

Lismore City Council



HUNTER RESEARCH
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Survey of community attitudes
to Council's draft Biodiversity
Management Strategy and
proposed rate rise

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Executive Summary

This document presents the results of a project conducted by Hunter Research Foundation (Hunter Research, HRF) on behalf of Lismore City Council (Council) as part of Council's community engagement around its Draft Biodiversity Management Strategy (BMS) and associated proposed rate rise. The purpose of the research project was to provide Council with independent, reliable information about the community's views through the conduct of a statistically robust survey of the affected community of ratepayers. The outcomes of the survey will assist Council in making decisions regarding possible application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to fund the BMS.

The results reported here are of a telephone survey of a random sample of 209 properties in the Lismore City Council Local Government Area (LGA) conducted in January 2015, with the selected respondent being a ratepayer for that property. The high response rate, of 88 per cent of eligible properties contacted, and the sample size and structure, provide confidence that the survey data are representative of the views of affected ratepayers in the LGA as a whole.

A stratified sample design was used to ensure a sufficient number of respondents from key subgroups (Farmland, Residential/Rural and Residential/Urban/Village rate categories) to support statistical analysis of differences between them. The final sample was weighted to accurately reflect the proportions of the different rate categories to allow generalisation of the results to the affected ratepayer community as a whole.

The key variables of interest in the survey were:

- The level of awareness in the community of Council's Draft BMS
- How important each of the nominated BMS activities was to the community
- The degree to which the nominated activities met the expectations of the community
- The level of support within the community for a proposed rate rise to fund implementation of the BMS
- The degree to which the proposed rate rise was seen as affordable by the community.

The results of the survey were analysed by ratepayer category and demographic groups (gender, age, household income). All analysis other than by ratepayer category was conducted using the weighted sample reflecting the proportion of each affected ratepayer type in the Lismore LGA, i.e. Farmland 11 per cent, Residential/Rural 17 per cent, and Residential/Urban/Village 72 per cent. Similarly, results reported here for affected ratepayers as a whole are based on the weighted sample.

Key findings:

- The final sample provided a good fit against 2011 Census data, allowing for the older age profile, higher level of workforce participation, and higher overall level of household income to be expected among ratepayers compared to the community as a whole.
- The results highlighted differences in attitudes between ratepayer categories, particularly farmland and urban ratepayers, with farmland ratepayers consistently less supportive of the Draft BMS, Council, and in particular the proposed rate rise than

were urban ratepayers. Demographic differences existed between the ratepayer categories, and were reflected in the survey results.

- Over 90 per cent of affected ratepayers had at least heard of the Draft BMS, although the majority indicated they did not know much about it. About one-third were at least somewhat aware.

All of the nominated Draft BMS activities were rated as at least *important* by the majority of affected ratepayers in the LGA as a whole. The activity rated the most important by affected ratepayers as a whole was *improved management of roadside weeds in the Lismore Council area*, followed by *managing threats to koalas and their habitat*, and *developing clear Council guidelines for sustainable development in the Lismore Council area*.

- Affected ratepayers gave the activities a moderate endorsement in terms of how well the activities met their *expectations for how Council should be managing biodiversity in the Lismore area*. The most frequent rating (by 41% of all respondents) was that the activities met their expectations *quite well*. The second most frequent response was *a little bit* (34% of all respondents), while the proportion who said the activities did *not* meet their expectations *at all* (12%) more than balanced those who said their expectations were met *very well* (9%).
- The most contentious issue of any canvassed in the survey was whether the proposed rate rise would be a reasonable price to pay for the BMS activities. Just over half the affected ratepayers as a whole (61%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that the estimated amount of rate rise that would apply to their property was a reasonable price to pay. However, almost four in ten (37%) *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed*. Further, those who *disagreed* tended to express their views in stronger terms than those who *agreed*. As a result the average rating on this question for the affected ratepayer community as a whole was just on the positive side of neutral.

The average score for farmland ratepayers was on the negative side of neutral, rural residential ratepayers were polarised, and urban ratepayers were on the positive side of neutral and significantly more supportive of the BMS rate rise than farmland ratepayers.

- Nevertheless, the majority of all ratepayer categories and demographic groups, except those with the lowest level of household income, agreed that the proposed BMS rate rise would be affordable for them. Inability to afford the rate rise was the main objection most frequently cited by respondents who opposed it. Negative perceptions of Council's efficiency and spending priorities accounted for the rest. The majority of ratepayers who objected to the rate rise, equating to about one-quarter of the affected ratepayer community, would not support it under any circumstances.
- While only a small minority (11%) of respondents indicated it would affect their views, the possibility of a SRV in 2018/19 to fund infrastructure renewal has the potential to impact the overall level of support for the proposed BMS rate rise by polarising the affected ratepayer community.

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1. Introduction

This report presents the results of a community survey conducted by Hunter Research Foundation (Hunter Research, HRF) on behalf of Lismore City Council (Council, the client) in January 2105. The background and objectives of the project are presented in Section 1.1; the research design and analytical methods used are detailed in Section 2, and Section 3 provides discussion of the key findings, together with the data in chart format.

1.1 Project background and objectives

Lismore City Council has been developing a Biodiversity Management Strategy (BMS) for the Lismore Local Government Area (LGA) in response to the priority given to environmental management by the community through the community consultation processes that informed the development of the current 10-year Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for the period 2013-2023, and the associated Delivery Plans.

After considering a variety of options to fund implementation of the BMS, Council has concluded that the only reliable mechanism in the long-term, that will not adversely affect ongoing Council services, is through a Special Rate Variation (SRV).

Hunter Research's understanding is that the purpose of the proposed SRV would be to raise \$500,000 annually (equivalent to a 1.9% increase in Council's current annual rates revenue), which would then form part of the ongoing rate base. The affected rating categories are Farmland, Residential/Rural and Residential/Urban or Village. Four other rating categories for various classes of business were previously subject to a Special Business rate rise in 2013 and will be excluded from the proposed SRV.

To seek community input into the Draft BMS and proposed SRV, Council is undertaking a consultation strategy that includes a statistically robust survey of the affected ratepayers; a three-month exhibition period and widely publicising the Draft BMS and proposed SRV; mail-out of a letter in early December 2014 to all affected ratepayers providing information on the cost and purpose of the proposed rate increase and encouraging comment; and establishment of a Community Forum whose members were randomly selected by Council from its ratepayer database to reflect the proportions of each of the three relevant rate categories in the LGA.

The research project reported here focused on providing Council with independent, reliable information about the community's views through the conduct of a statistically robust survey of the affected community of ratepayers. The outcomes of the survey will assist Council in making decisions regarding possible application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a SRV to fund the BMS.

The specific objectives of the community survey were to assess the affected ratepayers' views on:

- The effectiveness of the Draft BMS in reflecting their expectations; and
- The extent of their willingness and capacity to pay the proposed SRV, if sought by Council and granted by IPART, in the context of another possible larger rate increase in 2018/19.



2. Methods

The research methods were designed to address key issues for this project, including the need to:

- Assure Council and the community that the final sample of survey respondents was representative of the community of affected ratepayers as a whole. This required application of sampling strategies that captured difficult-to-contact respondent groups and the achievement of a high response rate.
- Enable Council to understand differences in the views of different types of ratepayers (owners of Farmland, Residential/Rural and Residential property), where these exist, as well as those of the affected ratepayer community as a whole. This required the use of sampling techniques that ensured a sufficient number of respondents of each type to support statistical testing of differences between ratepayer categories, and a sufficient overall sample size to support statistical testing of other demographic sub-groups within the affected community.
- Implement a survey that transparently and objectively provides respondents the opportunity to express their views without influencing them in any way. This required designing a questionnaire that presented the questions in a structured and balanced manner, including both positive and negative statements, allowed scope for respondents to express an overall view in their own words, and presentation of the questions by the interviewers in a neutral tone of voice and in the same way to every respondent.
- Provide respondents with sufficient objective information on which to base their own assessment of their willingness and capacity to pay for the proposed SRV. This required inclusion of an algorithm in the questionnaire that calculated the dollar amount of the proposed rate rise in relation to the land value of the respondent's subject property.

A telephone survey using Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology with a random sample of affected ratepayers was chosen as the most cost-effective method to address these issues. Telephone surveys achieve substantially higher response rates than other delivery methods, minimise self-selection respondent bias, and enable use of techniques to include the views of hard-to-contact respondent groups.

Council had mailed out detailed information about the Draft BMS and proposed SRV, including the average cost of the rate rise to each type of affected ratepayer, ahead of the community survey. A brief summary was provided to respondents during the interview where relevant to the questions, and to remind or inform them of the information provided by Council.

2.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed by Hunter Research staff in consultation with the client, following initial discussion with Council staff to identify key issues and themes, such as the non-regulatory measures embodied in the Draft BMS.

The questionnaire included an initial check that the respondent was a ratepayer in relation to the property address randomly selected from Council's ratepayer database, and confirmation that participation in the survey was voluntary, that their answers would be confidential, and there would be no identifying information in the results given to Council.

The main focus of the questionnaire was on ratepayer attitudes to the Draft BMS and the proposed rate rise, using a series of 5-point rating scales. The use of these scales maximises the neutral delivery of the questions and facilitates statistical analysis of the results. Topics addressed were:

- How aware the respondent was of the Draft BMS
- How important each of the nine key Draft BMS activities (presented in random order) was to the respondent
- How well the nominated activities matched the respondent's expectations for how Council should be managing biodiversity in the Lismore area
- The extent to which they agreed or disagreed that the amount of the proposed rate rise that would apply to their type of property in their local area was a reasonable price to pay to fund the BMS activities
- How affordable the amount of the rate rise would be for them
- The main reason for their objection (unprompted) for those who disagreed that the rate rise was a reasonable price to pay, or who indicated that it would not be affordable
- Whether there were any conditions under which they would support the proposed rate rise
- Whether they had heard of a possible separate rate rise in 2018/19 for infrastructure renewal, as part of Council's Long Term Financial Plan
- Whether knowing about the possible 2018/19 SRV changed their views about the proposed BMS rate rise, and if so, whether they would be more or less supportive of the BMS rate rise.

The questionnaire collected demographic data on the respondent's gender, age, employment status, length of residence in Lismore LGA, and household income range.

Opportunities for comment were provided at the end of the survey.

The questionnaire was programmed onto the Hunter Research CATI system, and piloted with Council staff and members of the Councillor Feedback Group, to ensure that wording and question flow were meaningful and appropriate.

The full questionnaire is attached in Appendix 1.

2.2 Sample design and quality control

The sample frame was all properties in the three affected rate categories in the Lismore LGA. The sample was randomly selected from the White Pages listing, and cross-matched to Council's database to identify the rate category of the selected property.

The sample was stratified to overcome the issue that a simple random sample of the ratepayer database would not yield sufficient number of the smaller ratepayer groups (Residential/Rural and Farmland) to give statistical reliability for comparison of responses between ratepayer categories. A minimum of 50 interviews was conducted with each ratepayer type, with an overall sample size of 209. The final sample was then weighted to reflect the relative proportions of each affected rate category, yielding a final overall sample of 200.

A sample size of 200 yields a sample variation of +/- 7.1 per cent at a confidence level of 95 per cent, given a response probability of 50 per cent. In practical terms, this means that if 50 per cent of the randomly selected respondents in the sample answered "yes" in a yes/no

question (the result with the highest possible variation in statistical accuracy), the true proportion of the population who would answer "yes" (if all were surveyed) would lie between 42.9 per cent and 57.1 per cent, 95 times out of 100.

Details are provided in Table 1 of the number of properties and their proportion of the total in Lismore LGA, number in the stratified sample and number in the weighted sample for each affected rating category.

Table 1 Lismore LGA, sampled, and weighted sample numbers by rating category

Affected rating category	No. of properties in Lismore LGA	% of total	No. sampled	No. in weighted sample
Farmland	1,920	11%	51	22
Residential/Rural	2,852	17%	55	34
Residential/Urban/Village	12,356	72%	103	144
TOTAL	17,128	100%	209	200

2.2.1 Sampling strategies

Strategies to maximise the representativeness of the final sample included:

- Priority to mobile phone numbers listed in the White Pages in sample selection.
- Up to 6 attempts were made, at different times and on different days, to contact the randomly selected property.
- Up to a further 5 attempts were made, at different times and on different days, to contact the ratepayer in relation to the selected property and complete the interview, including the capacity to contact non-resident ratepayers where relevant. This meant that, in some cases, up to 11 attempts could be made to complete an interview for a selected property.
- Where a property was owned by multiple ratepayers, the respondent was randomly selected.

2.2.2 Data collection and quality control

The survey was conducted by Hunter Research's trained and experienced interviewers from its dedicated on-site CATI facility in Maryville (Newcastle) between Tuesday 13 January, 2015 and Tuesday 27 January, 2015.

The CATI programming and quality control processes used by Hunter Research ensure interviewers do not skip introductory statements that provide information to participants and seek consent. Interviewers must enter participant responses into the CATI system and these responses are then used to navigate the multiple pathways of introductory scripts. Ongoing monitoring of interviewer performance by Team Leaders and Supervisors ensures interviewers read CATI scripts exactly as written. Hunter Research interviewers are highly skilled in survey techniques and employed on the basis that departure from CATI scripts or skipping required statements is considered to be a serious breach of employment.

The data was collated in a secure database. Hunter Research complies with the Australian Privacy Principles provided under the *Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012*. All collected interview data is kept separate from information that could be used to identify individuals. That is, data containing telephone numbers and names, if applicable,

is kept in one password protected database while all survey data kept in a separate password protected database. Although an ID number links the datasets, the project's researchers are the only people to have access to both passwords.

2.2.3 Response rate

The survey achieved an overall response rate of 88 per cent, which is very satisfactory and provides confidence that the sample is representative of the affected ratepayer community as a whole.

Details of the outcomes of all telephone contacts for the survey are provided in Appendix 2.

2.3 Data analysis

After the data was checked, cleaned, and verbatim open-ended responses were coded, it was imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis by Hunter Research's statistical team.

The first level of analysis produced frequency distributions for the issues and concepts being tested. The second level of analysis identified any statistically significant differences between population groups of interest based on the demographic responses, including comparison of responses between ratepayer categories, broad age groups, genders, and household income groups. Statistical testing was applied to both mean scores and frequency distributions to reliably identify significant differences.

2.3.1 Data weighting

The survey data presented in this report for the affected ratepayer community as a whole has been weighted to reflect the rate category distribution in the Lismore Council database. A survey of a random sample of the relevant community can be weighted to match overall community data, to ensure that the overall results can be generalised to the community as a whole.

Weighting does not alter the distribution of responses within respondent types. Tests of statistical significance were applied to unweighted data for comparisons between ratepayer categories and to the weighted total data for comparisons between demographic groups (genders, age groups, household income groups).

2.3.2 Mean ratings

In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate: how aware they were of the Draft BMS, how important the nominated BMS activities were to them, how well the nominated activities matched their expectations, how strongly they agreed or disagreed that the proposed BMS rate rise was a reasonable price to pay, and affordable for them, how much more or less supportive they would be of the BMS rate rise after knowing of the possible 2018/19 SRV. The following scales were used, respectively, for these questions:

Awareness

Never heard of it	(1)
Heard of it, don't know much about it	(2)
Somewhat aware	(3)
Very aware	(4)

Importance	
Very unimportant	(1)
Unimportant	(2)
Neither	(3)
Important	(4)
Very important	(5)
How well expectations are matched	
Not at all	(1)
A little bit	(2)
Quite well	(3)
Very well	(4)
Agreement	
Strongly disagree	(1)
Disagree	(2)
Neither disagree nor agree	(3)
Agree	(4)
Strongly agree	(5)
Support	
Much less supportive	(1)
Somewhat less supportive	(2)
Neither	(3)
Somewhat more supportive	(4)
Much more supportive	(5)

Note that a *neither* score of 3 out of 5 suggests a 'neutral' opinion: no strong feelings either way.

Average (mean) ratings were calculated by assigning the value shown in parentheses next to each of the components within the scale, with all *don't know* and other non-scale responses excluded from the calculation. Table 1 provides an example of the calculation of a mean rating.

Table 2 Illustration of a mean rating calculation

Rating	No. points	No. responses	Calculation: no. points x no. responses	Mean rating
Strongly agree	5	30	5 x 30=150	The mean is calculated by dividing 585 by the number of responses using the 1 to 5 scale (in this case 200-10=190): 585/190
Agree	4	70	4 x 70=280	
Neither	3	5	3 x 5=15	
Disagree	2	55	2 x 55 =110	
Strongly disagree	1	30	1 x 30=30	
Don't know Refused Other	Not included in calculation	10	Not included in calculation	Mean = 3.08
Total		200	585	

In this manner a mean rating of 1 would indicate that all respondents who provided a rating *strongly disagreed* with the specified statement; conversely, a mean of 5 would indicate that they all *strongly agreed* with it. Therefore, a higher rating represents a relatively more positive response.

When reviewing the detailed results it is important to consider:

- The distribution of ratings, since this may be masked in the mean score: for example, ratings which are evenly spread over the 1 to 5 scale may yield the same mean as those which are relatively polarised at either end of the scale
- The level of non-response (that is, the number of *don't know* and other non-scale responses).

2.3.3 Statistical analysis

Statistical significance was generally measured at the 95 per cent confidence level. Note that a significant difference referred to in Section 3 means a statistically significant difference.

For the Lismore rate rise survey, the following tests were applied to determine statistically significant differences in responses between demographic groups, and between survey years:

- Analysis of variance (f test) – a statistically significant result indicates a difference in the **mean ratings** which is considered to be a 'true' difference and not a difference attributable to chance.
- Chi-square analysis – a statistically significant result indicates a difference in the **frequency of responses** which is considered to be a 'true' difference and not a difference attributable to chance.

2.3.4 Presentation of the results

In the charts in Section 3 responses are sorted, where relevant, in descending order of frequency of the response or the mean ratings. Statistically significant differences are indicated by an asterisk.

Don't know and *refused* responses are excluded from calculation of mean ratings, but are included in presentation of response frequencies.



3. Results

The survey results are reported in this Section for each of the key variables for the community of affected ratepayers as a whole, and differences between ratepayer categories and demographic groups highlighted where these were statistically significant.

3.1 Demographic characteristics of the sample

The demographic characteristics of the sample are provided in Table 3, together with the comparative data for the Lismore LGA from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing. The sample provides a good fit against the Census data, allowing for the older age profile, higher level of participation in the workforce, and higher overall level of household income to be expected among ratepayers compared to the community as a whole.

Table 3 Demographic characteristics of survey sample and Census comparators

Demographic Characteristics	Sample	Census 2011
Gender		
Male	49%	48%
Female	51%	52%
Age group		
18-49	25%	52%
50-64	42%	29%
65 and over	32%	19%
Employment status		
Employed	61%	56%
Unemployed	4%	5%
Not in labour force	36%	39%
Household income		
\$20,000 and under	16%	16%
\$20,001-\$60,000	33%	44%
\$60,001-\$100,000	20%	18%
\$100,001 and over	15%	13%
Not Stated	16%	9%
TOTAL	100%	100%

SOURCE: Lismore BMS rate rise survey; ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2011

Demographic differences between the ratepayer categories are reflected in some of the survey results discussed in later sections. While most of these demographic differences were not sufficient to be statistically significant, they provide a useful context in interpreting the results. Observations include:

- Farmland respondents had an older age profile than rural or urban respondents and the majority were male. They had lived in Lismore LGA for significantly longer than other ratepayer types, and were significantly more likely to be self-employed. Their properties had a significantly higher average land value than other ratepayer categories.
- Rural residential respondents had a younger age profile than farmland respondents and the majority were male. They had lived in Lismore LGA longer on average than urban residents but less than farmland respondents, and a significantly higher proportion of them had a lower household income than other ratepayer types. Their average land value was significantly lower than that of farmland respondents, and significantly higher than that of urban ratepayers.
- Urban respondents had a younger age profile than farmland respondents, and the majority were female. They had lived in Lismore LGA for a significantly shorter period on average than farmland ratepayers. Their properties had a significantly lower average land value than other ratepayer categories.

3.2 Awareness of and attitudes to Draft Biodiversity Management Strategy

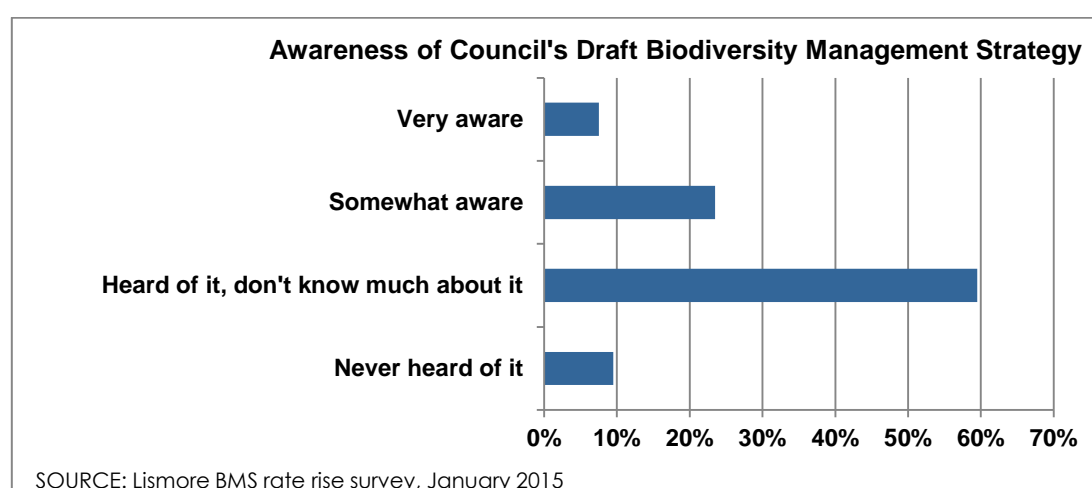
3.2.1 Awareness of Draft BMS

Following confirmation of eligibility to participate in the survey (suburb/locality of property ownership in Lismore LGA and rate category of the property), respondents to the community survey were asked:

How aware are you of Council's Draft Biodiversity Management Strategy?

The responses, summarised in Figure 1, indicated that over 90 per cent of affected ratepayers had at least heard of the Draft BMS, although the majority (60%) said they *don't know much about it*. About one-third (31%) were at least *somewhat aware*.

Figure 1 Awareness of Council's Draft Biodiversity Management Strategy



There were no significant differences in the level of awareness between genders, age groups, rate categories, household income groups, or land values.

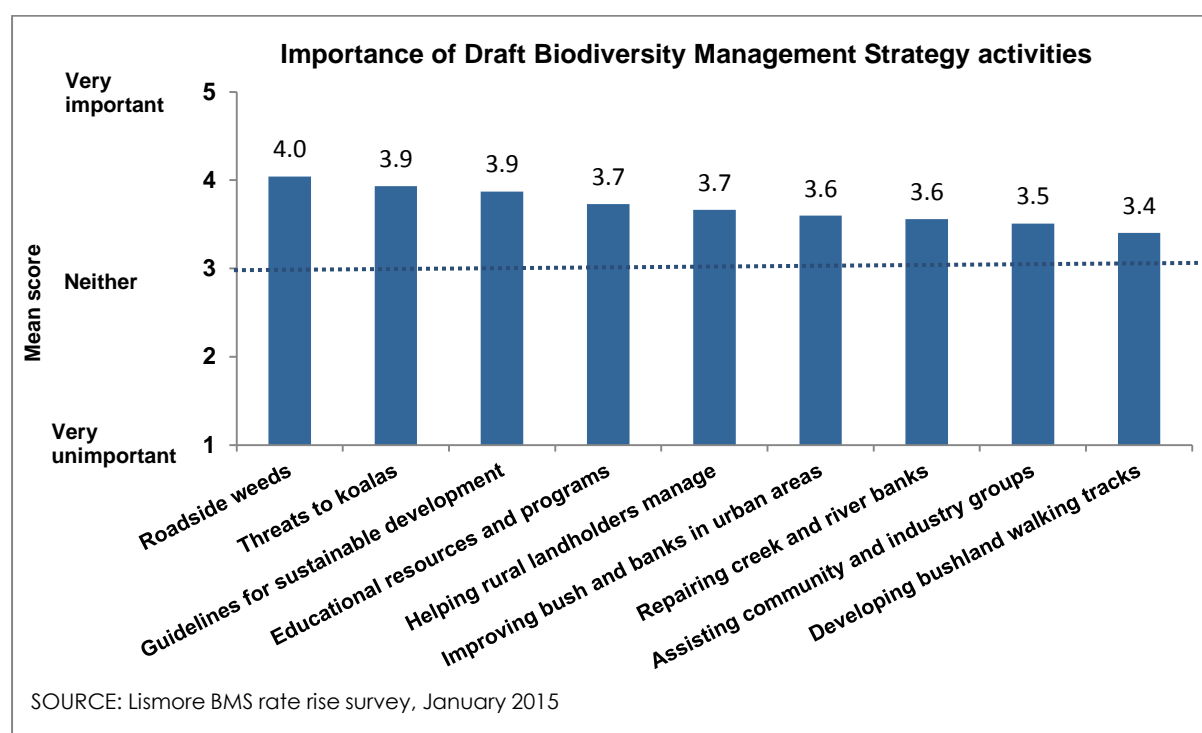
3.2.2 Importance of Draft BMS activities

Regardless of their level of awareness of the Draft BMS, respondents were then asked to rate each of nine key activities proposed in the Strategy on *how important each one is to you, on a scale where 5 is very important and 1 is very unimportant*. The activities were presented in random order to minimise order effects.

The results are summarised in Figure 2 in terms of mean scores, in descending order of importance. These indicate that:

- All of the nominated activities were rated as at least *important* by the majority of affected ratepayers in the LGA as a whole.
- The activity rated the most important by affected ratepayers as a whole was *improved management of roadside weeds in the Lismore Council area*, followed by *managing threats to koalas and their habitat*, and *developing clear Council guidelines for sustainable development in the Lismore Council area*.

Figure 2 Importance of Draft BMS activities to ratepayers – mean scores



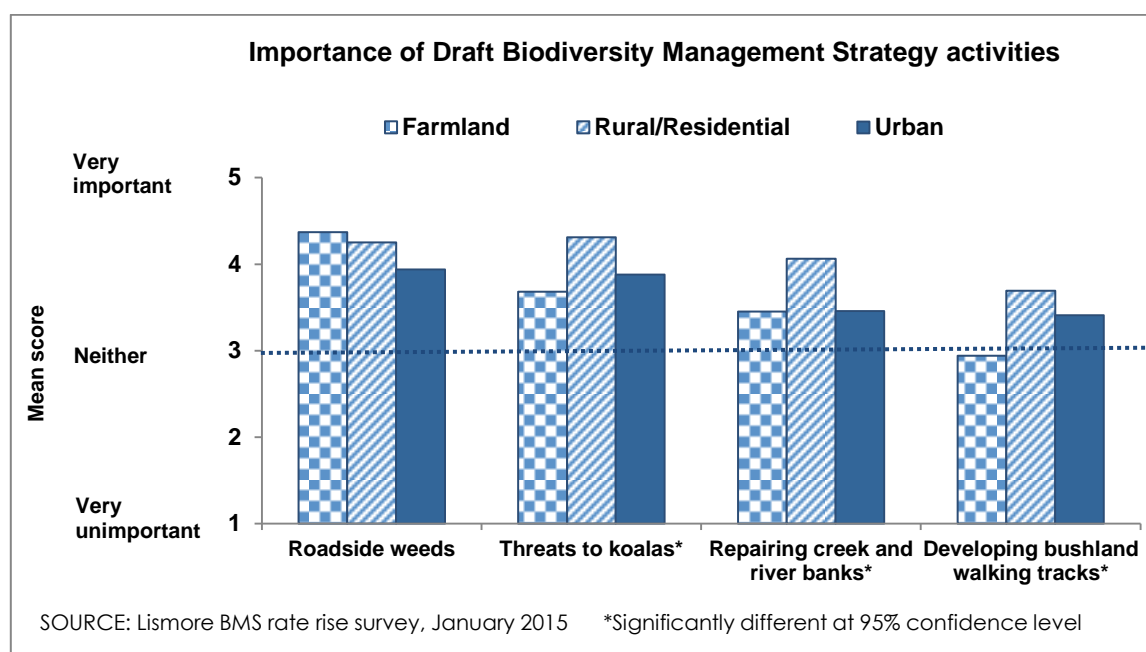
There were significant differences between ratepayer categories in terms of both ranking and importance of some of the Draft BMS activities, as shown in Figure 3:

- *Management of roadside weeds* was rated as significantly more important by farmland ratepayers than by urban ratepayers.
- On the other hand, *improving bushland and developing bushland walking tracks* polarised farmland ratepayers, resulting in a neutral overall rating, and significantly less importance than the overall importance assigned to this activity by rural residential ratepayers.
- Similarly, *managing threats to koalas and their habitat* was rated as significantly more important by rural residential ratepayers, who ranked this as the most important

activity as a group, than by farmland ratepayers, for whom it ranked fifth in importance.

- *Repairing creeks and river banks in rural areas* was rated as significantly more important by rural residential ratepayers as a group than others, ranking fourth overall in importance to rural ratepayers and rated as *very important* by half the respondents in this group.

Figure 3 Differing perceptions of Draft BMS activities by ratepayer type – mean scores



Females as a group rated each of the Draft BMS activities as significantly more important than did males. There were no significant differences between females in different ratepayer categories, but differences between ratepayer types amongst males were heightened.

There was some variability between age groups in the rating and ranking of Draft BMS activities. This was most notable for *management of koala habitat*, ranked as the most important activity overall by those in the youngest age group (18 to 49), and *repairing creek and river banks*, which was rated as significantly more important by those aged 18 to 49 than by those aged 65 and over.

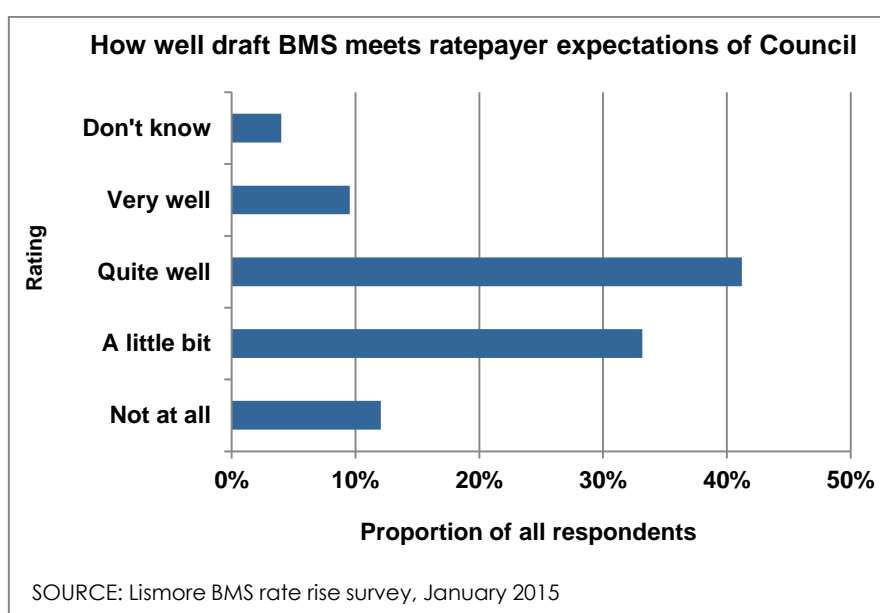
3.2.3 Draft BMS and ratepayer expectations

After rating all the nominated Draft BMS activities, respondents were asked:

How well do these activities match your expectations for how Council should be managing biodiversity in the Lismore area?

Overall, affected ratepayers gave the activities a moderate endorsement, with *quite well* the most frequent rating (41%) across all ratepayer categories, as shown in Figure 4. However, the overall response was somewhat lukewarm with second most frequent response *a little bit* (34%), while the proportion who said the activities did *not* meet their expectations *at all* (12%) more than balanced those who said their expectations were met *very well* (9%).

Figure 4 Ratepayer rating of how well BMS activities meet their expectations

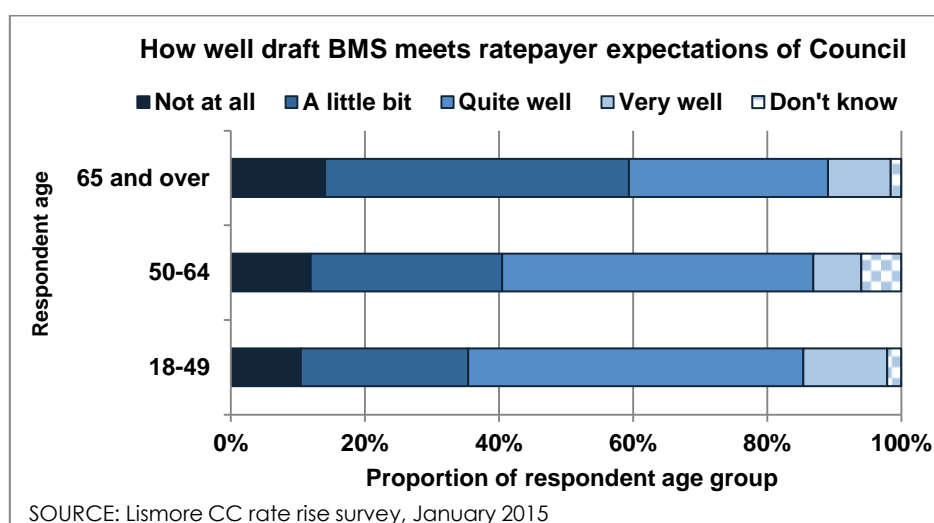


Ratepayer categories differed significantly in their ratings of the Draft BMS. The responses from farmland and rural residential ratepayers indicated some polarisation of views across these groups, consistent with their ratings of the individual Draft BMS activities. In particular, a significantly higher proportion of farmland and rural residential ratepayers said the Draft BMS met their expectations *not at all* compared with urban ratepayers. Further, there was a small number of additional comments from farmland and rural residential respondents in relation to this question – all of which indicated strong disagreement with the Strategy.

There were no significant differences in how well the Draft BMS activities met respondent expectations between genders or income groups.

However, there were indications that the overall acceptability of the Draft BMS activities decreased with age, as shown in Figure 5, consistent with the older age profile of farmland and rural residential ratepayers.

Figure 5 Expectation rating of Draft BMS by age group



3.3 Attitudes to the proposed rate rise

After rating the Draft BMS activities, respondents were provided by the interviewer with a brief statement about Council's rationale for the proposed rate rise to fund the BMS activities. This included the information that the rate rise would only be implemented if the community supports it, Council decide to apply to the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), and if IPART approves it. Respondents were offered *an idea of what the rate rises would mean TO YOUR PROPERTY in the first year* and then asked:

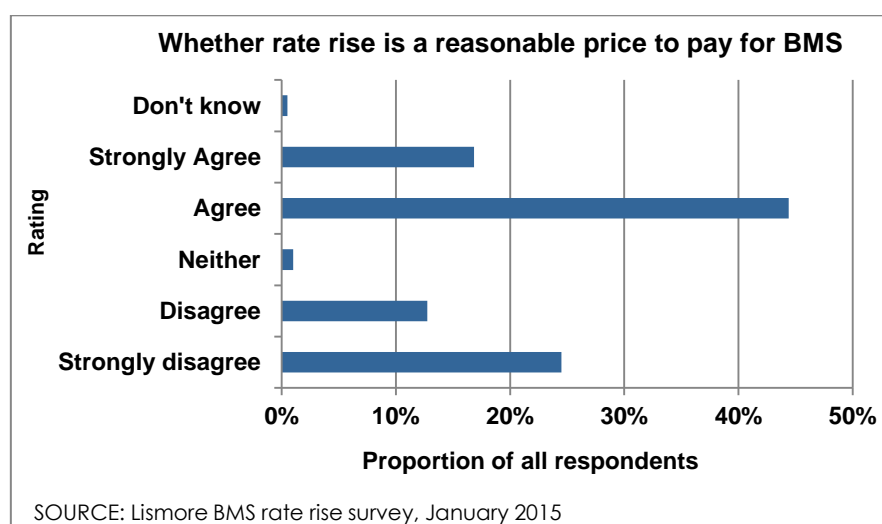
Do you agree or disagree that the amount I just gave you would be a reasonable price to pay for undertaking the activities in the Biodiversity Management Strategy?

Respondents had the opportunity to substitute their own estimate of their property value for the average calculated by the CATI program for their rate type and locality, and a small number (8% of the sample) opted to do this. Most respondents who opted to use their own estimate of their land value increased the value on which the rate rise calculation was based, and therefore the estimate of the dollar amount of rate rise that would apply to their property. Analysis of the detailed results indicated that the pattern of responses from this group was very similar to that for the bulk of respondents, and therefore nominating their own land value did not affect the overall outcomes.

3.3.1 Whether rate rise is a reasonable price to pay

This was the most contentious issue of any canvassed in the survey, almost dividing the community. Just over half the affected ratepayers as a whole (61%) *agreed or strongly agreed* that the estimated amount of rate rise that would apply to their property was a reasonable price to pay. However, almost four in ten (37%) *disagreed or strongly disagreed*. Further, as shown in Figure 6, those who disagreed tended to express their views in stronger terms than those who agreed. As a result the average rating on this question for the affected ratepayer community as a whole was just on the positive side of neutral.

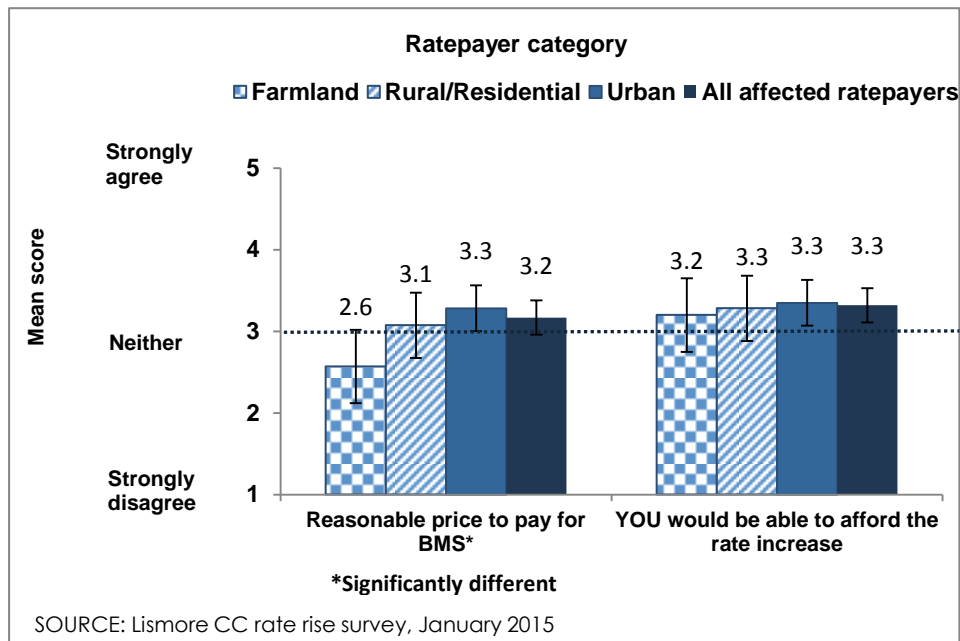
Figure 6 Whether rate rise is a reasonable price to pay for BMS activities



The rate rise issue also resulted in the strongest differentiation between ratepayer categories of any question in the survey, with half the farmland ratepayers (49%) *disagreeing* that the rate rise is a reasonable price to pay while more than half the rural residential (58%) and urban ratepayers (64%) *agreed*. Further, the farmland respondents expressed their views

more strongly than did the rural residential and urban respondents. The average scores for each group were thus close to neutral, but on opposite sides, as shown in Figure 7. The error bars in Figure 7 indicate the margin of error for that score at the 95 per cent confidence level, with non-overlapping error bars (between farmland and urban respondents) indicating significant difference between the scores of those groups.

Figure 7 Rating of proposed rate rise by ratepayer category – mean scores



Overall, the level of opposition to the proposed rate rise increased with land value, consistent with the relationship between land values and ratepayer category:

- Ratepayers whose land value was \$100,000 or less *agreed*, on balance, that the rate rise was a reasonable price to pay;
- Those whose land values were between \$100,000 and \$400,000 were polarised in their views, resulting in a *neutral* overall rating;
- The small group of ratepayers who owned property with land values over \$400,000 (predominantly farmland) on balance *disagreed* that the rate rise was a reasonable price to pay.

Females in all ratepayer categories were more supportive of the proposed rate rise than males. On balance, females as a group were moderately positive (two-thirds of them agreed the rate rise was a reasonable price to pay), whereas male views were polarised resulting in a neutral rating overall.

There were no significant differences in responses to the question of whether the proposed rate rise is a reasonable price to pay for the BMS activities between age groups, or household income groups.

3.3.2 Affordability of proposed rate rise

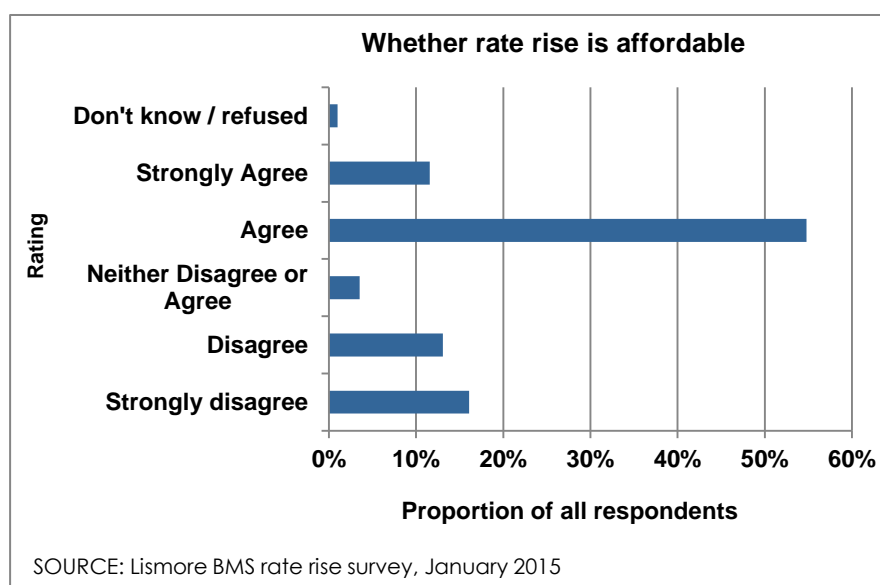
IPART specifically takes account of the affordability of a SRV for the community that would pay it in determining whether to approve an application by Council to raise rates above the rate peg. After responding to the question of whether the proposed rate rise is a reasonable price to pay for the BMS activities, respondents were asked:

Do you agree or disagree that YOU would be able to afford the rate increase I just gave you if it was approved?

There was a strong correlation between ratings of whether the rate rise was a reasonable price to pay and whether it would be affordable to the affected ratepayer. Nevertheless, in contrast to their polarised views about whether the proposed rate rise is a reasonable price to pay, two-thirds of affected ratepayers (66%) agreed or strongly agreed that the amount of the rate rise that would be applicable to their property would be affordable for them, while just under one-third of the affected ratepayers (29%) indicated that they would not be able to afford the rate rise. The responses are summarised in Figure 8.

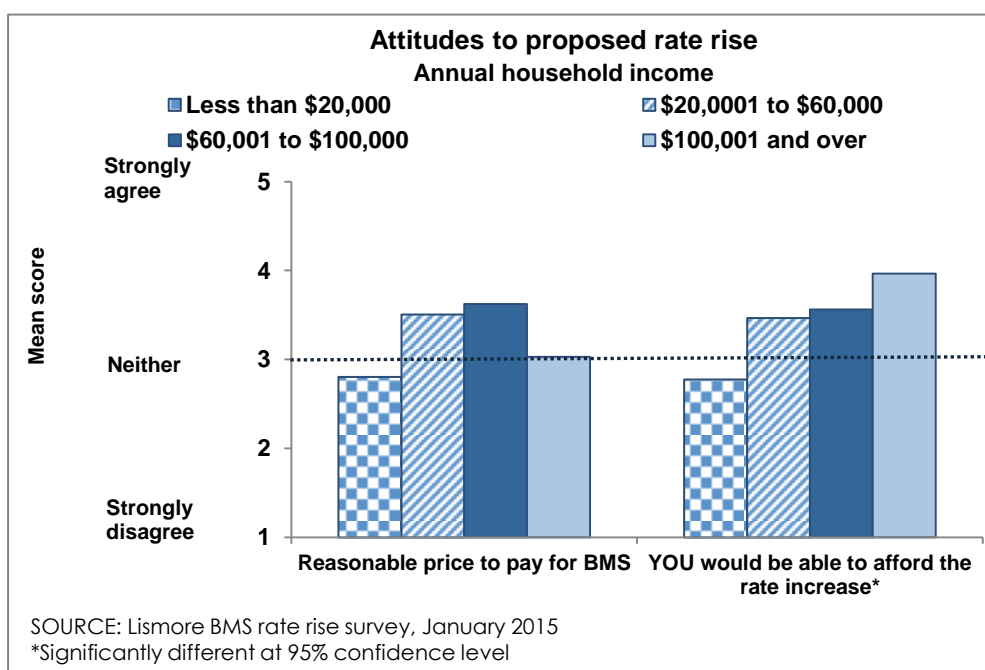
However, the specific objections to the rate rise discussed below suggest that some respondents may have disagreed that the rate rise would be affordable for them as a further way of registering their opposition to it, rather than as an indication of their capacity to pay.

Figure 8 Whether rate rise is affordable for affected ratepayers



There were no significant differences in affordability rating between ratepayer categories, nor between genders, age groups or land values. However, affordability increased significantly with household income, as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Affordability of proposed rate rise by household income – mean scores



3.3.3 Objections to the rate rise

All ratepayers who *disagreed* that the rate rise was reasonable, or that it was affordable, or both, were asked:

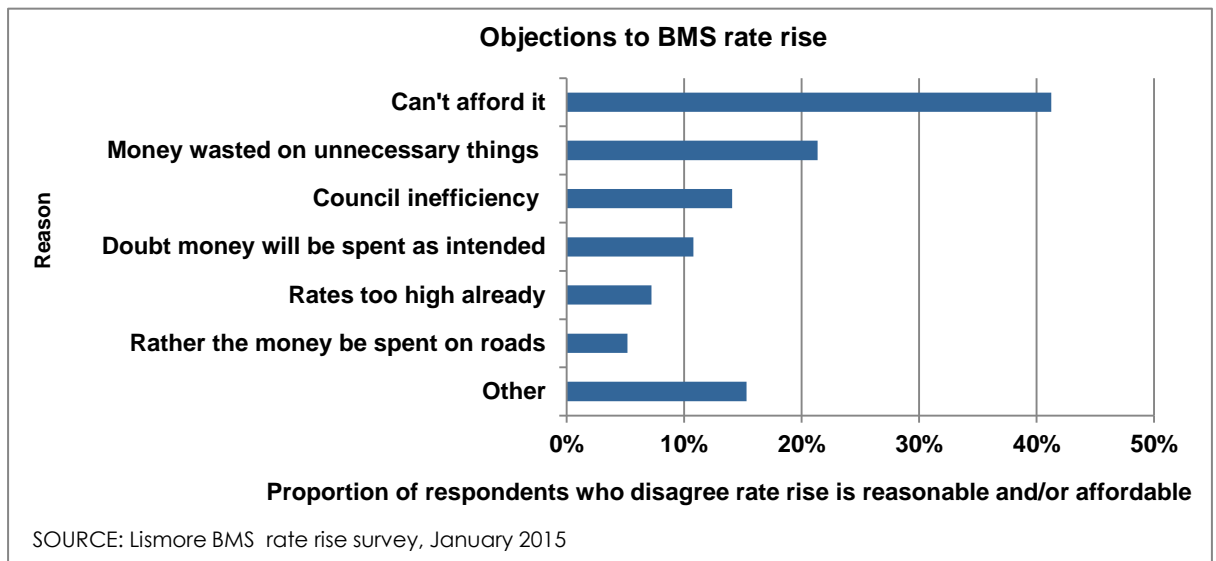
What is your MAIN OBJECTION to the proposed rate rise?

Four in ten respondents (41%) were asked this question. No prompts were offered by the interviewers, so that respondents were free to reply in whatever terms they chose. The answers were coded, where possible, into categories previously identified in consultation with the client, or recorded verbatim for later coding by Hunter Research staff.

The results, summarised in Figure 10, indicate that inability to afford it was the most commonly cited reason, accounting for well over one-third (37%) of those who were asked the question (and 17% of the whole affected ratepayer community). The remaining responses expressed criticism of Council's priorities or management in various ways, most frequently that *Council wastes money on things community doesn't need* and *Don't want to pay for Council inefficiency / bad management*.

A significantly lower proportion of farmland ratepayers (19%) cited inability to afford the rate rise as their main objection compared with urban ratepayers (45%).

Figure 10 Objections to BMS rate rise



Respondents who *disagreed* that the rate rise was a reasonable price to pay or that it was affordable were then asked:

Under what conditions would you support the proposed rate rise?

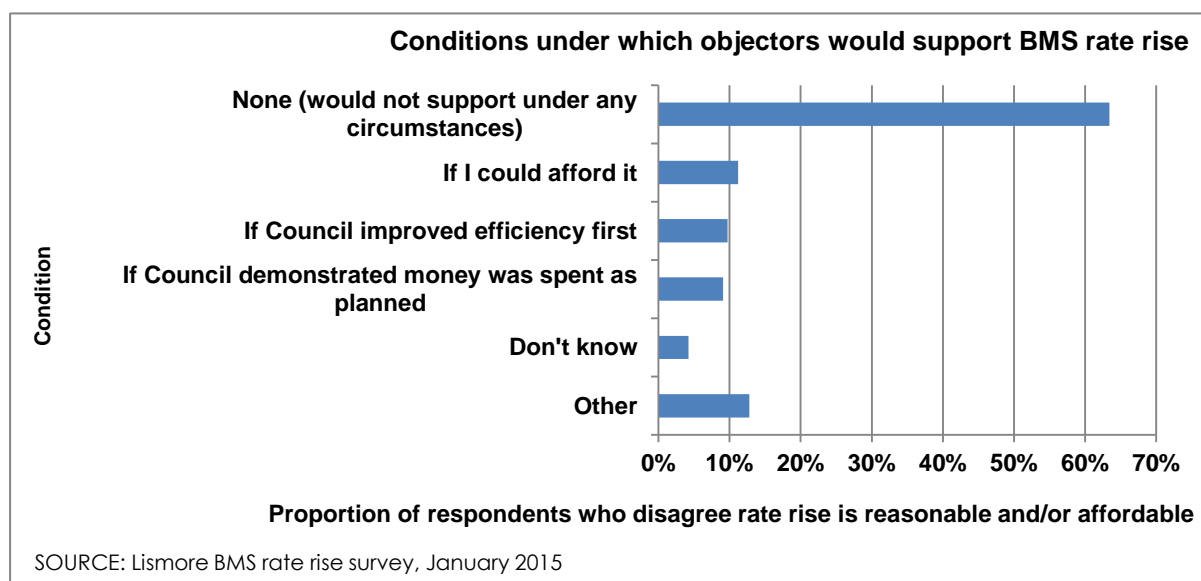
The majority (63%) indicated that they would *not support it under any circumstances*, equating to about one-quarter (26%) of the whole affected ratepayer community.

Among those whose objection was conditional, the most frequent pre-condition for their support was:

- *If I could afford it*, followed by
- *If Council improved their efficiency first* and
- *If Council demonstrated that the money was spent as they planned.*

The distribution of responses is shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11 Conditions under which objectors would support BMS rate rise



Consistent with the relationship between affordability of the rate rise and household income, inability to afford the rate rise was cited by a significantly higher proportion of affected ratepayers whose household income was \$20,000 p.a. or less than by those whose household income was over \$100,000 p.a.

There were no other significant differences between demographic groups in relation to their objections to the rate rise.

3.3.4 Impact of Council's Long Term Financial Plan

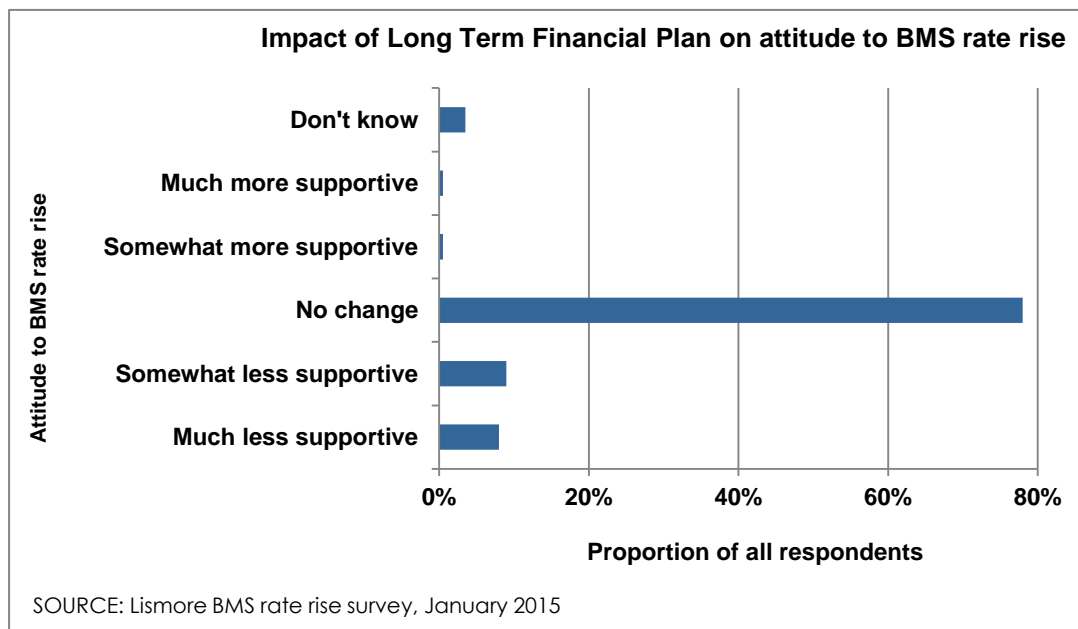
The summary document about the Draft BMS and associated rate rise circulated to the Lismore community by Council included the information that *the current Long Term Financial Plan proposes a separate SRV of \$2 million per year from 2018/19 for renewal of infrastructure, predominantly roads*. After providing their views on the proposed rate rise, respondents were asked whether they had heard about this possible rate rise before. Regardless of whether they were previously aware of it, they were then asked whether knowing about the proposed 2018/19 SRV changed their views about the rate rise to fund the Draft BMS, and if so, whether they would be more or less supportive of the BMS rate rise.

The results indicated that the proposed 2018/19 SRV could have an effect on the attitudes of affected ratepayers towards the rate rise proposed to fund the Draft BMS that would shift the balance of views in the community overall from slightly positive to neutral or, in the most extreme case, slightly negative:

- Very few affected ratepayers (10%) confirmed that they had previously heard of the proposed 2018/19 SRV.
- Nevertheless, the majority (78%) indicated that knowing about it would *not change* their views about the rate rise to fund the Draft BMS.
- The majority (92%) of those whose views changed in light of knowing about the 2018/19 SRV said they would be *somewhat or much less supportive* of the BMS rate rise, while only five per cent of this subgroup said they would be *more supportive* as a result.

The resultant data on the overall effect of knowing about the 2018/19 SRV is summarised in Figure 12.

Figure 12 Impact of knowing of planned 2018/2019 SRV for infrastructure



Detailed analysis of the relationship between respondents' initial rating of the proposed BMS rate rise and the change in their views indicates that, if **all** those who initially agreed that the rate rise would be a reasonable price to pay changed their views to *disagree*, the community would be divided in their attitudes to the proposed rate rise:

- Female ratepayers would remain in support of the BMS rate rise, on balance;
- Male ratepayers could shift from marginally supportive to slightly negative on balance;
- Farmland ratepayers would be stronger in their opposition to the BMS rate rise;
- Rural residential ratepayers would be divided on the issue;
- Urban ratepayers would remain slightly positive, on balance, but the strength of their support for the rate rise would be diminished.

3.4 Unprompted comments

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked:

Would you like to make any other comments?

The comments were recorded verbatim by the interviewer and then coded by research staff for analysis. The overall frequency of the coded comments is shown in Figure 13, with typical examples of the coded categories provided below.

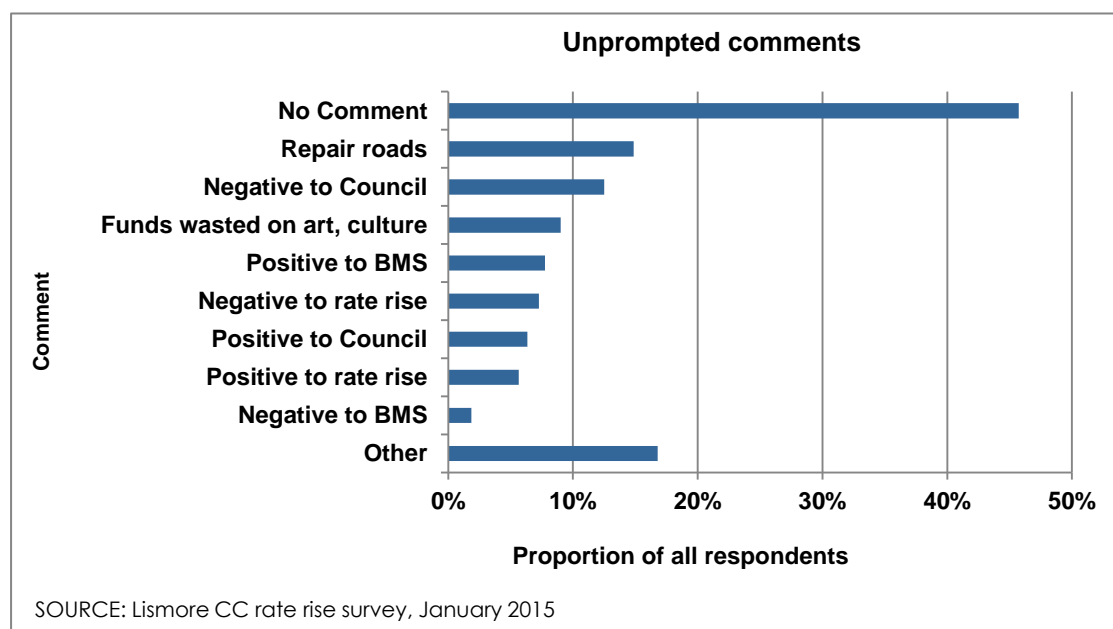
The data indicated that:

- Just over half the respondents took the opportunity to make comments;
- The unprompted comments most frequently expressed concern about the need to repair and maintain roads in Lismore LGA, and criticisms of Council and its spending priorities;
- The next most frequent type of comment expressed further opposition to the rate rise;
- Unprompted comments indicating support for the Draft BMS were more frequent than those expressing opposition to it.

A significantly higher proportion of farmland ratepayers made comments (78%) than urban ratepayers (48%), and also made significantly more frequent criticisms of Council than urban ratepayers.

There were no other significant differences in the number or nature of unprompted comments between genders, age groups, or household income groups.

Figure 13 Attitudes to rate rise and BMS in unprompted comments



3.4.1 Examples of unprompted comments

Repair roads:

In the past 10-15 years the roads have gone to rack and ruin (farmland)

Council should be more concerned about country roads and fixing boundaries (farmland)

Roads are dangerous and need immediate attention (farmland)

The roads are the most important thing in the area/Cannot believe biodiversity was number one thing the community wants fixed (rural residential)

In [our area] the roads are terrible and are only being patched up with holes appearing again after heavy rain/they need proper repairs (rural residential)

Did a trip around Australia and Lismore have the worse roads in Australia (rural residential)

I would prefer the council to get on top of the roads here (urban)

Council should take care of roads, water, footpaths/get back to basics (urban).

Negative to Council:

We pay over \$3000 per year in rates already and council do virtually nothing as all the things you mention I do myself (farmland)

Council needs to stop selling off farm land rather they need to start looking after the place (farmland)

The people involved in "Imagine Lismore" would not have been land owners so it is an artificial ranking and Council should concentrate on their core business (farmland)

The Council waste too much money already (rural)

I have been in the Lismore council area for 70 years and it is a disgrace (rural)

I am against all of the money that the council is wasting (rural)

Lismore Council's rates are far too high and it seems they are not doing much for the area [compared with Ballina] (urban)

Council do not manage any money properly (urban).

Funds wasted on arts / culture:

The boat in Lismore cost \$300000 which would have been better spent on roads and infrastructure (farmland)

Like to see council spend their rates more wisely/the boat in Woodlark Street is a complete waste of money (farmland)

The welcome signs to Lismore are very depressing/looks like a broken heart and cost a lot of money/the boat is ugly and the blue power (rural)

That silly boat is an eyesore pull it down and cash in the copper (rural)

I don't think the art gallery should be going ahead. That money would be better spent on roads and bushland (urban)

They should stop spending money on the arts then they would be able to fund these projects themselves (urban).

Positive to BMS:

Protecting the environment is excellent as long as... the money goes to it and not something else (rural)

I'm strongly supportive of improving the environment and support the increase (rural)

Good they are moving on all the biodiversity issues (rural)

It is crucial that council invests in protecting the environment/it is a shame it has not invested up until this time/it is a real opportunity for it to look after its plants and animals/absolutely support it (urban)

Respondent would agree to a rate rise if she was confident Council would spend the money efficiently on the actual proposed statements (urban)

I think the Biodiversity work being done is great and the Council should keep up the good work (urban)

The environment is very important and the rate rise for biodiversity is ok as long as these activities are done (urban).

APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

#331 LISMORE RATE RISE SURVEY CATI JANUARY 2015

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is.... calling from Hunter Research Foundation on behalf of Lismore City Council. We are conducting an independent survey of ratepayer attitudes to a rate rise proposed to fund Council's Biodiversity Management Strategy. Your telephone number was selected at random from the White Pages.

[IF PHONE ANSWERER APPEARS HESITANT OR REQUESTS MORE INFORMATION SAY, Council recently sent information to all affected ratepayers about the draft Biodiversity Management Strategy and proposed rate rise. You can find more information on Lismore City Council's website www.lismore.nsw.gov.au]

We would like to speak to a ratepayer for this property.

Does a ratepayer live here.

1. YES 15. NO ELIGIBLE PERSON

[IF RATEPAYER IS NON-RESIDENT, ASK FOR CONTACT DETAILS -NAME AND BEST CONTACT PHONE NUMBER - TYPE IN BELOW

#

[INTERVIEWER: IF NECESSARY EXPLAIN Hunter Research Foundation is an independent not-for-profit research organisation. We are conducting the study on behalf of Lismore City Council.]

WHEN REQUIRED PERSON IS ON PHONE ASK IF NECESSARY

Lismore City Council is very keen to have your input, as a member of the community, into its planning for the future. You are invited to take part in the survey and your answers will be confidential. There will be no identifying information in the results given to the Council.

This interview may be monitored for quality and training purposes.

Are you happy for me to continue with the survey?

[INTERVIEWER: IF RESPONDENT REFUSES, OFFER FREECALL]

1. PROCEED
2. NO - REFUSAL
4. Not Now SPOKE TO RESPONDENT - CALLBACK ARRANGED
6. RESPONDENT UNSUITABLE (EXPLAIN IN COMMENTS)
66. RESPONDENT UNAVAILABLE FOR SURVEY PERIOD (COMMENTS)
14. LANGUAGE PROBLEM 8. NOT IN AREA\QUOTA DONE
[Give Freecall if requested - 1800 082 238 9am to 8pm NSW time Mon to Fri]

Before we start, I just need to check.

Do you live in the Lismore City Council area?

1. Yes 2. No [8. DON'T KNOW 9. REFUSED]

What Suburb do you live in?

1. BENTLEY	21. EAST LISMORE	41. MAROM CREEK	61. SPRING GROVE
2. BEXHILL	22. ELTHAM	42. MCKEES HILL	62. STONY CHUTE
3. BLAKEBROOK	23. FERNSIDE	43. MCLEANS RIDGES	63. TATHAM
4. BLUE KNOB CREEK	24. GEORGICA	44. MODANVILLE	64. TERANIA
5. BOAT HARBOUR	25. GIRARDS HILL	45. MONALTRIE	65. THE CHANNON
6. BOOERIE CREEK	26. GOOLMANGAR	46. MOUNTAIN TOP	66. TREGEAGLE
7. BOOYONG	27. GOONELLABAH	47. MEERSCHAUM VALE	67. TUCKI TUCKI
8. BROADWATER	28. GREEN FOREST	48. NIMBIN	68. TUCKURIMBA
9. BUCKENDOON	29. HOWARDS GRASS	49. NORTH CODRINGTON	69. TULLERA
10. BUNGABEE	30. JIGGI	50. NORTH LISMORE	70. TUNCESTER
11. CANIABA CREEK	31. KEERRONG	51. NORTH WOODBURN	71. TUNTABLE
12. CHILCOTTS GR	32. KILGIN	52. NUMULGI	72. WHIAN WHIAN
13. CLUNES	33. KOONORIGAN	53. PEARCES CREEK	73. WOODLAWN
14. COFFEE CAMP	34. LAGOON GRASS	54. REPENTANCE CREEK	74. WYRALLAH
15. CORAKI	35. LARNOOK	55. RICHMOND HILL	
16. CORNDALE	36. LEYCESTER	56. ROCK VALLEY	
17. DORROUGHBY	37. LINDENDALE	57. ROSEBANK	77. NOT LISTED
18. DUNGARUBBA	38. LISMORE	58. RUTHVEN	
19. DUNOON	39. LISMORE HGHTS	59. SOUTH GUNDURIMBA	
20. EAST CORAKI	40. LOFTVILLE	60. SOUTH LISMORE	99. REFUSED

[IF NOT LISTED or DUBIOUS TYPE IN]

Are you sure you live in the Lismore City Council area?

1. Yes 2. No [8. DON'T KNOW 9. REFUSED]

Do you own or part own at LEAST ONE RESIDENTIAL or FARMLAND property in Lismore Local Government Area?

[1. Yes 2. No 9. REFUSED]

Do you own or part own MORE than ONE RESIDENTIAL or FARMLAND property in Lismore Local Government Area?

[1. Yes 2. No 9. REFUSED]

Do you make decisions for this property regarding payment of rates?

[1. Yes 2. No 9. REFUSED]

And do you live in "+iif(qnum=1,"that property","one of those properties")+"

1. Yes 2. No [9. REFUSED]

Qtype. Is the property you "+iif(qres=1,"live in","manage")+ " a....

1. Detached house
2. Semi-detached or row house
3. Townhouse
4. Unit
5. Retirement Village/Unit
6. Mobile Home/Caravan
- . OTHER (Type In)

#

And which of the following Council rate categories is it in ?
[READ

ALTERNATIVES]

1. Farmland
2. Residential - Rural
3. Residential - Urban
4. Residential - Village

#

[DO NOT READ - 5. Business

I'd like to ask your views about environmental management in the Lismore Council area. Environmental management was identified as the community's number one priority in the development of Lismore's 10 Year Community Strategic Plan Imagine Lismore.

Q1. How aware are you of Council's Draft Biodiversity Management Strategy?

1. Never heard of it
2. Heard of it, don't know much about it
3. Somewhat aware
4. Very aware

#

[8.DON'T KNOW 9. REFUSED]

[BIODIVERSITY IS OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT SUCH AS NATIVE BUSHLAND, WILDLIFE, RIVERS AND WETLANDS. IT IS THE VARIETY OF ALL LIFE FORMS, SPECIES AND ECOSYSTEMS IN A REGION, ALSO KNOWN AS 'NATURAL HERITAGE'].

The Strategy aims to protect and improve bushland, wildlife habitat, rivers and wetlands across the Lismore Council area.

Q2. I'm going to read you some of the activities proposed in the Strategy. Please tell me how important each one is to you.

[PROMPT FOR DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE OR UNIMPORTANCE 8. DON'T KNOW 9. REFUSED]

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Very unimportant | 4. Important |
| 2. Unimportant | 3. Neither 5. Very important |

On a scale where 5 is very important & 1 very unimportant, how important is...

Improved management of roadside weeds in the Lismore Council area

Developing clear Council guidelines for sustainable development in the Lismore Council area

Educational resources and programs about looking after our environment for the general community, schools and industry groups

Helping rural landholders manage biodiversity and ecosystems on their properties to benefit biodiversity AND their agricultural production

Repairing creek and river banks in rural areas

Council assisting community and industry groups to improve biodiversity in the Lismore Council area

Linking and improving existing bushland and riverbank areas to protect our environment in urban areas

Improving our bushland and developing bushland walking tracks

Managing threats to koalas and their habitat

Q3. How well do these activities match your expectations for how Council should be managing biodiversity in the Lismore area? Do they match ...[READ SCALE]

1. Not at all
2. A little bit
3. Quite well
4. Very well
6. OTHER (specify Below)

[8. DON'T KNOW 9. REFUSED]

OTHER and UNPROMPTED COMMENTS

#

Funding is required to successfully implement the activities in the Biodiversity Management Strategy. Lismore Council has investigated available sources of funding and concluded that the only effective way to reliably fund the activities, without substantially affecting existing services, is through a rate increase. Council proposes a permanent 1.9% increase in rates for non-business ratepayers from 2016/17. This increase to fund the activities in the Strategy will only go ahead if ...

- the community supports it,
- Council decides to apply to the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART),
- and if IPART approves it.

I can give you an idea of what the rate rises would mean TO YOUR PROPERTY in the first year before I ask the next question.

The average land value for "[rating category]" property in YOUR AREA (2014/15) is \$"....."

LEAVE BLANK & HIT ENTER TO CONTINUE OR

IF RESPONDENT QUERIES CURRENT AVERAGE LAND VALUE AND VOLUNTEERS THEIR ACTUAL LAND VALUE

Do want me to use your actual LAND VALUE instead of the average?

1. Yes 2. No

What was that current LAND VALUE you want to use?

#

That is \$"....." Is this the number you want me to use?

1. Yes 2. No

Assuming that the special rate increase to fund the Strategy is approved by IPART and your land value is \$".....", your rate increase to fund the Strategy would be about \$"....." per year.

Q4a. Do you agree or disagree that the amount I just gave you would be a reasonable price to pay for undertaking the activities in the Biodiversity Management Strategy?

[PROMPT FOR EXTENT OF AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT]

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
- [3. NEITHER]
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

[8. DON'T KNOW 9. REFUSED]

Q4b. Do you agree or disagree that YOU would be able to afford the rate increase I just gave you if it was approved?
[THAT IS APPROVED BY THE COMMUNITY AND IPART]?

[PROMPT FOR EXTENT OF AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT]

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
- [3. NEITHER]
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

[8. DON'T KNOW 9. REFUSED]

IF Q4a<4 .OR. Q4b<4

Q5a. What is your MAIN OBJECTION to the proposed rate rise?

[DON'T READ OPTIONS - CODE IF POSSIBLE 8. DON'T KNOW 9. REFUSED]

1. Can't afford it
2. Council wastes money on things community doesn't need
3. Don't want to pay for Council inefficiency / bad management
4. Not confident the money will be spent the way Council says it will
5. Money being spent on the wrong things
6. Plans don't fix the things that are important to you

#

IF Q4a<4 .OR. Q4b<4

Q5b. Under what conditions would you support the proposed rate rise?

[DON'T READ - MULTIPLE RESPONSES ALLOWED 8. DON'T KNOW 9. REFUSED]

#

Lismore Council's Long Term Financial Plan includes the possibility of a separate Special Rate Variation of about 7.3% in 2018/19 for renewal of roads and other infrastructure in the Lismore area. That rate increase would also need community and IPART approval.

Q6. Had you heard about this possible rate rise in 2018/19 before now?

1. Yes 2. No 3. Not sure [9. REFUSED]

Q7. Does knowing about the proposed 2018/19 rate increase change your views about the rate increase proposed in 2016/17 to support the activities in the Biodiversity Management Strategy?

1. Yes 2. No [8. DON'T KNOW 9. REFUSED]

IF q7=1

Q7b. Would you be more or less supportive of the increase for the BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY?

[READ SCALE or at least the relevant HALF OF SCALE]

1. Much less supportive

2. Somewhat less supportive

[DO NOT READ 3. NEITHER 8. DON'T KNOW 9. REFUSED]

4. Somewhat more supportive

5. Much more supportive

#

Just a few questions to make sure we've talked to a wide range of Lismore ratepayers.

QD1. [OBSERVE - Ask only if necessary - Are you male or female?

M. Male F. Female [9. REFUSED]

QD2. Could you tell me how old you are? [OVER 90=95]

[INTERVIEWER - ENTER ACTUAL AGE IF GIVEN]

IF REFUSED ASK - What age group are you? [READ OUT]

1. 18-24

2. 25-34

3. 35-49

4. 50-64

- 5. 65-69
- 6. 70 and over
- [9. REFUSED - DON'T READ OUT]

QD3. And YOUR work status? [READ OPTIONS]

- 1. Paid full-time employment
- 2. Paid part-time employment
- 3. Self-employed (full or part-time)
- 4. Looking for paid employment
- 5. Student
- 6. Home duties
- 7. On a pension other than the age pension
- 8. Retired [EITHER ON AGE PENSION OR SELF-FUNDED SUPER]
- . Other [TYPE IN RESPONSE]

[9. REFUSED - DO NOT READ]

#

QD4. How long have you "+iif(qres=1,"owned","managed")+ " a property in the Lismore Council area?

Years [1 = 1 Year or Less 90 = 90 or more]

QD5. What is the approximate combined YEARLY before tax income of everyone in your household? (ie Gross Household income)

[QUERIED: INCLUDES ALL INCOME STREAMS SUCH AS WAGES, PENSIONS, ALLOWANCES AND RENTAL INCOME].

[READ SCALE]

- # 1. \$10,000 AND UNDER
- 2. \$10,001 TO \$20,000
- 3. \$20,001 TO \$40,000
- 4. \$40,001 TO \$60,000
- 5. \$60,001 TO \$80,000
- 6. \$80,001 TO \$100,000
- 7. \$100,001 AND OVER

- 8. UNSURE
- 9. REFUSED

That completes the survey; thank you for your time. We very much appreciate your participation.

Would you like to make any other comments?

#

Thank you again.

Just to remind you my name is calling from Hunter Research on behalf of Lismore City Council.

[HRF CONTACT: Vanessa Sewell - Survey supervisor - Freecall 1800 082 238]

[More information is available on Lismore Council's website
www.lismore.nsw.gov.au]

APPENDIX 2 RESPONSE RATES

Table 4 Response and contact rates – Lismore BMS rate rise survey

	No.	No. as % of total	No. as % of eligible
Ineligible			
Call back appointment with household	0	0.0%	
No answer	37	5.8%	
Respondent unsuitable	14	2.2%	
Answering machine	118	18.6%	
Not in survey area	30	4.7%	
Business number	5	0.8%	
Disconnected number	93	14.7%	
Engaged/busy signal	1	0.2%	
Fax/data line	4	0.6%	
Language difficulty	2	0.3%	
Unavailable for survey period	40	6.3%	
No eligible person at home	50	7.9%	
Total ineligible	394	62.2%	
Eligible			
Completed interviews	209	33.0%	87.8%
Household refusal	20	3.2%	8.4%
Personal refusal	9	1.4%	3.8%
Terminated	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total eligible	238	37.6%	100.0%
Total (eligible + ineligible)	633	100.0%	
Contact rate		47.50%	