	<1%
Hill Top	4%	Fitzroy Falls	<1%
Colo Vale	3%	High Range	<1%
Exeter	3%	Kangaloon	<1%
Willow Vale	2%	Penrose	<1%
Yerrinbool	2%	Renwick	<1%
Aylmerton	1%	Sutton Forest	<1%
Balmoral	1%	Wildes Meadow	<1%
Burrawang	1%	Wingello	<1%
Canyonleigh	1%	Other	1%

Other	Count
Balaclava	1
Woodlands	1



Demographics

Q8. Please stop me when I read out your age bracket.

	%
18-34	18%
35-49	25%
50-64	28%
65+	28%
Base	403

Q11. Gender.

	%
Male	47%
Female	53%
Base	403

Q9. Which of the following best describes the house where you are currently living?

	%
Ratepayer	83%
Non-ratepayer	17%
Base	403

Q10. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

	%
Retired	28%
Work full time in the LGA	25%
Work part time in the LGA	17%
Work full time outside the LGA	12%
Unemployed/Pensioner	6%
Home duties	6%
Student	3%
Work part time outside the LGA	2%
Other	<1%
Base	403

Other	Count
Disabled	1



Appendix



Respondent Breakdown by Subcell

	Overall	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Non-ratepayer	Town	Village
Base	403	73	102	113	114	191	212	70	241	162



Awareness of Special Rate Variation – Cross Analysis

Q7a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation

Q7b. How were you informed of the Special Rate Variation?

Q7a											
	Overall	18–34	35–49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Town	Village
Yes	48%	27% ▼	43%	46%	66% ▲	49%	46%	52% ▲	25%	46%	50%
No	51%	73%	55%	54%	31%	50%	52%	46%	73%	53%	48%
Not sure	1%	0%	2%	0%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%

Q7b											
	Overall	18–34	35–49	50-64	65+	Male	Female	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Town	Village
Mail out	50%	21%	47%	47%	60%	48%	51%	53%	17%	49%	50%
Radio broadcasting	22%	16%	32%	25%	16%	28%	17%	23%	14%	26%	17%
Word of mouth	18%	43%	19%	24%	8%	19%	17%	17%	32%	22%	13%
Newspaper advertisement	13%	0%	6%	12%	22%	12%	15%	13%	18%	15%	11%
Email newsletter	10%	15%	9%	10%	9%	10%	10%	10%	9%	11%	8%
General Manager's Column in the newspaper	5%	8%	0%	2%	10%	5%	6%	4%	17%	7%	4%
Other	12%	20%	11%	7%	13%	8%	16%	12%	14%	8%	16%

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group)



Awareness of Special Rate Variation – Other Specified

Q7a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?

Q7b. How were you informed of the Special Rate Variation?

Other (Base: N=192)	Count
Council's website	7
Social media	4
Community meeting	2
Council brochure	1
Council Chambers' bulletin board	1
Council committee	1
Local community group	1
Micromex number collection	1
Newspaper	1
Online - 'Your Say' website	1
Petition	1
Phone	1
Rates notice	1
Television	1
Unable to recall	1





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Appendix 5

Postal Survey Report

November 2015

Appendix 5

Wingecarribee Shire Council

Postal – Special Rate Variation Research

Prepared by: Micromex Research

Date: November 2015



Reasons for Preferring Option 1

Option 1 – Deteriorate



N=650	Count
Council's financial mismanagement	12%
Most affordable/realistic option for community	4%
Benefits derived from rates are not distributed equally/appropriately across all communities	1%
Community consultation/transparency of information around expenditure	1%
Comments on amalgamation	1%
Concerns with Council infighting	1%
Not trusting of Council management as a whole	1%
Concerns that proposed improvements may not be implemented	<1%
Other	2%
No comment provided	9%



Option 1 – Deteriorate

Verbatim Responses

“Current annual increase in rates is roughly at the inflation rate, Council should therefore be able to continue its work without further increase”

“Please stop wasting our money. Let's be more efficient and improve the way Council runs”

“We are on a fixed income and cannot afford to pay anymore”

“With the increase of living standards it's already too hard to meet the current cost of living”

“Living on a rural property, I see no visible value from my Council rates – road maintenance is the only benefit I receive and that is poor at best and infrequent!”

“1. The wording of this is very misleading.

2. Why can't you maintain the assets within the regular 2+% rate rise?”

“Let's wait for the outcome of the amalgamations of councils before raising rates, hopefully it will be pointed out Council should be run more efficiently”

“I think using the word deteriorate is a scare tactic, if you lot stopped arguing and bickering between yourselves you would have plenty of money!”

“Dismiss current Councillors – appoint an independent administrator who is NOT a puppet of CSG and coal mining companies”

“Don't believe money would be spent on roads and footpaths”

“We are not getting anything from Council NOW, why would we want our rates put up?”



Reasons for Preferring Option 2

Option 2 – Maintain



N=650	Count
Council's financial mismanagement	7%
Most affordable/realistic option for community	4%
Current services and facilities need further investment	3%
Concerns with Council infighting	1%
Benefits derived from rates are not distributed equally/ appropriately across all communities	1%
Concerns that proposed improvements may not be implemented	<1%
Comments on amalgamation	<1%
Not trusting of Council management as a whole	<1%
Community consultation/transparency of information around expenditure	<1%
Other	4%
No comment provided	12%



Option 2 – Maintain

Verbatim Responses

“Please practice economic management”

“Further financial savings to be obtained from becoming more efficient”

“In this day and age sustaining capital is the only sensible option”

“Living on a pension, any rate increase would add to more tightening of the budget”

“Council should concentrate on basic maintenance programs such as roads, footpaths, stormwater, etc.”

“Members of Council should cease the petty rivalry between themselves therefore saving on litigation costs”

“Maintain our infrastructure but spend some money on other towns outside of Bowral”

“Hope any increase would be used for maintenance, not legal fees”

“Maintain what we have. Too much income = something that will benefit a few and disadvantage a lot. Amalgamation might come”

“Administrator required immediately to manage Council’s activities efficiently”

“I would like to see more information about how Council is being more efficient, as private businesses have to, rather than increasing the cost to the public”



Reasons for Preferring Option 3

Option 3 – Improve



N=650	Count
Current services and facilities need further investment	6%
Improvements from the rate increase will benefit the local community/ the growth of Wingecarribee	3%
Concerns with Council infighting	1%
Concerns that proposed improvements may not be implemented	1%
Most affordable/realistic option for community	1%
Council's financial mismanagement	1%
Benefits derived from rates are not distributed equally/ appropriately across all communities	1%
Comments on amalgamation	<1%
Community consultation/transparency of information around expenditure	<1%
Other	5%
No comment provided	16%



Option 3 – Improve

Verbatim Responses

“Improvement of roads and footpaths in protection of wildlife”

“Continue to improve and repair local roads please!”

“We must maintain the high standards achieved and improve on them”

“All communities should be prepared to invest in their future and this requires the 'improve' option”

“Stop spending scarce resources on futile court actions”

“On condition that the increases are allocated to infrastructure and not on bonus payments”

“As long as said things are done”

“I believe it is the only option for Council, to maintain and increase all council facilities”

“Imperative that any rate increase not be allowed to increase Councillors’ wages”

“We hope you are making better investments than in the past”

“My top priority is roads, roads & roads, not suburban streets but MAIN ROADS in our Shire”

“How do Council amalgamations affect the issue of rates increase?”

“Retain funds in a separate account, audit, and advise community of expense”





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Appendix 6

Online Survey Report

November 2015

Appendix 6

Wingecarribee Shire Council

Online – Special Rate Variation Research

Prepared by: Micromex Research

Date: November 2015



Reasons for Preferring Option 1

Option 1 – Deteriorate



N=326	Count
Council's financial mismanagement	15%
Most affordable/realistic option for community	8%
Community consultation/transparency of information around expenditure	2%
Concerns with Council infighting	1%
Concerns that proposed improvements may not be implemented	1%
Benefits derived from rates are not distributed equally/appropriately across all communities	1%
Current services and facilities need further investment	0%
Comments on amalgamation	0%
Not trusting of Council management as a whole	0%
Other	5%
No comment provided	2%



Option 1 – Deteriorate

Verbatim Responses

“Rates are already expensive enough. What the Shire needs is better management”

“I cannot afford such high increases on my limited income”

“You cannot justify an increase in rates until you explain exactly how the current rates are insufficient”

“We have no faith that our Councillors will be able to deliver the required repairs and maintenance needed, even with a rate rise”

“Rates are high enough, better management is required. Councillor disputes are a cost that ratepayers should not have to pay for”

“Roads need to be improved using the current budget and rate levels”

“Have no respect or trust in Councillors or senior management”

“Council’s mismanagement of our existing rates is disappointing, one example being the complete waste of money supplying the region with new bins, making them smaller (red) and then flatly denying it”

“The proposed rate increases are excessive and Council should consider alternate methods of cost reduction to fund any improvements”

“At this point we cannot support the ‘maintain’ or ‘improve’ options. Council has provided minimal information regarding activities/initiatives to proactively manage efficiencies, i.e. reduce costs”

“Councillors are too interested in fighting each other to do their job”

“In order to be assessed as Fit for the Future by IPART, Council put forward a strategy of rate rises, prior to community consultation. So the honest question would be: Do you support a rate rise to avoid forced amalgamation of Wingecarribee Shire Council?”



Reasons for Preferring Option 2

Option 2 – Maintain



N=326	Count
Council's financial mismanagement	9%
Most affordable/realistic option for community	8%
Current services and facilities need further investment	3%
Improvements from the rate increase will benefit the local community/the growth of Wingecarribee	2%
Comments on amalgamation	1%
Concerns with Council infighting	1%
Benefits derived from rates are not distributed equally/appropriately across all communities	1%
Concerns that proposed improvements may not be implemented	1%
Other	3%
No comment provided	2%



Option 2 – Maintain

Verbatim Responses

“Community believes Council does not use current funding correctly, efficiently, or appropriately”

“Council needs to better manage the finances, as so much money is wasted”

“Rates are very high for those on low incomes, so as much as we would all love improved facilities it is just not affordable”

“The economy is presently flat, with unemployment slightly increasing. Now is not the time”

“Maintain current infrastructure and reduce development”

“The existing infrastructure must be maintained and not allowed to deteriorate”

“I appreciate the need for additional funding, and clearly there is much work to be done in the Shire's infrastructure”

“A civilised society is measured by its cultural activities and its heritage. We simply cannot ignore this and let it lapse”

“Amalgamate. Stop wasting money on pointless legal issues which you will most likely lose”

“Unless we increase rates to maintain services we will be encouraged or forced to merge with another council”

“Reluctantly we choose MAINTAIN – considering the money Council has wasted over the years on the failed investment strategy and legal costs over Councillors fighting each other”

“I do not have much confidence in Council's ability to deliver improvements if granted option 3. I agree that a rate increase may be needed”

“Council rates are already too high. I can't see that we are getting value for our rates as it is”

“We understand the need for more funds but feel there are areas in which Council could save money and maximise benefit for the community”



Reasons for Preferring Option 3

Option 3 – Improve



N=326	Count
Current services and facilities need further investment	13%
Improvements from the rate increase will benefit the local community/the growth of Wingecaribee	10%
Most affordable/realistic option for community	2%
Concerns that proposed improvements may not be implemented	2%
Council's financial mismanagement	1%
Benefits derived from rates are not distributed equally/ appropriately across all communities	<1%
Other	2%
No comment provided	3%



Option 3 – Improve

Verbatim Responses

“Am prepared to pay more for substantive improvement”

“Current provision of services and infrastructure is inadequate”

“2.5% annual rate increase is not enough, inflation usually runs higher than that. Assets must be maintained properly or we will lose them eventually”

“Cannot allow deterioration, maintaining does not take us forward – improve for the future”

“To deteriorate or maintain existing standards is NOT an option”

“We don't want to become stagnant - let's advance and hope Council makes the best use of available funds”

“We need to improve facilities in the Wingecarribee Shire by using finances wisely, not by increasing rates by 45%”

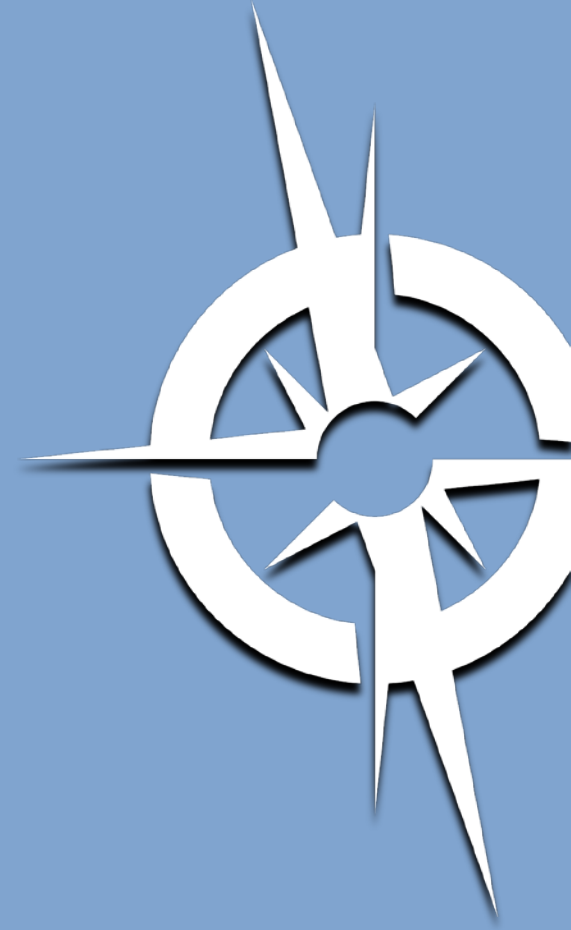
“Providing the money is handled better than it has been in the past”

“We feel ignored, Wingello has grown substantially and Council has not maintained or let alone improved our amenities”

“All assets have a finite life regardless of maintenance so improving is the only option”

“I would like to see amenities improved and the reduction of future maintenance costs”





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Appendix 7

Summary of Submissions Phase 2

November 2015

**Investing in our Future - Phase 2 - Summary of Submissions
December 2015**

Category	ID	Summary of Comments/Issues	Comments
Affordability	SRV3	Suggests rate increase is not affordable for residents and indicates that previous rate increases have forced people to sell their properties in the Southern Highlands.	Council acknowledges that any rate increase may adversely impact some community members. Council has mechanisms in place to assist ratepayers should they incur difficulty in keeping up with their rates payments, including a Financial Hardship Policy. The comparison of rates between councils needs to also consider urban density, the range and standard of services provided to the community and the geographical location. The mandatory \$250 rebate (set by the NSW State Government) which certain classes of pensioners are eligible for is the level which Council currently offers. This rebate is not indexed in line with future rate increases and has remained at existing levels for a number of years. Council has not factored in any additional increase in this rebate for pensioners within its proposed Special Rate Variation.
	SRV6	Pensioner who would be forced sell property if rates increased by 46%. Suggests that Wingecarribee Shire Rates are already higher than other Local Government areas such as Mosman.	
	SRV8	Suggests rate increase is not a plausible or positive step for senior citizens.	
	SRV13	Suggests that the cost of living is already too high and a rate increase would increase financial stress.	
	SRV15	As a pensioner, any increase in rates would be difficult to meet.	
	SRV17	States a rate increase of 46% is unsustainable by residents.	
	SRV20	Suggests Council considers the implications a rate increase would have on residents with fixed and limited incomes, such as pensioners. Suggests that Council consider increasing the pensioner rebate.	
Alternative Funding Strategy	SRV3	Suggests a user pay for non core services would be fairer and substantial fees for developers.	Revenue from user fees and charges represents approximately 10% of Council's overall income. Any significant increase in user fees and charges would not generate sufficient revenue to close the funding gap for infrastructure maintenance and renewal. Council will continue to actively pursue grant funding opportunities such as the Blackspot Program and National Stronger Regions Fund. Unfortunately, these grants are not guaranteed and therefore cannot be considered as part of a long term solution to closing the funding gap for infrastructure maintenance and renewal. Council takes a prudent, fiscally responsible approach to managing its budget. Council has for many years delivered, and maintained a balanced budget. It has lived within its means for many years. If Council is unsuccessful in its application for a Special Rate Variation, then it will need to reconsider its commitment to the current service levels across a broad range of community based programs and the duplication of a number of facilities which exist across the shire.
	SRV8	Suggests Council make use of grant programs such as "Building our Future", black spot program and national stronger regions funds and funds allocated to the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.	
	SRV10	Notes three broad sources of funding (grants, fees & charges and rates) and claims that if a rate rise is required then other funding sources should also increase e.g. user fees and charges.	
	SRV12	Upset that no other funding sources were explored such as reducing expenditure on unnecessary projects and living within means.	
	SRV13	Suggests that before asking residents to pay higher rates, Council should first consider alternative options such as: cutting the number of Councillors and staff, ceasing non-priority activities, ask for State Government assistance and as a last resort abolish Council altogether and let the State Government take care of the region.	
	SRV14	Suggests other funding sources to be considered before rate increase such as: (1) cancel proposed Council logo upgrade on signs and stationary. (2) Reduce Code of Conduct complaints. (3) Better forward planning of maintenance. (4) Use some of the money invested to carry out necessary works.	
	SRV15	States there must be another way to address the issue other than passing on the costs to rate payers, which is unacceptable.	

Investing in our Future - Phase 2 - Summary of Submissions
December 2015

Category	ID	Summary of Comments/Issues	Comments
Business Rates	SRV3	Suggests that increased business rates will impact negatively on businesses and Council should consider the economic impact of this.	<p>The proposed Special Rate Variation will be applied across all rating categories, including business rates. Council is not proposing to change its rating structure as part of this proposal.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that there will be additional financial pressures placed on local businesses if Council's application for a rate increase is approved by IPART.</p>
Community Consultation Period	SRV17	Questions why only three weeks were allocated for community consultation on an issue of major importance. Thought standard procedure was that councils had to give four weeks notice for any resident consultation process.	<p>Investing in our Future is a multi staged project which commenced in August 2015, the community will and have been provided with a number of opportunities to provide feedback on the proposed Special Rate Variation. To date, Council has conducted the following community consultation stages:</p> <p>Stage 1 - An asset management survey was conducted in September 2015 to identify and inform long term management and funding strategies for community infrastructure.</p> <p>Stage 2 - Following on from the Asset Management Survey, community engagement for the Investing in our Future options commenced on 10 October to 2 November 2015, this was supported by a number of communication and engagement activities such as information kiosks across the Shire, newspaper and radio advertising, provision of information on Council's website and email notification. These activities aimed to raise awareness of the Investing in our Future project and seek community feedback on the options.</p> <p>Stage 3 - A third phase of consultation is proposed to commence on 11 December 2015 to 1 February 2016 which will include the public exhibition of Council's draft Delivery Program, draft Long Term Financial Plan and Strategic Asset Management Plan. The strategic documents include additional details regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation and the Investing in our Future options.</p> <p>A Special Rate Variation was proposed as a key strategy in Council's Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal which was submitted in June 2015. However a decision to apply will not be made by Council until early February 2016.</p>
	SRV18	States that the consultation period was very short and believes Council has already decided to apply for a SRV as it formed part of the Fit for the Future submission to IPART.	
Contracting Services	SRV5	Suggests that Council contract out more services to private sector as the private sector is more efficient. Money saved in contracting our services could be put to better use. For example, to fund infrastructure improvements.	<p>Council currently delivers services to the community using a mix of Council employed staff and contractors. Decisions around the most appropriate delivery method are based on cost, quality and reliability.</p> <p>Outsourcing services to the private sector is not necessarily always a cheaper, nor more efficient way of providing services to the community.</p>

Investing in our Future - Phase 2 - Summary of Submissions
December 2015

Category	ID	Summary of Comments/Issues	Comments
Council Services	SRV10	Claims that Council is currently neglecting improvement and maintenance of assets and instead, providing services that Council is not required to provide as they are either provided by other levels of government (i.e. State and Federal) or are a private sector concern. (E.g. Community Services, business development and tourism).	Council provides a broad range of services to the community, some of which have been imposed on councils through other tiers of government. Councils are required to provide much more than the traditional services such as roads, rates and rubbish. Community based programs provided by councils are critical in developing and maintaining communities which residents feel strongly connected to.
	SRV16	Would be happy to pay more rates if it meant better services were provided. Would like to know that Council is looking after it's residents and will complete repairs on Lukes Fire Trail, Penrose.	Council is proposing a rate increase, rather than significant service reductions, as a long term funding solution to closing the funding gap for infrastructure maintenance and renewal.
Customer Service	SRV17	Thinks a more efficient contact centre system could be implemented.	Council commenced a Customer Service Review in 2014 with the purpose of improving service quality and productivity across the organisation. While the review is still being implemented, a change in the way front counter and contact centre services are provided have already resulted in reduced customer wait times and more timely processing of customer requests. Further improvements will continue in 2016 which aim to result in greater contact centre efficiencies.
Previous Works Programs Concerns	SRV18	Submission details examples of inefficiencies in road repair/construction works e.g.Canyonleigh road, Foxgrove road and the round-about on the corner of Bowral and Station street.	Council undertakes its works program on the basis of strict engineering standards and controls. The specific concerns raised with these projects have been passed on to the relevant sections of Council.
	SRV1	Resident requested work drainage and installation of lighting in street in 2013. Dissatisfied with drainage work which was undertaken by Council and that lighting has not been installed despite being added to the infrastructure priority list.	
Performance Monitoring	SRV10	Suggests review of labour efficiency as currently it appears to be a case of over capitalisation and under utilisation (E.g. newest vehicles purchased and staff leaving work early). States there should be published key performance indicators to provide ratepayers assurance of value for money.	The performance of NSW councils is monitored by the Office of Local Government. Information regarding these performance indicators can be found on the OLG's website. www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/my-local-council/yourcouncil-website In addition to the performance indicators measured by the Office of Local Government, Council also includes a range of performance indicators in its Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements. These indicators are a combination of financial indicators and service based indicators. These documents can be found on Council's website. www.wsc.nsw.gov.au
	SRV17	Council needs to become more accountable and transparent.	

**Investing in our Future - Phase 2 - Summary of Submissions
December 2015**

Category	ID	Summary of Comments/Issues	Comments
Organisational Efficiencies	SRV11	Normally would be supportive of a rate rise based on the info kit sent out however is not supportive due to concerns about existing inefficiencies and lack of professionalism with staff (e.g. no response to urgent letter and phone calls, staff not being able to track request numbers they log). States that there is a systematic and costly failure in the way Council interacts with ratepayers.	<p>The draft Delivery Program, which will be placed on public exhibition as part of stage 3 of Council's community consultation, outlines a number of the significant savings and efficiencies Council has achieved over the past several years. These include savings relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability Improvements, • Process Improvements, • Asset Management Improvements, • Procurement Improvements, • Technology Improvements. <p>In addition, Council has committed to a Service Review Program commencing in 2016 to ensure that it continues to deliver services in the most efficient way possible.</p>
	SRV14	Suggests that before a SRV can be considered, Council should demonstrate to rate payers that it can operate more efficiently and in a more financially responsible manner.	
	SRV10	Suggests that a comprehensive Expenditure Review is required whereby any budget line item that does not directly contribute to Council's core responsibilities is abolished.	
	SRV17	Would like to be provided with an itemised list of savings made over the last five years.	
Council's Current Expenditure	SRV2	Indicates that Council currently wastes money and that it needs to live within its means and develop a conservative approach to priorities for the community.	<p>Council takes a prudent, fiscally responsible approach to managing its budget. Council has for many years delivered, and maintained a balanced budget. It has lived within its means for many years.</p> <p>In addition, Council has committed to a Service Review Program commencing in 2016 to ensure that it continues to deliver services in the most efficient way possible.</p>
	SRV7	Suggests Council spend rates more judiciously. Cites a number of examples where resident believes funds have not been spent appropriately, such as Mittagong Bowling Club, Merrigang Street repairs and Mittagong Creek.	
	SRV3	Suggests Council is not able to conduct its affairs in a competent, efficient, practical and economically sustainable manner. References media reports about Council.	

Investing in our Future - Phase 2 - Summary of Submissions
December 2015

Category	ID	Summary of Comments/Issues	Comments
Councils Financial Reports	SRV17	Requests explanation about 2014 borrowing costs. Would like to know the legal expenses for years previous to 2014. Would like break up of Wingecarribee Shire Council contractor and consultancy costs. Does not agreed with early replacement of garbage bins and replacement with lesser quality bins. Would like to know why WSC has a Governance and Administrative Expenditure of \$626 per capita. States that a fairer system of revenue raising needs to be adopted in NSW generally.	<p>The borrowing costs reported in the 2013/14 audited Financial Statements reflects the interest repayments made for that financial year. Council's total loan liability for the same period was \$40.6million. \$28.4million relates to Council's water and sewer fund, \$12.2million relates to General Fund operations.</p> <p>Council entered into a new ten year waste collection contract in 2014. A replacement of the municipal garbage bins was conducted at the same time of entering into the new contract. When compared to previous contracts, the new contract is estimated to generate savings of \$550,000 per annum (\$5.5million over the next ten years).</p> <p>The OLG comparative data publication produces a range of performance indicators which are sourced from Special Schedule 1 of Council's Financial Reports. These Special Schedules are not required to be externally audited. Council's Governance and Administrative Expenditure per capita is significantly higher when compared to similar Councils. There could be a range of factors contributing to this, including the different methodologies used by each Council to arrive at its total Governance and Administration expenditure.</p> <p>Council supports the view that a review of the existing rating system in NSW needs to be conducted.</p>
Environment Levy	SRV1	States that the Environment Levy should not be continued as part of SRV.	The Environmental Levy has been in place since 2001 and funds a wide range of environmental and sustainability initiatives. If the Environmental Levy was not continued, important environmental gains which have been achieved to date, would be lost.
Fit for the Future and Amalgamation	SRV5	Questions why Council is seeking a rate increase if the State Government has determined its financial position is sustainable. Suggests if Council is not financially sustainable that amalgamation is a viable option as it can result in reduced overheads and make better use of Council's income.	<p>Council was required to submit an Improvement Proposal as part of its response to the NSW State Government reform agenda. The Improvement Proposal outlined a range of strategies which would ensure Council met the benchmarks set by the NSW State Government. The proposed Special Rate Variation was one of the strategies included within Council's Improvement Proposal.</p> <p>Council has been transparent about its current financial position, stating that at present it only meets 2 out of the 7 benchmarks set by the NSW State Government. These benchmarks will be met by 2020 through the implementation of a range of strategies outlined in Council's Improvement Proposal.</p> <p>An amalgamation would not generate the quantum of savings required to close the funding gap for infrastructure maintenance and renewal.</p> <p>The community has indicated that they wish to see Wingecarribee remain as a stand alone Council.</p>
	SRV18	Claims that Council in its current state is not fit for the future and says that Wingecarribee Shire Council should not be forced to amalgamate rather, be dispersed among neighbouring Councils.	

**Investing in our Future - Phase 2 - Summary of Submissions
December 2015**

Category	ID	Summary of Comments/Issues	Comments
SRV Scenarios - Detailed Works Programs	SRV19	Wants to know when there will be a list of projects to be undertaken by Council available to ratepayers. Will the costing of these be available? How much cost inflation will be built in and on what is the projected inflation cost based on?	The draft Strategic Asset Management Plan, which will be placed on public exhibition as part of stage 3 of Council's community consultation, outlines the works programs which will be undertaken for each of the scenarios presented as part of the Investing in our Future proposal. Inflation has been reflected within the program at a rate of 3.00% per annum.
Fit for the Future Assessment	SRV2	Residents raised the following question in relation to the IPART's assessment that Council will meet the benchmark for operating performance ratio and reduce backlog based on a successful SRV application (1) does this imply that the rate rise listed under the 'improve' option is a fait accompli and if that is the case why is Council going through a protracted and expensive public relations exercise (2) If it isn't a fait accompli and the rate rise for 'Improve' option is not approved will that mean that IPART could review their recommendation as Council fit to standalone (3) how was the 41.2% cumulative arrived at?	At this stage, Council is committed to implementing its Improvement Proposal and meeting the benchmarks set by the NSW State Government under the Fit for the Future reform agenda. Council's Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal included a projected rate increase (inclusive of rate pegging) over the next four years of 9.00% per annum. This amount is compounded over the four years, which results in a cumulative increase of 41.2%.
Distribution Issues	SRV12	Did not receive information kit until after the information kiosks were held.	Council was made aware of a small number of issues regarding the distribution of the information kit. In each instance, Council either made arrangements for additional community kiosks, or an opportunity for residents to meet with senior staff to discuss any concerns they had. Council employed a range of community consultation techniques to ensure there was broad community awareness of this proposal.
	SRV 21	Did not receive timely notification and essentially only became aware by word of mouth too late. There was no proposal received in the mail by those present.	
	SRV17	Did not receive information kit in post and neither did neighbours.	

Investing in our Future - Phase 2 - Summary of Submissions
December 2015

Category	ID	Summary of Comments/Issues	Comments
Investment Portfolio	SRV1	Request information on (1) the amount of money Council lost through investing with Lehmann Bros (2) amount of money recovered to date, not the amount which maybe recovered in the future (3) cost paid by Council in order to obtain judgement and the amount of costs recovered to date i.e. what is Council's out of pocket expenses. Concern that Council is requesting a rate increase after significant financial loss.	<p>The investment losses identified due to the write down of CDO's was \$11.6million. The write down of these investments were funded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund (Entrepreneurial Fund) \$5.586M • Water Augmentation Fund \$3.533M • Sewer Augmentation Fund \$2.487M <p>Council incurred expenditure of \$725K in undertaking legal proceedings against Lehman Brothers. These costs were recouped in the 2013/14 financial year.</p> <p>Council is yet to determine the total amount of investment losses which will be recovered as a result of its successful legal action. It is expected this figure will be known during the first half 2016.</p>
	SRV8	Suggests Council currently has \$60 million which is planning to invest and cites Lehmann Brothers loss. Suggests the \$60 million should be invested in roads and infrastructure rather than seeking a rate increase. Also indicates this would have a positive impact on employment and funds wouldn't be lost in the financial investment market.	<p>Council's cash and investments for its general fund operations as at 30 June 2015 was \$52million. \$18.2million relates to externally restricted assets such as developer contributions and unexpended grants. \$28.7 million relates to work Council has already committed to undertake, employee leave entitlements and replacement of major plant and equipment.</p> <p>Taking into account these restrictions, Council's unrestricted balance (working capital) was \$5.1million. Working Capital is required to ensure Council has sufficient liquidity to fund it operations. It also acts as a buffer for any unforeseen/unplanned emergency events which may need to be funded through the budget.</p>
Micromex Telephone Survey	SRV17	Would like to be provided with the list of questions asked in the original Micromex phone survey as well as the detailed answers.	This information has been provided to the resident. Details of all surveys undertaken for this project are included in Council's Community Engagement report.
Rate Increase Options	SRV1	Suggests a fourth SRV option where every property pays the same amount of levy regardless of the rates payable for the property (similar to waste levy)as this would be more equitable. While this option was not raised by Council, it should give this consideration.	<p>The Local Government Act (section 501) only allows councils to impose an annual charge for the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Supply • Sewerage Services • Stormwater Management • Waste Management <p>The three options which Council has presented as part of the investing in our future proposal are in line with the requirements of IPART. IPART are the regulatory authority who will assess Council's application to increase its rates income above rate pegging.</p>

**Investing in our Future - Phase 2 - Summary of Submissions
December 2015**

Category	ID	Summary of Comments/Issues	Comments
Preferred SRV Option	SRV1	Option 1: Deteriorate.	These views are noted.
	SRV3	Opposed to SRV and references previous SRV's which Council has received.	
	SRV4	Opposed to any SRV increase. Reasons for opposition are that Council is not managing resources appropriately and judiciously, uses examples related to (1) Councillor conduct (32) projects and development applications (3) not repairing residents access road.	
	SRV6	Option 1: Deteriorate.	
	SRV7	Feels an application for any additional increase in rates is not justified.	
	SRV17	Option 1: Deteriorate.	
Previous Rate Increase	SRV17	Would like clarification on the details of the last rate increase in 2008.	While Council last applied for a Special Rate Variation for infrastructure maintenance and renewal in 2008, there have been a number of rate increases approved since 2003/04. These increases were required as a result of a decision made by Council in the 1990's to not take up the full approved rate peg amount over a number of years.
Current Rate Increase	SRV18	Indicates that Council has had previous rate increases and that the current rate pegging of 2.5% is already 0.8% above current inflation.	<p>IPART determines the amount by which council may increase its rate income using the Local Government Cost Index. The Local Government Cost Index is a measure of the increase in operational costs incurred by NSW councils for services and activities funded from general rate revenue.</p> <p>Council was advised in December 2014 that IPART had determined a rate peg for 2015/16 of 2.40%. The increase in the Local Government Cost Index had been determined to be 2.47%.</p> <p>After taking into account the rise of the Local Government Cost Index of 2.47%, IPART then applied a productivity factor of 0.04%. The increase was then rounded down by 0.03% to arrive at the approved rate peg for 2015/16 of 2.40%.</p> <p>It is important to note that Council received approval by IPART to increase its rate income by an additional 0.1% in 2015/16 due to crownland adjustments.</p>

**Investing in our Future - Phase 2 - Summary of Submissions
December 2015**

Category	ID	Summary of Comments/Issues	Comments
Rural Rates	SRV4	Suggests Council has an inconsistent approach to classifying land as either rural land and rural residential rates.	Council has four categories for the purposes of levying rates. These are; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential • Business • Farmland • Mining
	SRV21	Canyonleigh may be sparsely populated but very many properties are rated as RESIDENTIAL since Council requires landholders to prove primary productive activity to qualify for rural rating even though the whole area is RURAL in both zoning and in quality.	There is no rating category for rural residential rates. Farmland rating applies to all rateable assessments which satisfy the farmland rating criteria as outlined in s515 of the Local Government Act. Council uses the land value of properties throughout the shire to determine the level of rates each property owner should pay. In other words, land value determines how Council's total rate income will be collected from each property owner.
	SRV12	Questions why they should support a rate increase when their rates are already three times higher than average town rates in the Local Government Area.	Valuations are determined by the NSW Valuer General. The valuation process is something Council cannot influence.
SRV Percentage Increases	SRV2	Notes that the 'Improve' option increase is 46.2% cumulative over 4 years however the improvement proposal to IPART stated a 41.2% cumulative increase. Wishes to know which is correct and questions the average rate rise information. Questions if the rate increase will apply to water rates.	Council's Fit for the Future Improvement Proposal included a projected rate increase (inclusive of rate pegging) over the next four years of 9.00% per annum. This resulted in a projected increase in rates over a four year period of 41.2% (cumulative). The proposed rate increase under the "improve" option has been increased to 9.25% per annum, and also includes the continuation of the Environmental Levy in the fourth year (2.90% in 2019/20). This has led to a difference in the total cumulative increase reported to IPART and the total cumulative increase we are now proposing under the "improve" option.
	SRV21	The rumoured rates increase (not having received any documentary evidence) said to be x% per annum for y number of years seems deliberately contrived to imply that the increase is insignificant and deliberately masks the fact that the increase will be compounded over those years to provide a new basis for future rates growth.	This increase is only proposed for general rates and does not apply to any future increase which may be set for water and sewer charges. Council has been transparent throughout this process in stating the cumulative increase of each of the scenarios in all of its community engagement tools.
Funding Calculations	SRV17	Indicates that the figures provided to achieve the additional \$8.5 million per annum do not add up and would like to know where the rest of money is coming from and what exactly it will be spent on.	The level of funding required to close the funding gap for infrastructure maintenance renewal will be achieved through the proposed rates increases shown in the "maintain" and "improve" options. This has been demonstrated in the financial models shown within the revised Long Term Financial Plan which will be placed on public exhibition as part of the third round of community consultation for the proposed Special Rate Variation.

**Investing in our Future - Phase 2 - Summary of Submissions
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Category	ID	Summary of Comments/Issues	Comments
SRV Terminology	SRV2	States that the terminology used in the Investing in our Future SRV booklet is poor and that the use of the word 'Deteriorate' is trying to shame residents into a decision which may not be necessary.	The terminology used in the brochure was carefully considered to ensure that the asset management outcomes under each scenario was clearly conveyed to the community. Council acknowledges that the terminology used may be considered as highly emotive by some residents.
	SRV7	Suggests services would not deteriorate with rate pegging and claims it is emotional blackmail. Notes that it is not too many years since the last rate increase was granted.	
	SRV12	States that the design of the information kit is designed to elicit a response favourable to Council's proposed application to IPART and the survey questions are biased.	
	SRV17	Notes that the word 'Deteriorate' is an emotive and derogative word and that it shouldn't have been used as part of the information kit.	
	SRV18	Refers to the SRV Information kit as propaganda and thinks that the titles of the options should have been called something different.	
Treatment of Outer Villages	SRV9	Requests that any special rate rise derived from Hill Top should be spent in Hill Top. These funds should be use to maintain roads and existing infrastructure, better roadside trimming especially at major intersections, weed control and rubbish dumping control.	Council has identified a range of projects across the shire which will be funded through the proposed Special Rate Variation. The detailed works program is shown in Council's draft Strategic Asset Management Plan which will be placed on public exhibition as part of the third round of community consultation for the proposed Special Rate Variation. Council does not support the restriction of general rate income for the provision of services based on individual locations. Under the Investing in our Future Proposal, Council has made a significant and genuine effort to engage with residents across the entire shire, including villages. Specifically, two community kiosks were held in Robertson. Concerns regarding the Tourist Road railway bridge has been passed onto the relevant section of Council.
	SRV21	Contends that Canyonleigh, Inverary and Tugalong Roads are in places so unsafe as to need 4WD vehicles and that frequently it is not possible for two vehicles safely to pass each other.	
	SRV12	Notes issue of the Tourist Road railway bridge (Robertson) - most affected residents were not notified or consulted on the matter before work commenced. As a result feels that Council is not interested in those who live outside the major towns and just uses the residents in outlying villages as a source of rates revenue.	

Appendix 8

Summary of Submissions – Phase 3

February 2016

Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-34	Infrastructure / Services	Works not carried out efficiently	Raised a number of issues regarding works conducted on local road including Canyonleigh Rd, Foxgrove Road and the roundabout on the corner of Bowral and Station Streets, and comments that these as a few examples of Council inefficiencies.
P3-15 (3)	Infrastructure / Services	Works not carried out efficiently	Claims that the maintenance schedule used by Council is an example of a lack of efficient use of funds e.g. resealing a good condition road and leaving work that is needed e.g. Ellsmore Rd.
P3-34	Infrastructure / Services	Works not carried out efficiently	Questions the methodology behind the weed / tussock control spraying as it only goes as far as the vehicle can reach (even on wide road verges) and is not coloured to show the spray area. Comments that this renders the job a waste of money.
P3-32	Investing in our Future Project	Advertising was inadequate	The amount of advertising Council has undertaken for the SRV project is unsatisfactory. Questions how much has been spent on advertising.
P309	Investing in our Future Project	Challenge to interpretation of survey results	The graphs and tables on the Council website misconstrue the data to represent Council's preferred choice of a special rate variation.
P3-42	Investing in our Future Project	Challenge to interpretation of survey results	There is not sufficient justification to suggest that there is community support for a rate increase.
P3-55	Investing in our Future Project	Challenge to interpretation of survey results	The sample selection from the surveys was too small to extrapolate trends for the whole community.
P305	Investing in our Future Project	Challenge to interpretation of survey results	The conclusions obtained from the Micromex survey were inaccurate..
P3-44	Investing in our Future Project	Challenge to interpretation of survey results	The three scenarios present limited choices and inappropriately influence people to support a rate variation.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-55	Investing in our Future Project	Challenge to interpretation of survey results	Questions why Scenario three was selected for the application to IPART when a third of the population preferred each option. Maintains that this makes it look as though Council had already made the decision to go with scenario three, and therefore the time and money spent on consultation was a waste.
P3-55	Investing in our Future Project	Community consultation did not resolve concerns	Attended a kiosk where concerns were dealt with in a calm and careful manner; however, the original concerns remain unresolved.
P3-39	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns about transparency	It is not coincidental that the proposed rate variation consultation immediately preceded the land value increase.
P305	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns about transparency	Council has not been transparent in its approach, information, consultation and process.
P3-14	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	The definition of a Council is 'an administrative or legislative body' therefore it should not act like a bank or trading floor to invest ratepayers money. Council needs to live within its means.
P3-32	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	Council's money management is poor, evidenced by past investments which have failed. .
P3-38	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	Council has lost credibility due to previous actions which has wasted money, and therefore it should not be rewarded with increased funding.
P3-46	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	Poor money management in the past by Council has not been forgotten.

Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
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Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P302	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	A special rate variation would not be necessary if Council did not waste money, including on legal cases.
P305	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	The replacement of the garbage bins was unnecessary and Council's explanation as to why this was done was unsatisfactory.
P305	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	Council needs to be more transparent, especially when referring to the significant savings made across Council.
P3-15 (3)	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	Council should live within its means.
P3-19	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	Asks why, when Council's investment performance has not been good in the past, they should contribute more money.
P3-23	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	Concerned that the increased money will result in increased waste.
P3-32	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	Wants accountability at Council when jobs go over budget, as it is unfair that when a job goes over budget ratepayers funds pay the outstanding fees.
P3-40	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	If Council invested more wisely, a rate variation would not be required.

Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-15 (3)	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that Council will disregard feedback opposed to SRV	The two kiosks held shortly before the deadline for submissions were only conducted so Council can say it has conducted extensive community consultation, even though it seems the rate increase application was the preferred outcome from the beginning.
P3-20	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that Council will disregard feedback opposed to SRV	Council does not pay enough attention to the views of residents in smaller villages.
P309	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that Council will disregard feedback opposed to SRV	Although pleased with Council's community engagement / consultation on other issues e.g. street trees or pools, when significant money is involved Council makes the decision. Claims that Council has already submitted an application for a rate variation before asking for community opinion.
P3-09 (2)	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that Council will disregard feedback opposed to SRV	Submissions against a rate variation, including a petition from 615 people, were ignored by Council and Micromex. Council is not listening to the majority of people.
P3-16	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that Council will disregard feedback opposed to SRV	Council disregarded the petition with 651 signatures opposed to the SRV, which indicates that Council is neither listening to the community nor acting in its best interests.
P3-23	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that Council will disregard feedback opposed to SRV	Providing feedback is not of use as Council has predetermined that it will increase rates regardless.
P3-38	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that Council will disregard feedback opposed to SRV	Although the community engagement materials note that the SRV is proposed, Council has already decided what it will do.
P3-52	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that Council will disregard feedback opposed to SRV	The community consultation is not genuine and Council will proceed with a rate increase regardless.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-53	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that Council will disregard feedback opposed to SRV	Maintains that although submissions in previous round of consultation were uniformly opposed to an increase, Council is still intending to apply for an SRV to IPART. Would like confirmation that Council is going to submit summary of submissions with its application to IPART.
P3-19	Infrastructure / Services	Concerns that Draft Delivery Program 2013-17 is not detailed enough	Apart from the street planting proposals, the expenditure proposals lack detail.
P3-42	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that Draft Delivery Program 2013-17 is not detailed enough	The program does not allow the community to specify that they want a particular road fixed but not a particular bridge project undertaken.
P3-49	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that Draft Delivery Program 2013-17 is not detailed enough	The program contains 'motherhood' statements and adds little detail to what Council proposes to do.
P3-15 (3)	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that extensive detail in SRV Information Kit made it difficult to comprehend	The SRV kit and report is too voluminous to read on the computer and is unable to be borrowed from site locations.
P3-55	Investing in our Future Project	Concerns that extensive detail in SRV Information Kit made it difficult to comprehend	The SRV kit and report is too voluminous to read on the computer and is unable to be borrowed from site locations.
P307	SRV Terminology	Concerns that extensive detail in SRV Information Kit made it difficult to comprehend	It is difficult for ratepayers to comprehend the level of detail provided in the Investing in our Future / SRV documents and therefore offer useful feedback.
P312	Efficiency of Council's operations	Critical of Council's management	Claims that the increase in rates is needed only because management at Council is not efficient.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-15 (3)	Efficiency of Council's operations	Critical of Council's management	Frustrated by Council conduct e.g. politicising of affairs at Council, as reported by media. It seems that there is no cohesive spirit of people trying to cooperate to the benefit of residents which conveys that money is wasted on trying to win an argument.
P3-09 (2)	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of survey methodology or company conducting the research	Questions Council's decision behind selecting Micromex to conduct the surveys. Suggests that they were selected because they have a history of achieving rate variations for other councils in the past.
P312	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of survey methodology or company conducting the research	Council did not engage enough with the wider community. Questions who was contacted in the survey Council conducted because they had not heard about it nor had anyone else they asked.
P3-15	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of survey methodology or company conducting the research	Requests to be provided with the full details of the survey - specifically how it was conducted, numbers of responses, result of responses. Concerned that the survey was not conducted scientifically e.g. whether non-ratepayers completed the survey (or people completed the survey multiple times) therefore skewing the results.
P3-15 (3)	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of survey methodology or company conducting the research	The SRV should only have been conducted with ratepayers and furthermore there are questions about its validity as there was no control on how many submissions were made by an individual.
P3-47	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of survey methodology or company conducting the research	The survey sample is very small and cannot be used with confidence in any future decision making process.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P305	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of survey methodology or company conducting the research	The resources spent on surveying 401 residents was wasteful and this money could have been better spent on a survey given to 100% of Wingecarribee Shire residents. Questions why the survey could not have been sent out with the rate notice.
P307	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of survey methodology or company conducting the research	References to arterial (state owned) roads should not have been left out of the SRV information kit as a substantial proportion of the survey results reflecting dissatisfaction with the roads are in relation to State roads.
P3-28	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of survey methodology or company conducting the research	The methodology of the survey is unrepresentative and biased.
P3-30	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of survey methodology or company conducting the research	The proposal should not proceed because a substantial number of people are against it and the survey should be nullified as it inappropriately influenced people to support a rate variation. Indications that Council has already budgeted on the basis of receiving a SRV further suggests an unfair process.
P3-55	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of survey methodology or company conducting the research	Only ratepayers should have been invited to complete the survey as they are the ones directly impacted.
P3-15 (3)	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of terminology used	The wording of survey questions could have been more accurate and detailed.
P3-27	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of terminology used	The surveying techniques, wording of the questions and the scenario names will inappropriately influence people to support a rate variation.
P3-47	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of terminology used	The titles of the three options are inappropriate.

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Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P302	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of terminology used	The wording used in the SRV information kit will inappropriately influence people to support a rate variation, suggesting this is what Council wants.
P305	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of terminology used	The language used in the Investing in our Future brochure was emotive.
P3-09 (2)	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of terminology used	Opposed to the terminology used in the survey.
P3-15	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of terminology used	The names of the scenarios are emotive and should not have been used.
P3-15 (3)	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of terminology used	The wording in many of the Council information packs is such that it suggests the majority of people support a rate increase. Also, it appears that Council has decided to apply to IPART for an SRV even though it is still asking for submissions on the matter.
P3-16	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of terminology used	Questions asked in the survey were ambiguous and used emotive language. The results gained from the survey do not make sense.
P3-42	Investing in our Future Project	Critical of terminology used	The three scenario titles of decline, maintain and improve are unclear and it is difficult to understand the meaning and detail for each of these terms.
P305	Efficiency of Council's operations	Internal expenditure too high	Council's Governance and Administration expenditure is too high in comparison to other councils.
P312	Efficiency of Council's operations	Internal expenditure too high	Council should cut back on providing lunches and Shire tours.
P302	Infrastructure / Services	More services/improvements should be offered	Other councils provide better services to the community e.g. free, biannual kerbside clean ups.

Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P307	Infrastructure / Services	More services/improvements should be offered	Would like remedial action to be undertaken for Bong Bong Street, Bowral as the Draft Asset Management Plan indicates that only planning for such action is anticipated at this stage.
P3-17	Infrastructure / Services	More services/improvements should be offered	Objects to the lack of alignment between the high rates they are expected to pay and the poor level of service delivered by Council along their road. Would be happier if level of service improved to reflect amount of rates paid.
P3-21	Infrastructure / Services	More services/improvements should be offered	The rates in the Wingecarribee Shire are already higher than they have experienced in other areas and yet this comes without the same level of services offered. Notes that in other areas free kerbside clean-ups or free trip days were offered throughout the year but Wingecarribee does not offer this.
P3-28	Infrastructure / Services	More services/improvements should be offered	The money raised from rates could be better spent on improvements in the area rather than paying for a predetermined result.
P3-32	Infrastructure / Services	More services/improvements should be offered	Questions whether it would be possible for Council to improve facilities and decrease rates.
P3-43	Infrastructure / Services	More services/improvements should be offered	Concerned that there is no provision in the draft Strategic Assets Management Plan for widening or upgrading Bowral street, Bowral as a consequence of the Retford Park development. As there is no provision for retail facilities in the development the increased traffic will be considerable, and additional expenditure essential.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P306	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Organisational savings	The key is sustainability and Council should focus on creating savings, particularly by ceasing any non-core functions it currently conducts/provides.
P306	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Benefits of amalgamation	If Council cannot achieve necessary savings on a stand alone basis, then it should actively explore the benefits of amalgamation.
P3-11	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Support growth of industry	Council should support industries looking to develop in the area (e.g. Hume Coal) as this would be an alternate method of generating money for the region.
P3-15 (3)	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Organisational savings	As the interest rates are so low it would be a good time to engage in some limited borrowing to fund essential needs.
P3-18	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Organisational savings	Council needs to become more efficient and use the funds it already receives in a more effective way rather than increase rates.
P3-19	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Enable savings by better utilising community groups	The SRV Information Kit should have included areas of savings that could have been made by the community e.g. community working bees. Also, there is no accounting for the money Council makes through Development Applications.
P3-32	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Organisational savings	The State Government change to introduce funding from all rate payers towards the RFS and SES should provide additional funding, and Council should publicly acknowledge this additional revenue.
P3-32	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Productivity improvements	Questions why Council needs so much money and why this cannot be obtained through developer costs as this produces perpetual rates from new residents.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-32	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Land value increase	As the land values of properties have already significantly increased Council will receive an increase in revenue, so any rate variation will be compounded by natural growth.
P3-41	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Land value increase	The increase in land value will already lead to a large increase in rates. Therefore, the proposed review of the rating scheme should be delayed until the new Council is elected and IPART is finalised by the State Government.
P3-44	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Organisational savings	Council should live within its means by trimming excess spending on non-essentials, city twinning programs and expensive legal cases etc.
P3-47	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Organisational savings	Council needs to cut back on unnecessary spending which support only minorities. Council should spend money on areas where the whole problem is fixed (e.g. not just for sections of road at different times), divert heavy traffic off the main roadways(with proper detours) and develop a priority list for future expenditure which all residents support
P3-49	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Land value increase	The SRV proposal is misleading as it fails to include rate increases resulting from revaluation effective from 2016/17. Council should clearly restate its case for the SRV after allowing for revaluation effects. The comparison with adjoining councils is therefore effectively meaningless.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
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Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-49	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Productivity improvements	Council is currently proposing to sell off part of an unmade public road, revenue from which will accrue to the State with no financial benefit to Council. This land could be more responsibly leased, with market rent going to council and future development options retained.
P3-50	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Productivity improvements	Council does not run as effectively as it could, and therefore should look for other savings rather than increase rates.
P3-51	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Organisational savings	Before considering a special rate variation Council should look at living within its means and address financial problems of over spending and a lack of cost saving measures e.g. reduction in staff, salary freeze, not investing into revenue returning assets.
P3-52	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Organisational savings	Would rather have Council look at its spending and make cuts where necessary, and if required a small increase in rates would be acceptable.
P3-56	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Organisational savings	Council should identify and engage in more effective strategies – and review the effectiveness of existing strategies - which will lead to the size of the overall revenue pie increasing. Queries what priority has been accorded to this.
P3-56	SRV rate rise	Propose additional SRV rate rise options	With reference to the three scenarios proposed over a four year period, questions what options Council has considered with respect to enabling its citizens to meet any increased costs over a different time period – whether from rates, or from any other source.

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Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P306	Concerns about affordability	Low income earner	The proposed rate variation has been suggested during a time of low inflation and earnings growth. Many ratepayers in the Wingecarribee Shire are relatively low income earners or self-funded retirees unentitled to rate concessions.
P306	Concerns about affordability	Impact from previous rate variation	This proposed variation has come shortly after a previous rate variation that had a significant cumulative effect on ratepayers.
P308	Concerns about affordability	Low income earner	Most ratepayers are on a fixed income and cannot absorb rate increases of four or five times inflation. Council should live within its means.
P3-11	Concerns about affordability	Increase in cost of living	Any increase in rates will be difficult for ratepayers to accommodate as the cost of living in general continues to increase and many residents have fixed incomes.
P3-14	Concerns about affordability	Increase in cost of living	Every year Council states the need to increase rates; however, this does not correlate with CPI salary increases which makes it hard to keep up with payments.
P3-15 (3)	Concerns about affordability	Rate increase is higher than inflation	The proposed levels of increase will mean many residents may have to sacrifice creature comforts or sell. The proposed SRV increases are excessive considering inflation is currently less than 2% p.a.
P3-15 (3)	Concerns about affordability	Rate increase is higher than inflation	For many years Council's rates and levies have been rising at levels well above inflation (per attachment)

Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-18	Concerns about affordability	Low income earner	Many families will not be able to afford proposed increases in rates. Although Council may achieve better infrastructure, it will be at the cost of increasing the number of financially deprived families.
P3-19	Concerns about affordability	Rate increase is higher than inflation	The proposed rate increases are higher than inflation, and so if Council refuses to increase the pensioner rebate people such as self-funded retirees will not be able to afford it.
P3-19	Concerns about affordability	High rates compared with other NSW councils	If Council achieves the proposed rate variation Wingecarribee Shire will have the highest rates of any nearby region and possibly all of NSW.
P3-22	Concerns about affordability	Low income earner	Cannot afford an increase in rates.
P3-24	Concerns about affordability	Increase in cost of living	Concerned that the land values of properties have already significantly increased, creating an affordability issue that will become an even bigger issue with the addition of a SRV. Considers that Council will receive enough of a rate increase through the land valuations.
P3-29	Concerns about affordability	Self-funded retiree / pensioner	Commends what Council is trying to achieve; however, wonders whether it has considered the impact a rate increase will have on residents living only on pensioner income.
P3-36	Efficiency of Council's operations	Concerns about transparency, accountability and/or financial management	It is not sustainable to increase revenue to meet expenditure. Council is beginning to treat rates in the same way that it treats water and sewerage i.e. sets its income to match its costs.
P3-47	Concerns about affordability	Increase in cost of living	The cost of living is increasing and things are increasingly difficult for people, especially those on a fixed income.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-51	Concerns about affordability	Impact on local businesses	Council's financial plan will have negative repercussions on local businesses, increasing the number of empty shops, unemployment, vandalism and crime.
P3-51	Concerns about affordability	Impact on local businesses	The draft plan does not address helping local businesses survive and suggests providing more affordable land.
P3-52	Concerns about affordability	Self-funded retiree / pensioner	Disappointed with Council as they think the options for a rate increase are inappropriate. As they are a self-funded retiree and considering the cost of living in general, it is becoming unaffordable to remain living where they are.
P3-55	Concerns about affordability	Self-funded retiree / pensioner	The proposed rate increases will have a considerable impact on ratepayers especially those on fixed incomes, regardless of the pensioner rebate.
P3-55	Concerns about affordability	Increase in cost of living	Council rates have increased by 7.81% over a 15 year period, which is consistently above the cost-of-living increase each year.
P305	General criticisms relating to Local Government / FFTF / WSC being deemed 'fit'	N/A	A fairer system of revenue raising should be introduced for NSW and Council should lobby the state government about such an objective.
P3-15	General criticisms relating to Local Government / FFTF / WSC being deemed 'fit'	N/A	Comments that the September and December quarter Wingecarribee Today newsletters were not yet on the website, making it hard for people to stay up to date with local matters.
P3-15 (3)	General criticisms relating to Local Government / FFTF / WSC being deemed 'fit'	N/A	Was of the understanding that Council has already been determined as fit for the future and that this indicates Council's finances are satisfactory as is and an SRV is not required.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-23	General criticisms relating to Local Government / FFTF / WSC being deemed 'fit'	N/A	Suggest Council become less bureaucratic and "merge" with more pragmatic, less idealistic and more contemporaneous concerns.
P3-32	General criticisms relating to Local Government / FFTF / WSC being deemed 'fit'	N/A	Queries the slogan 'Fit for the Future' and who developed it. Asks if it was the State Government and if so, questions why Council is subservient to State Government and wasn't opposed to this process from the beginning.
P3-34	General criticisms relating to Local Government / FFTF / WSC being deemed 'fit'	N/A	Council in its current state is not fit for the future. Wingecarribee Shire Council should not be forced to amalgamate but rather it should be dispersed among neighbouring Councils.
P3-46	General criticisms relating to Local Government / FFTF / WSC being deemed 'fit'	N/A	This is an attempt by Council to circumvent the present system of rates set by the State Government by trying to obtain electorate approval to increase rates.
P3-46	General criticisms relating to Local Government / FFTF / WSC being deemed 'fit'	N/A	The plan has merit however this is an undesirable method of seeking a rate increase outside of the increases set by the state. If Council is unaware it is acting inconsistently with the Local Government Act then it should be put under administration.
P3-47	General criticisms relating to Local Government / FFTF / WSC being deemed 'fit'	N/A	Mergers may be the solution if local councils cannot maintain reasonable services at fair costs. Bigger councils may have more power with the state government on roads, especially in growth areas such as Wingecarribee Shire
P3-51	Alternative funding and/or saving strategies suggested	Organisational savings	Council currently wastes ratepayers money on court cases when this money could be better spent on infrastructure. Council also needs to address issues with workers compensation.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-09 (2)	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Does not support the proposed 'maintain' and 'improve' rate increases.
P312	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Rates should stay exactly where they are.
P3-45	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Opposed to such a large rate rise because Council guaranteed that it would not increase rates after a previous rate increase. Council should be consistent with this previous undertaking regardless of the fit for the future process.
P3-55	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Objects to rate increase
P301	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Objects to a special rate variation
P306	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Opposed to the special rate increase.
P3-13	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Supports Scenario 1: Deteriorate, with the only rate increase arising from rate pegging.
P3-18	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Opposed to any rate increase.
P3-21	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Opposed to any rate or service fee increase. Rather, Council should spend the money it already receives more wisely.
P3-22	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	The current level of services provided by Council is adequate.
P3-25	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Opposed to the proposed 'maintain' and 'improve' rate increases.
P3-26	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Opposed to the proposed 'maintain' and 'improve' rate increases.
P3-27	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Opposed to the proposed 'maintain' and 'improve' rate increases.
P3-28	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Opposed to the proposed 'maintain' and 'improve' rate increases.
P3-31	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Opposed to the proposed 'maintain' and 'improve' rate increases. Also disappointed that they were not contacted for the survey.
P3-33	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Does not support the proposed 'maintain' and 'improve' rate increases.

Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-48	SRV rate rise	Oppose rate rise	Rates should not exceed 2% under any circumstances.
P3-32	Infrastructure / Services	Particular roads/areas neglected either historically or in the SRV proposal	Council has been neglectful of its infrastructure in the past as money that should have been spent on maintenance was invested instead. Questions whether Council has a five and 10 year plan for its infrastructure and if so, would like to see it.
P3-13	Infrastructure / Services	Particular roads/areas neglected either historically or in the SRV proposal	Council currently wastes money on unnecessary projects and negates important ones. For example, signs were placed on the Moss Vale Road roundabout at Bowral yet they have no footpath outside their property. Also unsatisfied with the general state of roads and the amount of money spent on Tulip Time every year.
P3-14	Infrastructure / Services	Particular roads/areas neglected either historically or in the SRV proposal	In 21 years they have rarely witnessed maintenance on their street.
P3-14	Infrastructure / Services	Particular roads/areas neglected either historically or in the SRV proposal	Concerned that Council continues to allow ready-mix concrete trucks to take a short cut through Harley street in order to access a new estate, which damages the road and paving.
P3-21	Infrastructure / Services	Particular roads/areas neglected either historically or in the SRV proposal	The roads in Bundanoon are in bad condition with deep potholes regularly occurring, and Council does not respond to these problems quickly enough. In particular, Ellsmore Road is frequently impassable, and should be properly fixed. Expresses concerns that this has not been done as a result of a lobby group in the area that want to reduce traffic near their houses.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-32	Efficiency of Council's operations	Perceptions of staff productivity	Comments on the productivity of Council outdoor staff i.e. machinery is under utilised, staff do not start early enough and skill sets of staff are mismanaged e.g. plumber being used as a traffic controller. Also comments that the outdoor staff are well provided for (e.g. portable crib room) and so it would be good if the productivity matched the facilities.
P3-32	Efficiency of Council's operations	Perceptions of staff productivity	Questions how many staff positions are dedicated to applying for State/Federal Government for funds after weather events e.g. severe storms, as this is an excessive focus on getting something for nothing.
P3-15	SRV rate rise	Propose additional SRV rate rise options	Questions what the logic is behind the three options and why there is such a big gap between the first and second percentages. Suggests offering two other options - a rate increase of 15% or 25%
P3-15 (3)	Investing in our Future Project	Query about community consultation methods	Questions whether Council held any Town Hall type meetings at which residents could ask questions and raise verbal objections. Does not recall seeing them advertised.
P3-49	Infrastructure / Services	Query about future increases in water and sewerage charges	Observes that there is a significant increase in expenditure on water and sewerage from 2017/18 and the funding for this is not part of the special rate variation. Questions whether rate payers are going to see major increases in charges in these areas as well.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-56	Infrastructure / Services	Query as to whether Council's forward planning is adequately considering technological change, job creation and environmentally-friendly transport options	Comments that the Shire is not well served by technology – including broadband and questions what steps are being taken to ensure that the shire is not relatively disadvantaged with respect to broadband speeds, and mobile phone access.
P3-56	Infrastructure / Services	Query as to whether Council's forward planning is adequately considering technological change, job creation and environmentally-friendly transport options	It is not clear that the shire has a positive plan to actively improve these services in a timely manner so that high technology (with low environmental impact) jobs can be created, and sectors such as education, agriculture, the arts, the aged, medicine and allied health, retail, and so on, can expand and thrive. Questions how this is to be achieved.
P3-56	Infrastructure / Services	Query as to whether Council's forward planning is adequately considering technological change, job creation and environmentally-friendly transport options	There is much information available in the SRV Information Kit about physical infrastructure - roads, footpaths, etc. – but insufficient information about how people movement is seriously and positively integrated into Council's planning, in a carbon constrained world. Questions how this is occurring.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-56	Infrastructure / Services	Query as to whether Council's forward planning is adequately considering technological change, job creation and environmentally-friendly transport options	Changes to people's preferences in people movement will involve a paradigm shift from reliance on the motor vehicle to alternative modes. Higher priority needs to be given to public transport – including access to more efficient train services – and improved shared pedestrian/cycle paths, with effective and safe linkages between town centres, and to schools, shops, railway stations, etc. Questions how this paradigm shift will be achieved, and what the impact to shire revenue will be.
P3-56	Efficiency of Council's operations	Query regarding how Council evaluates the success of its initiatives	Notes that Council has a number of worthy initiatives and asks how these will be evaluated to ensure their continuing success.
P3-16	SRV rate rise	Recommend SRV proposal should be a Council election issue	The best way to proceed is to put off the SRV until the next Council election, after which time there should be a referendum held on the matter so that the community has a democratic opportunity to voice its opinion.
P3-30	SRV rate rise	Recommend SRV proposal should be a Council election issue	Councillors should take responsibility for their actions by taking any proposal to seek a special rate variation to the electorate at the next elections. This will leave any enactment of a special rate variation open to challenge.
P3-10	Efficiency of Council's operations	Reduce staff /committee numbers	In order to save money Council should first consider reducing the number of staff it employs and either reduce or eliminate committees. If Council were to be run more like a private business it could save more money.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-36	Efficiency of Council's operations	Reduce staff /committee numbers	The number of Council employees in relation to the number of ratepayers has changed a great deal and outpaced population growth.
P3-15 (2)	Investing in our Future Project	Request for more information online	Requests the annual dollar charges (rates and special levies) for a "mean" value property in the Shire in the year 2000/2001 and how those values changed in each subsequent year. If every year cannot be provided requests they receive the figures for at least: 2001, 2006, 2010, 2015.
P3-56	Efficiency of Council's operations	Request that Council more closely analyse its expenditure with reference to desirable environmental and economic characteristics of the Shire	All of Council's expenditure needs to be closely examined to ensure that there is no cross-subsidisation. Queries whether this has occurred and what methodology was employed.
P3-56	Efficiency of Council's operations	Request that Council more closely analyse its expenditure with reference to desirable environmental and economic characteristics of the Shire	Before making significant decisions with substantial impacts to the general community, Council needs to engage in a full examination of all of its costs, using an accepted methodology such as activity based costing, to ensure that every sector meets its appropriate share of all costs, including overheads and indirect costs. Also questions why in the absence of reassurance about the level of sophistication of the methodology employed for examining its costs, rates being expected to do all of the heavy lifting.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-56	Efficiency of Council's operations	Request that Council more closely analyse its expenditure with reference to desirable environmental and economic characteristics of the Shire	The attractiveness of the shire is built around its natural resources and environment. Questions what measures are taken to ensure that all expenditure – whether for existing activities, or new initiative – are tested against this.
P3-56	Efficiency of Council's operations	Request that Council more closely analyse its expenditure with reference to desirable environmental and economic characteristics of the Shire	Suggests that positive initiatives – such as the Joadja Food and Wine Cluster – should be funded, and actively identified and fostered, and negative proposals – such that proposed by Hume Coal/Posco – should be actively discouraged. Wonders at the extent to which this is identified in Council's budget, and how effective it has been to this stage.
P3-56	Efficiency of Council's operations	Request that Council more closely analyse its expenditure with reference to desirable environmental and economic characteristics of the Shire	Asks what measures are taken to ensure that all expenditure – whether for existing activities, or new initiative – are tested against considerations designed to protect and enhance the natural environment.
P3-56	Efficiency of Council's operations	Request that Council review its services for potential efficiencies	Suggests Council needs to identify strategies which will enable existing services to be more cost effectively delivered, and savings redirected. Asks to what extent has Council engaged in partnerships with adjoining councils, as well as the private sector. Also asks about the effectiveness of these partnerships, and what plans there are for extending this approach.
P3-35	Infrastructure / Services	Request that Council review its services for potential efficiencies	Objects to any increase until Council operates and its services are delivered more efficiently.

Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-36	Infrastructure / Services	Request that Council review its services for potential efficiencies	Several Council services overlap with other agencies and therefore should be considered for removal.
P3-15	Infrastructure / Services	Resources wasted on infrastructure of limited use	Council currently wastes money by conducting seemingly unnecessary works. e.g. re-sealing works at Old Illawarra Highway (past Sutton Forest Anglican Church) and Coneys Hatch Lane and the end of Golden Vale Road. Both these roads are cul-de-sacs and experience very limited traffic. Requests an explanation as to why these works were done.
P3-32	Infrastructure / Services	RMS should take on more responsibility	All through roads should be transferred to the RMS so that these become their responsibility to maintain.
P303	SRV rate rise	Support higher rate rise to improve services	Supports Council applying for SRV Scenario 3, Improve
P304	SRV rate rise	Support higher rate rise to improve services	Supports Council applying for SRV Scenario 3, Improve
P3-37	SRV rate rise	Support higher rate rise to improve services	Supports Option 3: Improve
P3-43	SRV rate rise	Support higher rate rise to improve services	Supportive of Option 3: Improve as the present generation is morally obligated to maintain and provide appropriate infrastructure for future generations. Condition of support is that funds raised will only be used for projects specified in the draft Strategic Assets Management Plan and associated documents.
P3-50	SRV rate rise	Support higher rate rise to improve services	Supports Scenario 2: Maintain, however is opposed to Scenario 3: Improve.

**Investing in Our Future - Phase 3 Summary of Submissions
February 2016**

Submission ID	Theme	Subtheme	Summary of Comments/Issues
P3-20	Infrastructure / Services	Works not carried out efficiently	Unwilling to pay higher rates unless Council fixes problem it created by digging a ditch along Colo Rd, Colo Vale which now fills with water. They have got a handy man in to try and fix the issue for them but it is the same all along the road and something Council should fix.
P3-35	Infrastructure / Services	Works not carried out efficiently	Prefers if money was spent on recruiting and training innovative, resourceful and dedicated staff rather than on badly planned projects.

Appendix 9

Media Coverage

October 2015 to February 2016

Media Coverage

October 2015 to February 2016

Newspaper Advertising

PHASE 2: Information about the SRV was included in Council's weekly advertising page in the Southern Highland News on 7, 14, 21 and 28 October 2015. Separate display advertising about the SRV was placed in the Southern Highland News on 7, 9, 12, 26, 28, and 30 October 2015 as well as the Highlands Post on 15 and 29 October 2015.

PHASE 3: Information was included in Council's weekly advertising page in the Southern Highland News on 16 and 23 December 2015 plus 6, 13, 20 and 27 January 2016. Separate display advertisements were placed in the Southern Highland News on 16 December 2015 plus 13 and 27 January 2016 as well as in the Highlands Post on 17 December 2015 plus 14 and 21 January 2016.

Weekly Newspaper Columns (General Manager and Mayor)

PHASE 2: Columns were placed in the Wednesday edition of Southern Highland News featuring information about the Special Rate Variation on 14, 21 and 28 October 2015. These were written from the Mayor or General Manager's perspective and were themed.

PHASE 3: Columns appearing in the Southern Highland News for the General Manager and Mayor mentioned the opportunity to view and make submissions about the exhibited documents, attend information kiosks or attend relevant Council meetings on 9 and 16 December 2015, 20 January and 3 February 2016.

Media releases

08/10/2015 *Information Kiosks kick off Special Rate Variation discussions*
19/10/2015 *Special Rate Variation Information Kiosks continue*

20/10/2015 *Wingecarribee Shire LGA to remain unchanged*
11/12/2015 *Council responds to increase focus on assets*
08/01/2016 *IPART announces 2016/17 rate pegging amount*
14/01/2016 *Information Kiosks to discuss Special Rate Variation projects*
25/01/2016 *Land valuations and your Council rates*
27/01/2016 *Final Information Kiosk before 1 February deadline*
10/02/2016 *Council vote to apply for improve Special Rate Variation*

Southern Highland News Articles

21/10/2015 *No amalgamation for council*
23/10/2015 *Rate heartache for residents*
28/10/2015 *The importance of independence (Editorial)*
11/12/2015 *Rate rise plans continue*
15/01/2016 *Action to avoid budget deficit*
18/01/2016 *Ask questions about the future of the Highlands*
29/01/2016 *Put your words into action (Editorial)*
29/01/2016 *Time running out to have your say*

Southern Highland News

'Letters to the Editor'

21/10/2015 Attributed to [REDACTED]
28/10/2015 Attributed to [REDACTED]
16/12/2015 Attributed to [REDACTED]
13/01/2016 Attributed to [REDACTED]
18/01/2016 Attributed to [REDACTED]
22/01/2016 Attributed to [REDACTED]
27/01/2015 Attributed to [REDACTED]
29/01/2016 Attributed to [REDACTED]
29/01/2016 Attributed to [REDACTED]

Latte Life (monthly newspaper)

December 2015 *The added cost of infrastructure*

Appendix 10



***'Investing in our Future'* Fact Sheets & Other Exhibited Materials**

(Including Council Reports)

Exhibited materials made available on the Wingecarribee Shire Council consultation website can be located via the link www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/SRV

Documents available:











Council report : 10 February 2016

-  [REPORT: 10 February 2016 \(407 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Attachment 1: Community Engagement Report \(13.8 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)



Council report and exhibition docs: 9 December 2015

-  [REPORT: 9 December 2015 \(253 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Attachment 1: Community Engagement Report | Investing In Our Future \(12.9 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Community Engagement Report | Investing In Our Future \(without attachments\) \(959 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Attachment 2: Draft Delivery Program 2013-17 \(revised Dec 2015\) \(2.97 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Attachment 3: Long Term Financial Plan 2016-2026 \(1.33 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Attachment 4: Draft Strategic Asset Management Plan 2016-2026 \(2.13 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

Stage 2: Special Rate Variation Proposal info

-  [Investing In Our Future | Special Rate Variation booklet \(386 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [The options and their varying impacts on assets and service quality \(4.48 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Financial Fact Sheet \(408 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Budget fact sheet \(400 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Buildings Fact Sheet \(725 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Drainage Fact Sheet \(890 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Environment Levy Fact Sheet \(1.67 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Infrastructure Recovery Scheme fact sheet \(326 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Open Spaces fact sheet \(760 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Transport Assets fact sheet \(774 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)


Stage 1: Infrastructure Assets

-  [ASSETS Info pack for Levels of Service consultation SEPT2015 \(6.44 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Survey results : Asset Management SEPT2015 \(3.17 MB\) \(pdf\)](#)

Community Satisfaction with services and facilities

-  [Community Satisfaction Survey results](#)

Wingecarribee : Fit for the Future

-  [Map showing size of Shire compared to Sydney \(628 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)
-  [Fit for the Future reforms](#)