



ATTACHMENT 6b

Report on Resourcing Our Future: Telephone Survey

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Insight for
Business & Government

Report on the Results of Blue Mountains Special Rates Variation Telephone Survey August 2014

Prepared for



by
IRIS Research Ltd

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the Blue Mountains City Council special rate variation survey, 2014. IRIS Research was commissioned by Council to conduct a deliberative poll among the area's residents. The survey sought to gauge community support and reaction to the three proposed funding options, two of which include a special variation to rates.

When presented with the three options, almost half of the respondents surveyed (48.8%) selected Option 1 (Service Levels Improved) as their preferred option. Under this option the Environment Levy is reinstated in 2015/16 and there are three further annual rate increases of 9.6% each. The main reasons given for selecting Option 1 were residents felt they could not allow the Blue Mountains to 'go backwards' with regards to the standard of services and facilities provided in the area. Residents that selected this option also felt it was not a huge increase and understood that costs were rising and they needed to play their part and pitch in to help, provided the funds were used in the right areas.

More than one-third of respondents (35.7%) selected Option 2 (Service Levels Maintained) as their preferred option. Under this option the Environment Levy is reinstated in 2015/16 and there are three further annual rate increases of 7.4% each. The main reasons given for selecting Option 2 were that it was more affordable than Option 1 and residents were happy with maintaining services and facilities at the current standard. This option prevented services from going backwards and together with the cost, was more appealing.

In contrast, only 15.5% of residents did not support any rate increase above the rate peg of 3.0% per annum and chose Option 3 (Service Levels Reduced) as their preferred option. Most of the residents selecting this option quoted affordability and/or perceived Council inefficiency as the reason for their choice. These survey participants were also asked which service areas they would like the Council to consider reducing and the most common responses were 'Sports fields', 'Libraries', 'Cultural and community centres', 'Playing fields', 'Bike tracks' and 'Council wages'.

Results showed that just under half (47%) of all residents were aware that the Environment Levy was due to expire in June 2015. When asked about how supportive they were that the levy continue beyond June 2015, 77.4% were 'highly' supportive of it continuing. The resulting mean score of 4.22 out of 5 is an overall 'high' result, which shows just how much support there is for the Environment Levy continuing.

Regarding resident satisfaction with current levels of service provided by Council, results showed that 79.2% of residents provided a medium to high satisfaction rating for the current levels of service and the quality of community assets provided by Council.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

IRIS Research was commissioned by Blue Mountains City Council to undertake a survey of residents within the Blue Mountains Local Government Area. The survey aimed to canvass the community on funding options being considered by Council for the maintenance and upgrade of community assets such as playgrounds, sporting fields, footpaths, local roads, storm water drainage and buildings.

Blue Mountains City Council sent a brochure to all households titled 'Resourcing our Future – Have your say on the options for achieving a better Blue Mountains' (see Appendix 7.1). The brochure contained information on three different funding options to assist Council with the maintenance and upgrade of community assets. A random sample of households was then selected by IRIS Research for a follow up survey by telephone.

The three options were as follows:

Option 1 – Service levels are improved: Under this option, the Environment Levy is reinstated in 2015/16 and there are three further annual rate increases of 9.6% each.

Option 2 – Service levels are maintained: Under this option, the Environment Levy is reinstated in 2015/16 and there are three further annual rate increases of 7.4% each.

Option 3 – Service levels are reduced: Under this option, the Environment Levy is not continued and rates increase only by the rate peg of 3.0%.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this survey were:

- To assess the level of support from Blue Mountains residents for each of the three funding options proposed by the Council.
- To determine which of the three options they most preferred and why.
- To measure the level of community support for the continuation of the Environment Levy
- To establish household satisfaction with the current levels of service and the quality of community assets provided by Blue Mountains City Council.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey, which followed the deliberative poll process, was conducted following an information package being mailed out to all households explaining Council’s proposal of an application for a special rates variation. This information package also directed households to more comprehensive information available on Council’s ‘Have Your Say’ website and in hard copy at Council offices and libraries. The questionnaire was only administered to those households who had read the Resourcing Our Future brochure and who were familiar with the special rate variation proposals and the reasons why Council is proposing the various options.

The questionnaire was administered using IRIS’s Computer-assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) facility. CATI facilitates strategies to combat non-response using time shifted retries for non-contacts and a callback facility for the convenience of respondents. Adult decision-makers were randomly selected across the local government area in proportion to population densities ensuring a geographic spread, an approximate 50:50 split of male and female respondents, and a spread of age groups. Together these strategies deliver a representative sample of the of the Blue Mountains household population.

1.4 SURVEY RESPONSE

Interviews were conducted from 16th to 19th August 2014.

A final sample of 504 adult decision makers was achieved. As this was a household survey and not a community survey, IRIS set out to achieve a spread of responses from both male and female household decision makers, young and old. The spread of responses is shown in tables 1.1 and 1.2 below. The response rate for this deliberative poll was 68.5%, which is considered a high response for a phone survey. The maximum error on proportion for the total sample is +/- 4.4%. A maximum error rate of +/- 4.4% means that in the event that a proportion in this survey comes out to 50%, we can be 95% confident that the true result, had we interviewed the entire population, would be between 45.6% and 54.4%.

Table 1.1 Sex break down

	%
Male	46.6%
Female	53.4%

Table 1.2 Age break down of household decision maker

	%
18 to 29 years	7.1%
30 to 49 years	51.7%
50 to 64 years	18.1%
65 years plus	23.1%

1.5 ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT

Throughout this survey, a number of 5 point rating scale questions have been put to residents. Results from these ratings form the basis of much of the analysis in this report. For all rating scales, those respondents who could not provide a rating, either because the question did not apply to them or they had no opinion, were entered as a 'Can't say' or a rating of 6. Rating scale results have generally been presented in two basic forms. Firstly, the results have been presented in terms of the proportion (%) of respondents giving a particular rating for a specific service or facility. These results are presented in collapsed category tables, where proportions have been assigned to one of the following categories:

Table 1.3 Collapsed rating scores

	<i>Can't say</i>	<i>Low</i> importance / satisfaction	<i>Medium</i> importance / satisfaction	<i>High</i> importance / satisfaction
Rating score given	6	1 & 2	3	4 & 5

Secondly, the numeric values recorded for each attribute have been converted into an overall mean score out of five. To derive the mean score for an attribute, all respondents' answers are 'averaged' to produce an overall rating that conveniently expresses the result of scale items in a single numeric figure. This makes data interpretation considerably easier when comparing multiple services and facilities. The mean score excludes those respondents who could not give a valid rating (i.e. 'Can't Say').

Given that IRIS undertakes many surveys such as this; we are able to benchmark mean scores. As such, mean importance and satisfaction scores can be further classified as being a low, medium or high score based on this experience. Table 1.3.1 highlights the mean classifications.

Table 1.3.2: Classification of mean scores

Mean scores	
0 – 2.99	Low
3.00 – 3.99	Medium
4.00 – 5.00	High

The key survey findings are presented in the following section.

SURVEY RESULTS

2 Infrastructure and Services

Residents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of services and infrastructure currently provided by Council.

Q. How satisfied are you with the current levels of service in your local area and the quality of community assets provided by Council such as roads, footpaths, drainage, public toilets, town centres, playing fields and libraries etc?

Table 2-1 Satisfaction with current levels of service (n=504)

	n/r	Satisfaction Rating (%)			Mean Score (out of 5)
		Low (1-2)	Medium (3)	High (4-5)	
Satisfaction with current levels of service	1.0%	19.8%	40.7%	38.5%	3.22

Key findings:

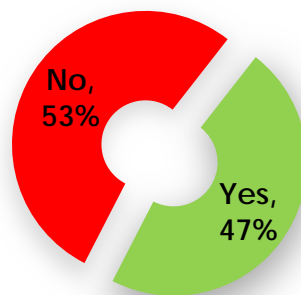
- 79.2% of respondents provided a medium to high satisfaction rating for the current levels of service and the quality of community assets provided by Council such as roads, footpaths, drainage, public toilets, town centres, playing fields and libraries etc.
- The mean score of 3.22 is considered to be a 'Medium' level satisfaction score. This score is attributed to the fact that 2 out of 5 residents (40.7%), provided a rating of 3 out of 5 (Medium rating).
- Further analysis found that male residents were more satisfied with the current levels of service provided by Council, scoring 3.30 out of 5, compared to females, which score 3.00 out of 5.

3 Environment Levy

The following questions were designed to gauge the level of support for the current Environment Levy and awareness of its imminent expiry.

Q. Are you aware that the Environment Levy which is part of your rates is due to expire in June 2015?

Graph 3-1 Environment Levy (n=504)



Key findings:

- Results showed that less than half (47%) of all respondents were aware that the Environment Levy is due to expire in June 2015 while 53% were not.

Q. How supportive are you of the Environment Levy continuing beyond June 2015?

Table 3-1 Support for Environment Levy continuing (n=504)

	n/r	Supportive Rating (%)			Mean Score (out of 5)
		Low (1-2)	Medium (3)	High (4-5)	
Support for Environment Levy continuing	1.6%	10.7%	10.3%	77.4%	4.22

Key findings:

- 77.4% of respondents indicated a high level of support for the Environment Levy continuing beyond 2015. The mean score of 4.22 out of 5 is considered an overall ‘High’ mean score and confirms a large proportion of households are highly supportive.
- Only 10.7% of respondents were unsupportive of the Environment Levy continuing beyond 2015.

4 Funding Options

4.1 SUPPORT FOR OPTIONS 1, 2 AND 3

Households were provided with background information regarding the Council's financial challenges, and read a description of each of the three options. They were then asked how supportive they were of each option in turn.

Q. How supportive are you of option 1?

Table 4.1 Support for Option 1 (n=504)

	n/r	Supportive Rating (%)			Mean Score (out of 5)
		Low (1-2)	Medium (3)	High (4-5)	
Support for Option 1 – Service levels are improved	1.4%	34.9%	15.5%	48.2%	3.21

Key findings:

- Option 1 (Service levels are improved) achieved a mean score of 3.21, which was statistically the same as Option 2 (3.17). Results for Option 1 showed that the statement polarised residents, with 34.9% showing 'Low' support for this Option, while 48.2% were 'highly' supportive of it.

Q. How supportive are you of option 2?

Table 4.2 Support for Option 2 (n=504)

	n/r	Supportive Rating (%)			Mean Score (out of 5)
		Low (1-2)	Medium (3)	High (4-5)	
Support for Option 2 – Service levels are maintained	1.6%	28.6%	29.0%	40.9%	3.17

Key findings:

- As mentioned previously, Option 2 (Service levels are maintained) achieved a mean score of 3.17, which was statistically the same as Option 1. The difference between Option 2 and Option 1 was that in Option 1, a high proportion of residents were either strongly

supportive of the option or strongly unsupportive of it. The results for Option 2 show a larger proportion of people providing a ‘medium’ rating, compared to Option 1.

Q. How supportive are you of option 3?

Table 4.3 Support for Option 3 (n=504)

	n/r	Supportive Rating (%)			Mean Score (out of 5)
		Low (1-2)	Medium (3)	High (4-5)	
Support for Option 3 – Service levels are reduced	1.4%	77.8%	8.7%	12.1%	1.76

Key findings:

- Option 3 was the least favoured of the 3 Options put to residents, achieving a very ‘low’ mean score of 1.76 out of 5, brought about by the 77.8% of residents that provided a ‘low’ rating score.

4.2 PREFERRED OPTION

Residents were asked to state their most preferred funding option, and reason for their choice.

Q. Of the options proposed by Council, which option do you MOST support?

Table 4.2 Preference for Option (n=504)

	Preference %	No.
Preference for Option 1 – Service levels are improved	48.8%	246
Preference for Option 2 – Service levels are maintained	35.7%	180
Preference for Option 3 – Service levels are reduced	15.5%	78
Total	100%	504

Key findings:

- When respondents were asked for their preferred option, the highest level of support was for Option 1 (Service Levels Improved) with 48.8%, while just over one in three respondents (35.7%) preferred Option 2 (Service Levels Maintained).
- The combined support for Options 1 and 2 was 84.5%. In other words, more than eight out of every ten respondents preferred one of the options involving a special variation to rates.

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- In contrast, only 15.5% of respondents indicated a preference for Option 3 (Service Levels Reduced). These people were asked further questions regarding their preference, the results of which can be found in Section 5.

Q. What is your reason for choosing Option 1 as your highest preference?

The main reasons given by residents for selecting Option 1 were because they felt they could not allow the Blue Mountains to ‘go backwards’ with regards to the standard of services and facilities provided in the area. Residents selecting this option also felt it was not a huge increase and understood that costs were rising and they needed to play their part and pitch in to help, provided the funds were used in the right areas.

Table 4.3 Summary of reasons for choosing Option 1

	Counts
Need to improve and/or maintain services	80
Understand that it’s necessary	31
So long as it’s spent wisely/in the right areas	23
Environment Levy should be maintained	21
The area will benefit	15
Need to improve infrastructure	12
Not a big increase/I can afford it	12
It’s the best option	12
Don’t want services to be reduced	10
Not happy with current services	8
Council is doing a good job	6
Other	5
No reason provided	11
Total	246

The verbatim responses are shown below, grouped into categories:

Need to improve and/or maintain services

- Feel that we can improve on the services
- Need to continue to maintain and contribute towards it
- Need to do those things
- Need to improve
- Need to improve
- Need to improve services
- Need to improve the services is to pay for it
- Need to keep working at improving and costs are increasing
- Need to maintain our level of services
- Need to maintain services
- Need to maintain the services and start getting a green bin
- Need to make improvements and keep it that way
- We need to maintain, no option
- We need to move forward we need to continue

- We want to see improvements
- Happy with the future maintenance and upgrading
- Has to be done
- Has to be improved cannot keep maintaining it
- Have got to go forward
- Have to look forward as there will be a greater demand on services provided
- Quality of services
- Have to move with the times - need to improve everything
- I think the Blue Mountains needs to improve services
- I think we need the improvements. However think we should be provided with more options
- It is important that the services are improved
- There are things that don't get done that would improve as a community
- There is a lot of work that needs to be done
- There's an obvious need to improve things: needs more funding to do so
- These are ongoing cost but they need to be done
- Things have to be maintained and it costs money
- Things need improving and I understand that council needs more funds
- Things need to be done our the place will fall into the area
- Things need to be improved
- Things need to be maintained and improved
- As a ratepayer we need to improve facilities and also for tourism
- Hopefully it will improve the community and environment services. Must improve.
- We need to go forward
- We need to have better services in the blue mountains
- We need to have our services: facilities and environment improved
- We need to improve on what we have now and adapt to the needs in the future
- We need to improve, we can't just stand still
- We need a lot of improvement and make it matter to get it done.
- We need more services and need to pay them
- We need the ongoing improvement
- We need things done and they all cost money
- We need to be diligent about our maintenance
- We need to keep building infrastructure and improving services
- Want services to improve and not deteriorate
- Want things improved
- Want things to improve
- Want to see improvement within the area
- Want to see services and facilities improved over time
- Wants the mountains to progress e.g. environmentally as well as services
- Its more money and we need to keep improving
- Keep on improving the services
- Keep up on all services to be improved
- Keep up to date
- Keeping up what we can do
- Know we need our services maintained
- Because I live here and am retiring I would like to see improvement
- To improve the current services
- Improve our services that we use
- Services have to be maintained and improved upon

- Services need to be improved
- See the need to maintain and improve services
- Concerned about the mountains itself, needs to increase to service the mountains
- Continue to provide service and maintenance for improvement
- Could do with improvement of services and money is not significant to me
- Importance of maintaining the services and keeping them to a high standard
- Important to maintain the area
- Maintain and improve on facilities. Keeping resources and improving on them.
- Maintain service and improved where we can
- Make sure the standard of living improves and also the property values
- More improvement and has to be paid for
- Mountains need maintenance and improvement
- Need more things done in the area
- Need services to continue
- We have an increasing number people in the area more services should be in place
- Services need to be upheld for the growing community
- Living in upper mountains need services improved to a high level

Understand that it's necessary

- Can appreciate money is needed for maintaining a council area that is this large
- I can understand the difficulty our town has
- Costs are rising and we need to pay more to move forward
- Agree with the logic of what's being put forward and services are important
- Got to bite the bullet
- Council doesn't have a large rate paying base
- If you haven't got money you can't do anything
- Councils squeezed by government. I'm happy to pay extra money for extra services
- Realise what we have is not sustainable to improve facilities. Not a big rise
- Recognise council is strapped
- We need to maintain and increase rates -but also federal government to increase gst
- Bite the bullet and get on with what we need
- Like to have the services provided and we have to pay
- Like to see council getting the money to do what is required
- I know that we have to spend something; better management of the funds
- It will cost us even more in the future
- It will increase revenue for council to keep our community going
- Need more funds with lower population
- Need more money and things to be done
- Need to pay for services if we want them
- Need to pay to get things done
- Ongoing costs-we have to grow-wages increasing
- Things need to be paid for - matter of how
- To have better facilities you have to pay for them
- Understand that things are going up have to pay more to get more
- Taking responsibility for improvements
- That's how a city functions
- Each generation has an obligation to provide improved services etc
- Everyone needs to contribute especially concerning the environment
- Believe we must help and support the finances with our rates, nothing is getting cheaper

- If we want facilities we have to pay them

So long as it's spent wisely/in the right areas

- If money well spent on the quality of life e.g. bush track, bush fire preventions
- As long as it's spent in the right areas
- Put the finances into the community's needs then I'll support
- As long as the environment rate levy increase is used for what it is meant for
- As long as York street in Glenbrook is fixed I'm happy
- As long it's spent properly on positive community things
- If the council puts money into infrastructure and not into consultation
- If the rate increases are spent in the right way
- Extra money to translate to community services
- I am prepared to pay to improve facilities and services for pensioners
- Want to see Glenbrook lagoon continuing to clean it up
- We need to invest the money into community services
- To see libraries open longer and improved current facilities more staff
- Our road may get graded
- Murray park you could save money over maintaining sporting facilities
- Springwood being left behind as a village need help in the parks e.g. rest park
- I love libraries – I'd love more days open with longer hours. Better footpaths
- Council needs to be able to maintain streets
- Hope they will use the money to lift the quality of the services and environment
- Hoping they will look after the residents interest especially the environment
- Improved emergency response and action regarding bush fire
- Fire safety
- Its needed for the roads

Environment Levy should be maintained

- Bush looked after
- Environmental work
- Environment levy should stay
- Need to maintain and look after the environment
- Concerned to improve the environment
- Like the environment levy needs to be maintained at a high level
- Maintenance of the environment. Necessary in this area.
- Like to see the environment preserved that's why we live here
- Living in a world heritage area we have to maintain the area
- Mainly because I believe we need to be protecting the environment.
- See the environment maintained
- Seen difference environment levy has made, also need better infrastructure
- Take care of the environment we live - bushfire strategy - infrastructure
- The environmental is maintained and services are looked after
- To keep a pristine environment in the mountains
- Want to support the environment
- We have to maintain our beautiful environment and that costs money
- We should like after our environment and facilities
- Important to keep levy and maintain the services
- The national parks and leisure activities can be better maintained
- Land care for backyard which is bush

The area will benefit

- The ageing population will benefit from this option
- The area will get the most benefit
- Believe this is a place that needs looking after
- Great place to live and would like to see it keep going that way and improve
- We can't afford not to
- We got to look after what we've got
- We live in the mountains and they need looking after and the council needs help
- More we can support the better off the community will be and the area
- Overall support of all the community needs
- Unless you develop, community will stagnate
- Should be aiming to improve the quality of life for everyone
- Need to look after where we live
- Have to look after the area and keep it well maintained. To influence tourists
- I think the area needs to grow
- It seems like will make things better

Need to improve infrastructure

- Improvement needs to be done to infrastructure. Need to be more efficient
- Infrastructure needs improving
- Infrastructure needs more income to look after
- Infrastructure needs to be done, tourism needs to be improve to make money
- To improve infrastructure and emergency preparedness
- The infrastructure needs it
- To improve infrastructure that we have
- Need to improve infrastructure and can't do it by cutting money
- Need to keep all infrastructure up to standard and improve
- Would like to see improvements in town centres and infrastructure
- Would like to see more infrastructure in Blaxland east e.g. parks
- We have an aging population we need to keep infrastructure running

Not a big increase/I can afford it

- I can afford it
- It's a small increase to improve our services and I can afford it
- Happy to pay the money for the services and environment
- Increase is insignificant when there is an increase either way
- Increase is so small and the benefit of it is greater than the expense
- We can afford it
- We live in a unique place and happy to pay extra to maintain and increase services
- Prefer to see services improved and cost is minimal
- Prepared to pay extra rates as long as we get improvements made
- Prepared to pay to have services improved
- Small amount for me to pay but council needs to perform better
- Willing to pay more for good services

It's the best option

- The only way to go
- Bit fairer on most people
- Seems to be the best option
- More benefit on option 1

- More benefits included
- It will maintain services and keep mountains looking good
- It's the best for improving blue mountains
- It includes the options that I feel we need in our area
- The changes of option 1 are a realistic option for the cost proposed
- Reducing or maintaining services is not an option, only option one is the answer
- Services need to be provided to all the areas of the council and that's the best
- Seemed to cover the things that are important to maintain and improve

Don't want service levels to reduce

- Can't go backwards
- Can't risk letting infrastructure deteriorate especially for tourism
- If the services are not maintained they only fall into disrepair and cost more
- If we let the quality of things slide everything will be harder to fix
- If we let things go on, we will go backwards
- Would not want the services reduced and services to go down
- Don't want to see things degrade, tourism could contribute a bit more
- Would hate to see service levels reduced any further
- If not improved area will be less attractive and needs constant maintenance
- The other options take things backwards

Not happy with current services

- Like more services than we currently received
- A lot of basic services that don't get done because of lack of funds
- A lot of work that needs to be done and they money has to come somewhere
- Aging community we need support
- We are constantly growing and we need : e : books in the library: bush care
- We can do a lot better with facilities in our local area
- Services are run down and need to replace them and have new initiatives
- Number of areas that demand greater financial support

Council is doing a good job

- Happy with the way the council is going
- Council seems to do a good job now, I'd like to see a high standard continue
- Council does good job. Can't go backwards, needs plan to improve
- We have to keep going forward, council doing as much as they can, need support
- Things need to improve and council doing good job: needs to continue
- Like the current standard of living and want it to continue

Other

- Council should get together with other councils and demand more money
- Don't want the area to continue to improve
- Need to bring in a better price for all these services
- Offering increase to improve things
- Very good amount for major improvements

Q. What is your reason for choosing Option 2 as your highest preference?

Residents selecting this option mentioned it was more affordable than Option 1 and they were happy with maintaining services and facilities at the current standard. This option prevented services from going backwards and together with the cost, was more appealing.

Table 4.4 Summary of reasons for choosing Option 2

	Counts
More affordable	43
It's the best option	24
Services need to be maintained	23
Environment Levy should be maintained	16
Don't get many services currently	10
Happy with the way things are	9
Council should be more efficient/better managed	9
Compromise between services and rates	6
Middle of the road option	5
Don't want services to be reduced	4
Council should concentrate on fewer services	3
Funding is unevenly distributed between townships	3
Lack of information provided	2
Other	10
No reason provided	13
Total	180

The verbatim responses are shown below, grouped into categories:

More affordable

- A little bit more of an affordable option - option 1 is very difficult for others
- About all I can afford
- Affordability
- Affordability and we are satisfied with how things are
- Affordability and what we receive in return
- Affordability, can't get any pay any more
- Affordable for me
- Is not a scary amount of money to add to our bills, can't afford any more
- Because I am a pensioner the budget has to be considered
- Money wise it is the option I can afford
- More affordable because of the type of people here e.g.: renters, single people
- More affordable for me as a pensioner
- More affordable too many internal jobs more council should be amalgamated
- More affordable. I have paid above average rates for over 10 years
- Can't afford the higher option
- Better price to manage

- The cost
- Cost as much as anything
- It seems affordable in regard to cost of living for the whole blue mountains
- Pensioner - already struggling - any increase is difficult
- Pensioner, not much money and difficult to predict the future circumstances
- People are struggling and I have had to choose the lower option
- Because I'm a pensioner and have a limited income
- Because we are pensioners which means affordability
- Being a pensioner don't have a lot to spare but can afford this option
- Could afford this amount because I am on a limited income
- Income would not support option one, but things need maintaining
- Is affordable but council have to more creative with groups maintaining parks
- Suits my personal budget
- Most affordable
- More financially reasonable maintain the service we have
- Not too much pain to pay
- On a pension
- Option 1 is far too expensive
- Option 1 too big a rate rise
- Retired on pension - all I can afford
- The rates are high enough so it is more financially viable
- Mostly thinking of can only pay so much
- Cheaper option, Winmalee have no kerb guttering, we need more done in Winmalee
- Not as much increase in my rates need to think about affordability
- Recently had our increase. Only one main household income
- Financial reasons and don't see much value for rates I pay
- We own two properties and don't want a big increase

It's the best option

- A better idea
- It seems the most moderate
- It seems the most reasonable of the 3 financially
- It seems to be the best option for me
- It sounded like the best option
- It's the best option for the best price
- Best, at this point in time. Human resources could be better use e.g. contractors
- Best of the two options
- Best option
- Best value for money of the three
- It is the most realistic option
- This option suits me best
- Most suitable
- Reasonable one
- We think this option is fair
- The best and fairest
- Most realistic option. Option one would be too expensive - option 3 ridiculous
- More needs to be done, this option is more sustainable
- Option 2 is the best option under how the council can cover the large area.
- Option two is best cost wise and is good for the environment

- Not a great deal of difference so this is best for me
- Seems the best value for money
- That is all we need here
- Seem to encompass most things that are important to me

Services need to be maintained

- Maintain the services
- Maintain what we have already have and keep the levy
- Maintenance is needed; more affordable
- Maintaining the current standard. I understand the increased costs have to be met
- Maintaining what we have
- Maintain what is already there, monetary value for pensioners is not too high
- It maintained services but rates not too high for me
- Should be just maintained
- They need to be maintained
- Things should be maintained
- Need services to be maintained
- Need to maintain at a current level
- Need to maintain more affordable
- Would be good to see them maintained
- Don't want to go backwards: but we need to watch our wallets
- Services should be maintained but should be done more efficiently
- Maintain improvement
- I would like everything to be maintained but not idea of cost rising
- Important to keep level as they are
- Keep the level and the overall increase is less than option a
- Allows for reasonable maintenance of current infrastructure
- At least things are maintained nothing is perfect anymore
- By maintaining current levels furthers savings can be made by council

Environment Levy should be maintained

- Environment level being maintained
- Environment levy needs to continue but increase in rates is exceptional high
- Environmental levy stays but costs are kept down
- Environmentally it stays the same-and the rate increase is minimal
- Environmental levy
- It still includes the environment levy
- Keep the levy not too expensive
- Keeps environmental things happening and cost
- Still keeps levy but less of a financial hit
- We need levy to continue to maintain our services
- Want the environment to be maintained
- Includes the environment levy. Not so high that it would disadvantage people
- The environment needs to be looked after, option 1 is far too expensive
- The bushwalks need to be maintained
- Working towards more greener area
- Service the environment we enjoy, more supervision of men doing the job

Don't get many services currently

- Don't really want any of these options see nothing done for the money
- In my area council neglects the service e.g. no gutters no footpath
- It reflects the services in my area
- Believe that minimal is done with our money-services are fine for us
- We don't get any services because we live on acreage
- Have concerns with the current level of services the jump is too big 2 to 1
- Cause they don't do much in our area. Trees all around and no back burn, no maintenance
- Council land on Wilson St, Waratah street are weed infested
- Paying a high cost for the services I have. it's wrong to go backwards
- Pay out too much now and don't get a return for high rates

Happy with the way things are

- Quite happy with how things are
- Quite content with how things are going and could use some footpaths in my area
- Like to see the services stay the same
- Services to stay the same, over all happy with option 2
- Happy for things to be maintained
- Happy with level of service now
- Happy with things now but feel that more could be done with services
- Reasonably satisfied with the services the council provide on option 2
- Reasonable standards maintained at the present

Council should be more efficient/better managed

- Disappointed council wastes money
- Council is not capable of managing rate payers money through poor investments but things are needed
- Could run the council more efficiently
- Not satisfied with council's efficiency
- Not a heavy user of services or facilities: money not spent wisely
- They have to get smarter and get entrepreneurial to bring down cost for revenue; unsustainable for future
- Lived here for 35yrs and have found council to be very lacking
- Reduce the debt
- Like to see a change in how council is funded, realism

Compromise between services and rates

- It created a balance between services and rated paid
- Cost effective compromise retaining level of service
- Meeting the rate payer half way and they'll hopefully learn how to manage it
- Balance independence-focus on the community
- Less money, still maintaining services
- Willing to pay a little extra for the facilities we get

Middle of the road option

- Haven't seen enough information to make an informed decision: sticking to the middle
- Keeps the level a middle range option
- Keeps the level but does not take away too much money
- Mid-range
- Seems middle of the road rating

Don't want services to be reduced

- Cost of living - bite the bullet - no services reduced
- Don't want to lose any services and don't want an increase cost
- Don't want to see services reduced. A lot of people can't afford the rate increase
- We cannot afford to go backwards-council needs to manage our money better

Council should concentrate on fewer services

- I feel rates may include services that should not be councils responsibility
- The council has to give up some of the less necessary things in council spending
- Would like to see bushwalking tracks reduced

Funding is unevenly distributed between townships

- More services at lower end of the mountain
- Mt Victoria has nothing but services need maintained
- Council are too selective on their suburbs e.g. look after Leura and Wentworth Falls

Lack of information provided

- Not satisfied with explanations for options 1 and 3
- The web page is impossible, can't understand language concern waste of money

Other

- Allows a small level of increase
- As think the only think that would happen
- Average person is only going to pay standard rates
- Fact is only a 7% increase but why not charge the tourists for the use of area
- Its more financially responsible
- Measured increase in the revenue provided to council
- Tried and tested
- With resources available will be put to use
- I'd want better services and infrastructure
- When I see improvement in service

Q. What is your reason for choosing Option 3 as your highest preference?

Residents that selected this option tended to be negative with Council’s performance in maintaining services and facilities in the area. Most of the residents selecting this option also said it came down to an issue of affordability.

Table 4.5 Summary of reasons for choosing Option 3

	Counts
Affordability	22
Council should be more efficient/better managed	11
Don’t get many services currently	10
Distrust of Council	6
Lack of information provided	6
Don’t like any options	4
Don’t support the Environment Levy	3
Council should concentrate on fewer services	3
Happy with the way things are	2
Funding is unevenly distributed between townships	2
Other	6
No reason provided	3
Total	78

The verbatim responses are shown below, grouped into categories:

Affordability

- Affordability
- Affordability, I can’t afford on a pension
- As we are pensioners we need to live within our means
- Can’t afford the increase, down to one income
- Cannot afford the increases of options 1 and 2
- Can’t afford to pay any increase and pay enough as is
- Can’t afford to pay more as I am on disability pension
- Cost
- Pensioner and don’t have the money to pay that cost
- Pensioners can’t afford it
- Rates are very expensive now and 9% is too much
- Our financial situation cannot cope
- Pensioner and cannot afford. This questionnaire doesn’t cover all residents perspectives
- On pension can’t afford
- Struggling to pay rates in the first place
- Financial reasons
- I am retired and can’t afford any more money
- Low income earner
- Rates have risen already. Costs increasing beyond my income
- Impact badly, I pay 3-4 times more, limited as to what I can do, but charge excessively
- Don’t want to pay any extra in rates

- Rising cost of living for us as pensioners

Council should be more efficient/better managed

- Already paying enough and council should run more efficiently
- Council doesn't spend the money wisely
- Council has high levels of financial wastage services tend to be in upper mountains
- Council have to learn to live within their means
- Council has badly managed our money with costs always rising
- Council is using money to conduct surveys etc, brochure says there is no money
- Council need to provide services and not wasting money on themselves
- Cut back on the waste in the head office and cultural centre costs too much
- Inefficient. Council should decrease council wages not take away residents not productive
- Other savings can be made e.g. more efficiency in the running of council
- We pay enough for services we get increase not warranted. Reduce wastage of money

Don't get many services currently

- Don't see many services provided by council
- My rates are very high and seem to get nothing back for them
- Money at present not being used as it is supposed to be used
- For what we get it's not value for money as we don't even see anything done
- We have no lights, footpaths etc. Council will never provide in sun valley
- Council doesn't spend money where needed like local roads. Rates shouldn't be increased
- Think we receive very little services for our rates that we pay
- We pay rates and nothing gets done. Masses of trees need cutting back
- Don't feel that increases are in result of services provided
- Can't get into the bus as there is no curb or gutter

Distrust of Council

- Distrust of funding being used correctly
- Don't trust council propositions continued dissatisfaction
- Don't think they will do what they say they will do
- Mis-management of funds I should not have to pay fund what is important
- Less money the council has the less they can mess with people private business
- The need to look at what they're doing first before increasing

Lack of information provided

- Not enough information
- Not enough information about each options
- Don't know what the details are
- Inaccurate information supplied to ratepayer to make decision
- Lack of information
- Don't know what services are going to be cut, options are not very good

Don't like any options

- Council didn't give any options other than increases
- Don't like any options - cost shifting from federal and state governments
- No one wants an increase in rates
- Feel not one will benefit myself or my family

Don't support the Environment Levy

- Because I don't support environment levy, should be shared by others
- Concentration on environmental matters not concern of council, world heritage outside of council responsibility
- I don't believe we should pay for outsiders to use the national parks

Council should concentrate on fewer services

- Council should concentrate on basic services and state should cover the rest
- Force the council to revisit what it is actually required by law
- Rates go up and services go down. Do less and charge more for everything

Happy with the way things are

- Seems the most reasonable
- Seems to be working well as it is. We are happy with that

Funding is unevenly distributed between townships

- Basically the lower part of the mountains don't get their fair share of funding
- Take notice of the lower mountains please

Other

- Blue Mountains should be looked after
- Council has already cut some environment services
- I am a pensioner who doesn't use many of the facilities e.g. playing fields and parks
- Rates in Blue Mountains are extremely high compared to Sydney
- Tourists should pay for parking
- We need some increase to maintain services

5 Reduced Service Levels

Respondents who selected Option 3 as their preferred option were asked which services they would like to see reduced.

Q. Given that you selected the REDUCED service levels option, can you please outline which service areas you would like the Council to consider reducing?

Table 5.1 Summary of comments regarding service level reductions

	Counts
Service Areas:	
Cultural & Community Development	5
Natural Environment	4
Sport & Recreation	3
Aquatic & Leisure	3
Transport & Public Access	3
Libraries & Information	2
Economic Development & Tourism	2
Burials & Ashes	1
Other comments:	
Reduce Council staff and wages	9
Services should stay the same	4
Need more transparency	4
Council should focus on roads and garbage	3
I don't use Council services	2
Funding is unevenly distributed between townships	2
Other	2
Total	49

*Note that although there were only 40 respondents who answered this question, several made more than one suggestion and these have been included in multiple categories. That is, a comment of 'pools and libraries' would have been included in both Aquatic & Leisure and Libraries & Information

The verbatim responses are shown below, grouped into categories:

Service Area Comments

- Cultural and arts
- Culture centres
- Stop overspending in the cultural centre; staff cuts where they are not needed
- Libraries and community centres
- The council could stop taking people and companies to court so often and save lawyer costs. Stop renewing perfectly good buildings like springwood civic centre.
- Libraries, swimming pools, cemeteries. The improvements in Leura and Katoomba serve businesses not homeowners. Too much money spent for tourists

- Pools
- Springwood swimming complex and the heating of swimming pools, kerb and guttering
- Parks and grounds
- The money spent on playing fields
- Roads and sports fields
- Bike tracks
- Maintenance of national parks
- Natural habitat
- Reduce environmental spending and stop wastage spending on themselves
- Environment levy funding should be provided by state government or parks and wildlife

Reduce Council staff and wages

- Councillor and council worker wages
- Council should reconsider the wage increases of workers before rate increases and make known what efficiencies can be made and what cuts can be made and then raise rates
- Not reduce service but how council is run. Administration needs to be cut and more service provided
- Less spending on the council staff
- Wages of council employees and reduction in staffing levels
- Too many workers on the roads not working
- Generally restructure their approach to their job and take a pay cut

Services should stay the same

- Just want things to stay as is
- Services should still remain the same
- Happy the way things are
- Should work out how to maintain things with what they have

Need more transparency

- Need a lot more transparency where our rate dollar is going. The roads are in disrepair and more weeds, no evidence of money being well spent. Very disenchanted with sewerage problems.
- Council should be telling resident what services they are considering cutting
- Council claims to have kerb and guttering, but there's none on Lesley street even though we were given money from Howard government to do so. Cut down some of the residential trees.
- They have reduced it all anyway

Council should focus on roads and garbage

- Everything except garbage pickup and roads
- Stop the rubbish that they annoy people with. Go away and do things required like garbage and road maintenance and leave me alone
- Don't know what they do only see them collect the garbage and tar the road once

I don't use Council services

- None, being a pensioner I use very little of the services anyway
- Don't use a lot of these services

Funding is unevenly distributed between townships

- The money gets put into show areas for tourists like Leura, but in other places things are getting sadder and sadder despite the money getting thrown at Katoomba
- More focus in other areas not just Springwood and Katoomba

Other

- Interference in building regulation and tree removal on own property
- Tourists should pay to park everywhere to increase the revenue

Residents that most preferred Option 3 (Service levels reduced) were asked whether they could identify any circumstances that may lead them to support Option 1 (Service levels improved) or Option 2 (Service levels maintained).

Q. Can you identify any circumstances where you would support Option 1 or Option 2?

Residents supporting option 3 (Service levels reduced) indicated they were concerned that Council would not spend the money in the right area. Residents were also concerned about their capacity to pay higher rates.

Table 5.2 Summary of comments regarding support for a higher option

	Counts
If specific services were improved	8
No	4
If I had more income	3
If my rates were closer to the average	3
If there was more transparency	2
If the Environment Levy was removed	2
Other	4
Total	26

The verbatim responses are shown below, grouped into categories:

If specific services were improved

- If Brook Road was resurfaced and widened. There is no verge for people to walk on. Banked cars parked, very dangerous
- If they fixed kerb and gutters out in the street gave us footpaths

- Give us more services for our money. No street lighting or kerb and guttering, no sewerage or water
- If I could see something being done; aiding the residents and keeping the residents safe should be a priority, not tourist attractions
- If they could come up with a believable plan that will fix our streets
- If guarantee increases were used for specific services
- A lot of areas in Blue Mountains haven't got the basics like curb and guttering and public areas are not maintained.
- If council was prepared to help with my property with modest development then would consider paying more

No

- No (A total of 17 responses were a flat out no)
- Definitely not. I don't trust them to use the funds correctly. If they were a proper financial institution they would be bankrupt.
- Rates are high enough already. Learn to work within the budget they have instead of overspending. Road repairs have far too many people working on small repair jobs, reduce staff and waste where things are not needed. Gross waste going on.
- They seem a bit over the top to be able to support

If I had more income

- Option 2 we would support if we had more income
- If I was making more money-
- Greater income

If my rates were closer to the average

- If my rates were reduced to average amount I would support option 1. They are currently \$2048 for a residential block in Glenbrook
- If council restructure the average rates
- If I saw the lower Mountains rates getting more towards the average of the Mountains

If there was more transparency

- Would support Option 1 if we knew where everything was going and saw the financial side of management costs
- If they outlined how they were spending the money and produced a clear financial plan to public

If the Environment Levy was removed

- If environment funding was lifted
- I agree with what the levy does, but I don't like how it's currently funded

Other

- This doesn't give the opportunity to comment on certain areas
- Maybe option 2 with the environmental levy, which is very important
- If there was a maximum of 3 wage increases for council workers
- Higher levels of Federal Government need to plan for the future

6 Characteristics of Respondents

6.1 Age and Sex

Table 6.1 Sex break down

	%
Male	46.6%
Female	53.4%

Table 6.2 Age break down

	%
18 to 29 years	7.1%
30 to 49 years	51.7%
50 to 64 years	18.1%
65 years plus	23.1%

6.2 Locality

Table 6.3 Locality

	%
Blackheath, Megalong Valley, the Mounts	8.5%
Medlow Bath, Katoomba, Leura, Wentworth Falls	28.2%
Bullaburra, Lawson, Hazelbrook, Woodford, Linden	11.7%
Falconbridge, Springwood, Winmalee, Valley Heights	28.6%
Warrimoo, Blaxland, Mt Riverview, Glenbrook, Lapstone	23.0%

6.3 Ratepayer

Table 6.4 Ratepayer versus tenant

	%
Pay Council rates ourselves	97.4%
Landlord pays Council rates	2.6%

7 Appendix

7.1 Brochure sent to ratepayers (with a letter from the Mayor)

See next two pages.

Six Strategies for Financial Sustainability

What the Council is doing to be efficient and address the City's financial challenge:

1 AVOID SHOCKS

Through sound financial planning, this strategy positions us to better withstand costly and unexpected events such as the 2013 bushfires and the recent \$2.9 million reduction in Federal assistance to the Blue Mountains over the next 4 years.

2 BALANCE THE BUDGET

Given that costs are rising by 2% more than income, the Council is taking action to balance its budget through annual efficiency cost savings – more than \$13 million achieved over the last 8 years.

3 MANAGE BORROWINGS RESPONSIBLY

The Council has ceased new loan borrowings, subject to annual reviews of financial capacity and sound business cases.

4 INCREASE INCOME

For every dollar residents pay in rates, the Council matches it with income from other sources. Over the past 5 years we have secured more than \$87 million in grant funding from State and Federal Government agencies for the community. We have also used Environment Levy funds to attract more than \$3.6 million in matching co-funding for our environment.

6 INCREASE ADVOCACY & PARTNERSHIPS

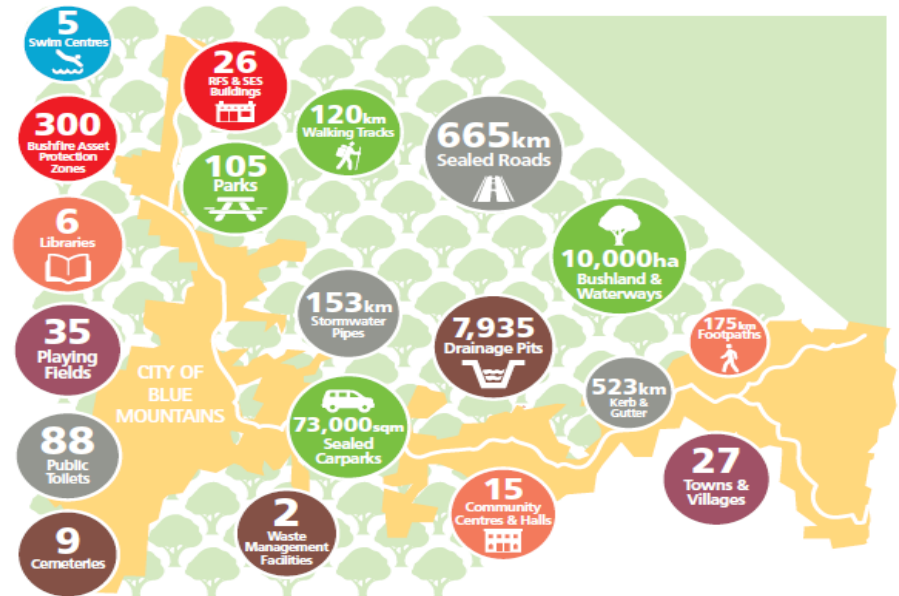
This strategy is about advocating for a fair share of resources for the Blue Mountains and building partnerships to achieve positive outcomes. For example, following the 2013 bushfires, the Council advocated to the State Government and achieved a \$1.8 million grant to support recovery.

5 REVIEW & ADJUST SERVICES

The Council continually reviews its service delivery to ensure it is meeting community needs and providing 'value for money'. Areas recently reviewed include bulky waste collection service, tourist parks and unsealed roads.



Resourcing OUR FUTURE



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION 4 AUGUST – 15 SEPTEMBER 2014

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Information on *Resourcing Our Future* is available:
 Online: www.bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au
 Hardcopy: Katoomba office and Council libraries
 Email: council@bmc.nsw.gov.au

HAVE YOUR SAY

Tell us your preferred option by ticking one of the boxes below. Post your completed form in the reply paid envelope provided. Your personal details will be kept confidential.

KEEP THIS BROCHURE

A cross section of ratepayers will be asked to participate in a telephone survey from mid-August. Please keep this brochure handy in case you are selected to participate.

SUBMISSION FORM

My preferred option is (please tick one box):

- OPTION 1: SERVICE LEVELS IMPROVED
 OPTION 2: SERVICE LEVELS MAINTAINED
 OPTION 3: SERVICE LEVELS REDUCED

Submissions close Monday 15 September 2014

Your Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Suburb: _____
 Postcode:

HAVE YOUR SAY

on options for achieving a better
BLUE MOUNTAINS

7.2 Questionnaire

Blue-Mountains-SRV-201

Hello my name is from IRIS Research and I'm calling on behalf of Blue Mountains City Council. We are seeking your participation in a survey about your opinion of the three options currently being considered by Council for funding future levels of service provision in the Blue Mountains. Firstly, is this a household in the Blue Mountains City Council area? [IF NO] I'm sorry you don't qualify to be interviewed. Thank respondent and terminate interview. [IF YES] May I please speak to an adult decision-maker of this household aged 18 years or older, is that you? [IF NOT ARRANGE A CALLBACK] Great, the survey will take around 7 minutes. The information you provide will only be used for research purposes and is completely confidential. I also have to inform you that my supervisor may monitor this call for quality control purposes.

Page 1

Blue Mountains Special Rates Variation 2014

Are you currently an employee or elected representative of Blue Mountains City Council?

{ Store Answer In : s1 }

- Yes
 No

Page 2

Don't Present If : s1=2

Don't Qualify

I'm sorry you don't qualify to be interviewed. Thank you for your time. [TERMINATE INTERVIEW]

Page 3

Received Brochure

Has your household received a brochure from Blue Mountains City Council titled 'Resourcing our Future - Have your say on the options for achieving a better Blue Mountains?'

{ Store Answer In : s2 }

- Yes
- No

Page 4

Don't Present If : s2!=2

Don't Qualify

I'm sorry but it is important that we interview people who have read the information pack. Thank you for your time. [TERMINATE INTERVIEW].

Page 5

Read Brochure

Have you read the information contained in the brochure?

{ Store Answer In : s3}

- Yes
 No

Page 6

Don't Present If : s3!=2

Haven't Read Brochure

Could we contact you again after you have read the information.

IF YES : SUSPEND INTERVIEW

IF NO: THANK AND TERMINATE INTERVIEW

Page 7

Infrastructure and Services

Q1. How satisfied are you with the current levels of service in your local area and the quality of community assets provided by Council such as roads, footpaths, drainage, public toilets, town centres, playing fields and libraries etc?

Please use a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means Very Dissatisfied and 5 means Very Satisfied?

{ Store Answer In : q1 }

- 1. Very Dissatisfied
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5. Very Satisfied
- Can't Say

Page 8

Environmental Levy

Q4. Are you aware that the *Environment Levy* which is part of your rates is due to expire in June 2015?

{ Store Answer In : q4 }

- Yes
- No

The Environment Levy funds programs such as: bushland restoration, protection of our creeks and drinking water catchments, weed control and wildlife habitat restoration and improvements to local walking tracks and lookouts.

It has been costing rate payers on average less than \$50 per year which is less than \$1 per week.

Q5. How supportive are you of the Environment Levy continuing beyond June 2015?

Please use a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means Not at all Supportive and 5 means Very Supportive.

{ Store Answer In : q5 }

- 1. Not at all Supportive
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5. Very Supportive
- Can't Say

Page 9

Funding Options

Before asking your views on which of the three Options for "Resourcing Our Future" you prefer, I would like to provide some background information.

Like most councils in NSW, the City of Blue Mountains faces significant financial challenges as a result of costs rising faster than available revenue, ageing infrastructure, and cost shifting from other levels of government.

The City also bears high costs associated with servicing 27 dispersed towns and villages, managing the impact of development on the surrounding World Heritage environment and being a city highly prone to bushfires and storms.

The information provided to you in the brochure outlined three Options. To refresh your memory, I will start by describing each option briefly:

Option 1 - Service Levels are Improved: Under this option, the Environment Levy is reinstated in 2015/16

and there are three further annual rate increases of 9.6% each (which includes the estimated rate peg of 3%), resulting in an average increase of \$113 per year (or an extra \$2.18 each week) over four years.

Option 2 - Service Levels are Maintained: Under this option, the Environment Levy is reinstated in 2015/16

and there are three further rate increases of 7.4% each (which includes the estimated rate peg of 3%), resulting in an average increase of \$88 per year (or an extra \$1.69 each week) over four years.

Option 3 - Service Levels are Reduced: Under this option, the Environment Levy is not continued and rates increase only by rate peg of 3.0% each year, resulting in an average increase of \$28 per year (or an extra 53 cents each week) over four year

I would now like to ask you about each option in turn.

Page 10

Option 1

Q6. Using a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means Not at all Supportive and 5 means Very Supportive, how supportive are you of Option 1. [READ DETAILS IF NEEDED]

Under Option 1, the Environment Levy is reinstated in 2015/16

and there are three further annual rate increases of 9.6% each (which includes the estimated rate peg of 3%), resulting in an average increase of \$113 per year (or an extra \$2.18 each week) over four years.

This would allow service levels to be improved including turning around the decline in built infrastructure with less roads, footpaths, drainage, town centres etc in poor condition, improved emergency preparedness and response -

better community and recreation facilities and services and the current capacity to look after the environment would be retained.

{ Store Answer In : q6 }

- 1. Not at all Supportive
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5. Very Supportive
- Can't Say

Option 2

Q7. Using a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means Not at all Supportive and 5 means Very Supportive, how supportive are you of Option 2. [READ DETAILS IF NEEDED]

Under Option 2, the Environment Levy is reinstated in 2015/16

and there are three further rate increases of 7.4% each (which includes the estimated rate peg of 3%), resulting in an average increase of \$88 per year (or an extra \$1.69 each week) over four years.

This would allow Council to maintain current levels of service including stabilising the decline in the City's built assets.

The capacity to prepare and respond to emergencies and to look after the environment would be maintained as is.

{ Store Answer In : q7 }

- 1. Not at all Supportive
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5. Very Supportive
- Can't Say

Option 3

Q8. Using a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means Not at all Supportive and 5 means Very Supportive, how supportive are you of Option 3. [READ DETAILS IF NEEDED]

Under Option 3, the Environment Levy is not continued and rates increase only by rate peg of 3.0% each year, resulting in an average increase of \$28 per year (or an extra 53 cents each week) over four years.

This would mean service levels are reduced, with a significant deterioration in the condition of built and natural assets.

The capacity to respond to emergencies such as bushfires and to look after the environment would be significantly reduced.

{ Store Answer In : q8 }

- 1. Not at all Supportive
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5. Very Supportive
- Can't Say

Page 13

Preferred Option

Q9. Of the options proposed by Council which option do you MOST support? (READ OUT)

{ Store Answer In : q9 }

- Option 1 : Where Service Levels are Improved
- Option 2 : Where Service Levels are Maintained
- Option 3 : Where Service Levels are Reduced

Q10. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

{ Store Answer In : q10}

Page 14

Don't Present If : q9!=3

Reduced Service Levels

Q11. Given that you selected the REDUCED service levels option can you please outline which service areas you would like the Council to consider reducing:

{ Store Answer In : q11}

Q12. Can you identify any circumstances where you would support Option 1 or Option 2?

{ Store Answer In : q12}

Page 15

Demographics

I now have a few questions relating to household data to help classify your answers.

What is the name of the town or village where you live?

{ Store Answer In : local }

- *suburb.dat

Do you or your family pay Council rates or do you leave this to the landlord if you rent?

{ Store Answer In : own }

- Pay Council rates ourselves
 Landlord pays Council rates

Please stop me when I read out the age group you are in ...

{ Store Answer In : age }

- 18 to 29 years
 30 to 49 years
 50 to 64 years
 65 years plus
 Refused

And you are a ...

{ Store Answer In : sex }

- Male
- Female
- Refused

Page 16

Workshop Participation

Council is undertaking workshops to gain further community input on how best to achieve affordable and acceptable levels of services and to build a successful future for the Blue Mountains.

Are you interested in participating in a workshop which for your area is to be held on:

Area 1: Sunday 31st August at Blackheath (10:00am to 1:30pm)

For residents from Megalong Valley, Mt Wilson, Mt Tomah, Mt Irvine, Bell, Blackheath

Area 2: Saturday 30th August at Katoomba (2:00pm to 5:00pm)

For residents from Wentworth falls, Katoomba, Leura, Medlow Bath

Area 3: Saturday 6th September at Lawson (2:00pm to 5:00pm)

For residents from Linden, Woodford, Hazelbrook, Lawson and Bullaburra

Area 4: Sunday 14 September at Springwood (1:30pm to 4:30pm)

For residents from Valley Heights, Winmalee, Springwood, Faulconbridge

Area 5: Saturday 13th September at Blaxland (2:00pm to 5:00pm)

For residents from Lapstone, Glenbrook, Warrimoo, Mt Riverview, Blaxland and Blaxland East

{ Store Answer In : works}

- Yes
 No

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Don't Present If : works!=1

Contact Details

Great, I just need to get your details so we can send you information about the workshop. Your details will be used for no other purpose other than to contact you about the workshops.

{ Store Answer In : surn}

Surname:

{ Store Answer In : ph}

Phone:

{ Store Answer In : email}

Email:

{ Store Answer In : stno }

Street Number:

{ Store Answer In : stnam }

Street Name:

{ Store Answer In : suburb }

Suburb:

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Conclusion

... and finally, could you tell me your first name, as my supervisor audits 1 in 10 of my calls as part of the quality control process? (ENTER FIRST NAME ONLY)

{ Store Answer In : firstn }

First Name

That completes our interview. As this is social research, you can be assured that it is carried out in full compliance with the Privacy Act and the information you provided is only used for research purposes.

Again my name isand my supervisors name is Judy. If you have any questions about the survey, or would like further information about IRIS Research, you can call us on 4285 4446 between 9am and 5pm week days.

Thank you for your time.

End of Survey