






























Special Rate Variation Online Survey Report

QA. Do you or an immediate family member work for Council?

		Response percent	Response total
Yes		3.75%	6
No		96.25%	154






Statistics based on 160 respondents;

Q1. Which town/village do you live in/near?

		Response percent	Response total
Ben Bullen		0.63%	1
Blackman's Flat		0%	0
Bogee		0.63%	1
Bowenfels		9.38%	15
Capertee		1.88%	3
Clarence		1.25%	2
Cullen Bullen		0%	0
Dargan		0%	0
Glen Alice		1.25%	2
Glen Davis		1.25%	2
Good Forest		0%	0
Hampton		0.63%	1
Hartley		2.5%	4
Hartley Vale		0.63%	1
Hermitage Flat		0.63%	1
Kanimbla		0.63%	1
Lidsdale		1.25%	2
Lithgow		29.38%	47
Little Hartley		2.5%	4
Littleton		3.75%	6
Lowther		0%	0
Marrangaroo		1.88%	3
Megalong		0.63%	1
Pipers Flat		1.88%	3
Portland		10%	16
Round Swamp		0.63%	1
Rydal		1.88%	3
Sodwalls		0.63%	1
South Bowenfels		6.88%	11
Tarana		0%	0
Vale of Clwydd		2.5%	4
Wallerawang		6.88%	11
Wolgan Valley/Newnes		0.63%	1
Other		7.5%	12

Statistics based on 160 respondents;

Planning precinct

		Response percent	Response total
Rural North		10.81%	16
Rural South		10.81%	16
Lithgow		56.76%	84
Wallerawang		8.78%	13
Portland		12.84%	19

Statistics based on 148 respondents;

Lithgow residents have consistently told Council that assets such as Transport (sealed roads, unsealed roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridges and road drainage), Stormwater Drainage and Buildings are important to them, and that Council needs to improve their condition. Business improvement initiatives are also considered important to residents. In addition to this, the State Government introduced its Fit for the Future Reform in 2014, which required all NSW councils to assess the current status of their financial sustainability and asset management, and submit an improvement proposal demonstrating how they will become Fit for the Future.

Council currently spends approximately \$19 million on the maintenance and renewal of infrastructure assets each year, however, Council should be investing at least an additional \$1.1 million per year to keep assets safe and functioning.

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 in the long term.

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

Council acknowledges that any rate increase may adversely impact some community members. Council has a Hardship Policy and alternative payment options to assist ratepayers should they have difficulty keeping up with their rate payments. Please contact Council for further information regarding this.

There are two options which we would like you to consider. Each option will have varying impacts on local assets and service quality.

Option 1 – Current SRV expires + rate peg. Our assets would continue to decline with more assets in poor condition. The focus would be on managing risk, including the possible closure and removal of unsafe assets and reduction of services.

Option 2 – Maintain the current SRV + Rate Peg + one off (permanent) 4.23% SRV. We would stabilise the deterioration of our community assets and be able to fund the required renewal and maintenance of our assets into the future.

Let's look at the options in more detail:

Option 1 Current SRV expires + rate peg

On 1 July 2019, the current 4.77% SRV expires. A 2.7% rate peg would be added to the lower rate base. The projected loss of rates revenue due to the expiry of the current SRV is estimated at \$624,000 for the 2019/20 year.

Even though the rate peg increase would apply each year, the expiry of the current 4.77% SRV will mean in 2019/20, the average base residential rate of \$763 will be reduced by \$16 next year and the average base farmland rate of \$1439 will be reduced by \$29.

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

- Roads
- Footpaths
- Cycle ways
- Bridges
- Road drainage
- Stormwater drainage
- Community buildings

Council would also have virtually no capacity for new capital works, meaning it would have difficulty funding new assets such as footpaths, shared pathways, and community facilities. It would also be unable to undertake works like the sealing of gravel roads, or the progressive rehabilitation of the local sealed road network.

In order to meet the Fit for the Future financial benchmarks, Council would be required to reduce or close services.

Q2a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 1?

		Response percent	Response total
Not at all supportive		25.63%	41
Not very supportive		13.75%	22
Somewhat supportive		20%	32
Supportive		12.5%	20
Very supportive		28.13%	45

Statistics based on 160 respondents;

Option 2: Maintain the current SRV + rate peg + one-off (permanent) 4.23% SRV

Council proposes to apply to retain the current SRV of 4.77%. Council also plans to request an additional one-off permanent increase of 4.23%. The total SRV application will be for a 9% increase in rates revenue (i.e. the current 4.77% SRV plus a new 4.23% SRV). The 2.7% rate peg will also be added. The impact on ratepayers will be a new 4.23% SRV plus the rate peg.

This would mean that in 2019/20 the average base residential rate \$763 will increase by \$52 per year. While the average base farmland rate of \$1439 will increase by \$100 per year.

The projected total SRV income (from maintaining the current SRV plus adding the new SRV) is estimated at \$1.178 million for the 2019/20 year.

\$725,000 on Transport (sealed roads, unsealed roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridges and road drainage)
\$100,000 on stormwater drainage
\$250,000 on buildings

Approximately \$100,000 on business improvement initiatives which will either generate additional revenue or reduce long-term costs

As part of this program, Council would be able to fund a limited program of asset upgrades with a focus on the sealing of gravel roads, the rehabilitation of sealed roads stormwater drainage and building improvements. Council would also be able to increase its preventative maintenance and renewal program to stabilise the condition of priority assets.

Council would also be able to meet the Fit for the Future financial benchmarks and maintain current services levels.

Q2a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 2?

		Response percent	Response total
Not at all supportive	<div></div>	70%	112
Not very supportive	<div></div>	15%	24
Somewhat supportive	<div></div>	6.88%	11
Supportive	<div></div>	3.13%	5
Very supportive	<div></div>	5%	8

Statistics based on 160 respondents;

Q3a. Please rank the 2 options in order of preference:

	1st preference ■	2nd preference ■		Response total
Option 1 - Current SRV expires + rate peg	85% (136)	15% (24)		160
Option 2 –Maintain the current SRV + Rate Peg + one off (permanent) 4.23% SRV	15% (24)	85% (136)		160

Statistics based on 160 respondents;

Q3b. What is your reason for choosing [Q15.C1] as your highest preference?

		Response total
1	For responses to this question see Attachment 6 – Reasons	159
2	For choosing option 1 or 2 as your highest preference report	106
3	(Q3b of online survey).	89
4		65
5		47

Statistics based on 160 respondents;

Q4a. Prior to this survey, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?

		Response percent	Response total
Yes		36.88%	59
No		59.38%	95
Not sure		3.75%	6

Statistics based on 160 respondents;

Q4b. How were you informed of the Special Rate Variation? Please select all that apply.

		Response percent	Response total
Mail out		49.15%	29
Council website		11.86%	7
Newspaper advertise		10.17%	6
Council eNewsletter		1.7%	1
Mayoral Column		1.7%	1
Social Media		45.76%	27
Other		18.64%	11

Statistics based on 59 respondents;

Demographics

The following information is used for demographic purposes only.

Q5. Please select your age bracket.

		Response percent	Response total
18–34		10.63%	17
35–49		32.5%	52
50–64		38.75%	62
65+		18.13%	29

Statistics based on 160 respondents;

Q6. Which of the following best describes the house where you are currently living?

		Response percent	Response total
I/We own/are currently buying this		98.13%	157
I/We currently rent this property		1.88%	3

Statistics based on 160 respondents;

Q7. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

		Response percent	Response total
Work full time in the LGA		32.5%	52
Work full time outside the LGA		15.63%	25
Work part time in the LGA		9.38%	15
Work part time outside the LGA		3.75%	6
Home duties		1.25%	2
Student		0%	0
Retired		19.38%	31
Unemployed/Pensioner		6.88%	11
Other		11.25%	18

Statistics based on 160 respondents;

Q8. Please select your gender.

		Response percent	Response total
Male		52.5%	84
Female		47.5%	76

Statistics based on 160 respondents;

To find out more information about Lithgow City Council's policies and Special Rate Variation proposal, please visit www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com

Thank you for your time and assistance. This market research is carried out in compliance with the Privacy Act, and the information you provided will be used for research purposes only. This research was conducted by Micromex Research on behalf of Lithgow Council.

To submit your response, please select the 'submit' button below. This may take up to 30 seconds.

Reasons for choosing option 1 or 2 as your highest preference report

Q3b of Special Rate Variation online survey

In support of the SRV

- Council's arguments convinced me it is necessary
- Infrastructure is running down and needs upgrading
- Some community facilities and services should always be improving - parks, halls, information signs etc. services becoming more expensive such as waste disposal and recycling
- I understand that to upkeep and improve Lithgow and surrounds costs money though I'm disappointed in what seems like an 'all or nothing' approach. Why was there not a third option - Maintain current SRV + Rate Peg? Why does it need to be 2x SRV?
- Hoping that the current poor service of the council can improve immensely!
- Council will be able to hopefully improve their level of service and maintenance of existing facilities.
- I expect the infrastructure assets in any LGA (Lithgow is no exception) to be maintained and upgraded as require to meet the demands of the 21st century. Going backward in the budget is a dereliction of financial duty. Asset growth in Lithgow is increasing to meet demands, so maintaining status quo will be a plan to go backward. Over the years to come, assets will wind down/degrade as the council attempts to spread an ever diminishing budget. Modern infrastructure is more complex and invariably more expensive. I would not expect Lithgow Council to apply 19th/20th century thinking to maintaining or building new infrastructure. Modern infrastructure is more complex and invariably more expensive. I would not expect Lithgow Council to apply 19th/20th century thinking to maintaining or building new infrastructure. I am surprised that there has not been an increase earlier. The amount being asked for is small with reference to the area Lithgow has to manage. I expect that he top priority in Lithgow council to be asset maintenance, upgrades and new provisioning to meet future economic growth and enhancements to amenity
- To see that roads in the area are repaired. To see stormwater drainage improved as may areas drainage is poor.
- Assets and infrastructure need to be maintained. Delaying maintenance costs more in the long run. We will not attract tourists or new comers if council roads and facilities are run down. Our residents and our children especially deserve to live in a safe environment. You can't promote healthy communities and growth if the infrastructure does not support it.
- Maintaining infrastructure is a good investment.
- While I don't want to see things go backwards as per Opt 1, Option 2 will fail to address our main concerns in Wolgan Valley
- Better Option before we amalgamate with Bathurst.
- It may mean that the section of Peach Tree Rd in the Lithgow LGA can be properly maintained or even sealed.
- Roads are the major concern. Without the immediate correction and improvements you won't be able to traverse anywhere. Tourism will come to a standstill and the township will die. Plus there will be a massive lawsuit against council for the reimbursement of damages to vehicles and public persons.

General Comments

- I don't think that anything that the people of Lithgow say will have any effect on what on you plan on doing
- I don't know who you people think you are but you have no right to be asking more from us.
- Stop ripping us off. All you do is waste people's money, time and energy. I would rather vote for a stray dog than this council it would care more.
- I don't think you people care about this town. Only what you can suck out of it.
- [REDACTED]
- I don't agree with either option but to proceed I needed to respond to one of the two options
- Clearly the council is incompetent or corrupt (or both).
- This fake survey is an insult to my intelligence - clearly you'll raise rates anyway.
- This council is far too top heavy and members are more interested in their self-interests than those of the community.
- This survey has been designed to give council the result it is looking for.
- Increase should be incurred by commercial / industrial property owners, and not residential
- Don't want a rate rise at all
- [REDACTED]
- there is no value for money here
- Council waste is excessive this survey proves it. No value for money here could have used this money elsewhere.
- no empathy for the working people at all
- Because we get no benefit in Little Hartley
- Why is the Lithgow region's population decreasing? Perhaps a survey should be conducted on that - that might answer as to why there shouldn't be an increase in a struggling region's rates.
- Stop the in house fighting causing unnecessary experiences to the rate payers
- This survey is written emotively and with bias - there is no honesty or transparency
- Lithgow council seem to fight amongst themselves and get nothing positive done
- Just sick of being totally ripped off by Lithgow council.. the entire council needs to go as does nothing good for the community
- It is insulting when there is so much discontent with the current council.

- I am not supportive of a rate increase!
- If we could earn more than sure but our wages are not going up at all.
- council has always had parks and grounds and all the other items mentioned to maintain
- Cause once again this council does what it does best and that is lies about everything
- No point in sealed roads & beautiful towns if you struggle to put food on the table
- We NEVER receive any services from Lithgow City Council, no garbage, no septic and no road maintenance
- We do not have any services at Little Hartley anyway - No curb guttering, no town water, no storm water etc....
- sick of paying money and nothing gets done
- The ever increasing costs required to bring services up to an acceptable standard. Comment only: With rural rates expected to be twice those of residential rates, can we expect that 50% of the increase will be spent on rural projects?
- Disappointment – Disillusioned
- I do not trust that the money will be used for the stated projects, but rather it will just be used to employ more bureaucrats It is completely inappropriate that any level of government simply decides to do more projects and then demands that citizens fund this. If I decide to upgrade my driveway etc. I am not able to tell my customers/boss that I will be charging them 9% more for my services to cover this, so government should not be able to do this. Rate increases will lead to increased rents for tenants there has been no growth in wages or social security payments for many years so people cannot afford any more increases in the cost of living Governments need to get smaller and more efficient, not bigger and more expensive.
- The present council do not complete projects now, more money will only be wasted on overpaid staff who sit in Mort ST, there are far too many Admin staff with no supervision of ground staff, obviously very top heavy. The town is an absolute disgrace, very little maintenance, weed control, I cannot begin to express my disgust at the Cook Street plaza, surely someone in council would have looked at other projects completed by these out of town contractors, how dare you ask for more money to waste. I live at Hartley and have no garbage collection and drive on a council road which is washed away and no maintenance for at least 12 months. The streets in Lithgow are dangerous and very damaging for our cars. How dare you pay these high salaries of our money and get these appalling results.
- Option 1 is insufficient to allow maintenance/renewal of deteriorating assets (roads, buildings & drainage).
- get almost no value from current rates - use of a transfer station and poor roads
- Works seem to be done to the same places over and over (inefficient). Lacklustre maintenance. Town square and other works seem to be poor use of money.
- No choice - Wasting money on things we already pay for (water rates).
- Council needs to do better, work harder to find better options.
- Lithgow council are incompetent.
- We live in a remote rural area that has no services including the bin collection why pay more. The roads are unsealed and the holes are so bad that I punctured my tyre...why pay more. I see no reason to pay for nothing - in fact it should reduce for us dramatically. Everything is done by the community ... not by the council at all. Even the fire services are local people. I think it should be determined by where you live and if you utilize services. Things are already hard from the drought and we had to kill cattle this year to support ourselves...where do we get money for this.
- I currently get no garbage collection and grading of my road once every 4 or 5 years why would i pay more for no service
- I do not want a rate increase. We have too many Councillors making poor decisions. I do not believe that the rise quoted will fund these projects, the money will be squandered. Lithgow City Council just raised our water rates without explanation. I do not believe that Lithgow City Council are money smart, at all!
- I am a Hartley rate payer. As such I receive nothing for my rate payment each year except a road that is seldom maintained. So I would be against ANY increase in my rates.
- I did not want to select either options - there should have been a third option for no extra as for the past 15 years since i have been a rate payer Lithgow City Council has not done much for Meadow Flat and initially on this survey Meadow Flat was not listed so this is an indication that Meadow Flat is not even considered.
- I don't believe that council would uphold their end of the deal to upgrade all the things they suggest. There is no proof now of where the rate money goes, there are no improvements made in any of the towns listed for a number of years that were and are council funded. LCC is a laughing stock, this survey is painting a picture they are broke how and why did it get this bad that may be the real problem.
- Lithgow Council is so "Lithgow-Centric" I would support the increase ONLY if the money deals with obvious issues in outlying areas constantly ignored by council. If there is no improvement in those works I will write to the State Government on the Lithgow centric nature of spending.
- Council needs to focus on basic jobs of Roads, Rubbish Disposal everything else comes second. Arts Culture community development service, events are for state government not local government!!
- This is one bill that a home owner has. Every bill is going up and a little here and there makes a huge dent in one's weekly income. For investment properties the cost will be passed on to renters who no doubt already find it difficult. This is accepted once then councils will continue putting rates up in a manner that causes home ownership to be even more unaffordable. Little faith money will go where it's supposed to rather than pay rises for councillors.
- I live in Portland and do not see an equitable level of repairs despite paying rates at the same level as Lithgow
- Not sure why council cannot support facilities with current rates as many other councils can do this successfully
- A lot of the services Council are involved in are duplicating the State Government's services.
- I do not want my rates to increase at ALL! It's that simple!! I do not believe whatsoever that Lithgow Council will provide what it states the increase is supposed to be for!
- Council has already received a SRV and in real terms is receiving more rates than in previous years. Those in the community who pay these rates do NOT have the capacity to simply approach their income source and ask for an increase of 9%, this cannot be justified.
- A lot to ask - don't feel we get value for money. We live near a small easement park - council do a terrible job in maintaining it so residents do it - why should we pay more. Some areas around town get very little for their rates - curb & guttering/water/bins not included

Council's financial and management capabilities

- If you can't work with the budget you have now what makes you think any more money will help
- Because the money you are getting should be doing those things already where is the money going.
- Stop filling your own pockets and get on with the job you are meant to be doing.
- Don't trust council with effectively spending the money. What did they do with the last special rate rise.
- I believe costs could be cut in non-essential areas like Halloween, staff satisfaction surveys and a lot of other areas.
- Council is mismanaging money i.e. street improvement. Lithgow, Blast Furnace, endeavour park, hiring survey companies. Do the essentials first!!!
- I also think there are other options than the two raised. It's threatening that if we don't agree to the rise then roads and services will decline. I'm sure there can be some rearrangements to the budget to prioritise essential services.
- Council wastes ratepayers money
- I consider that better management of funding based on sound financial evaluation rather than whim would curb waste
- money that has been wasted on and adventure park that will only be used 3 months for the year
- Rates are already overpriced compared to other towns. When I have to choose between rates and medication, and see this council unable to manage funds they do have and wasting money on bi-elections and whatnot, and don't even get me started on the rudeness and incompetence of some of your staff, my health was ruined by your failure to act on animal control complaints for over a year. Lithgow council needs competent management, not more funds.
- How much of the asset money has council spent fighting unfair dismissal cases with staff? Why should rates increase based on poorly made decisions?
- How much of the asset money has council spent in the land & environment court?
- It's unfortunate that the council would be unfit for the future using this option, however poorly made decisions would appear to be the reason this is now happening.
- There's no excitement, vision or plan - no indication of what we are getting for our money
- The council is holding the people to ransom. How about finding some savings by trimming the top of the tree.
- Council doesn't need to suck more money out of paying rate payers when they don't deliver any value for money paid.
- How long have the same directors been making decisions at council? Maybe the rate increase, if it happens, should be used to place positions on contracts so they are more accountable?
- How long have the same staff been making the big calls at council? Why should we have a rates hike - shouldn't these staff who have been making decisions be held accountable & made perform to a contract which sees the region increase in size?
- Hope that jobs started by council get finish e.g. the toilet block in Wang!
- Council has themselves to blame for the state of the town due to mismanagement
- Both options are crap to be honest. Maybe not spend millions on Halloween and use that money towards the next stupid project like the plaza in cook street that is absolutely disgusting
- have not seen any improvement over the last 10 years of the increased rates
- Because the reason provided for the initial SRV we are currently paying was to cover everything. now being mentioned for this new SRV. Are we expected to believe this will be the last SRV? We as rate payers should not be expected to keep funding the incompetence of those making decisions on our behalf, they should be being held accountable for getting us into this position.
- We need better financial management of the current funds we pay council, not to increase the volume of funds given. Miss management of current issues wasting, rate payers money
- Council has already mismanaged funds and should not be given more
- Reassess budget to see where money can be saved in other areas.
- Value for money - not seeing the current \$19 million spend - look at where there is wastage
- Waste the money
- If the golf course was not funded by council than that money could be used instead of the increase and it would benefit a lot more people in the community than the few that use the golf course.
- It is obvious that there has been mismanagement in council leading to poor choice and spending. It is unrealistic to then expect the community to then fund this spending. Perhaps a better financial manager is needed.
- Its got nothing to do with rates deteriorating the roads its bloody management they waste money and have no idea what they are doing
- Money could be spent on necessity things not Halloween.
- How much of the increase would go to administration?
- Redirect council funds to necessities as itemised in option 1. Reduce expenditure on areas that the majority of people do not benefit from e.g. golf club, Halloween, consultancy charges, reduce labour costs.
- Council can't manage the money they have. The town is falling apart. Council need to be more stream lined to say money.
- I would have liked none of the above as council has not shown it can manage RP funds and is not fit for the future! When are the Administrators going to be called in!
- I think that council should manage their current finances more efficiently. Spending money on Halloween is wrong and a waste of money, use this money where it is needed more.
- An SRV will not address council's issues. Council needs to become more strategic by undertaking a service review thereby managing its rates revenue more wisely.
- I would prefer Lithgow City Council look to achieve more efficiencies within current operations rather than seeking to increase revenue to support an already inefficient system. Option 2 allows inefficiencies to continue. I am aware council had opportunities to use grants which they did not use to their full extent which cost Lithgow residents opportunities for local improvement. I do not believe a rate increase should be used to compensate for mismanagement.
- I don't think any rate increase if fair nor just, council needs to work on using the resources available efficiently and stop wasting our money.

- Council does not allocate according to need, thus any extra money I cannot see being used where it is most required. There is no transparency to WHAT will be covered under each of the supposed allocated funding areas.
- Council doesn't maintain anything currently Like to know where our money goes. Funding Halloween is a waste of money. Council already has up to date cars etc they don't need replacing. We don't get anything for your rates anyhow
- Need to concentrate on basic services. Make better use of assets eg Golf club, council land at Marangaroo. Employ only necessary people.
- I think the current rates should be sufficient to repair and maintain all assets. I think the council should change the budget to prioritise what's really important, not tourism, just maintain the town for the people who live here, cancel Halloween and stop building parks and other useless things. If the council can't maintain the town with the current rates, they are doing something wrong.
- Redirect current spending. We already pay energy enough. We don't get anything with what we already pay.
- Rates should not be increases as works are not done in the area for the rates we already pay. Better management of council funding is required rather than increasing rates. Stop wasting money on useless projects, such as Halloween, etc. Do works correctly in the first place rather than ripping things up again because of mistakes (Main Street, etc.)
- I am not getting wage rises to keep up with inflation let alone a big rate rise. I don't believe council is managing the money it now has, wastes money on things like Halloween. And won't fix potholed roads. Propping up both the Portland and Lithgow golf clubs if they cannot survive then they should close.
- The council should look at the amount of money they are spending on upgrading the council head office and centrelink.
- I want to see the breakdown of how the money was spent before I agree further increases. I believe there is mismanagement that has occurred and we should not be paying for it.
- The more money Council receives the more money it wastes through mismanagement.
- Council needs to develop more efficient & effective management of resources and jobs. The outlying areas of the LGA are suffering due to a lack of representation in council. We pay for all services but only get roads & sub tips and are expected to cart are rubbish some 120kms.
- in order to save money council could [if not already in place]buy smaller less expensive com cars. Better management of outside work staff would save money. Tell the footpath sweeper to do his job.
- Council over spends on Administrative Staff, to top heavy.
- Too much focus on minority groups, take the excessive spend on Skate parks instead of footpaths
- The Council should cut costs as per business would do and not keep putting prices up. Look at cost savings, why are there so many council motor vehicles?
- Due to miss management council has for a long time not been fulfilling their role of working for rate payers and wasting rate payers money trying to force people to sell properties. Hire less staff pay cuts for team leader and above workers by 30% will have the budget back where it needs. Get rid of PA for general manager he can answer his own phone.
- Council needs to manage funds better than they currently are. More productive work outputs of staff.
- Council needs to find better ways to get value from its existing budget (efficiency from staff, value from contractors), not just demand more money.
- Council cannot competently manage current revenue. No justification for a rates increase in the Lithgow LGA. Until LCC are able to effectively complete works and manage funds, additional revenue should not be available.
- If council cannot meet the government selected criteria then maybe council is not in a position to be finically viable. If council had utilised the funding better in the past the infrastructure assets would not be in this condition. Has council looked at the inefficiencies within the organisation for process improvements and provide for the community? Council have yet to prove that it is capable of efficient management of the assets. I am unsure as to how council have determines that a rate increase will fix years of asset neglect and poor maintenance.
- Council expenditure needs to be looked at if they cannot afford maintenance from the rates received currently. - is this even reasonable and they key word permanent- and not to mention yearly inflation on top. There is no guarantee that council can even maintain and remain accountable if things are NOT done. This is a CASH GRAB -- nothing more. Live within Lithgow's means
- Council needs to improve their quality of work they contract out or perform themselves.

Employment for the LGA

- You don't do anything useful for Lithgow now why should you be given any more. We need Jobs
- I have heard people on the council complain about the unemployed well it's your fault they are out of jobs so get off your butts and do something about it.
- no jobs available in this town for my children
- No employment - People are struggling to live

Employee costs

- If you want to raise money hand back your wages you don't earn them. This council is killing this town.
- Every person employed by council has a company vehicle. Why?
- How much money has been wasted on unfair dismissals of council staff? Why should the ratepayers be accountable for these poor decisions?
- Suggest that council consider getting employing workers that do a good job - lack of pride in their job and many just filling in time smoking & talking and not doing much
- No employment

- Paying out employees due to mismanagement is the issue
- Restructure council employees to cut down staffing numbers in management positions
- Something is wrong if council can't maintain and work with current costs, too high of wages and manager wage will go up with any increase.
- Council should restructure their staff etc. get rid of petrol cards and perks for workers. Better management, lots cost cutting with office stop buying new cars every year, get rid of them.
- I also support it provided the council publish on the website: All salary and benefits of the top 5 employees; how much is paid to council for all expenses and meals at meetings; how much money is paid to lawyers and consultants

Local economy

- We have that many empty shops in this town. Stop worrying about your own pockets and help us.
- You have closed down the power plant and haven't provided any more jobs for the people of this town.
- Main St is half empty the plaza is half empty, Sams warehouse and every other shop there is empty
- Council should've had the foresight to open up commercial development years ago. It allows for a business rates base which is something this area lacks greatly.
- Why isn't the LEP user friendly allowing for business & residential growth in the region?
- Why hasn't council opened up a commercial corridor for this area? Here we are with another rate increase & nothing to show for it.
- Why wasn't the LEP made to allow for business and residential growth in the region?
- Council hasn't had a lot of foresight regarding development in the last twenty years, in my opinion. Why? Shouldn't a bigger rates base from development ensure that rates aren't hiked this much...multiple times? My family has moved from a region that invested in tourism - why hasn't Lithgow council done the same? Perhaps that way we would ensure visitors come to the town and in turn become one resident - again increasing the rates base for both residential & commercial sectors.
- Why doesn't the area allow for commercial development?
- Council need to be more proactive in securing new business opportunities for the town - Updating current buildings to support new business - Improving infrastructure to support new business - Be proactive in securing new business to the town
- Can't encourage new business here take your coal goggles off
- No progress in Lithgow just high priced rates
- I own a business in Main Street & rates are already way over priced & becoming affordable
- If council wants to promote tourism they should look at projects that draw people to the district at all times of the year i.e. not just for one festival like Halloween.
- Council needs to better manage the funds available to them rather than chase struggling families for more money. Stop wasting money on unnecessary things e.g. \$90k on Halloween
- Each Dept. should be able to better manage their budgets and prioritise their expenditure, less reviews, planning strategies and implementing of programs to decrease employment and more money spent on assets.
- Efficiencies if expenditure, time and production - something all councils do poorly.
- The managing of council works in Lithgow has and is a waste of rate payers money.

CBD Revitalisation

- I don't think ripping up cement to relay cement is not helpful at all. The only thing you did was inconvenience everyone.
- money wasted on main street upgrades that did nothing
- The council appears to waste significant funds on unnecessary works which impact poorly on local businesses. For example beautification works on Main St which has led to reduced parking, and forcing larger vehicles over medians into oncoming traffic.
- Our Main Street is an absolute disgrace - council hasn't accounted for that in the proposed rate increase. Why? It's a main driver for business in this town.
- Shame on Lithgow council for the mess they created in Main Street
- Bad management of current funds (Halloween, Cook St Plaza.)
- Council has wasted so much money in the main street and Cook Plaza which has also forced people out of business. The street was closed for months, The Marjorie Jackson statue has been placed on such a small ugly base that the Council should be ashamed. The trees should not have been removed and the huge amount of money spent in the Main Street could have fixed many roads in the district.
- The work done on main and Eskbank Streets has increased drainage and traffic problems.
- Wasting of Money...nothing has changed Main Street is Ugly after All the expense wasted on it
- Eskbank and Main St intersection poorly executed, waste of money. . Money was wasted on Cook St Plaza
- I do not believe Council spends its income - our rates - wisely. The recent 'revitalisation' works - over 12 months inconvenience - resulted in less trees, less shade and less amenity. Footpaths in the main shopping street are totally inconsistent. Much of the new work has already been dug up for repairs, NBN, etc. Council cannot be trusted to spend money productively and efficiently.

- WE don't need a rate increase just stop wasting money on making town ugly and in many places of the kerbs and footpaths in Main St are not practical and waste space (Cook St, Main St)

Pensions/low income earners

- Money, pensions don't go up as much as our rates - Can't afford more money. It's ok to say council has hardship contingency, but in the end you still have to pay.
- Would you be happy if we just gave you our pensions and we went begging on the street? You do nothing for this town.
- special relief could be given to very low income earners
- I'm a pensioner, I can't afford an increase. I think the rates are already too high, my nan in Sydney pays less.
- Cannot afford an increase in rates on my pension..i may have to move away. This will cause significant financial difficulties for my family. We already pay more in rates than any of my friends or family members do and they live closer to Sydney with much more benefits from the council. No council pick up.no animal desexing or vaccination help. No community programs or courses? What are you doing with our money?
- You did not address the increase to rates for pensioners - just went around their concerns, \$1 a week may not sound like much to people earning your incomes but remember these are low income very low income earners
- Our pension is low and you are asking for more money where is that supposed to come from.
- Prices go up but our pay or pension does not, where do we get the money for the rate hike
- Families already struggle with the current rate
- i think that most ratepayers can only afford to pay for option 1
- Pensioners, no increase in pension every year but costs are going higher every year.
- With all electricity/gas costings increasing as a pensioner on a low set income would not be able to pay future projected rate increases.
- I cannot afford option 2.
- Financial Hardship is already seriously affecting ratepayers. Offering payment plans not an acceptable solution. Unreasonable to expect Ratepayers to do Option 2. Low income residents will suffer most. Focus on cutback elsewhere in operations eg Halloween. Cutback ALL fringe benefits for Councillors & Staff. Option 2 will not successfully deliver for this region. LCC is unfit for the Future - face it! Closures/deterioration of assets affects all residents' not just low income earners. That is fairer.
- Less financial impact on rate payers
- I refuse to pay more rates as I cannot afford it

Cost of Rates

- Rates are already too high.
- we already are paying high rates and a lot of people have trouble paying now
- Lithgow has significantly higher total rates notice values than other regional areas, typical residential rates for an empty block exceeds \$2200
- Already 6th highest average residential rates in NSW.
- Council is trying to use the easy option of increasing rate as an excuse for not managing the available finances it currently collect. The Lithgow community already pays higher rates than most other council areas including the Sydney region.
- Financial hardship incurred by increase in rates
- Farmland rates with smallest population have in the past incurred the greatest rate increases. Council presumes farmland rates are tax deductions but land zoned farmland is not viable farmland income rather a lifestyle. Benefits received by the majority have been slow to role out to farmland raters e.g. ability to recycle
- rated are way too expensive now we are not all coalminers
- cannot afford more rises in rates
- Cannot afford increases when nothing gets done. cannot afford an increase in rates
- I have a family member who has already lost their house in Lithgow due to The increased cost of living and my grandchildren also struggle to pay their Bills and mortgages, so a further increase in living expenses would make it More difficult. I also have a grandson who has been suicidal because of money Issues and this would be a further tipping point for him.
- Rates are already well above comparative suburbs
- Increase is above CPI
- We live out of town we have no services what so ever. Our rates are excessively high already!! No sewage no sealed road no garbage collection nothing yet we are expected to pay these high rates for what? We were told our road would be sealed in 2000 and it still isn't...
- Would rather services cut than an excessive rate increase
- I Want rates to go down with wages as living expenses go up. At some point rates must go down, we pay off our home but still pay weekly rent to council, thieves. Don't need any council services other than wastage which is paid for separately. Will rates go up to \$5000 per year in 20 years, absolutely ridiculous?
- Our rates are too high at the moment and any increase is only going to make it harder for a lot of people to pay them.

- Lithgow has some of the highest rates in the state, with very little by way of services. Why is this?
- The rates are too high for the lack of services.
- Our rates are one of the highest and we live in a low socio economic area.
- Total rates and other charges are dearer than other towns, water charges are dear for the condition of the water
- At the present moment I am struggling to pay the rates
- I live out in a rural block and we have no services including no collection of bins so why pay more for nothing. Overall I find the overall upkeep very poor and a waste of money as it seems to go to contractors that do a half job and never complete their tasks. I cannot afford it with my family as well. My pay has not gone up that much in the last 5 years.
- It is a poor time to increase rates with current living expenses already too high eg electricity, petrol
- I feel this is purely a ploy for council to make additional money off rate holders. The increase is too much, plus the increase will continue year on year. Council needs to list and justify spend before I can commit. I am not prepared to support without this.
- Our rates are already expensive enough. Disgustingly expensive to be honest. You have already given this same reasoning for the first SRV.
- The rates are excessively high already.
- Average wage earner can't afford the increase.
- We pay a lot more rates than any other council I know. I DON'T believe in any "permanent" SRV. This town is run down due to poor management of the funds the council already collect off ratepayers. Example.. The Main street and Cook street plaza disgrace!! The Unfair dismissal of 2 highly paid council staff...A cost of about a million dollars in fees, fines and payouts. I pay over \$9000.00 in rates a year...THAT IS ENOUGH. Giving this council more money to WASTE is not on!!!!
- Too expensive - Don't see what my money is put to use right now - I do not earn enough for the increase here.
- Lithgow Council Rates are already very expensive, way more than even Sydney rates and affordable.
- All families are under financial pressure, at a time where the reserve bank is not willing to increase lending rates; I do not feel it would be appropriate increase homeowner rates. Personally, I am not in a position to increase how much money I am spending on rates. Living in central Lithgow, my rates are already the most expensive of all my colleagues (>\$2400) per annum. Living on my own this is a large expense and increasing it would put even greater pressure on my budget.
- Costs are too expensive, rates are constantly going up.
- We cannot earn an income off the land due to the drought. We cannot afford an extra increase in rates. Have not earned an income off it for the last 10 years.
- I think the rates here are high enough
- The current rates for the property are already high in comparison to other areas, improvements to money management rather than rate hikes preferred.
- Many people in this area are struggling, and a rate rise will not help them.
- Our rates are higher enough now without any extra. Get rid of extra funding for Halloween/ Ironfest etc to show genuine interest in cost cutting. There is no mention of cost cutting measures for Council or Council staff - free car access etc. Payments to recompense bad managers, court costs etc shouldn't be at ratepayers expense. Debacle of Cook St Plaza and Eskbank Street - how can we trust Council with any extra money!
- Rates are high enough already. Council need to become more efficient with the funds they have. Council need to stick to their basic functions. Can the rate payers afford this now?
- Increased personal cost. Rates already high compared to other places.
- We already pay enough! We are one of the highest rate payers in NSW. What has council been doing with the money they already get? Nothing! If we pay more I know nothing will change. How about cutting costs elsewhere? Like Halloween. Our council is already a joke!
- The rates in Lithgow are much higher than what people pay in Sydney & Blue Mountains for much larger blocks. The roads in Lithgow are atrocious and if they do any patching of broken potholed roads it is not of good quality. I pay full rates no concessions on a small single income, maybe it's just better to sell my property and go elsewhere.
- We can't afford an extra \$150+ per year on our already ridiculously overpriced rates!
- Council rate is very high at the moment. Due to any extra the rent will be increase too much which is no good in the Lithgow market. It will be effect the investment in Lithgow to grow. we are suffering from increase insurance every year, maintenance, loan rate for involvement and more. The investment in Lithgow include any property will be effect in the market value due to extra expenses.
- Due to increase council rate the rent will be increased which is no good in Lithgow area. We suffering from increase council rate, insurance, and maintenance even the travelling cost not add as expenses for tax purpose. The property in Lithgow area will be reduced in value due to extra expenses. The market in Lithgow will be effect as the council rate will be affected and more increase will be coming and coming again. Rate in Lithgow at the moment is very height than any council.
- I cannot afford an increased rate payment. I have not had a wage increase in many years. Lithgow Council will have to cut costs by reducing wages etc. Reduce council staffing levels. Many ratepayers work in private industry; therefore don't have the security of a local council job. COST OF LIVING IS TOO HIGH.
- Plainly we live in a very basis socio-economic area and yet we pay rates that are equivalent to very expensive areas in Sydney...how does that make any sense?
- Our rates are already high. Why is it that residential gets a \$52 increase and gets ALL services whilst farmland gets \$100 increase and no services?

- Our rates are already high compared with Bathurst. Bathurst offers residents better services for less. Lithgow council needs to demonstrate that it better support its residents with current income before I support paying more.
- Rates are already much higher than other councils. Maybe council should review its spending and re-tender operations. Council should reduce its overheads before expecting more funds from rate payers
- Rates are expensive enough for a big block of land. I don't believe the council will spend the money he effectively. Ratepayers should have a say on how and where the money is spent.
- Lithgow council already have some of the highest rates in the state and we can see how they currently waste our current rates let alone what they would do with even more money to waste.
- Being on a property we get little value out of our rates yet pay more.
- Rates are already quite high, i think council should look at it current budget and possibly reallocate money to higher priority projects.
- Keep rate bill low.
- My council rates are already expensive for little in the way of services at Round Swamp.
- We currently pay very high rates. At best services are second quality. Ratepayer money continually wasted on events i.e. Halloween. Ratepayer money seems wasted on services like street sweeper machine due to st parking. What is cost to ratepayer re a very inefficient rental to UWS, could be used as community centre.
- Rates are already too high. Council is not considering the impact high rates are having on farmers as they attempt to recover from the drought. Farmers pay the highest rates and get very little back in return. All the things you want to invest in are primarily for the city of Lithgow, not the farmers in outlying areas.
- Council rates are already extremely high for the area.
- council rates are too expensive
- Our rates are too high for what we have in our town, you need to reduce the waste spending.
- We own several properties in Lithgow and find that Lithgow rates are already quite high. We own properties that do not have access via sealed roads and this scenario will probably continue. I don't believe that any additional funding available with Option 2 would change our circumstances. It would most likely benefit properties with sealed roads that are in poor condition to be upgraded.

Consultation

- Definitely not enough notice for the rate rise. Everything including council is shut for 2 weeks over the Xmas period
- The communications about this proposal are not communicated well.
- The proposal in full does not give ratepayers enough information to make an informed decision. Because of this, Option 1 is chosen. Council should have prepared and issued a business case proposal for the community to consider - as it is, there's neither detail nor justification. Option 1 is not ideal but at least it is the lesser of two evils - unless the full facts are known, then the response is always sub-optimal
- How council can say it has completed a full analysis of the community's capacity to pay additional rates when its consultants have only contacted 401 residents. There are 11247 rateable properties were the 401 rate payers? If so only 3.5% have been consulted with. The Long Term Financial Plan 2019-2029 says Micromex Research have completed their research project. How can that be when Micromex Research are still making calls in relation to the SRV. Given that Council is seeking a permanent increase rate payers should be provided with information of how the additional money will be spent in future years as well and be held accountable for the delivery of these works. Council has not demonstrated how it will achieve the proposed additional works in 19/20.
- Council have not given concrete examples. Questions guiding people to choose option 2
- Wasted money on surveys (council staff could do it)
- Forget consultants and use the talent already employed to do the job
- You did not address the increase to rates for pensioners - just went around their concerns, \$1 a week may not sound like much to people earning your incomes but remember these are low income very low income earners.
- Council has engaged a telephone survey. This is inherently without checks and balances. The survey must include a large cross section of the local rate payers and council MUST be able to prove beyond all doubt that they have support for any further SRV.

Transport facilities

- not once in the 40 years that we have payed rates has our street been resurfaced
- Improve roads
- Roads are terrible at the best of times, used to it.
- The roads in Portland have never been fixed properly
- The basic roads alone are not met so where is the money going to.
- Council needs to look at their current spend on Transport costs and reallocate funds appropriately.
- Roads in Portland is a POT Land and never fixed properly already what is to say that we will see anything for the money spent
- This council has wasted too much money on foot paths only to be uprooted and done again.

- Living in Portland you have not fixed any roads permanently instead done very bad jobs that last a few months. How much money is going to Portland right now as there does not seem to be any real services for us here
- Right now I pay for wheel alignment on my car on a regular basis, as the roads are always bad. Tell us how much of our rates goes back to Portland and then we can deduct that from our rates as then we can fix the roads ourselves
- In Little Hartley the roads are disgraceful. I have serious erosion in the street the council does nothing about. Road fixes I have seen are cheaply and done in a temporary and poorly engineered fashion.
- the extra income received should be spent on the main street footpaths
- New facilities are not a priority for me, existing facilities are already quite good, just roads need more work
- Priorities are wrong Roads and Transport should be highest.
- With the budget the council should focus on line marking for public safety in bad weather, take Pipers Flat Road or the like, utterly dangerous in fog, has been for years.
- Lithgow Council is remote and does little to service roads around Capertee most of the roads are maintained by the State Government.
- Poor repairs on roads meaning more money spent refixing roads.