

Randwick Council – Our Community, Our Future – SURVEY

1. Timing of Survey: Randwick Council conducted a survey regarding a proposal to seek a special rate variation throughout December 2017 and January 2018. This period is the Christmas and holiday period for ratepayers and would be the **worst time that Council could have chosen to conduct this survey.**

Information sessions were held on December 13 and 16 and were poorly attended as evidenced by the photographs on Council website. Workshops were held on January 18 and 24. I attended one of these and there were fewer than 12 ratepayers present, along with four Council Officers. The written survey, received by us just before Christmas 2017, had to be completed by February 1, 2018.

2. Framing of Questions and Feedback Form: The questions asked in the survey and at the workshop were **heavily skewed** towards a “High Priority” response.

e.g. In the mailed survey from Council “*Domestic violence is the biggest social issue of our time...*” and then in the Feedback Form “*Rate the following proposed major projects...1-5 WOMEN’S REFUGE CENTRE*”.

At the workshop, the Council Officers present were unable to answer the question “*How much will the Refuge Centre Cost?*” I feel the cost is a very important element in ones response to the question.

The 3 Options on funding in the Feedback Form were heavily biased towards Option 3 “**PREFERRED APPROACH**”. The wording of the 3 options was:

Option 1	Do Nothing Approach
Option 2	Delayed Approach
Option 3	Preferred Approach

We found it very **confusing** that ratepayers were asked to prioritize 6 major projects but they differ from the 6 services and projects displayed in the Funding explanation.

3. Average Increase In Rates: On the Funding page of the Council survey the Average annual rate increase for Option 3 is stated as around \$70 using an average rate of \$1159pa. Many ratepayers are paying rates far exceeding this, with many being faced with an average annual rate increase exceeding \$400pa. if Option 3 is adopted.
4. Misleading Council statements on results of Survey: In the Local newspaper and Council ENews, Council claims “*Community backs rate variation*”. Analysis of the results shows that less than 6% of the total ratepayers in Randwick responded to the surveys and supported Option 3.