

# Marrickville Council

## Special Rate Variation Community Survey

Prepared by: Micromex Research  
Date: February 2015



# Background



# Methodology & Sample

## Data collection

Micromex Research, together with Marrickville Council, developed the questionnaire.

## Data collection period

Telephone interviewing (CATI) was conducted during the period 27<sup>th</sup> January – 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015.

## Sample

N=410 interviews were conducted.

A sample size of 410 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.8% at 95% confidence.

This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of n=410 residents, that 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.8%.

For the survey under discussion, the greatest margin of error is 4.8%. This means, for example, that the answer 'Yes' to the question on awareness (31%) could vary from 26% to 36% and the answer 'No' (68%) could vary from 63% to 73%.

Therefore, the research findings documented in this report as an accurate and reflective measure of the broader community's attitudes.

## Interviewing

Interviewing was conducted in accordance with the AMSRS Code of Professional Conduct.

## Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

## Word Frequency Tagging

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



# Sample Profile

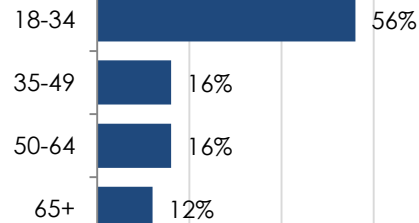


# Sample Profile

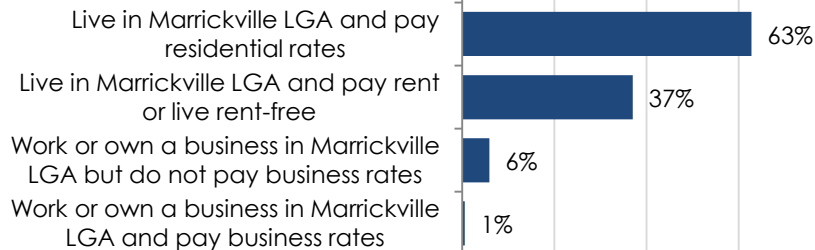
## Gender



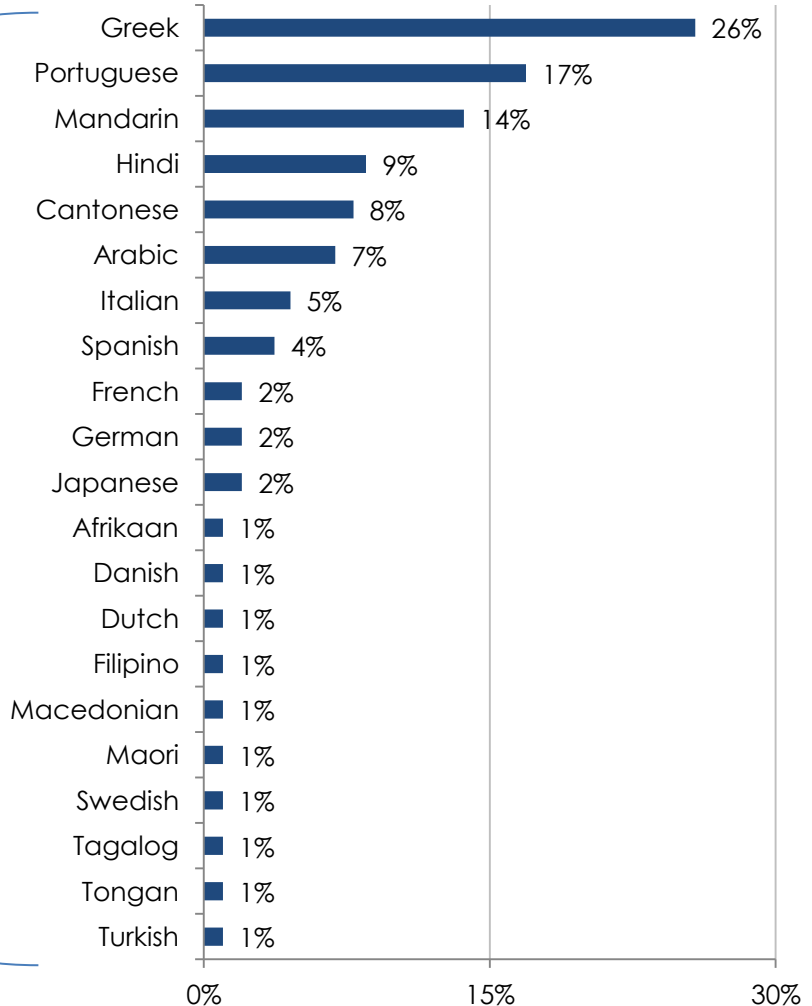
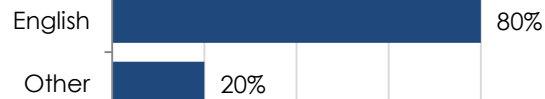
## Age



## Ratepayer status



## Language Spoken at Home



Base: n = 410

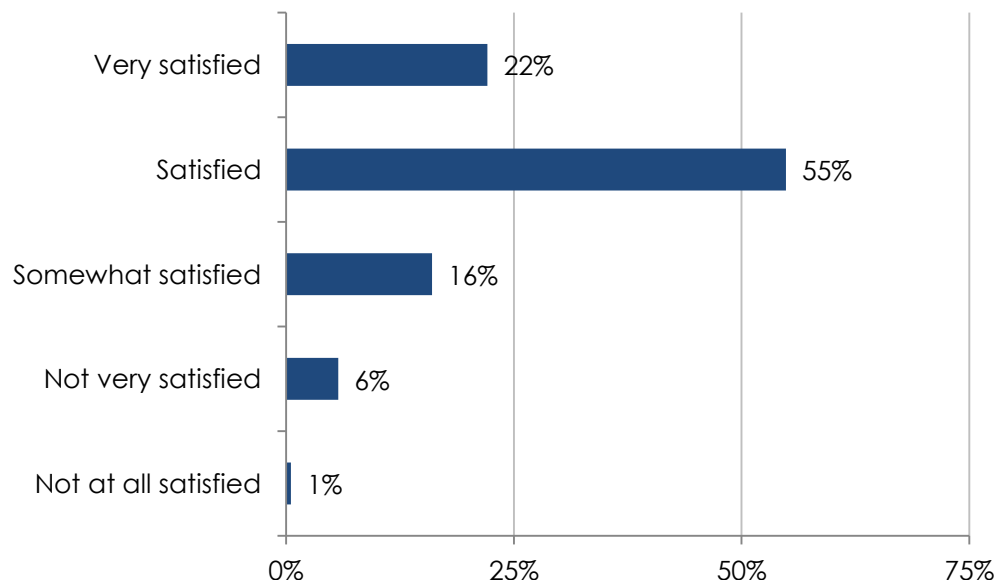
The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2011 ABS Census data

# Detailed Findings



# Satisfaction with the Quality of Facilities

Q2. How satisfied are you with the quality of facilities provided by Council in the local area?



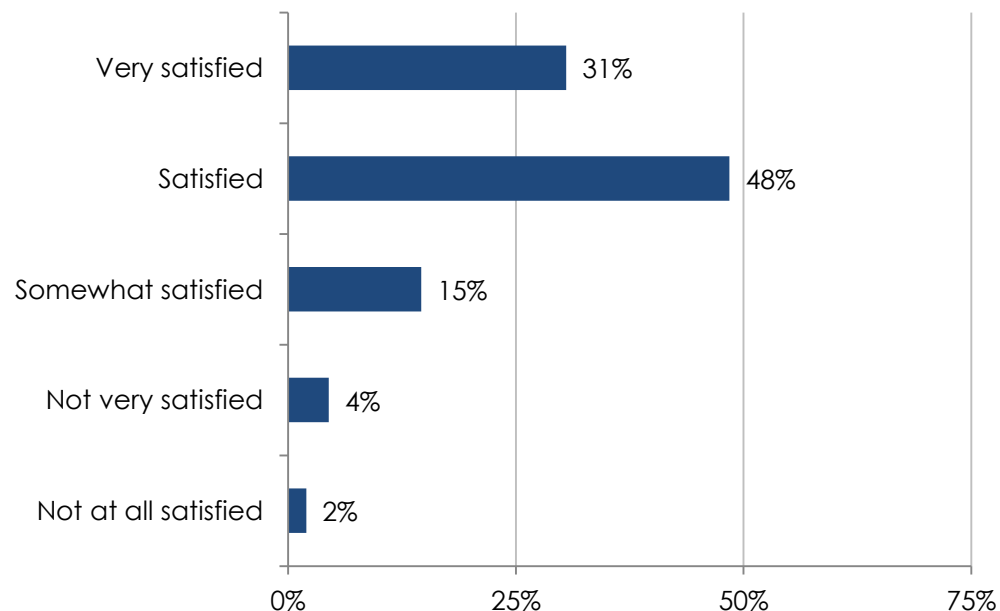
	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Resident Ratepayer	Resident Non-ratepayer	Business Ratepayer	Business Non-ratepayer	English	Other
<b>Base</b>	410	201	209	230	66	66	49	257	152	2	24	327	83
<b>Mean rating</b>	3.92	3.89	3.95	3.90	4.00	3.86	4.01	4.01	3.77	3.24	3.57	3.97	3.75

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

This is a positive result for Council, with 93% of residents at least 'somewhat satisfied' with the quality of facilities provided by Council in the local area

# Satisfaction with the Level of Services

Q3. How satisfied are you with the level of service provided by Council in the local area?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Resident Ratepayer	Resident Non-ratepayer	Business Ratepayer	Business Non-ratepayer	English	Other
<b>Base</b>	410	201	209	230	66	66	49	257	152	2	24	327	83
<b>Mean rating</b>	4.01	3.92	4.09	4.09	3.93	3.81	4.02	4.00	4.02	3.49	3.36	4.05	3.86

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

**Council is performing strongly with the delivery of services. 94% of residents are at least 'somewhat satisfied' with the level of service provided by Council in the local area**



# Concept Statement

Like many other councils, Marrickville is facing the challenge of maintaining and renewing its infrastructure in line with community expectations, whilst ensuring its long term financial sustainability. Essentially there is a growing gap between the cost of providing services and facilities and the available funding to meet these costs.

Over the past few years the community has been telling Council they want to see more infrastructure works undertaken to improve the local area.

Like many local governments, Marrickville has a funding shortfall for infrastructure renewal. Without the additional funding, the community's infrastructure assets will deteriorate. Roads will have more potholes and cracking, kerbs and gutters will degenerate, furniture such as seats in public squares will not be replaced when broken, public toilets and grandstands in parks will not be replaced, stormwater pits and pipes will decay and improvements to public buildings will stagnate.

Last September, Marrickville Council convened a randomly selected 'jury' of local residents to assess the infrastructure shortfall and decide what level of infrastructure quality was acceptable to the community. The Jury saved \$2.7m per annum, but there was still a shortfall of \$2.35 million annually. Council proposes to fund this shortfall through:

- Saving \$1 million through streamlining processes, with no reduction in services
- A small rate rise of 3% above the rate peg to raise \$1.35 million

To help Council determine the best course of action, the community is being asked to have their say on the two funding options being put forward by Council.

Option 1 – Continuation of current funding – No rate increase above the rate peg of 2.4%

Option 2 – A special rate variation – One-off rate increase of 3% above the rate peg, making a net total of 5.4%

I'll now detail each of those for you.



# Concept Statement

## **Option 1 - Continuation of current funding – No rate increase above the rate peg of 2.4%**

No rate increase above the State restricted level of 2.4% per annum. This means, over time, there would be a decline in the current standard of community and transport infrastructure, and the infrastructure funding gap and backlog would remain and grow. Council would not be able to provide new and upgraded infrastructure that the community has said it wants.

In this option, rates would still increase in 2015/16, as they do each year, by approximately 2.4%. As such:

- The average household will pay an additional \$18 per year
- The average business will pay an additional \$131 per year

## **Option 2 – A special rate variation – One-off permanent rate increase of 3% above the rate peg, i.e. 5.4%**

Council acknowledges that any rate increase may be difficult for some community members and has proposed that eligible pensioners will be exempt from the Special Rate Variation.

This option is about providing sufficient funds to:

Reduce the annual gap in funding needed to renew our current community and transport infrastructure; and

- Provide a package of community and transport infrastructure projects and renewals that the community has asked us for. This includes having enough funds to maintain and plan to replace anything new built

In this option, rates would increase in 2015/16 above the State restricted level of 2.4%, to 5.4% per annum:

- The average household will pay an additional \$43.50 per year (this is the combined 5.4%)
- The average business will pay an additional \$194 per year (this is the combined 5.4%)

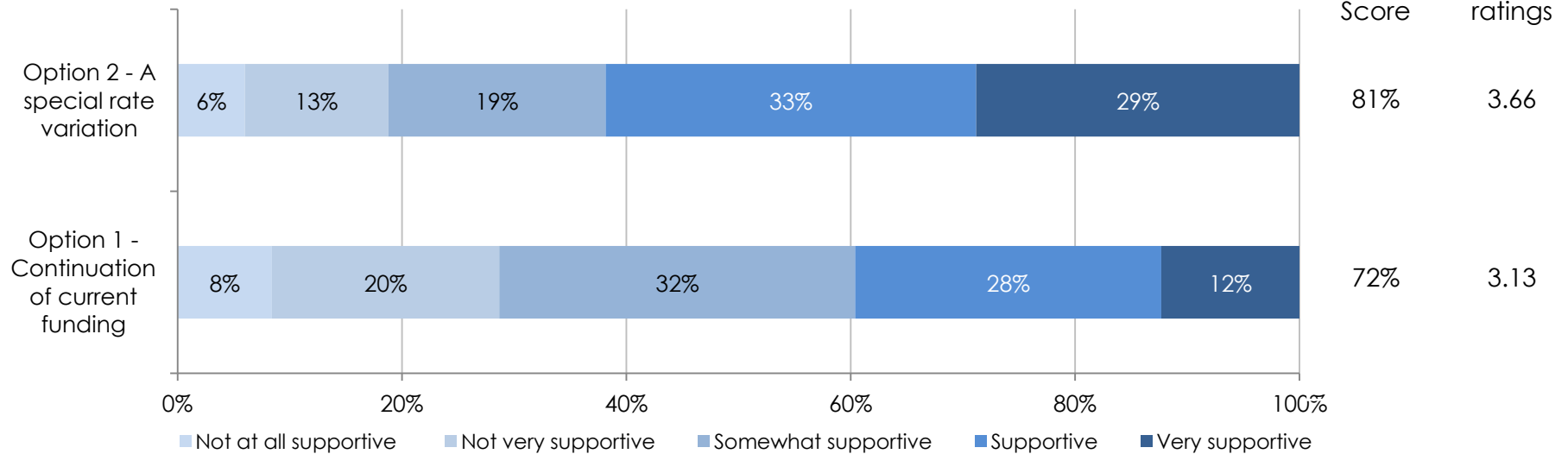
The additional 3% in rates will fund the renewal of:

- Roads
- Kerb and guttering
- Roadside furniture
- Stormwater pits and pipes
- Park buildings
- Play equipment
- Park paths
- Car parks
- Property buildings



# Level of Support for Options

Q4a & 4b. – How supportive are you of Council proceeding with this option?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Resident Ratepayer	Resident Non-ratepayer	Business Ratepayer	Business Non-ratepayer	English	Other
Base	410	201	209	230	66	66	49	257	152	2	24	327	83
Option 1	3.15	3.13	3.16	3.25	2.96	3.11	2.96	2.95▼	3.48▲	3.75	3.42	3.08	3.43
Option 2	3.66	3.49	3.82	3.77	3.73	3.44	3.34	3.56	3.84	2.49	3.63	3.81▲	3.08▼

Note: Due to the small sample size for 'business ratepayer', the mean rating should be viewed from a point of interest only as it is not statistically valid.

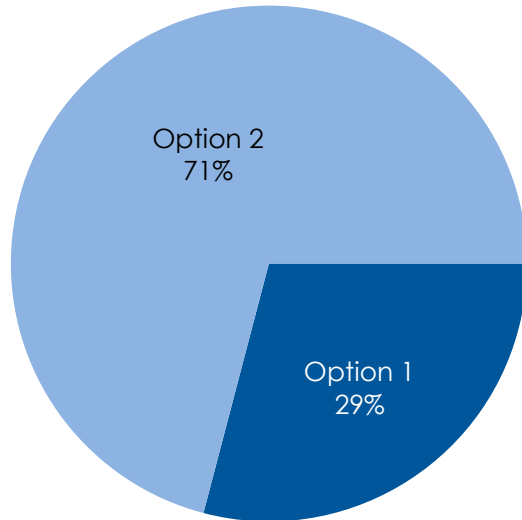
Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

▲ ▼ = significantly higher/lower level compared to overall rating

**81% of residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of Option 2 - A special rate variation – One-off permanent rate increase of 3% above the rate peg, i.e. 5.4%**

# Preference of Options

Q5a. Which option do you prefer?



Q5b. Why do you say that?

Option 2 - A special rate variation (71%)	
Understand the increase is necessary/beneficial to maintain/improve current living standards and services/facilities	59%
Standard of current services/facilities requires improvement - roads, footpaths, cycleways, kerb and guttering, parks, general infrastructure	11%
Proposed increase is reasonable/affordable	10%
Supportive of rate increase provided it is implemented as proposed	3%
Supportive of the increase as long as I am exempt as a pensioner	3%
Option 1 – Continuation of current funding (29%)	
Council's financial management should improve to make such increases unnecessary	12%
Rate increases would not be affordable for many residents/Cost of living	7%
Not confident that the rate increase will be reflected in service provision	3%
Poor maintenance and provision of facilities and infrastructure	3%
Not supportive of rate increase	3%

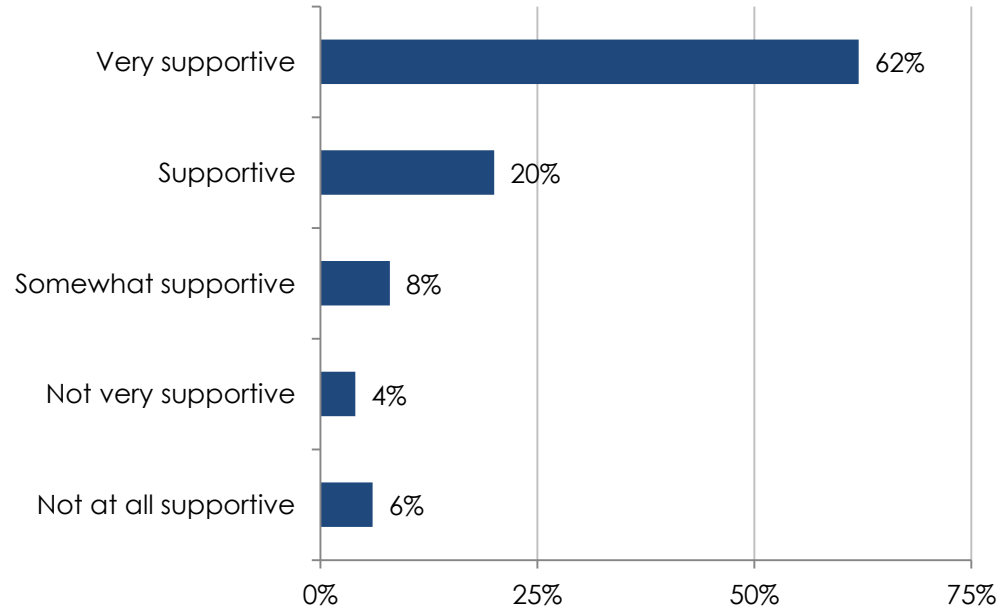
	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Resident Ratepayer	Resident Non-ratepayer	Business Ratepayer	Business Non-ratepayer	English	Other
<b>Base</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Option 1</b>	29%	32%	27%	25%	28%	36%	39%	31%	25%	50%	34%	25%	44%
<b>Option 2</b>	71%	68%	73%	75%	72%	64%	61%	69%	75%	50%	66%	75%	56%

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

**71% have a preference for Option 2 - A special rate variation – One-off permanent rate increase of 3% above the rate peg, i.e. 5.4%**

# Support for Exempting Eligible Pensioners

Q6. How supportive are you of exempting eligible pensioners from a Special Rate Variation of 3%, the cost of which is approximately \$130,000 per annum?



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Resident Ratepayer	Resident Non-ratepayer	Business Ratepayer	Business Non-ratepayer	English	Other
<b>Base</b>	410	201	209	230	66	66	49	257	152	2	24	327	83
<b>Mean rating</b>	4.29	4.01	4.56	4.31	4.44	4.28	4.00	4.19	4.47	4.00	4.16	4.22	4.54

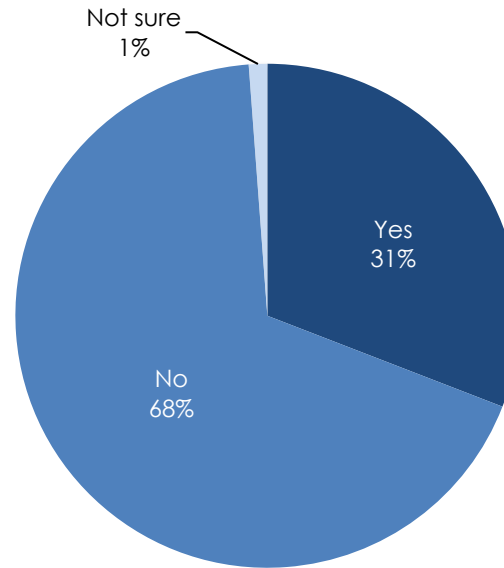
Note: Due to the small sample size for 'business ratepayer', the mean rating should be viewed from a point of interest only as it is not statistically valid.  
 Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive



**90% of residents were at least 'somewhat supportive' of exempting eligible pensioners from a Special Rate Variation of 3%**

# Awareness of Council Exploration of SRV

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



	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Resident Ratepayer	Resident Non-ratepayer	Business Ratepayer	Business Non-ratepayer	English	Other
<b>Base</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Yes</b>	31%	27%	34%	15%▼	40%	52%▲	65%▲	47%▲	3%▼	75%	10%▼	32%	25%
<b>No</b>	68%	71%	65%	85%▲	55%▼	46%▼	34%▼	51%▼	96%▲	25%	90%▲	67%	72%
<b>Not sure</b>	1%	1%	1%	0%	5%▲	2%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%	3%

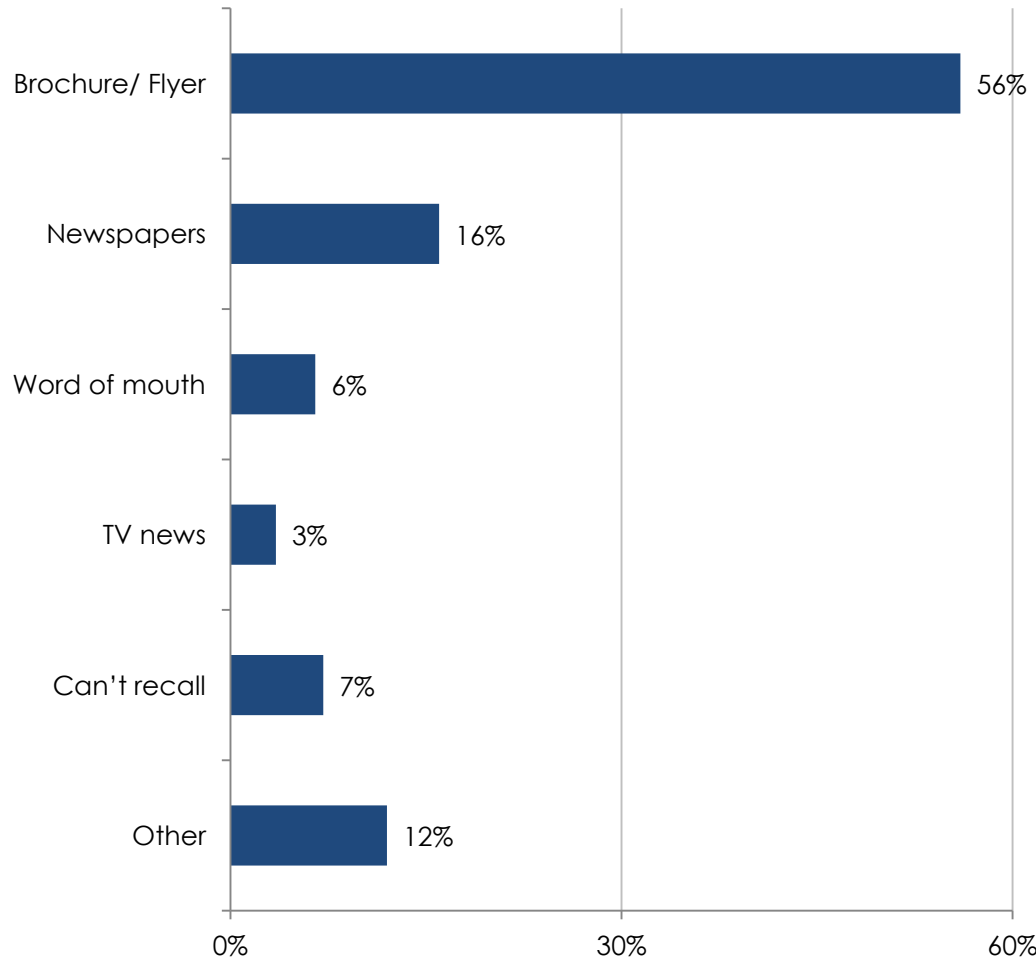
▲ ▼ = significantly higher/lower level compared to overall rating

31% indicated they were aware that Council was exploring community feelings towards an SRV

Ratepayers and residents aged 50+ generally claimed to be more aware of the SRV

# Medium for Receiving Information about SRV

Q7b. Where did you first hear about the potential special rate variation?



Brochure/Flyer (56%) specified	Count
Local Council brochure	41
Brochure in rates notice	14
Brochure with questionnaire	11
Can't recall	11
Council flyer	6
Newspapers (16%) specified	
Inner West Courier	21
Marrickville Matters	13
Local newspaper	3
Can't recall	2
The Gazette	1
Valley Times	1
Word of Mouth (6%) specified	
Neighbours	2
Another school parent	1
Community engagement office	1
Community members on Strata committees	1
Friend	1
Housing Commission meeting	1

Residents most often heard about the proposed amalgamations through 'brochure/flyer' (56%), 'newspapers' (16%), and 'word of mouth' (6%)

# Summary Of Results





# Summary of Results

- Residents have a strong level of satisfaction with the quality and level of the services and facilities provided by Marrickville Council
- 31% were aware that Council was exploring community sentiment regarding an SRV, the majority of whom were informed by a brochure/flyer
- Residents were supportive of exempting eligible pensioners from a rate increase

Residents were most supportive of Option 2 – A special rate variation

⇒ ***71% of residents selected Option 2 as their most preferred option, as they feel the increase is necessary to maintain the current standard of services and facilities in the area***



**The Marrickville community supports an SRV**

**Marrickville Council**  
**Special Rate Variation – January 2015**

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ from Micromex Research and we are conducting a survey on behalf of Marrickville Council, would you be willing to take part?

Thank you for agreeing to assist us with this survey, which is being conducted for Council and asks local residents their opinions of Council's options for financial sustainability.

**A. Before we start I would like to check whether you or an immediate family member work for Marrickville Council?**

☐ Yes      ☐ No      **(If yes, terminate survey)**

**Q1. In which suburb do you live?**

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Camperdown   | <input type="radio"/> Petersham          |
| <input type="radio"/> Dulwich Hill | <input type="radio"/> South Marrickville |
| <input type="radio"/> Enmore       | <input type="radio"/> St Peters          |
| <input type="radio"/> Lewisham     | <input type="radio"/> Stanmore           |
| <input type="radio"/> Marrickville | <input type="radio"/> Sydenham           |
| <input type="radio"/> Newtown      | <input type="radio"/> Tempe              |

**Q2. How satisfied are you with the quality of facilities provided by Council in the local area? *Prompt***

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

**Q3. How satisfied are you with the level of service provided by Council in the local area? *Prompt***

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

## READ CONCEPT

Like many other councils, Marrickville is facing the challenge of maintaining and renewing its infrastructure in line with community expectations, whilst ensuring its long term financial sustainability. Essentially there is a growing gap between the cost of providing services and facilities and the available funding to meet these costs.

Over the past few years the community has been telling Council they want to see more infrastructure works undertaken to improve the local area.

Like many local governments, Marrickville has a funding shortfall for infrastructure renewal. Without the additional funding, the community's infrastructure assets will deteriorate. Roads will have more potholes and cracking, kerbs and gutters will degenerate, furniture such as seats in public squares will not be replaced when broken, public toilets and grandstands in parks will not be replaced, stormwater pits and pipes will decay and improvements to public buildings will stagnate.

Last September, Marrickville Council convened a randomly selected 'jury' of local residents to assess the infrastructure shortfall and decide what level of infrastructure quality was acceptable to the community. The Jury saved \$2.7m per annum, but there was still a shortfall of \$2.35 million annually. Council proposes to fund this shortfall through:

- Saving \$1 million through streamlining processes, with no reduction in services
- A small rate rise of 3% above the rate peg to raise \$1.35 million

To help Council determine the best course of action, the community is being asked to have their say on the two funding options being put forward by Council.

Option 1 – Continuation of current funding – No rate increase above the rate peg of 2.4%

Option 2 – A special rate variation – One-off rate increase of 3% above the rate peg, making a net total of 5.4%

I'll now detail each of those for you.

### **Option 1 - Continuation of current funding – No rate increase above the rate peg of 2.4%**

No rate increase above the State restricted level of 2.4% per annum. This means, over time, there would be a decline in the current standard of community and transport infrastructure, and the infrastructure funding gap and backlog would remain and grow. Council would not be able to provide new and upgraded infrastructure that the community has said it wants.

In this option, rates would still increase in 2015/16, as they do each year, by approximately 2.4%. As such:

- The average household will pay an additional \$18 per year
- The average business will pay an additional \$131 per year

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

- ☐ Very supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Somewhat supportive
- ☐ Not very supportive
- ☐ Not at all supportive

**Option 2 – A special rate variation – One-off permanent rate increase of 3% above the rate peg, i.e. 5.4%**

Council acknowledges that any rate increase may be difficult for some community members and has proposed that eligible pensioners will be exempt from the Special Rate Variation.

This option is about providing sufficient funds to:

- Reduce the annual gap in funding needed to renew our current community and transport infrastructure; and
- Provide a package of community and transport infrastructure projects and renewals that the community has asked us for. This includes having enough funds to maintain and plan to replace anything new built
- In this option, rates would increase in 2015/16 above the State restricted level of 2.4%, to 5.4% per annum:
  - The average household will pay an additional \$43.50 per year (this is the combined 5.4%)
  - The average business will pay an additional \$194 per year (this is the combined 5.4%)
  -
- The additional 3% in rates will fund the renewal of:
  - Roads
  - Kerb and guttering
  - Roadside furniture
  - Stormwater pits and pipes
  - Park buildings
  - Play equipment
  - Park paths
  - Car parks
  - Property buildings

**Q4b. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with this option? Prompt**

- ☐ Very supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Somewhat supportive
- ☐ Not very supportive
- ☐ Not at all supportive

**Following the completion of all community consultation activities, Council will consider whether to proceed with a Special Rate Variation application to IPART based on the feedback received during this period.**

**Q5a. Which option do you prefer? Prompt**

- ☐ Option 1 - Continuation of current funding – No rate increase above rate peg
- ☐ Option 2 - A special rate variation – One-off rate increase of 3% above the rate peg to 2.4% per annum

**Q5b. Why do you say that?**

.....

**Q6. How supportive are you of exempting eligible pensioners from a Special Rate Variation of 3%, the cost of which is approximately \$130,000 per annum? Prompt**

- ☐ Very supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Somewhat supportive
- ☐ Not very supportive
- ☐ Not at all supportive

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

- ☐ Yes **(ASK Q7b)**
- ☐ No **(Go to Q8)**
- ☐ Not sure **(Go to Q8)**

**Q7b. Where did you first hear about the potential special rate variation?**

- ☐ TV news
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Newspapers (please specify) .....
- ☐ Word of mouth (please specify) .....
- ☐ Brochure/ Flyer (please specify) .....
- ☐ Other (please specify) .....
- ☐ Can't recall

### **Demographics**

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

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-34
- ☐ 35-49
- ☐ 50-64
- ☐ 65+

**Q9. Please indicate which of the following describe your situation. Prompt (MR)**

- ☐ Live in Marrickville LGA and pay residential rates
- ☐ Live in Marrickville LGA and pay rent or live rent-free
- ☐ Work or own a business in Marrickville LGA and pay business rates
- ☐ Work or own a business in Marrickville LGA but do not pay business rates
- ☐ None of the above (other specify) .....

**Q10a. Do you speak a language other than English at home?**

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No    **(If no, go to Q11a)**

**Q10b. (If yes), which language?**

- ☐ Greek  
☐ Vietnamese  
☐ Arabic  
☐ Portuguese  
☐ Cantonese  
☐ Spanish  
☐ Italian  
☐ Mandarin  
☐ Other (please specify) .....

**Q11a. Council is developing a community consultation register – would you be willing to register your interest with Council for future consultation activities?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No **(If no, go to end)**

**Q11b. Could I please have your contact details? Note that while these will be supplied to Council, they will be kept entirely separate from your responses to this survey.**

First name: .....

Surname: .....

Email: .....

Preferred telephone (mobile/landline): .....

**Thank you very much for your time, enjoy the rest of your evening.**

**Q12. Gender (determine by voice):**

- ☐ Male                      ☐ Female



Telephone: (02) 4352 2388

Fax: (02) 4352 2117

Web: [www.micromex.com.au](http://www.micromex.com.au)

Email: [stu@micromex.com.au](mailto:stu@micromex.com.au)