



Hunters Hill Council Special Rate Variation Research – 2021 October 11th Summary Presentation

Prepared by: Micromex Research
Date: October 2021



Background & Methodology

Why?

- Identify the community's overall level of satisfaction with Council performance and community assets
- Measure awareness levels and information received about the Special Variation (SV) of rates
- Measure levels of support and preference for SV options

How?

- Telephone survey (landline and mobile) to N=400 residents
- We use a 5 point scale (e.g. 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive)
- Greatest margin of error +/- 4.9%

When?

- Fieldwork conducted 23rd September – 1st October 2021

Please see Appendix B for detailed methodology



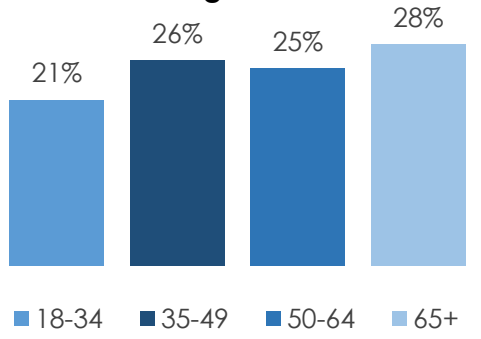
Sample Profile

The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2016 ABS community profile of Hunters Hill Council.

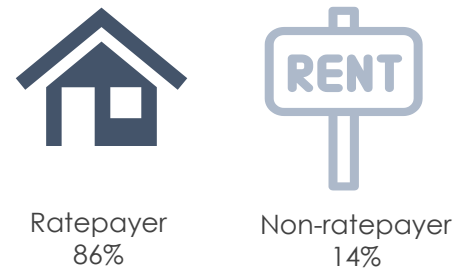
Gender



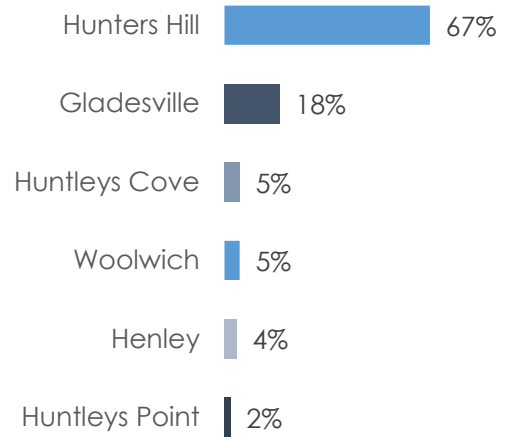
Age



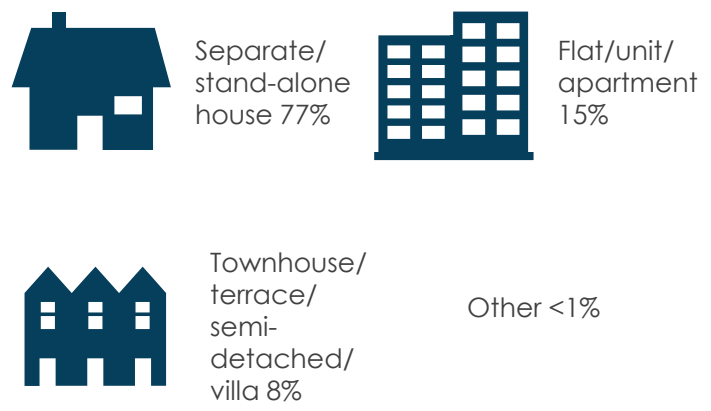
Ratepayer status



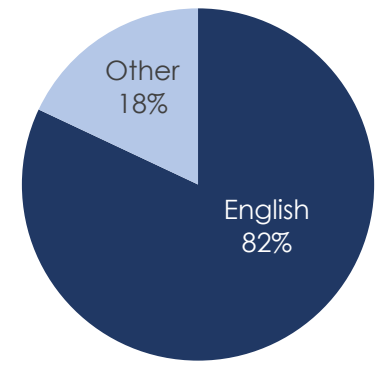
Suburb



Housing Type



Language spoken at home



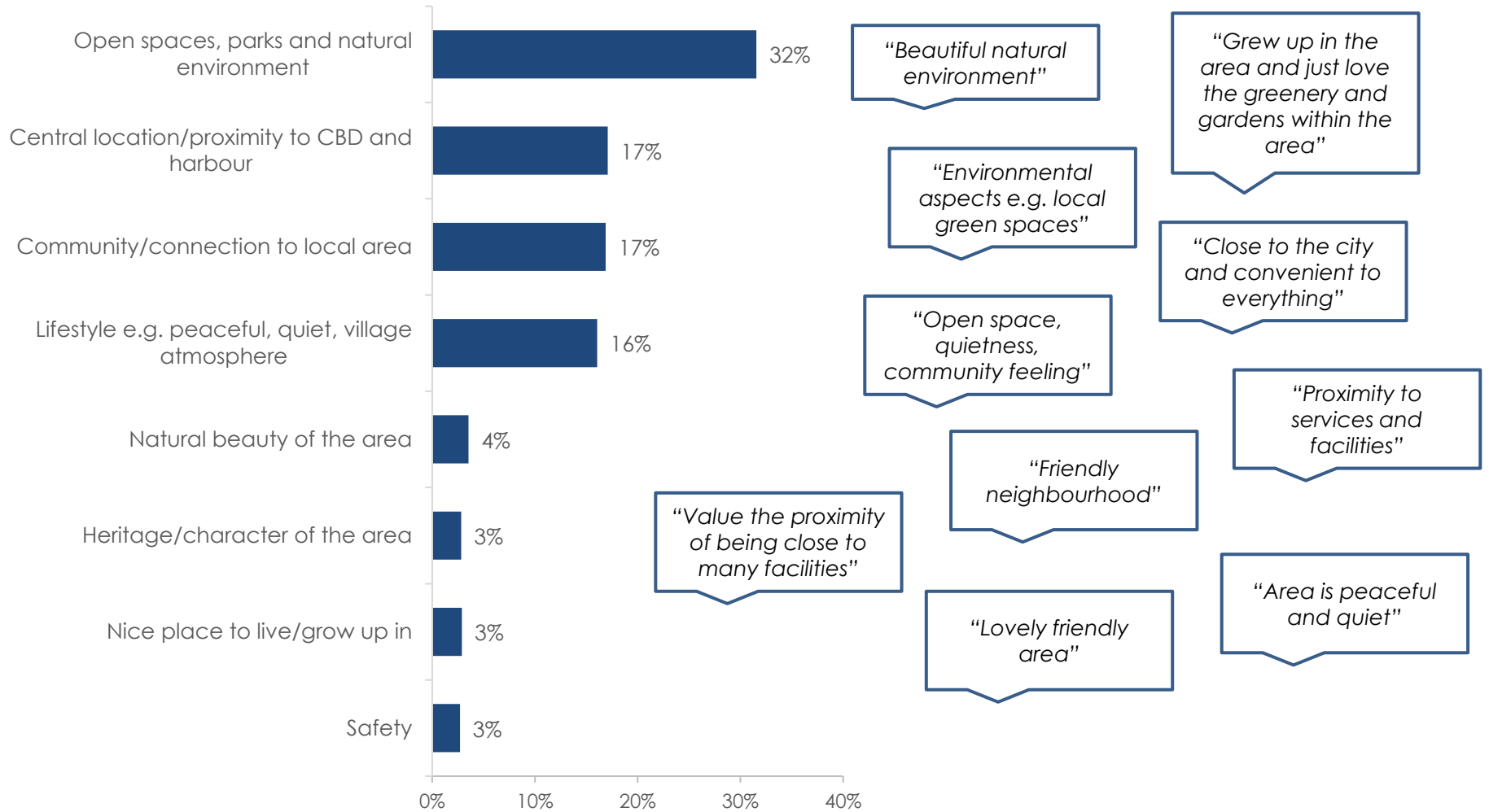


Living in Hunter's Hill LGA



What Residents Value About Living in Hunters Hill LGA

Q2a. Thinking generally about living in the Hunters Hill local government area, what do you value the most about living here?



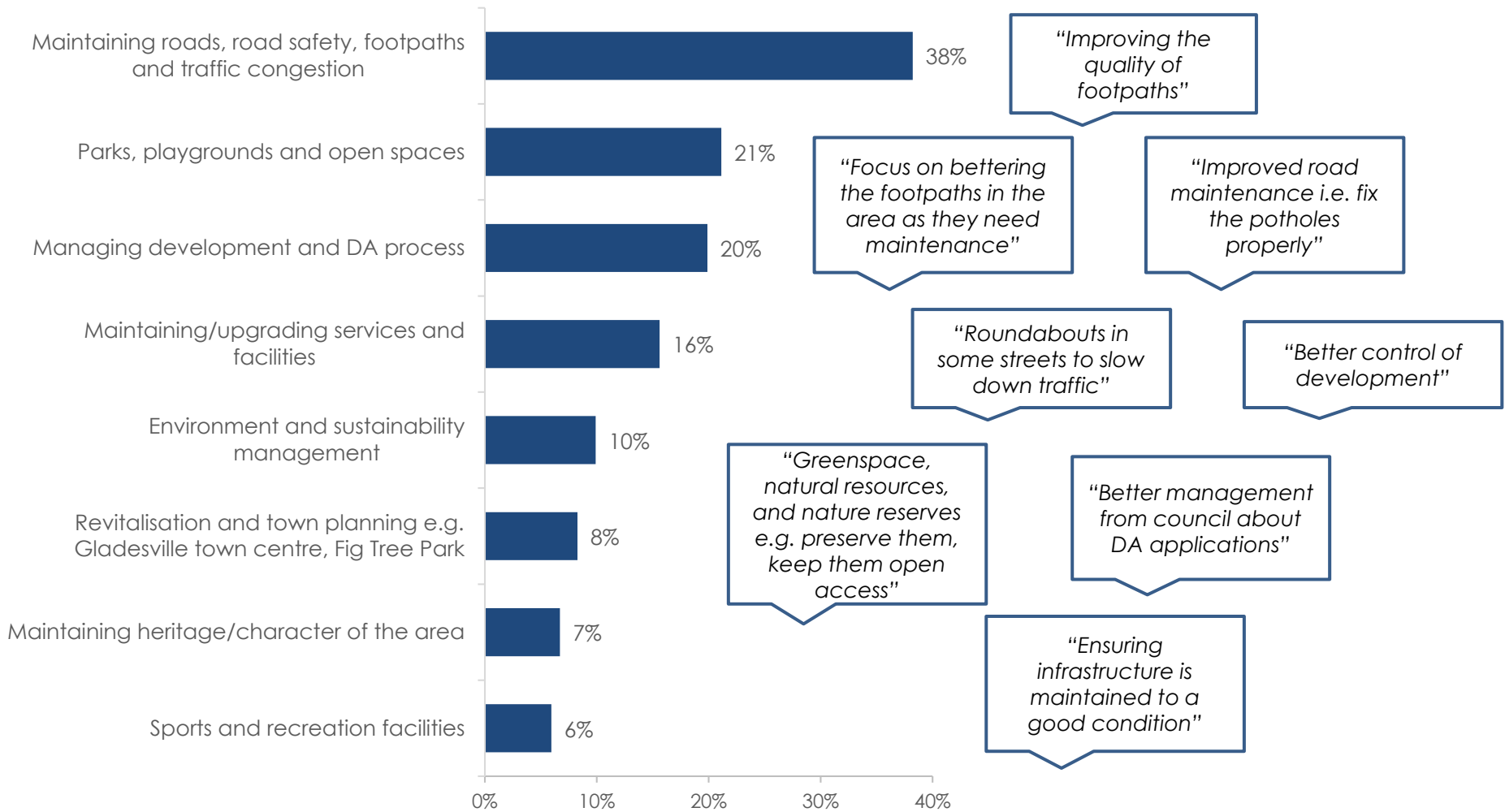
Base: N = 400

Please see Appendix A for full list of responses

Residents in the Hunters Hill area value the open spaces, parks and natural environment. Location, sense of community and lifestyle were also common responses.

Top Priorities Over the Next Four Years

Q2b. Thinking about the next four years, what do you think are the top priorities for Council to focus on?



Base: N = 400

Please see Appendix A for full list of responses

38% of residents believe that road maintenance/safety, footpaths and traffic congestion should be the top priority area for Council to focus on in the next 4 years. Parks, playgrounds and open spaces, and development management were also frequently mentioned.



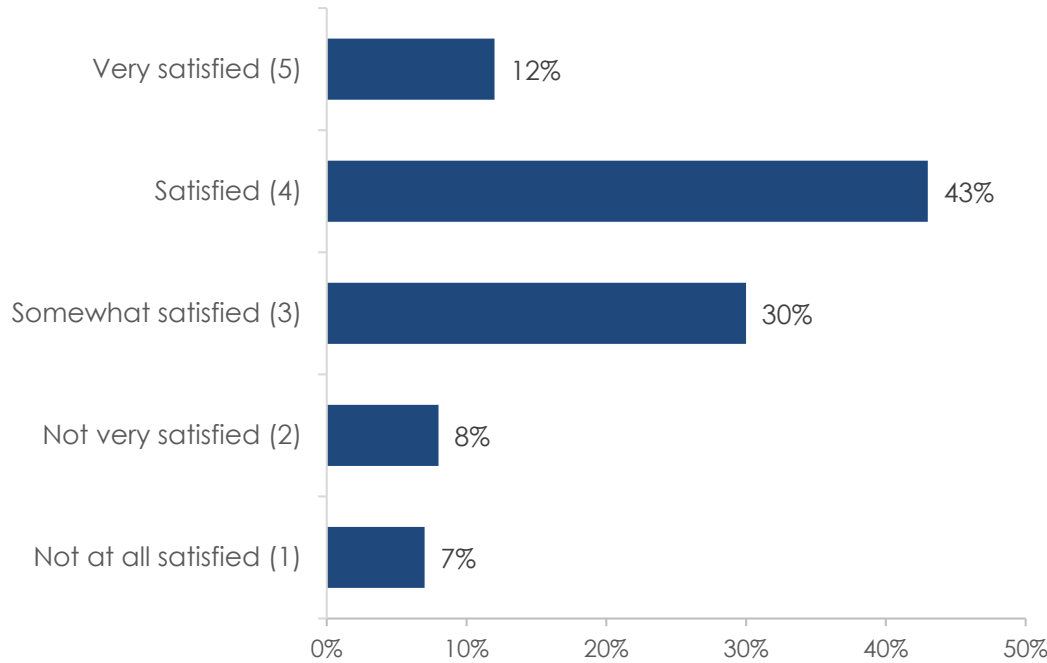
Satisfaction with Council



Overall Satisfaction

Q3a. 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	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	3.43	3.37	3.50	3.60	3.41	3.32	3.44	3.38	3.79▲
T3 Box	85%	82%	87%	87%	88%	80%	84%	84%	91%
Base	400	188	212	83	105	99	114	343	57



	Aware of SRV	Not aware/ Not sure
Mean rating	3.28	3.51
T3 Box	80%	87%
Base	126	274

	Hunters Hill Council	Micromex LGA Metro Benchmark
Mean rating	3.43	3.55
T3 Box	85%	89%
Base	400	37,950

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

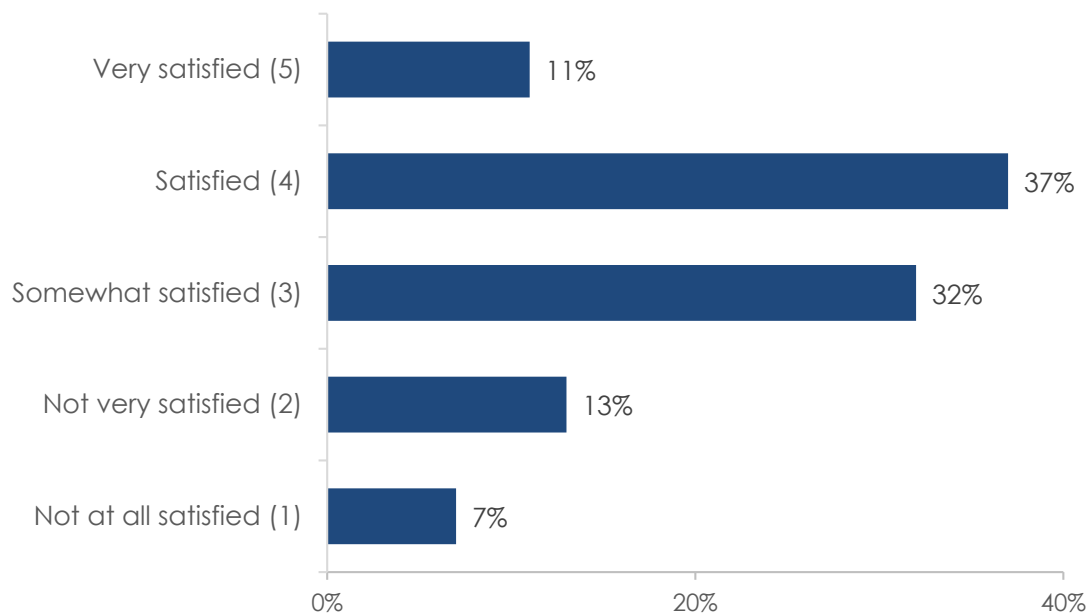
T3 box = somewhat satisfied/satisfied/very satisfied
Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

Overall, 85% of residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the performance of Council over the last 12 months, with non-ratepayers being significantly more satisfied.

Satisfaction with the Quality of Assets

Q3b. Thinking generally about community assets provided by Council, which include local roads, footpaths, cycle ways, parks and playgrounds, public buildings, public toilets, libraries, etc. 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+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	3.32	3.24	3.39	3.60	3.20	3.16	3.37	3.28	3.54
T3 Box	80%	78%	82%	89%	77%	73%▼	83%	79%	86%
Base	400	188	212	83	105	99	114	343	57



	Aware of SRV	Not aware/ Not sure
Mean rating	3.15▼	3.40
T3 Box	73%▼	84%
Base	126	274

T3 box = somewhat satisfied/satisfied/very satisfied

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

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

80% of Hunters Hill residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the current quality of council-provided community assets..

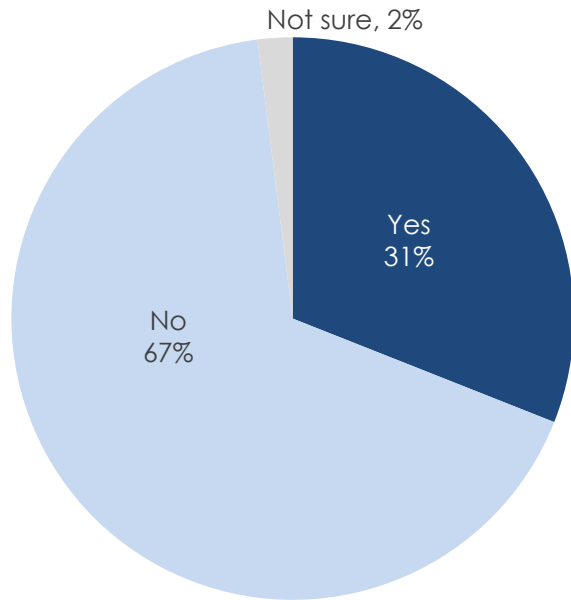
Awareness of SV



Awareness of a Special Variation of Rates

Q6a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Yes %	31%	31%	32%	5%▼	30%	37%	47%▲	34%▲	18%
Base	400	188	212	83	105	99	114	343	57



Base: N = 400

	Hunters Hill Council	Micromex LGA Benchmark - Metro
Yes %	31%	30%
Base	400	2,431

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

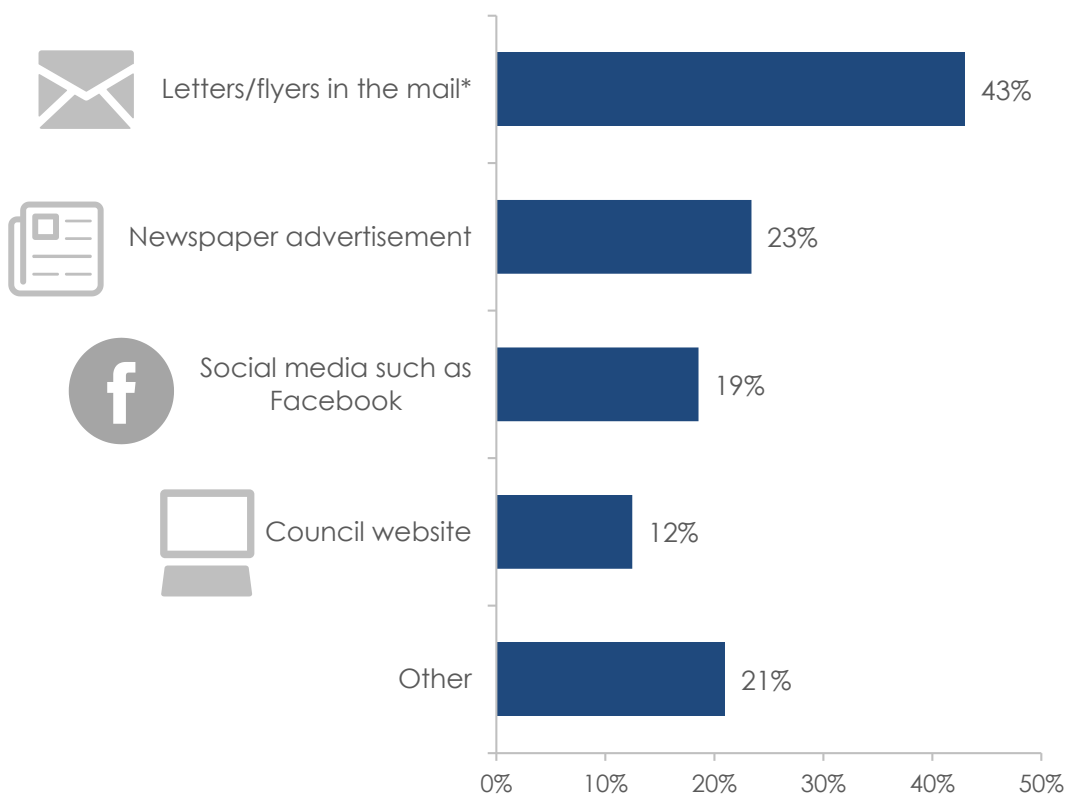
31% of residents were previously aware that Hunters Hill Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation. Older residents (65+) and ratepayers were significantly more likely to be aware of the SRV prior to the call.

Source of Information on a Special Variation of Rates

Q6a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?

Q6b. (If 'yes' on Q6a), How were you informed of the Special Rate Variation?

Of those aware of the SRV



Other (specified)	Count
Word of mouth	9
Council newsletter (print and email)	7
Email	7
Local media	2
Phone call	2
Signage	1
Social groups	1

Base: N = 126

*Note: 'Letters/flyers in the mail' was not a prompted option

Non-digital methods of communication were the most common ways for those aware of the SRV to be informed, with 43% mentioning they were informed via letters/flyers in the mail and 23% were informed via newspaper advertisements.

Support and Preference for Options



Concept Statement

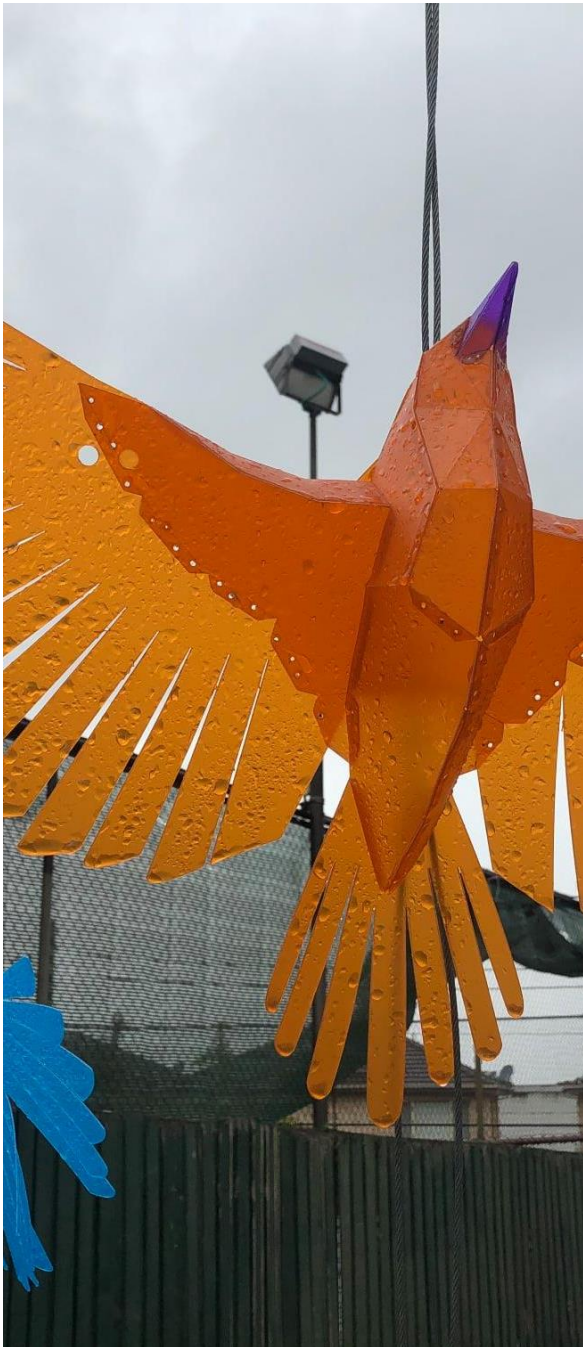
Over recent years, Council has implemented a range of productivity savings, reduced costs across our operations, but there are no easy solutions to addressing this increasing funding gap. If Council does not address this gap now, our community assets will deteriorate. To address this situation, councils are able to apply for rate increases above rate peg. This is called a Special Variation to Rates (SV).

...

Council is considering a number of options, including applying for a permanent SRV, there are 4 options which ratepayers can consider. Each option will have varying impact on what Council can deliver.

Council wants to get community feedback on the following 4 options:

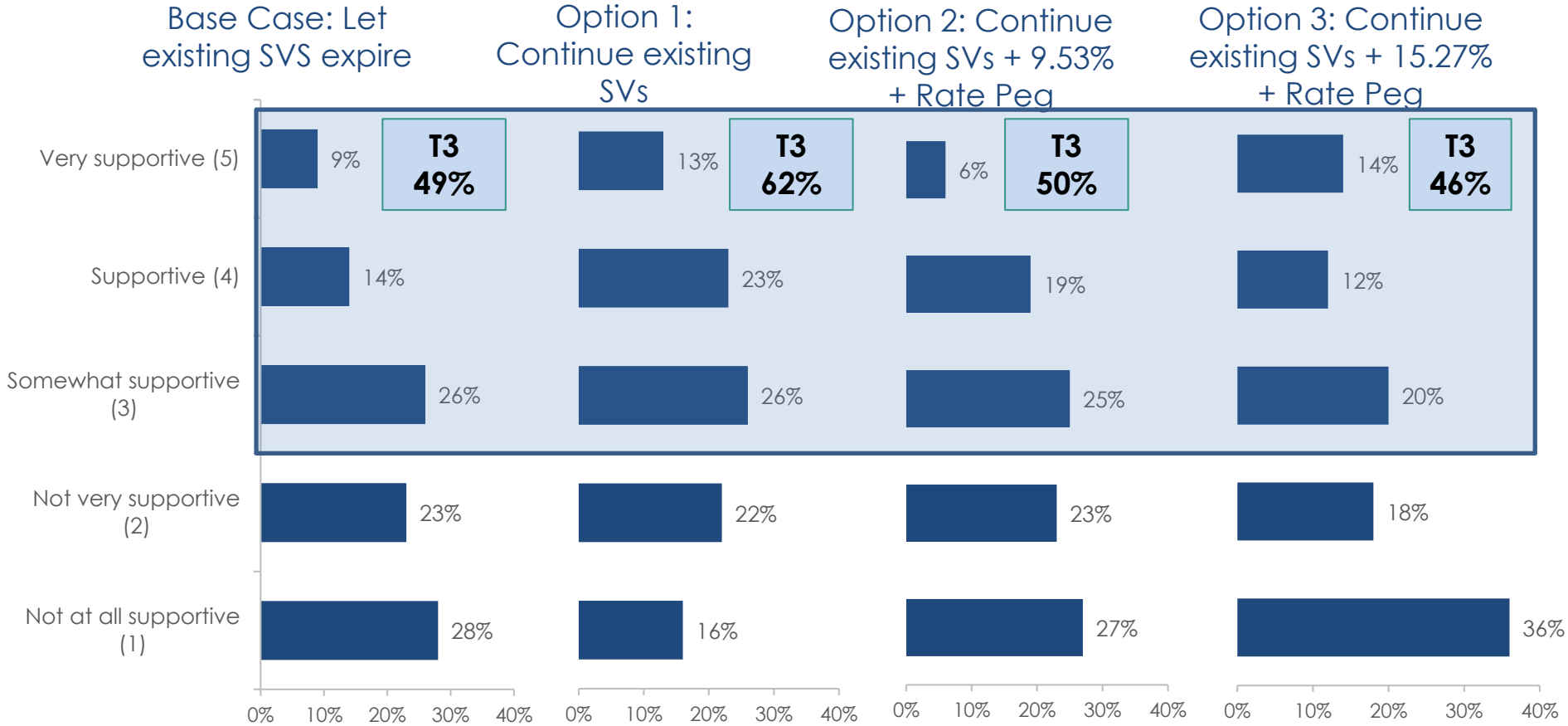
1. BASE CASE - LET EXISTING SV's EXPIRE
2. OPTION 1 - CONTINUE EXISTING SV's
3. OPTION 2 - CONTINUE SV's WITH AN ADDITIONAL INCREASE OF 9.53% + THE RATE PEG
4. OPTION 3 - CONTINUE SV's WITH AN ADDITIONAL INCREASE OF 15.27% + THE RATE PEG



Summary of Support Scores - Monadic

Q4a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with this option?

Support for Each Option

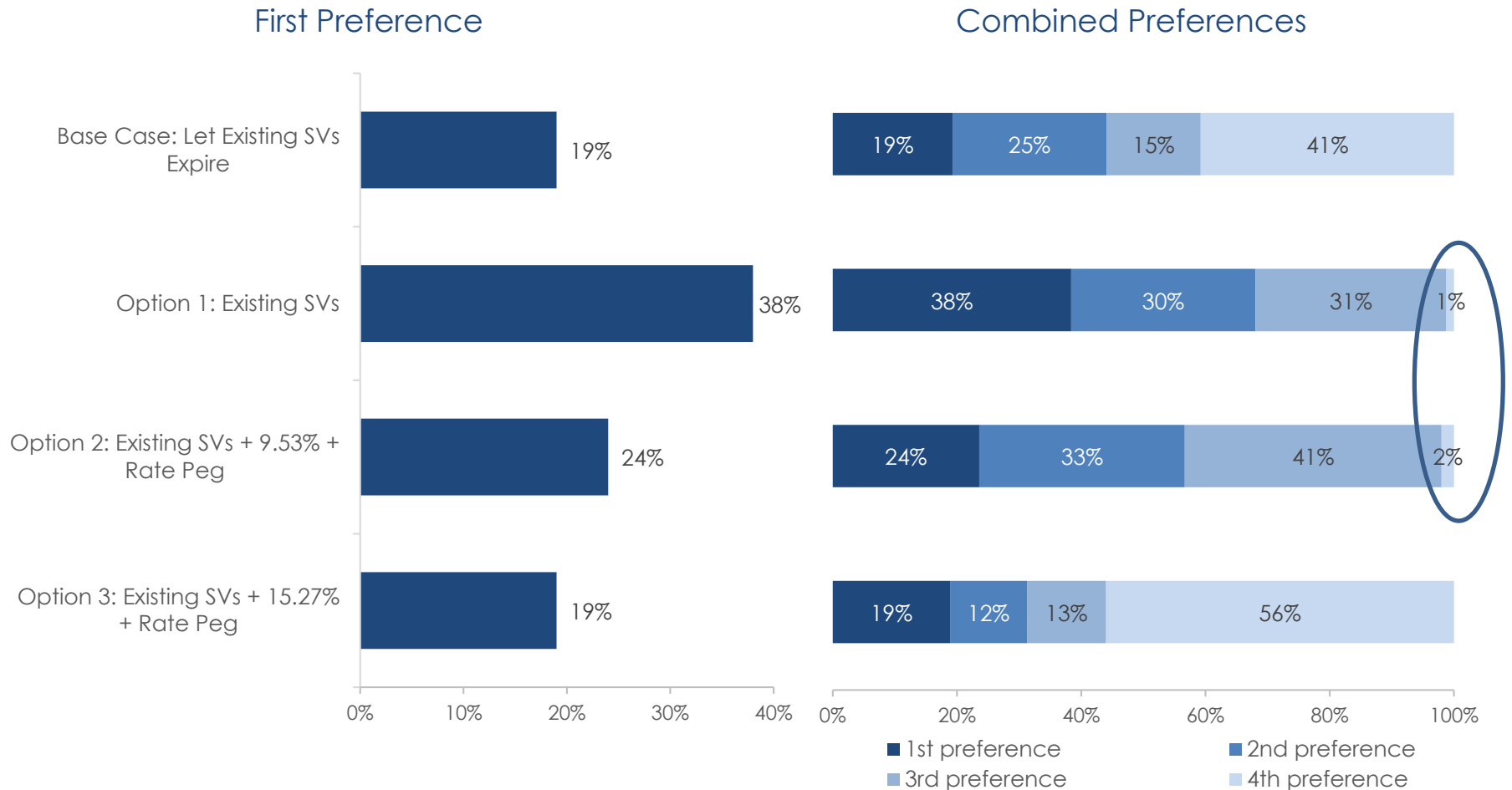


Base: N = 400

Support is highest for option 1: Continue existing SVs, with 62% of residents being at least somewhat supportive of this option.

Preferred Options - Forced

Q5a. Please rank the 4 options in order of preference. Which is your first preference?



Base: N = 396 - 397

*Note: 3 respondents refused to give a preference, and one respondent only gave a first preference

1st preference is singularly stronger for Option 1 (38%).

However in total, 43% of residents have 1st preferred either Option 2 or Option 3.

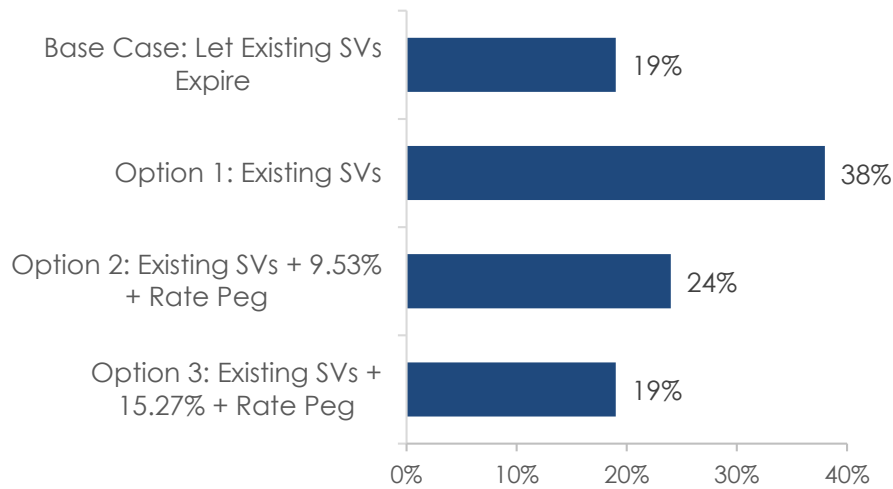
Less than 20% of residents 1st preferred the Base Case.

Preferred Option

Q5a. Please rank the 4 options in order of preference. Which is your first preference?

First preference	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Base Case: Let Existing SVs Expire	19%	23%	16%	16%	18%	23%	20%	19%	19%
Option 1: Existing SVs	38%	36%	41%	51%	32%	35%	38%	39%	37%
Option 2: Existing SVs + 9.53% + Rate Peg	24%	22%	25%	14%	36%▲	21%	21%	25%	18%
Option 3: Existing SVs + 15.27% + Rate Peg	19%	20%	18%	19%	14%	20%	22%	18%	25%
Base	396-397*	186	211	83	104	99	111	340	56

First Preference



Base: N = 396 - 397

*Note: 3 respondents refused to give a preference, and one respondent only gave a first preference

	Aware of the SV prior to call	Not aware/not sure
Base Case: Let Existing SVs Expire	21%	19%
Option 1: Existing SVs	29%▼	43%
Option 2: Existing SVs + 9.53% + Rate Peg	31%▲	20%
Option 3: Existing SVs + 15.27% + Rate Peg	20%	19%
Base	126	271

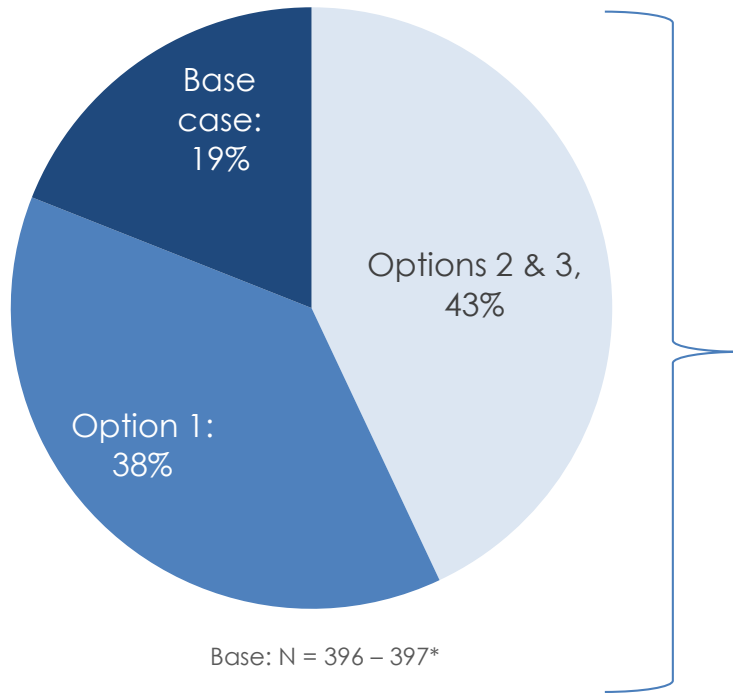
For the most part the data is reasonably consistent across the demographics.

Reasons for Preferences

Q5a. Please rank the 4 options in order of preference. Which is your first preference?

Q5b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

First Preference



Top Reasons for Preference

Options 2/3: Continue existing SVs + increase	% of total population
Balance between increased costs and maintaining level of services/infrastructure	21%
Maintaining/upgrading quality services, facilities and infrastructure	20%
Willing to pay more to maintain the area/quality of living	5%

Option 1: Continue existing SVs	% of total population
Cost of rates is already high/can't afford to pay more	11%
Council should reduce expenditure/manage finances better	10%
Balance between increased costs and maintaining level of services/infrastructure	10%

Base case	% of total population
Council should reduce expenditure/manage finances better	9%
Cost of rates is already high/can't afford to pay more	6%
Council should leave rates as is/seek other alternatives for generating revenue	3%

*Note: 3 respondents refused to give any preference,

For those preferring the increase options, having a balance between increasing costs and maintaining service levels, as well as ensuring services and facilities are maintained/upgraded were the most common responses.

Sample Profile - Online

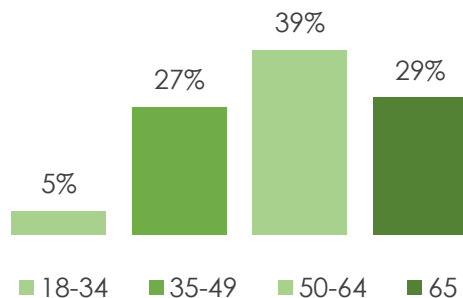


Online

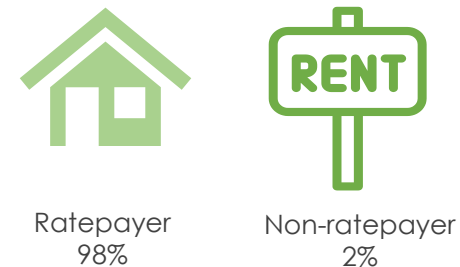
Gender



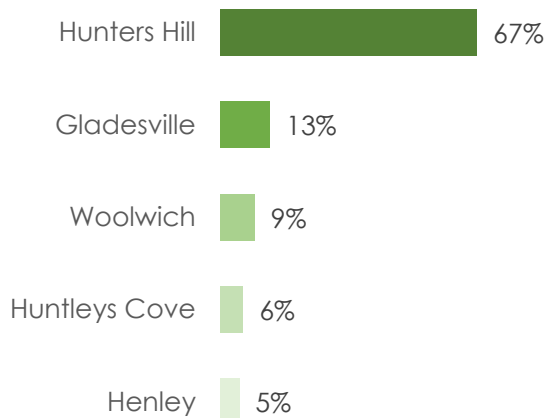
Age



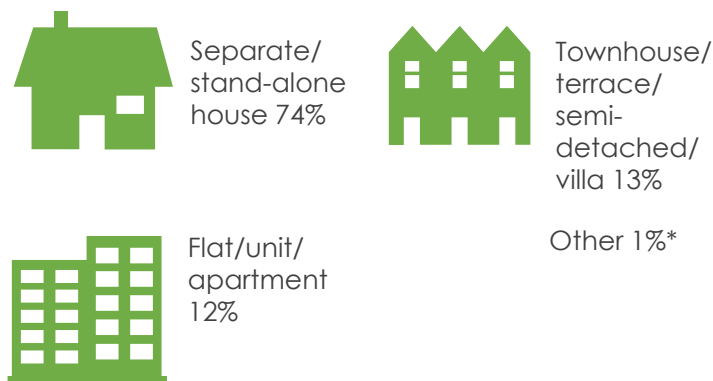
Ratepayer status



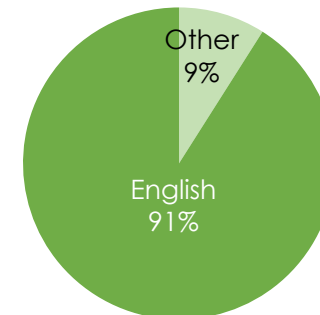
Suburb



Housing Type



Language spoken at home



Base: N = 143

*The other specified response housing type was 'business'

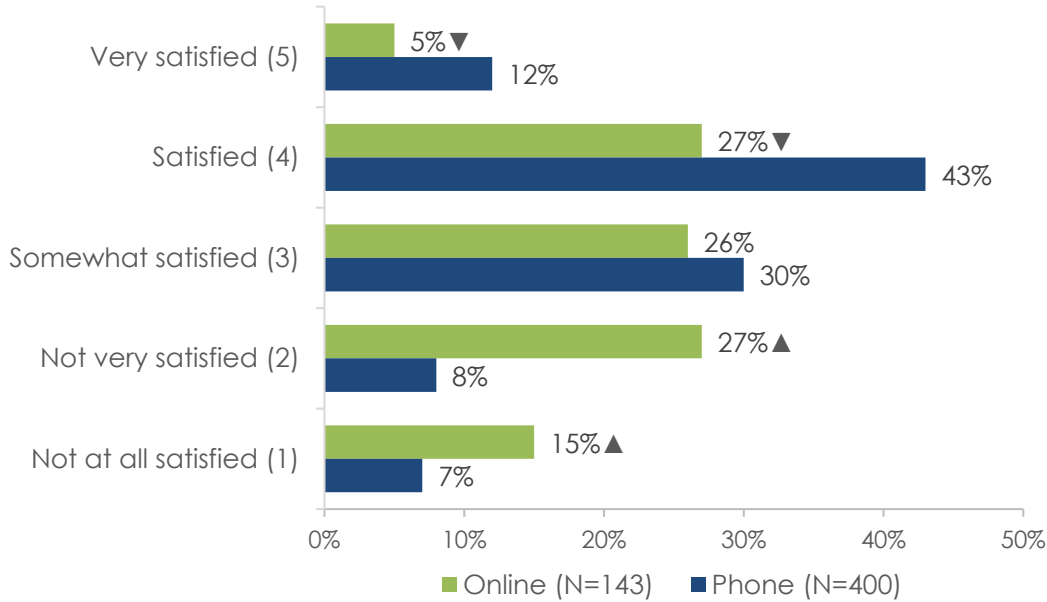
Overall Satisfaction



Phone Online

Q3a. 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?

	Online	Phone	Online							
			Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	2.79▼	3.43	2.57	2.99▲	3.14	2.55	2.79	2.95	2.79	2.67
T3 Box	58%▼	85%	48%	67%▲	71%	50%	55%	67%	58%	67%
Base	143	400	67	76	7*	38	56	42	140	3*



Online	Aware of SRV	Not aware/ Not sure
Mean rating	2.84	2.76
T3 Box	60%	57%
Base	50	93

	Hunters Hill Council (online)	Micromex LGA Metro Benchmark
Mean rating	2.79↓	3.55
T3 Box	58%↓	89%
Base	143	37,950

*Caution small base size

↑↓ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (compared to the Benchmark)

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

T3 box = somewhat satisfied/satisfied/very satisfied
Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

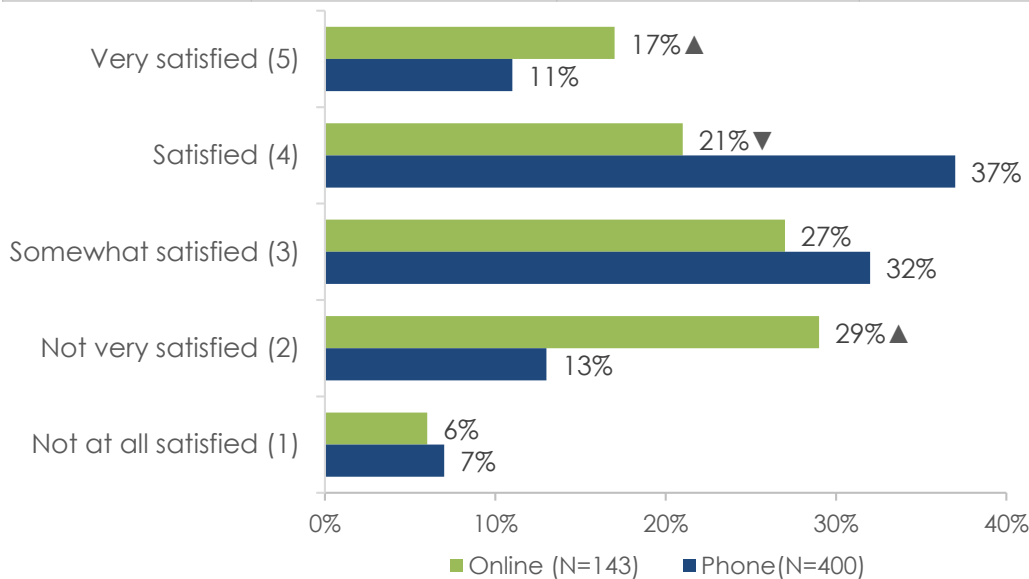
58% of online respondents are at least somewhat satisfied with the overall performance of Council over the last 12 months. This is a significantly lower level of satisfaction compared to results obtained by phone.

Satisfaction with the Quality of Assets



Q3b. Thinking generally about community assets provided by Council, which include local roads, footpaths, cycle ways, parks and playgrounds, public buildings, public toilets, libraries, etc. Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of community assets currently provided by Council?

	Online	Phone	Online							
			Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	2.85▼	3.32	2.67	3.00	3.43	2.61	2.68	3.19▲	2.84	3.00
T3 Box	62%▼	80%	54%	68%	86%	50%	57%	74%	61%	67%
Base	143	400	67	76	7*	38	56	42	140	3*



	Online	Aware of SRV	Not aware/ Not sure
Mean rating		2.94	2.80
T3 Box		62%	61%
Base		50	93

	Hunters Hill - Online	Micromex Benchmark**
Mean rating	2.85↓	3.35
T3 Box	62%↓	83%
Base	143	2,978

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

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

**Note: this benchmark is an interim benchmark for a point of reference only. The benchmark is created using 7 LGAs (Byron Shire Council, Central Coast Council, Great Lakes Council, The Hills Shire Council, Lake Macquarie Council, Lithgow City Council and Wingecarribee Shire Council)

*Caution small base size

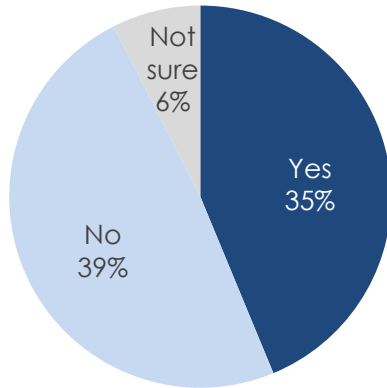
↑↓ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (compared to the SRV Benchmark)

T3 box = somewhat satisfied/satisfied/very satisfied

Satisfaction with the quality of community assets is also significantly lower among online respondents.

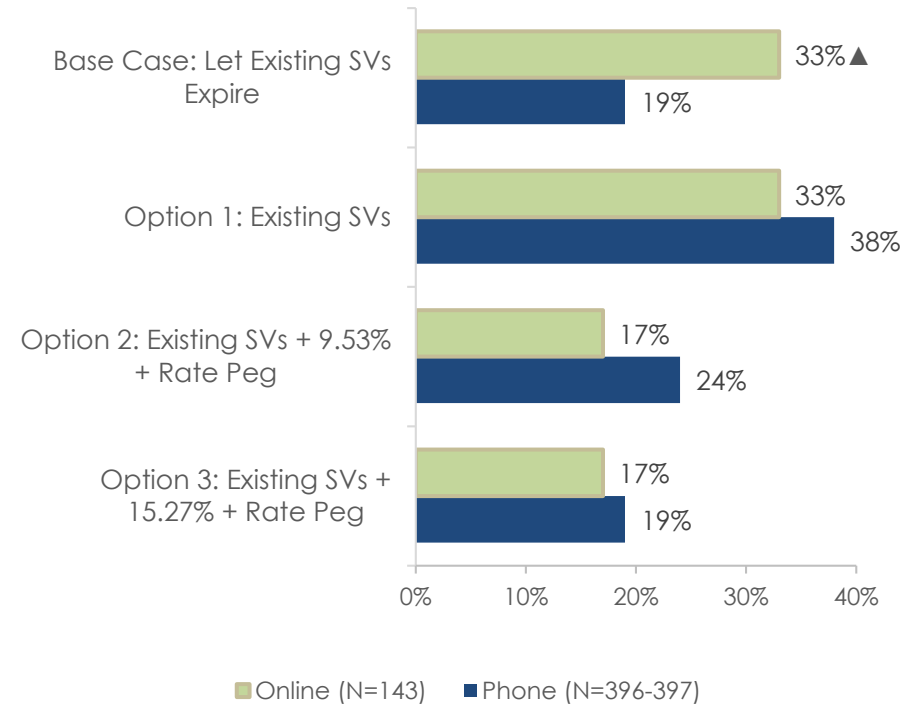
Online Response to Special Variation of Rates

Q6a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?



Base: N = 143

Q5a. Please rank the 4 options in order of preference. Which is your first preference?



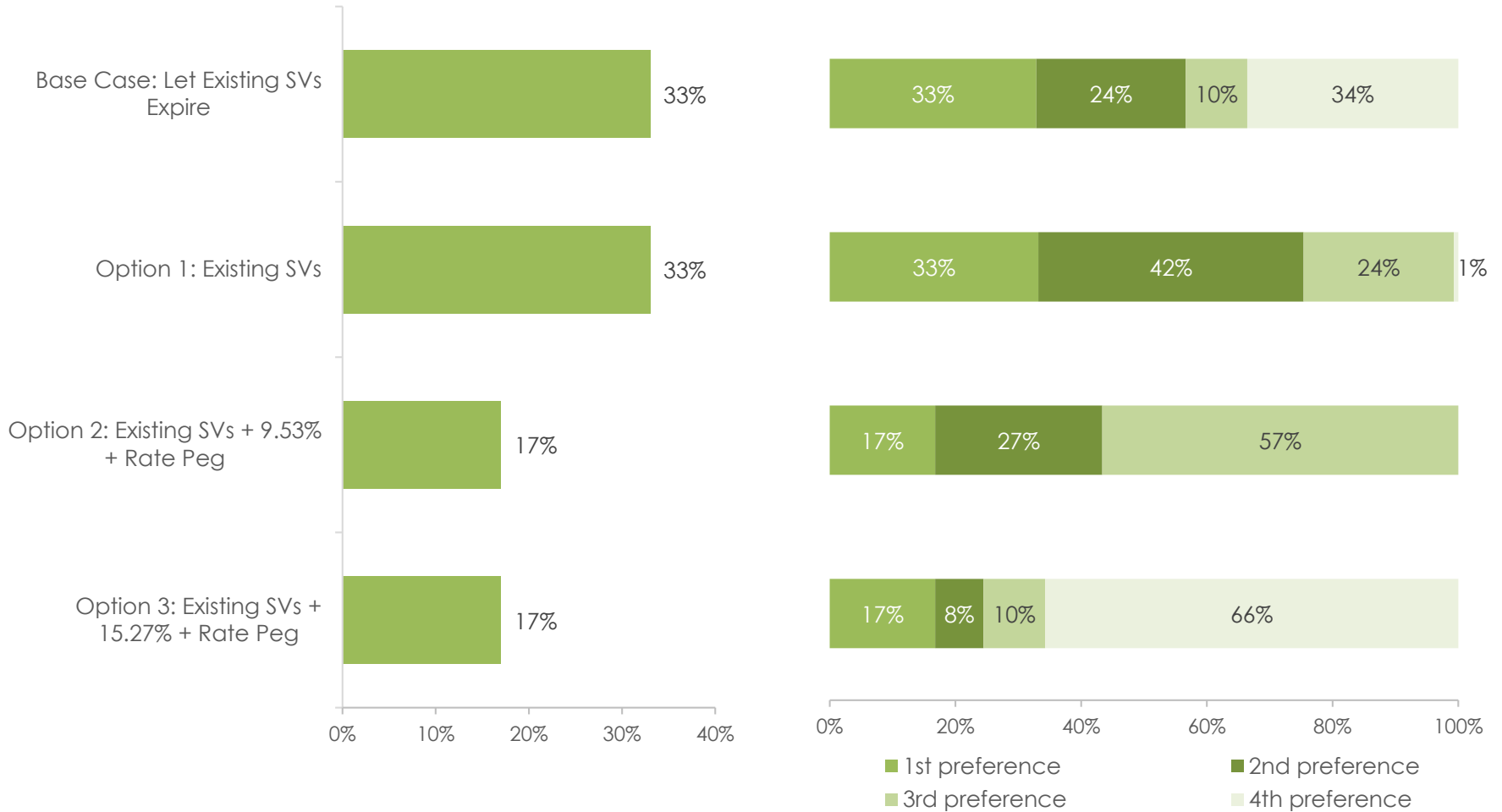
35% of online respondents were previously aware of the SRV.
As expected online participants had a higher preference for the Base Case. However still 2/3 of the online respondents supported on of the SV options

Preferred Option



Online

Q5a. Please rank the 4 options in order of preference. Which is your first preference?



Preferences for online respondents are more mixed than what was observed in the phone results.

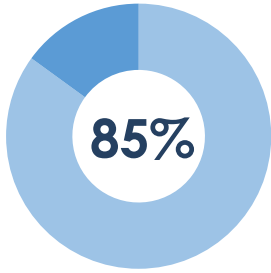


Summary



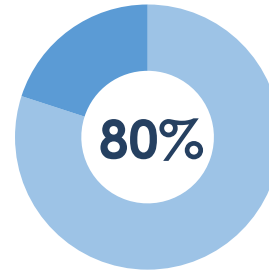
Summary of Findings

Overall Satisfaction



Of Hunters Hill residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the **performance of Council** over the last 12 months

Satisfaction with the Quality of Assets



Of Hunters Hill residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the **quality of Council – provided assets**

Most Valued Aspects About Living in the Area



- Open spaces, parks and natural environment



- Central location/proximity to CBD and harbour



- Community/connection to local area



- Lifestyle e.g. peaceful, quiet, village atmosphere

Priority Issues



- Maintaining roads, road safety, footpaths and traffic congestion



- Parks, playgrounds and open spaces



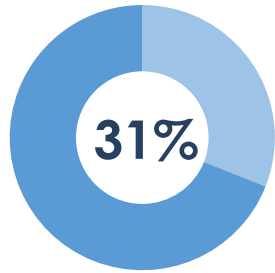
- Managing development and DA process



- Maintaining/upgrading services and facilities

Summary of Findings

Awareness



Of Hunters Hill residents were previously aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation



The most common ways to be informed of the SRV were:

Letters/flyers in the mail **(43%)**

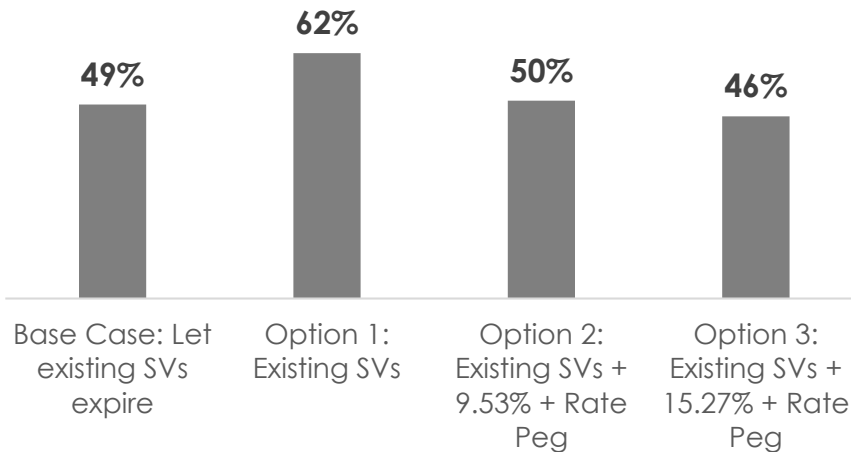


Newspaper advertisement **(23%)**



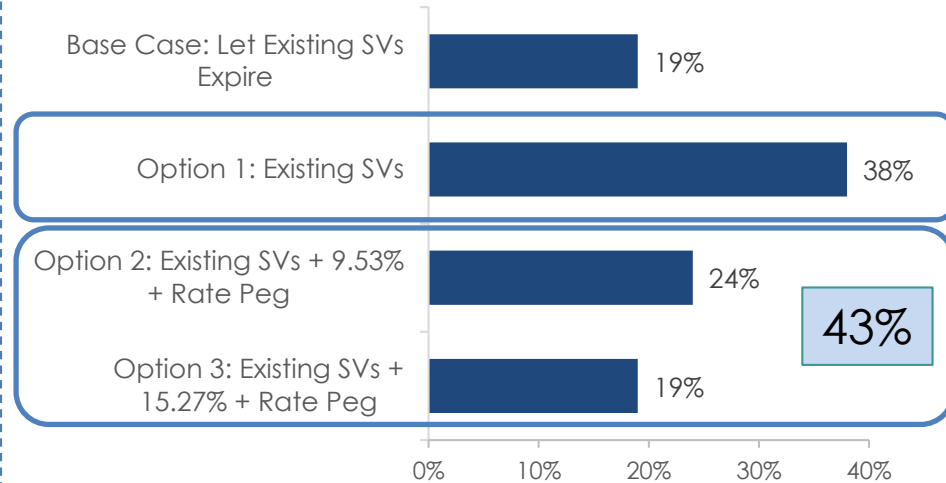
Support for SRV Options

13B% (somewhat supportive/supportive/very supportive)



Preferred Options

First Preference



**Resident preference for at least continuing the current SVs exceeds 80%.
43% suggesting they are willing to pay the existing as well as some sort of increase.**

The logo for micromex research features the word "micromex" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. A stylized compass rose is integrated into the letter "o", with a red needle pointing towards the top. Below "micromex", the word "research" is written in a smaller, grey, lowercase, sans-serif font. The background of the entire image is a lush green golf course with trees and a bright sun in the sky.

micromex
research

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