



A survey of Armidale Dumaresq residents to measure support for a proposed special rate variation survey from 2014/15



A random and representative telephone survey
of 300 residents in the Armidale Dumaresq LGA, conducted by
Jetty Research on behalf of **Armidale Dumaresq Council**

FINAL REPORT dated December 11th 2013

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Front cover photo: New England Regional Art Museum, Armidale.

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Executive summary

Armidale Dumaresq Council is considering applying to the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a special rate variation (SRV) covering seven years from 2014/15. As part of its wider community engagement strategy for the SRV application, Council commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random and representative fixed line telephone survey of 300 Armidale Dumaresq adult residents.

In addition to measuring support for the SRV, and as a way of identifying asset allocation priorities, the survey also sought to understand residents' sentiment on 13 Council-managed services and facilities.

Surveying was conducted from Jetty Research's CATI¹ research centre from November 25th to 28th, with a team of 10 telephone researchers calling residents from 3.30 to 8pm each evening. (For more details on methodology, see pages 6-7).

Random sampling error for a survey of 300 residents is +/- 5.6 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level. (For more information on sampling error and its implications, see page 7).

Among the key conclusions:

1. In terms of 13 facilities and services measured, satisfaction was highest with cleanliness of streets, local parks, reserves and playgrounds, waste collection and disposal, and town beautification and streetscaping. Those with the lowest satisfaction ratings included maintenance of unsealed roads, public toilets, drainage and protection of waterways, and maintenance of sealed roads.
2. Those facilities and services deemed most important included waste collection and disposal, parks, reserves and playgrounds, maintenance of sealed roads, and drainage/protection of waterways. Those perceived of lesser (relative) importance included maintenance of unsealed roads, community facilities such as public halls, kerb and guttering, and libraries.
3. When comparing satisfaction with importance, the highest "expectation gap" (i.e. the biggest negative difference between satisfaction and importance scores for any given facility or service) lay with maintenance of sealed roads, drainage and protection of waterways, and footpaths/cycleways.
4. Likewise, dividing the 13 facilities and services measured into four satisfaction and importance quadrants produced the following breakdown:

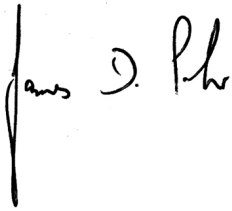
Higher importance, lower satisfaction	Higher importance, higher satisfaction
Maintenance of sealed roads	Waste collection and disposal
Drainage/protection of waterways	Parks, reserves and playgrounds
Footpaths and cycleways	Cleanliness of streets
Lower importance, lower satisfaction	Lower importance, higher satisfaction
Public toilets	Town beautification and streetscaping
Maintenance of unsealed roads	Bridges
	Libraries
	Kerb and guttering
	Community facilities e.g. public halls

This again suggest that sealed road maintenance, drainage/waterway protection and footpaths/cycleways are three issues of concern to local residents.

¹ Computer-assisted telephone interviewing

5. Only 39 per cent of respondents were aware that Council was applying for a special rate variation.
6. 28 per cent claimed to have read about the SRV in local media.
7. Between 14 and 19 per cent were aware of specific programs or projects to be funded by the SRV.
8. 10 per cent of respondents agreed with Council's preferred option ("option 1") of a 20 per cent SRV for each of the next seven years. A further 46 per cent preferred a stepped approach (termed "option 2") that would see a 10 per cent rise in year 1 with an additional 10 per cent thereafter. Forty-one per cent didn't accept either of these options, while the final 3 per cent were unsure.
9. Of those disagreeing with options 1 and 2, or who were unsure, the vast majority (88 per cent) sought a SRV of between 0 and 5 per cent.

This would appear to indicate that the community is divided fairly evenly between those supportive of – or at least prepared to accept – the proposed special rate variation, and those who are opposed to either of the options proposed by Council. And it is noteworthy that majority support comes despite a general lack of awareness about the proposed rate increase.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James D. Parker".

James Parker, B. Ec, Grad Cert Applied Science (Statistics), AMSRS
Managing Director
December 11th 2013

Introduction

Background

Armidale Dumaresq Council, located in the New England region of NSW, is considering a special rate variation (SRV) for seven years commencing in the 2104/15 financial year.

Prior to making a decision on whether to proceed with the SRV application to the state's Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal – and if so, in what format – Council commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random and representative telephone survey of its residents.

The survey was designed to:

- (a) identify satisfaction with, and importance of key Council facilities and services (as a means of establishing future asset allocation priorities);
- (b) measure awareness of the proposed SRV and its uses; and
- (c) measure support for the two proposed SRV models.

Methodology

The survey was conducted using a random fixed line telephone poll of 300 residents aged 18+. Respondents were selected at random from a verified random sample residential telephone database of 2,300 residential telephone numbers within the LGA². A survey form was constructed collaboratively between Council management and Jetty Research (see Appendix 1), based on satisfying the above objectives.

Polling was conducted between Monday, November 25th and Thursday, November 28th 2013 from Jetty Research's Coffs Harbour CATI³ call centre. A team of ten researchers called Armidale Dumaresq residents from 3.30 to 8pm each evening. Where phones went unanswered, were engaged or diverted to answering machines, researchers phoned on up to five occasions at different times of the afternoon or evening.

The poll was conducted on a purely random basis, other than ensuring an adequate mix of ages and genders. Respondents were screened to ensure they were aged 18 or over, lived within the Armidale Dumaresq LGA, and were not councillors or permanent Council employees.

Survey time varied from 6 to 23 minutes, with an average of 10.3 minutes. Response rate was satisfactory for an uncompensated interview of this length, with 52 per cent of eligible households reached agreeing to participate.

Please note that due to the nature of the survey, not all respondents answered every question. The number of respondents answering each question is marked as "n = XXX" in the graph accompanying that question. Caution should be taken in analysing some questions due to the small sample size.

² Sampleworx, the provider of these verified random residential numbers, is a respected supplier of random residential telephone numbers to the market and social research industry.

³ Computer-assisted telephone interviewing

Where differences in this report are classed as significant, this implies they are statistically significant based on independent sample t-scores or other analysis of variation (or ANOVA) calculations. In statistical terms, significant differences are unlikely to have been caused by chance alone.

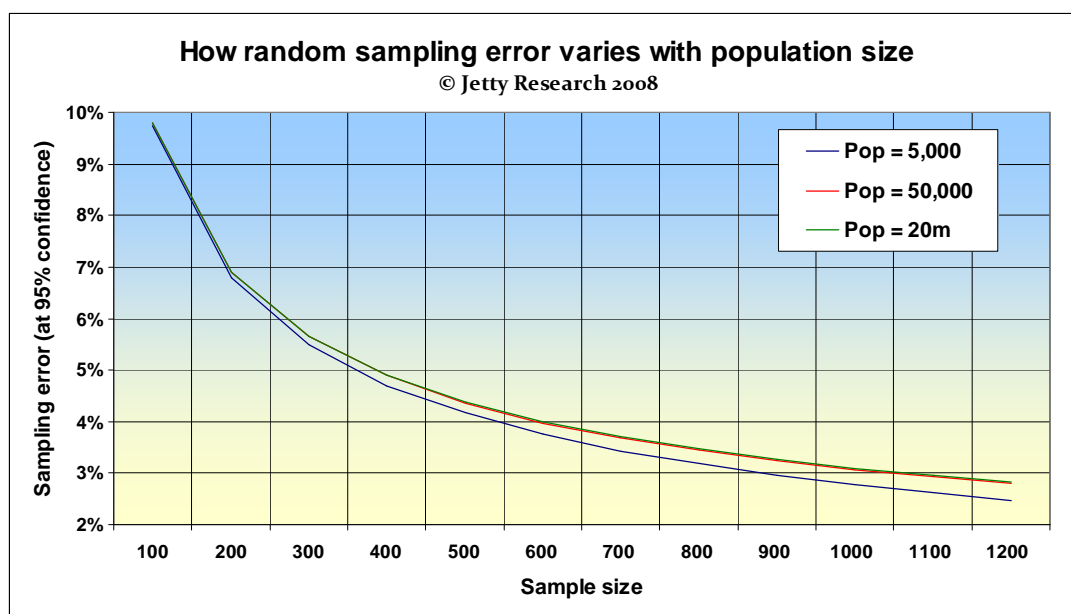
Results have been post-weighted by age and gender to match the population profile of the Armidale Dumaresq Council LGA in the 2011 ABS Census (Usual Resident profile). See Appendix 2 for details on how this process was conducted.

Sampling error

According to the 2011 ABS Census (Usual Resident profile) the total population of the Armidale Dumaresq LGA was 24,106, of which 18,403 (76 per cent) were aged 18 and over. Based on this latter survey population, a random sample of 300 adult residents implies a margin for error of +/- 5.6 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.

This means, in effect, that if we conducted a similar poll twenty times, results should reflect the views and behaviour of the overall survey population – in this case all Armidale Dumaresq adult residents excluding permanent council employees and councillors - to within a +/- 5.6 per cent margin in 19 of those 20 surveys.

Table i: How sampling error varies with sample and population size

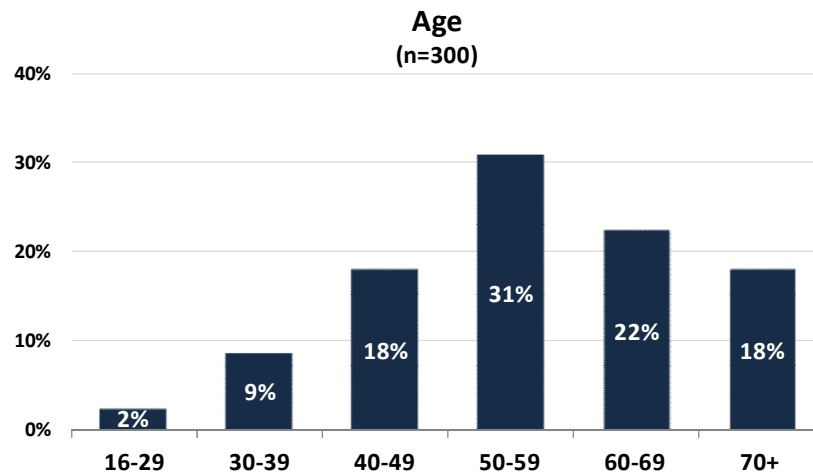


In addition to the random sampling error, above, there may also be some forms of non-random sampling error which may have affected results. These include respondents without fixed line phones, the proportion of non-respondents (refusals, no answers etc.) and/or imperfections in the survey database.

Sample characteristics

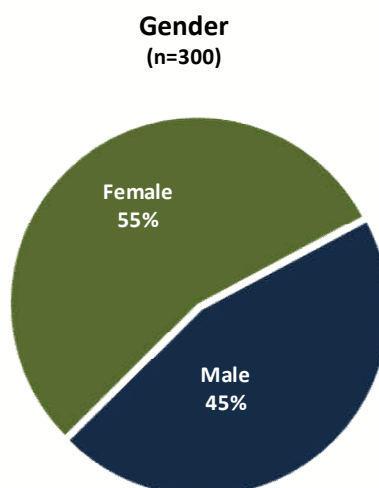
The random survey of 300 adult Armidale Dumaresq residents displayed the following demographic characteristics:

Graph i: Age breakdown



The sample was skewed slightly older than the general population, with 40 per cent of respondents aged 60 or more. This is common in random fixed line telephone polls, and particularly for Council-related surveys. (The proportionately higher number of older residents is exacerbated in the case of Armidale by the large student population at University of New England.)

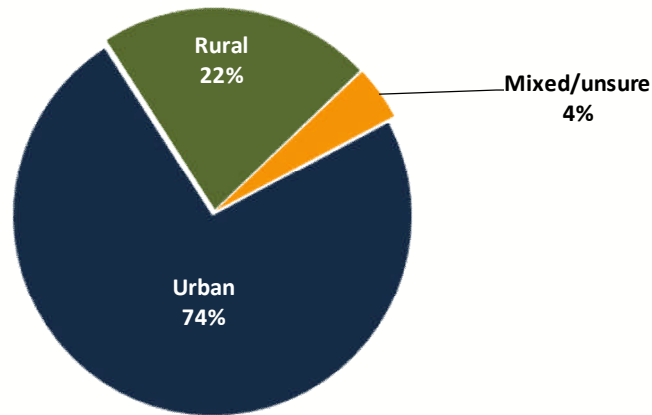
Graph ii: Gender breakdown



There was a very slight bias towards females, who make up 52 per cent of the Armidale Dumaresq population.

Graph iii: Breakdown by urban vs. rural

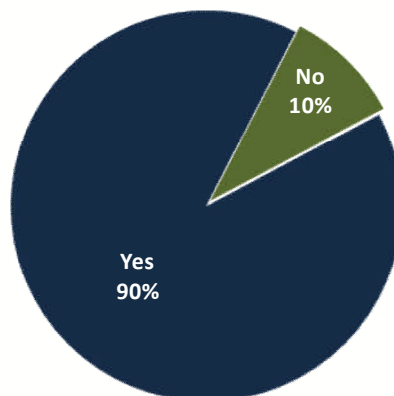
Would you class your residence as mainly urban or rural?
(n=300)



Just under three-quarters of the sample claimed to live in an urban setting. This is consistent with our previous surveying in the Armidale Dumaresq LGA.

Graph iv: Breakdown by ratepayer status

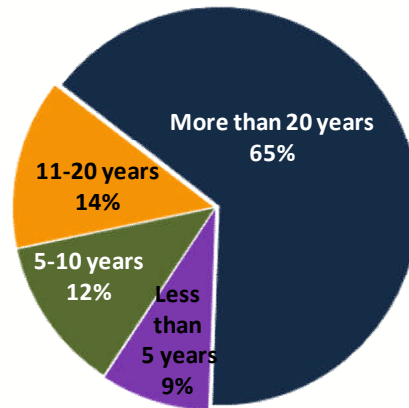
Are you a ratepayer within the Armidale Dumaresq Council area?
(n=300)



Nine in ten respondents claimed to be ratepayers within the LGA. While this is not necessarily representative of all residents, it is typical within Council-related surveys (as ratepayers tend to have a more vested interest in Council services and funding).

Graph v: Breakdown by length of residence

How long have you lived in the
Armidale Dumaresq Council area?
(n=300)



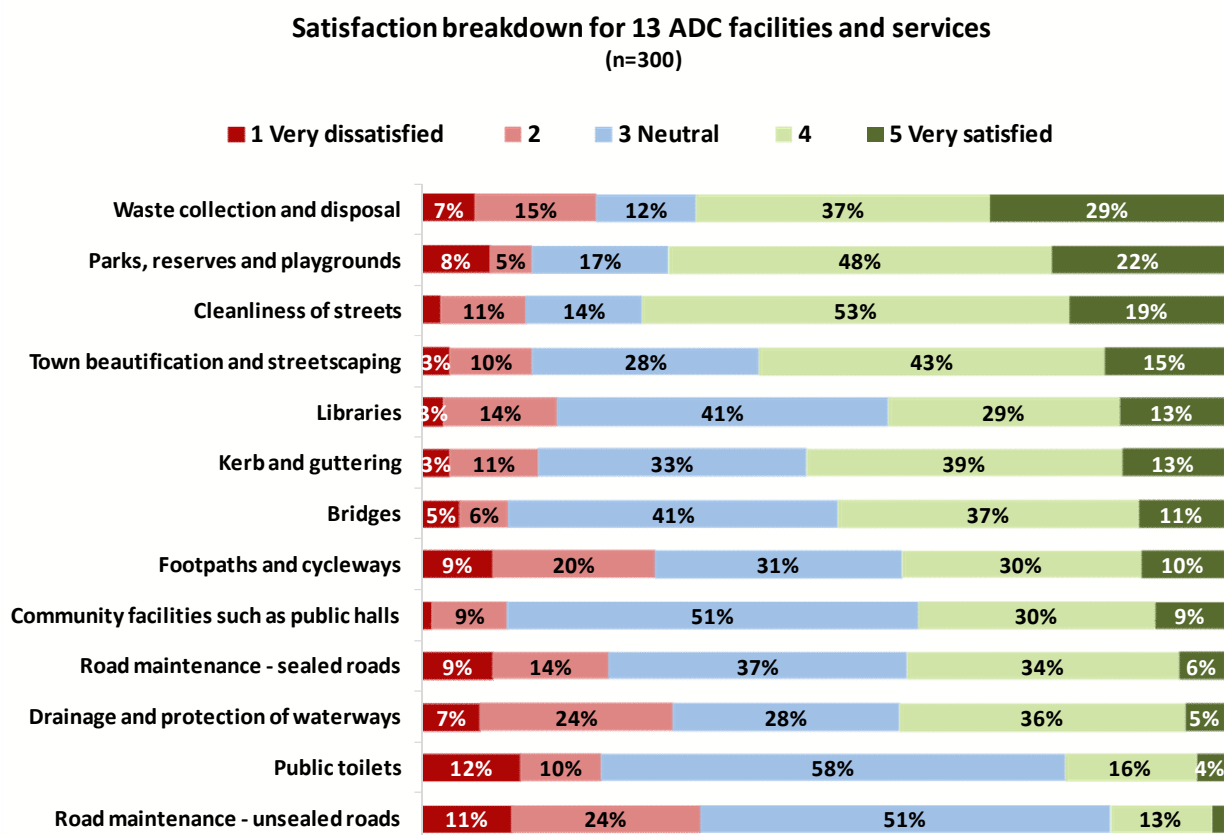
Two-thirds of the sample had lived locally for 20 years or more. This would at least partially reflect the slightly older skew of respondents relative to the LGA's adult population.

Part 1: Facility and services rankings

The survey commenced with residents asked to rank their satisfaction with, and importance of 13 Council-managed facilities and services. Satisfaction was ranked on a 1-5 sliding scale, where 1 was very dissatisfied, 3 was neutral and 5 was very satisfied. Importance also used a 5-point ranking, with 1 being not at all important and 5 being very important.

Looking first at satisfaction (ranked here from highest “very satisfied” to lowest):

Graph 1.1: Satisfaction breakdown for 13 facilities and services



This suggests that waste collection and disposal, parks, reserves and playgrounds and cleanliness of streets were the services attracting the highest overall satisfaction, with 70+ per cent of residents satisfied in each instance.

At the other end of the scale, seven of the 13 facilities and services measured had satisfaction scores of less than 50 per cent. Among these were maintenance of unsealed roads (with 14 per cent satisfied overall), public toilets (20 per cent), maintenance of sealed roads (40 per cent) and drainage and protection of waterways (41 per cent).

Looking at each facility and service by its satisfaction mean score tells a similar story:

Table 1.1: Facilities and services ranked from highest to lowest mean satisfaction score

Facility or Service	Satisfaction mean
Cleanliness of streets	3.77
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	3.69
Waste collection and disposal	3.67
Town beautification and streetscaping	3.56
Kerb and guttering	3.47
Bridges	3.43
Libraries	3.36
Community facilities such as public halls	3.35
Road maintenance - sealed roads	3.13
Footpaths and cycleways	3.13
Drainage and protection of waterways	3.07
Public toilets	2.89
Road maintenance - unsealed roads	2.70

On this measure, 11 of the 13 facilities and services enjoyed a mean rating of 3.00 or more (on the 5-point scale). Cleanliness of streets, parks reserves and playgrounds and waste collection/disposal again led the list, while maintenance of unsealed roads and public toilets were the only two to fall below the 3.0 “mid score”.

The table below shows how satisfaction means varied by whether the respondent lived in an urban or rural location⁴. Significant differences from the overall mean are marked in blue and pink.

Table 1.2: Satisfaction with facilities and services, by urban vs. rural

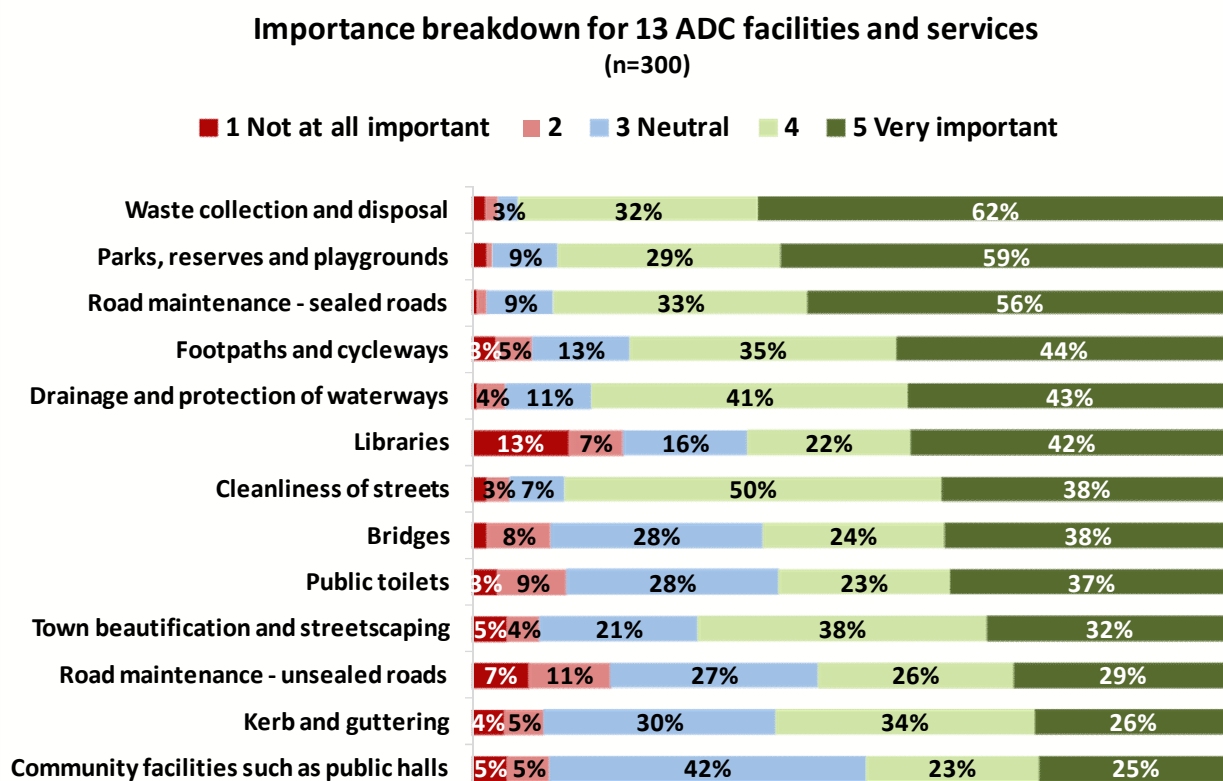
Facility/Service Satisfaction	Urban		Rural/Village		Difference
	Mean	N	Mean	N	
Waste collection and disposal	3.77	235	3.14	56	0.63
Road maintenance - sealed roads	3.25	235	2.62	56	0.63
Road maintenance - unsealed roads	2.79	235	2.31	56	0.48
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	3.75	235	3.36	56	0.40
Bridges	3.51	235	3.15	56	0.37
Kerb and guttering	3.52	235	3.25	56	0.27
Libraries	3.39	235	3.21	56	0.18
Public toilets	2.91	235	2.78	56	0.13
Community facilities such as public halls	3.36	235	3.32	56	0.03
Drainage and protection of waterways	3.05	235	3.10	56	-0.04
Cleanliness of streets	3.75	235	3.80	56	-0.05
Town beautification and streetscaping	3.51	235	3.71	56	-0.19
Footpaths and cycleways	3.10	235	3.30	56	-0.20

This suggests that satisfaction was significantly higher among urban residents in the areas of waste collection and disposal, maintenance of sealed and unsealed roads, parks, reserves and playgrounds, and bridges. There were no areas in which rural dwellers were significantly more satisfied than their urban counterparts.

⁴ Excludes 9 respondents who classed themselves as “mixed” or “unsure”

Looking next at importance (and again ranked from highest to lowest “very important” rankings):

Graph 1.2: Importance breakdown for 13 facilities and services



As might be expected, the vast majority of services and facilities measured were classed as “important” or “very important”. Leading the way were waste collection and disposal (classed as “important” or “very important” by 94 per cent of respondents), sealed roads (89 per cent), parks, reserves and playgrounds (88 per cent) and drainage and protection of waterways (85 per cent).

At the other end of the scale, community facilities were classed as important or very important by just 48 per cent of those surveyed, with 55 per cent believing maintenance of unsealed roads was important to them.

Table 1.3 (next page) ranks the 13 facilities and services from highest to lowest mean score:

Table 1.3: Facilities and services ranked from highest to lowest mean importance score

Service	Importance mean
Waste collection and disposal	4.51
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	4.43
Road maintenance - sealed roads	4.42
Drainage and protection of waterways	4.22
Cleanliness of streets	4.19
Footpaths and cycleways	4.12
Town beautification and streetscaping	3.89
Bridges	3.87
Public toilets	3.81
Libraries	3.74
Kerb and guttering	3.72
Community facilities such as public halls	3.59
Road maintenance - unsealed roads	3.58

The major mover in this instance is “cleanliness of streets”, which was of fifth highest importance when ranked by mean importance score. And maintenance of unsealed roads was deemed the least important of the 13 service or facilities measured on this basis.

Table 1.4: Importance of facilities and services, by urban vs. rural

Facility/Service Importance	Urban		Rural/Village		Difference
	Mean	N	Mean	N	
Footpaths and cycleways	4.29	235	3.39	56	0.89
Waste collection and disposal	4.64	235	3.96	56	0.68
Kerb and guttering	3.80	235	3.33	56	0.48
Town beautification and streetscaping	3.95	235	3.56	56	0.40
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	4.52	235	4.13	56	0.39
Libraries	3.80	235	3.48	56	0.32
Cleanliness of streets	4.18	235	4.15	56	0.03
Drainage and protection of waterways	4.21	235	4.20	56	0.01
Community facilities such as public halls	3.57	235	3.63	56	-0.06
Public toilets	3.78	235	3.93	56	-0.15
Road maintenance - sealed roads	4.37	235	4.58	56	-0.21
Bridges	3.77	235	4.23	56	-0.45
Road maintenance - unsealed roads	3.37	235	4.38	56	-1.01

Looking at the importance figures by town vs. country reveals some stark differences. As one would expect, footpaths and cycleways, waste collection, kerbs and guttering, town beautification and streetscaping and parks, reserves and playgrounds were significantly more important to urban residents. Conversely, bridges and unsealed roads were of significantly greater importance to rural dwellers.

Graph 1.3, below, summarises the mean satisfaction and importance scores for each of the 13 facilities and services. Table 1.5 also includes the “expectation gap” between satisfaction and importance, ranked from lowest to highest gap:

Graph 1.3: Mean satisfaction and importance scores for 13 facilities and services

Mean Importance & Satisfaction scores for 13 ADC facilities and services
(n=300)

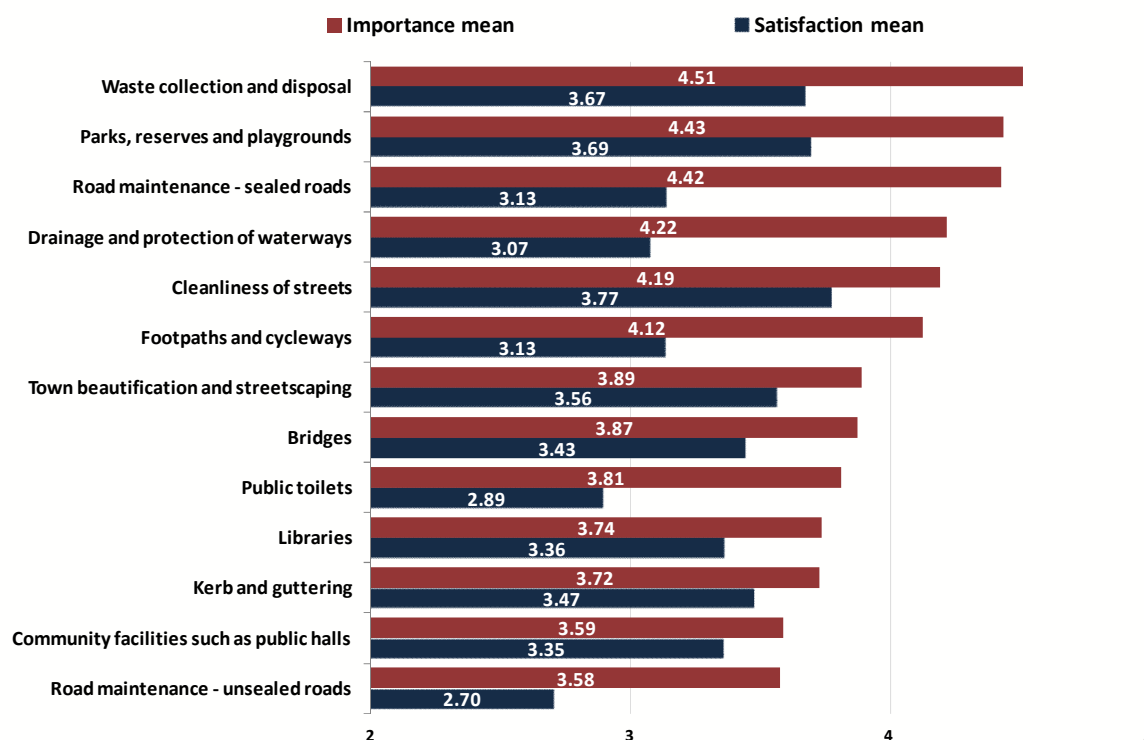


Table 1.5: Expectation Gap – Importance vs. satisfaction

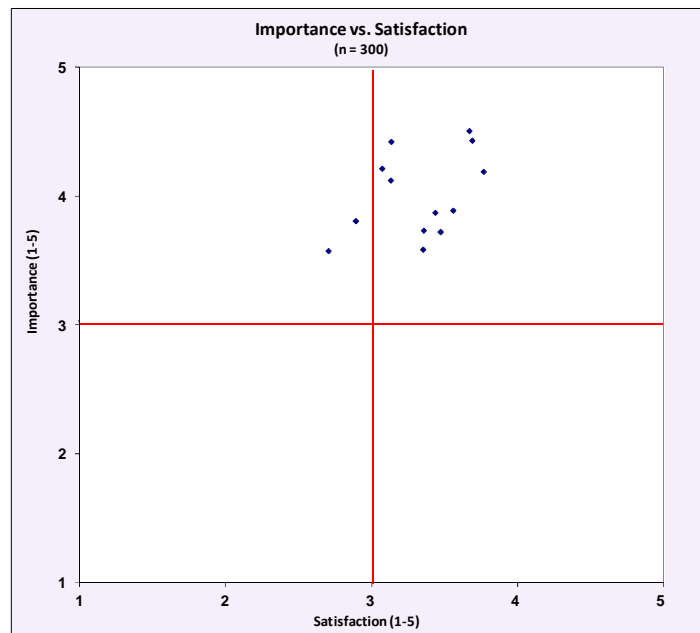
Service	Satisfaction mean	Importance mean	Expectation gap
Community facilities such as public halls	3.35	3.59	-.24
Kerb and guttering	3.47	3.72	-.25
Town beautification and streetscaping	3.56	3.89	-.33
Libraries	3.36	3.74	-.38
Cleanliness of streets	3.77	4.19	-.43
Bridges	3.43	3.87	-.44
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	3.69	4.43	-.75
Waste collection and disposal	3.67	4.51	-.84
Road maintenance - unsealed roads	2.70	3.58	-.87
Public toilets	2.89	3.81	-.92
Footpaths and cycleways	3.13	4.12	-.99
Drainage and protection of waterways	3.07	4.22	-1.15
Road maintenance - sealed roads	3.13	4.42	-1.29

This suggests that the lowest gap between satisfaction and importance lies in community facilities, kerbs and guttering and town beautification and streetscaping. (These then are the three areas where community expectation is closest to being met.)

Conversely, the gap is widest in the areas of drainage/protection of waterways and maintenance of sealed roads. These are the council-provided services where community expectation is outweighing satisfaction by the greatest amount.

Meanwhile Graphs 1.4a and 1.4b plot importance against satisfaction on the same graph. Graph 1.4a shows all 13 facilities and services rated against 1-5 satisfaction (horizontal) and 1-5 importance (vertical) ratings. Graph 1.4b drills down into more detail, and shows whether facilities and services fall into the higher or lower quadrants of satisfaction and importance:

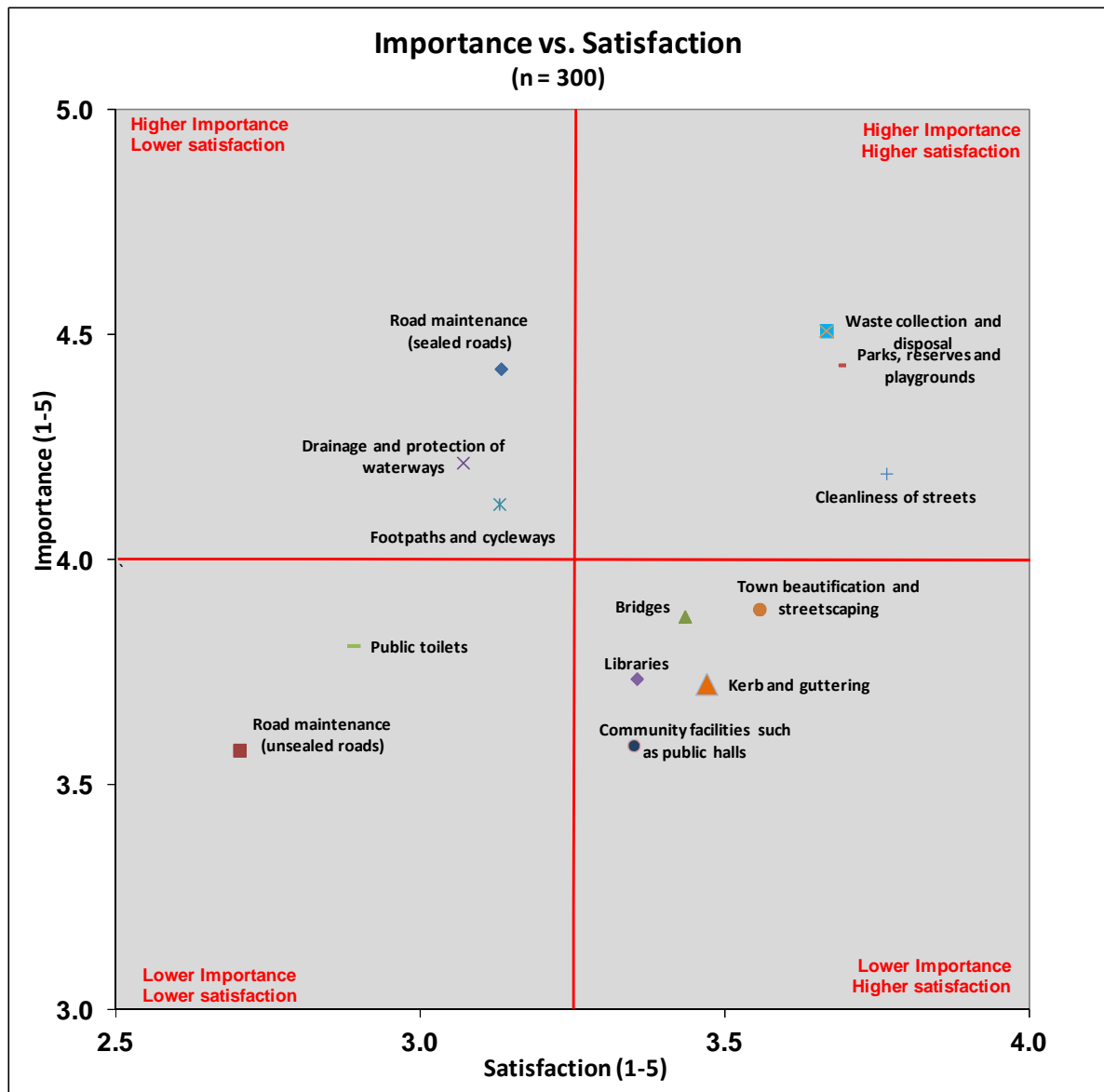
Graph 1.4a: Satisfaction and Importance Matrix (Big picture)



The big picture analysis suggests that in absolute terms, all but two of the facilities and services fall into the “high satisfaction, high importance” quadrant (the exceptions being public toilets and maintenance of unsealed roads).

(Continued next page)

Graph 1.4b: Satisfaction and Importance Matrix (Detail)



Using a revised (and more demanding) scale, we can see that waste collection, cleanliness of streets and parks, reserves and playgrounds are the three services and facilities to meet the “higher importance, higher satisfaction” criteria.

Meanwhile maintenance of sealed roads, drainage and protection of waterways and footpaths/cycleways fall into the higher importance/lower satisfaction category.

Part 2: Awareness of Special Rate Variation

At this point of the survey, respondents were informed that:

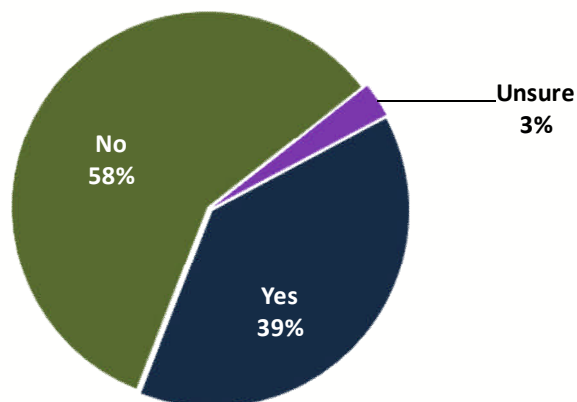
“Armidale Dumaresq Council has indicated in-principle support for a special rate variation of 20% p.a. in 2014 on general rates. This rate variation would last for seven years. It does not include the rate peg of 2.4% nor include this increase on water, sewer and waste charges. The rate variation is designed to fund asset sustainability and would address the current \$2.1 million per annum funding gap for maintenance of local infrastructure.

The proposed increases would mean that for a ratepayer currently paying \$1000 in general rates, the special rate increase in the first year would be \$200 per year or approximately \$3.85 per week. “

This explanation was followed by three questions designed to identify respondents’ level of awareness and knowledge about the proposed special rate variation (SRV).

Graph 2.1: Were you aware of the proposed special rate variation?

Were you aware of the proposed SRV?
(n=300)

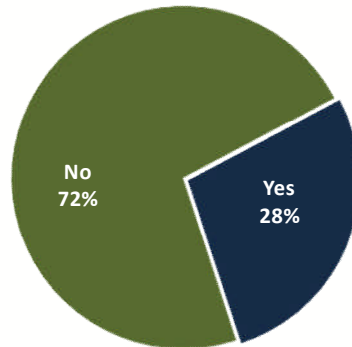


Just under 40 per cent of respondents claimed to have been aware of the proposed SRV prior to being surveyed. This proportion was relatively consistent by age and gender.

(Continued next page)

Graph 2.2: Have you read any recent articles about the SRV in local media?

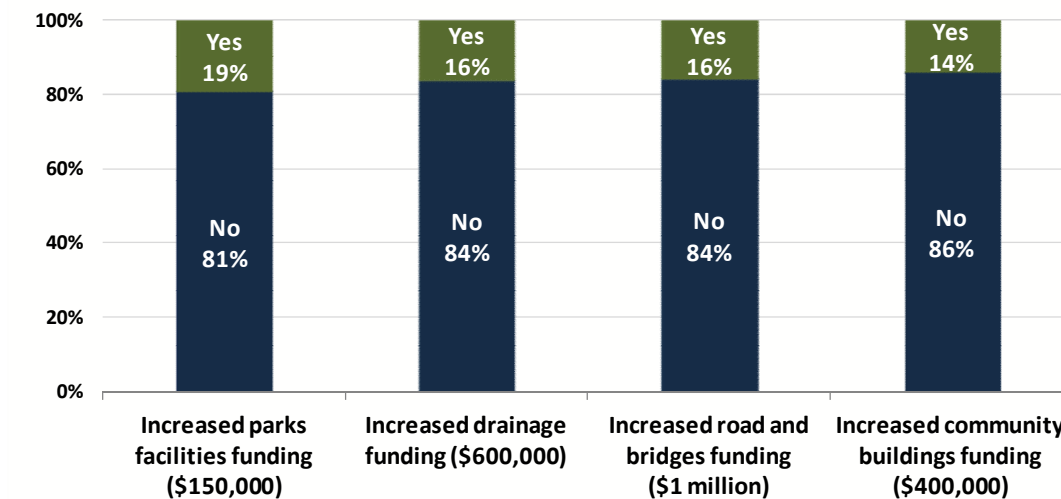
**Have you read any of the recent articles
in the local media about this SRV?**
(n=300)



Meanwhile only 28 per cent said they had read about the proposed SRV in local media.

Graph 2.3: Are you aware of the proposed programs/projects in the SRV?

**Are you aware of the following proposed
programs or projects in the SRV?**
(n=300)



With less than three in ten of those surveyed having read about the SRV, it is not surprising that few respondents were aware of individual projects targeted for attention were it to proceed (Graph 2.3, above).

Part 3: Support for Special Rate Variation

Those taking part in the survey were then asked which of three prompted statements most closely aligned with their own views on the proposed SRV:

“I agree that the special rate variation is necessary and support the rate variation being proposed of 20% for 7 years” (Option 1); or

“I accept that a special rate variation is necessary but believe the proposed rate increase is too high and should be set at 10% for the first year and an additional 10% thereafter” (Option 2); or

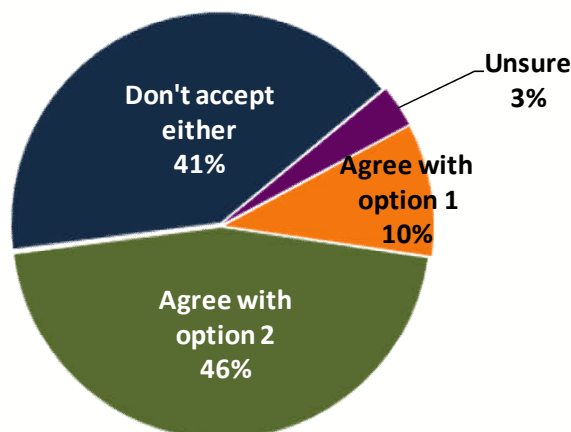
“I don't accept either of these proposed variations” (Option 3).

(Respondents could also answer “unsure”, although this option was not prompted).

The results are shown in Graph 3.1, below.

Graph 3.1: Which of the following statements most closely aligns with your views on the proposed SRV?

Which of the following statements most closely aligns with your views on the proposed SRV?
(n=300)



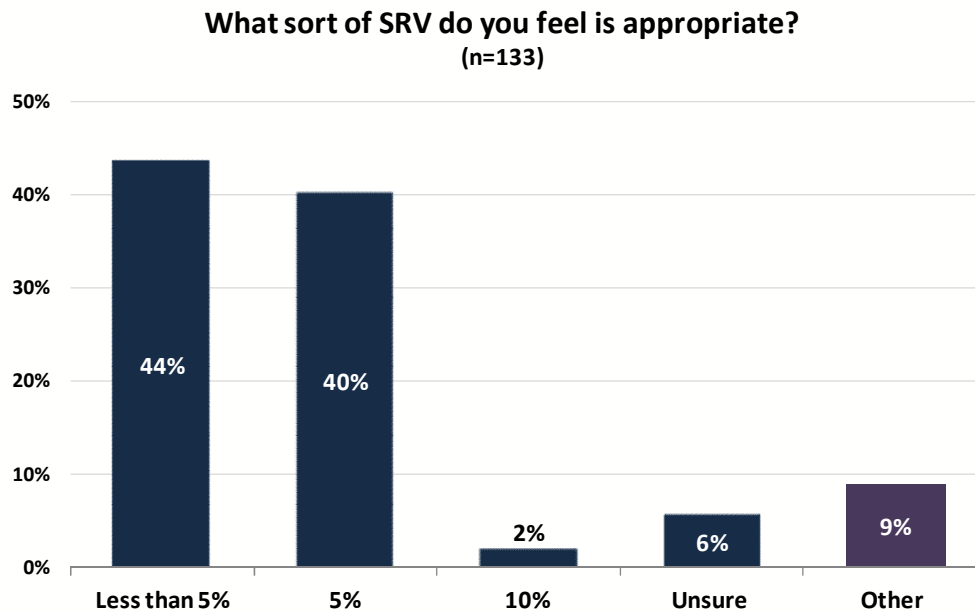
This suggests that 10 per cent of those surveyed agreed with the need for a 20 per cent SRV over seven years, while a further 46 per cent felt it should be “stepped up” at 10 per cent in the first year and an additional 10 per cent thereafter. A further 41 per cent didn’t like either option, with the balance unsure.⁵

Support for option 2 was strongest among younger respondents (i.e. those aged 18-39) and females. There was no significant difference between urban and rural residents, and – interestingly – no difference depending on whether the respondent claimed to have prior knowledge of the proposed SRV.

⁵ In case it’s of interest, unweighted results suggested 9 per cent support for Option 1, 43 per cent for Option 2, 45 per cent for neither option, and 3 per cent for “unsure”.

Those choosing Option 3 or “unsure” were then asked what they felt an appropriate SRV would be. Their responses are shown in Graph 3.2, below:

Graph 3.2: (If “Don’t accept either option” or “unsure”) What sort of SRV do you feel is appropriate?



With 84 per cent of these (133) respondents choosing a rate of 5 per cent or less, this suggests that residents fell sharply into one camp (accepting the need for a sizeable SRV) or the other (believing that little or no SRV was appropriate).

In summary then, it appears that a slim majority of the community accept the need for a sizeable rate increase, with the balance opposed or unsure. It is interesting to note that this support comes despite a lack of prior awareness about the proposed SRV.

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Version 1 ADC-SRV

Last modified: 25/11/2013 10:18:12 AM

- Q1. Hi my name is (name) and I'm calling from Jetty Research on behalf of Armidale Dumaresq Council. Council is currently conducting a random telephone survey of residents to get a better understanding of community views regarding a proposed special rate variation. You have been selected at random to participate in this survey. It would only take around 10 minutes, all your answers are confidential, and we are not trying to sell anything. Would you be willing to share your views with us on this important issue?

Offer a call back if inconvenient time. Dumaresq pronounced DUE-MERICK. Council contact is Shane Burns, General manager, on 6770 3822

Yes	1
No	555

Answer If Attribute "No" from Q1 is SELECTED

Q1

- Q2. Thank you for your time. Have a great afternoon/evening.

End

- Q3. Before we start I just have a few quick screening questions. Can I confirm you are aged 18 or above?

IF NO ask to speak with someone 16 or over

Yes	1
No	555

Answer If Attribute "No" from Q3 is SELECTED

Q3

- Q4. I'm sorry but you must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this survey. Thanks for your time and have a great afternoon/evening.

End

Q5. And do you live in the Armidale Dumaresq local government area?

DUE-MERRICK.

Yes	1
No	555

Answer If Attribute "No" from Q5 is SELECTED

Q5

Q6. I'm sorry this survey is only for residents of the Armidale Dumaresq LGA. Thank you for your time and have a great afternoon/evening.

End

Q7. Are you a Councillor or a permanent employee of Council?

UNPROMPTED. Immediate family members of above no not qualify e.g. husband, wife etc

Yes	1
No	555

Answer If Attribute "Yes" from Q7 is SELECTED

Q7

Q8. I'm sorry but Councillors or permanent employees of Council do not qualify to participate in this survey. Thank you for your time.

End

Q9. May I have your first name for the survey?

Type N/A if not willing to give name.

Q9

Q10. Thanks [Q9]. Now I'd like to commence by asking you to rate your satisfaction with a range of Council facilities and services. We'll use a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very dissatisfied, 3 is neutral and 5 is very satisfied. First we have:

READ OUT and rate each option. Use 3 if UNSURE

	1 Very dissatisfied	2	3 Neutral	4	5 Very satisfied	
Road maintenance - sealed roads	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_1
Road maintenance - unsealed roads	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_2
Bridges	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_3
Drainage and protection of waterways	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_4
Footpaths and cycleways	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_5
Town beautification and streetscaping	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_6
Cleanliness of streets	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_7
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_8
Public toilets	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_9
Libraries	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_10
Waste collection and disposal	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_11
Kerb and guttering	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_12
Community facilities such as public halls	1	2	3	4	5	Q10_13

Q11. And now please rate how important these Council facilities and services are to you personally. Again we'll use a scale of 1-5, where 1 is not at all important and 5 is very important:

READ OUT and rate each option.

	1 Not at all important	2	3	4	5 Very important	
Road maintenance - sealed roads	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_1
Road maintenance - unsealed roads	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_2
Bridges	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_3
Drainage and protection of waterways	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_4
Footpaths and cycleways	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_5
Town beautification and streetscaping	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_6
Cleanliness of streets	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_7
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_8
Public toilets	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_9
Libraries	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_10
Waste collection and disposal	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_11
Kerb and guttering	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_12
Community facilities such as public halls	1	2	3	4	5	Q11_13

- Q12. Armidale Dumaresq Council has indicated in-principle support for a special rate variation of 20% p.a in 2014 on general rates. This rate variation would last for seven years. It does not include the rate peg of 2.4% nor include this increase on water, sewer and waste charges. The rate variation is designed to fund asset sustainability and would address the current \$2.1 million per annum funding gap for maintenance of local infrastructure.**

The proposed increases would mean that for a ratepayer currently paying \$1000 in general rates, the special rate increase in the first year would be \$200 per year or approximately \$3.85 per week.

Were you aware of this proposed special rate variation?

UNPROMPTED - DUE-MERRICK

Yes	1
No	555
Unsure	666

Q12

- Q13. And have you read any of the recent articles in local media about the reasons for this proposed rate increase?**

Yes	1
No	555

Q13

- Q14. Are you aware of the following proposed programs or projects in the special rate variation?**

PROMPTED

	Yes	No
Increased road and bridges funding \$1 million	1	555
Increased community buildings funding \$400,000	1	555
Increased drainage funding \$600,000	1	555
Increased parks facilities funding \$150,000	1	555

Q14_1

Q14_2

Q14_3

Q14_4

Q15. Which of the following statements MOST closely aligns with your views on the proposed special rate variation?

PROMPTED - except unsure. Repeat options if necessary.

I agree that the special rate variation is necessary and support the rate variation being proposed of 20% for 7 years

1

I accept that a special rate variation is necessary but believe the proposed rate increase is too high and should be set at 10% for the first year and an additional 10% thereafter

2

I don't accept either of these proposed variations

3

Unsure

666

Q15

Q16. In percentage terms, what sort of rate variation do you feel would be appropriate?

Answer If Attribute "I don't accept either of these proposed variations" from Q15 is SELECTED OR

Answer If Attribute "Unsure" from Q15 is SELECTED

PROMPTED

0% 1

5% 2

10% 3

15% 4

20% 5

OTHER

Q16

Q17. Thanks [Q9], just to ensure we have a good mix of residents, could I please have your age range. Would it be between?

PROMPTED

16-29 1

30-39 2

40-49 3

50-59 4

60-69 5

70+ 6

Q17

Q18. Gender?

Don't ask

Male	1
Female	2

Q18

Q19. Would you class your residence as mainly urban or rural?

UNPROMPTED

Urban	1
Rural	2
Mixed/unsure	3

Q19

Q20. Are you a ratepayer within the Armidale Dumaresq council area?

Dumaresq pronounced DUE-MERRICK. If unsure, ask if they own a property within the LGA

Yes	1
No	555

Q20

Q21. And how long have you lived in the Armidale Dumaresq Council area?

PROMPTED. Dumaresq pronounced DUE-MERRICK

Less than 5 years	1
5-10 years	2
11-20 years	3
More than 20 years	4

Q21

Q22. Finally [Q9], Council is looking to establish a consultative reference group for the provision of feedback on the special rate variation and possible adjustment in asset services levels. Would you be interested in participating in this reference group?

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1	
No	555	Go to Q25

Q22

Q23. Great! I just need to get your details and Council will be in touch at a later date. Firstly may I have your:

Only take postal address if no email

First name	1
Surname	2
Email address	3
Best daytime number	4

Q23_1_1
Q23_1_2
Q23_1_3
Q23_1_4

Q25. That concludes the survey. Council greatly appreciates your time and feedback. Did you have any questions about this survey? Thank you again and have a great afternoon/evening.

End

Appendix 2: Weighting method and calculation

It is common in random surveys such as this to weight results by age and gender. This avoids the need to sample by quota (which is far more expensive than purely random sampling), and ensures the data from under- and over-represented groups is adjusted to meet the demographic profile of the survey population.

In this case, the 2013 survey sample has been post-weighted to match the age and gender profile of the Armidale Dumaresq LGA based on 2011 ABS Census data. To do this we divide the 2013 survey sample by gender (male/female) and across three age groups (in this case 18-39, 40-59 and 60-plus.) This divides respondents into one of six and gender categories, as shown below:

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Age	18-39	15	18	33
		5.0%	6.0%	11.0%
	40-59	62	84	146
		20.7%	28.0%	48.7%
	60+	59	62	121
		19.7%	20.7%	40.3%
Total		136	164	300
		45.3%	54.7%	100.0%

Meanwhile the 2011 ABS Census data sample breaks down as follows:

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Age	18-39	3,573	3,985	7,558
		19.4%	21.7%	41.1%
	40-59	2,949	3,171	6,120
		16.0%	17.2%	33.3%
	60+	2109	2616	4725
		11.5%	14.2%	25.7%
Total		8631	9772	18403
		46.9%	53.1%	100.0%

Dividing the 2013 sample population by the 2011 Census data for each age and gender category provides the following weighting factors:

		Gender	
		Male	Female
Age	16-39	3.883	3.609
	40-59	0.775	0.615
	60+	0.583	0.688

These weightings are then assigned to each data record based on each respondent's age/gender profile, and the raw data for each question is adjusted accordingly.