

A survey to measure support for a special business rate of commercial property owners in the Coffs Harbour CBD



A random telephone survey of commercial
property owners in the Coffs Harbour CBD by
Jetty Research on behalf of **Coffs Harbour City Council**

FINAL REPORT dated January 24th 2012

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Front cover photo: 2011 Buskers Festival on Harbour Drive, Coffs Harbour. Photo by Frank Redward, and used with permission of John Logan Entertainment



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Executive summary

Coffs Harbour City Council has commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random telephone survey of business owners within the Coffs Harbour central business district (CBD) to measure their support for a 10-year special business rate (SBR).

Survey results will form one part of a broader consultation process designed to understand support levels for a SBR among: (a) owners in the Coffs Harbour city centre, who have been paying such a levy since July 2000; and (b) owners in other parts of the Coffs Harbour CBD, who are not currently subject to the levy.

The survey was commissioned as a representative poll of opinion towards a proposed continuation of the SBR for city centre business owners, and the introduction of such a rate to owners in the rest of the CBD. It followed separate letters and information sheets (i.e. one for city centre, another for “rest of CBD”) sent to all affected owners in early November 2011.

The sampling frame for each survey was a list of “city centre” and “rest of CBD” business owners supplied to Jetty Research by Council on November 10th. Excluding CHCC-owned properties and duplicates, this comprised approximately 242 unique owners in the Coffs Harbour centre, and 316 owners in the remainder of the Coffs Harbour CBD.

For those owners without telephone numbers, Jetty Research sent 150 personally addressed letters to randomly selected owners (75 each for city centre and “rest of CBD”) inviting their participation in the survey. (See Appendix 2 for copy of letter).

Surveying was conducted between November 28th and December 1st from Jetty Research’s CATI¹ call centre in Coffs Harbour. In all 172 interviews were conducted (69 for city centre, 103 for “rest of CBD”) with an average interview time of seven minutes. See Appendix 1 for telephone script.

Random sampling error for a sample of 172 –among 558 unique owners – is +/- 6.2 per cent at the 95 cent confidence level.² However as we ultimately attempted to contact *all* owners for whom we had a phone number, and 150 of 186 owners for whom no number was available, the poll also has some characteristics of a census rather than a random poll.

Among the survey’s major conclusions:

1. Two-thirds of those surveyed claimed to have received the letter and information sheet sent by Council in early November. Of these, just under three-quarters said they had read this information, with a further 73% of these claiming to have read all or most of it.

In total then, just 39 per cent of city centre and 33 per cent of other CBD owners had received and read most or all of the SBR-related information sent by Council.
2. 56 per cent of all respondents could not correctly name any projects funded by the current SBR. City centre owners were significantly more likely than those in the rest of the CBD to correctly nominate one or more SBR-funded projects. Those able to nominate actual projects focussed predominantly on the Mall/Harbour Drive redevelopment, with 10 per cent mentioning other parking improvements.

¹ Computer-assisted telephone interviewing

² This effectively means that were to conduct the survey 20 times but using a different sample each time, results should be representative for the entire survey population to within +/- 6.2 per cent in 19 of those 20 surveys

3. Only 38 per cent of city centre owners, and 29 per cent of those in the rest of the CBD, were able to correctly nominate proposed uses for a future SBR. (This included 75 per cent of those claiming to have read Council's information sheet, but only 25 per cent of those who hadn't.)

Those who were able to correctly nominate at least one project mentioned, in relatively equal number, construction of a multi-deck car park in Moonee Street, completion of beautification works at Brelsford Park, improvements to existing car parks, and Jetty foreshore enhancements.

4. After being provided with an explanation of the rationale for, and applications of the SBR, respondents were asked whether they supported an extension of the SBR for another ten years (city centre respondents only) or the introduction of a ten-year SBR ("Rest of CBD" only).

Forty six per cent of city centre respondents supported the continuation of a SBR, with 42 per cent opposed and the balance unsure. Only 17 per cent of other CBD owners supported the introduction of a SBR, against 73 per cent against and 11 per cent unsure.

Support among city centre owners was significantly enhanced by knowledge of past and proposed SBR uses. However this was not the case for "rest of CBD" owners, who remained opposed to a SBR regardless of their knowledge of past or proposed SBR uses.

5. Those who were opposed to, or unsure about their support for a SBR were then provided with further information explaining the implications of a SBR not being approved (see page 20 or Q11 in Appendix 1). This led to 34 per cent of city centre respondents previously unsupportive to consider supporting the SBR, but only 14 per cent of those in "rest of CBD".
6. This suggests total support for a special business rate of 62 per cent of city centre respondents, against 28 per cent of those in the remainder of the CBD.

Survey data suggests that:

- The majority of city centre property owners are in favour of the SBR being continued;
- There is little support among "rest of CBD" property owners for the SBR being levied on them;
- Within the city centre, there is a direct correlation between knowledge of past and (potentially) future funded by the SBR and support for the SBR. However this relationship does not extend to property owners in other parts of the CBD;
- Apart from the SBRs previous contribution to the mall redevelopment (at least among city centre owners), there is generally poor knowledge of its past and intended uses among Coffs Harbour business rate payers.



James Parker, B. Ec, Grad Cert Applied Science (Statistics), AMSRS
Managing Director
January 24th 2012

Introduction

Background

Since July 2000, Coffs Harbour City Council (CHCC) has levied the owners of business premises in the Coffs Harbour city centre with a special business rate (SBR) to fund city centre improvements. Over the past decade funds received from the SBR have been used on a number of projects, most visibly the mall conversion and subsequent revitalization of Harbour Drive.

Council now wishes to extend the SBR for a further ten years to fund further projects. It is also considering extending the SBR to the owners of premises through the wider CBD, which (in broad terms) incorporates an area bounded by Park Beach to the north, Howard Street to the south, and approximately 500 metres west of the Pacific Highway.³

As one part of its SBR application to the NSW Government Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), Council has commissioned a telephone survey of business property owners in: (a) the city centre; and (b) wider CBD areas.

Survey objectives comprised:

1. Establishing awareness of projects funded by previous BSR;
2. Measuring awareness of proposed uses for new BSR;
3. Testing support for new BSR;
4. Determining how awareness and support varied between city centre and rest of CBD.

Methodology

The poll of local businesses regarding their views on a SBR was constructed as two random telephone surveys: the first of businesses in the city centre, who have been paying a SBR for the past 12 years; and the second of businesses in other areas of the CBD, who are not presently subject to the levy.

The survey was commissioned by CHCC to be a representative poll of opinion towards a proposed continuation of the SBR for city centre business owners, and the introduction of such a rate to owners in the rest of the CBD. It followed separate letters and information sheets (i.e. one for city centre, another for “rest of CBD”) sent to all affected owners in early November 2011.

The script for both surveys was identical, except for question 10 which explained the differing financial implications of the proposed SBR to each of these groups (see Appendix 1).

The sampling frame for each survey was a list of “city centre” and “rest of CBD” business owners supplied to Jetty Research by Council on November 10th. Based on analysis of the lists by Jetty Research, these were broken down as follows:

³ For exact boundaries, see Coffs Harbour City Centre Local Environment Plan 2011/Land Zoning Map Sheet LZN_001

Property category	City Centre	Rest of CBD	TOTAL
Entries with phone numbers	183	255	438
CHCC-owned properties	21	15	36
New phone numbers found	27	27	54
No phone numbers found	93	93	186
TOTAL RECORDS	324	390	714

Excluding Council-owned properties and duplicate records, this represents approximately 558 unique CBD business owners: being 242 in the city centre, and 316 in the Rest of CBD.

Given the large number of records for which telephone numbers could not be easily found (i.e. through White Pages or Local Directories), and in order not to disenfranchise those businesses, Jetty Research suggested it would be appropriate to randomly select 75 such businesses in each area and send them a letter inviting their participation in the telephone survey. This decision was approved by Council, with a response deadline of Tuesday, December 6th. (See Appendix 2 for copy of letter.)

The remaining business owners (excluding, of course, CHCC itself) were called between Monday November 28th and Thursday December 1st. Calls were made by a team of five researchers from Jetty Research's Coffs Harbour CATI⁴ facility during business hours. Owners were phoned up to five times, and offered callbacks (both day and evening) if requested. In attempting to gain a sample size of 100 for each area, Jetty Research eventually called all business owners for whom we had a current telephone number.

In all, 69 interviews were conducted with "city centre" property owners, and 103 for "rest of CBD" owners. This provided a total sample of 172 business owners. Of these, 16 were sourced from the letter sent to business owners without telephone numbers (city centre = 5, rest of CBD = 11).

Average interview time across both surveys was 7.0 minutes (min. = 3, max. = 20). And participation rate was excellent, with only 39 of the 211 owners successfully contacted declining to participate.

At the conclusion of each survey, respondents were invited to send a written submission to CHCC regarding their views on the SBR, and (where requested) provided with delivery options for these submissions.

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

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

⁴ Computer-assisted telephone interviewing

Sampling error

Assuming a survey population of 558 Coffs Harbour CBD business owners, random sampling error for a sample size of 172 is +/- 6.2 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level. This effectively means that were we to conduct the survey 20 times but using a different sample each time, results should be representative for the entire survey population to within +/- 6.2 per cent in 19 of those 20 surveys.

(Obviously margin for error rises with smaller survey samples, so care should be taken in extrapolating results from sub-samples of, say, 50 or less.)

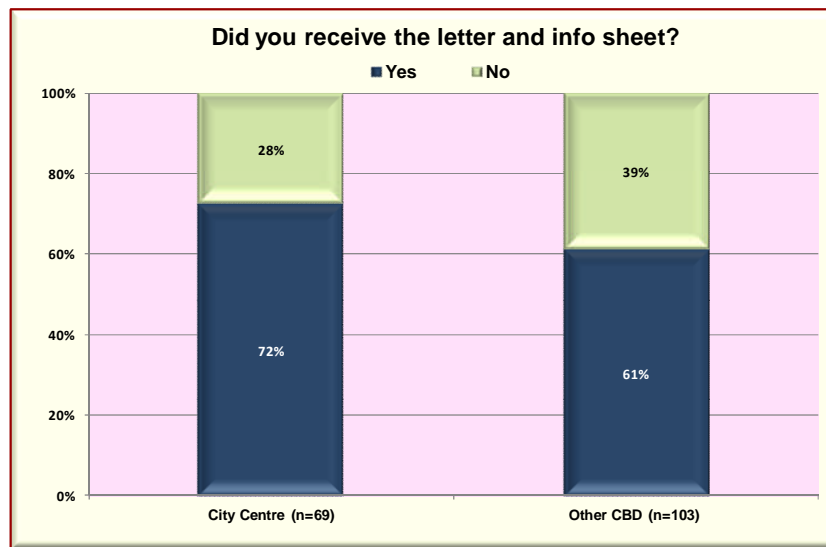
Given that we ultimately attempted to contact *all* owners for whom we had a valid telephone number (plus 150 for whom we didn't), and the low refusal rate, this survey also has some characteristics of a census –i.e. attempting to collect information from every member of the population.

In either instance, we believe the polling method chosen has made the results highly representative of Coffs Harbour's CBD property owners.

Part 1: Receipt of letter and information sheet

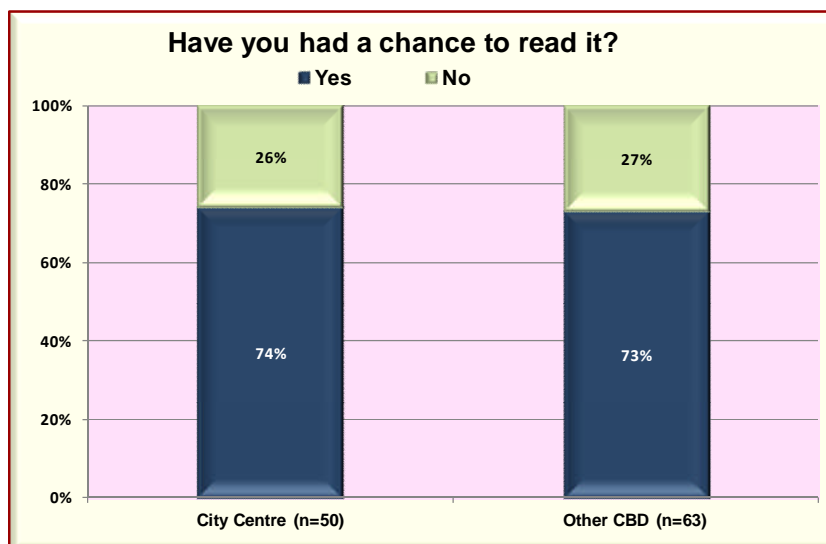
The first few questions of the survey were designed to identify whether business owners had: (a) received; and (b) read the letter and information sheet sent to them 10 days or so prior.

Graph 1.1: Did you receive the letter and information sheet?



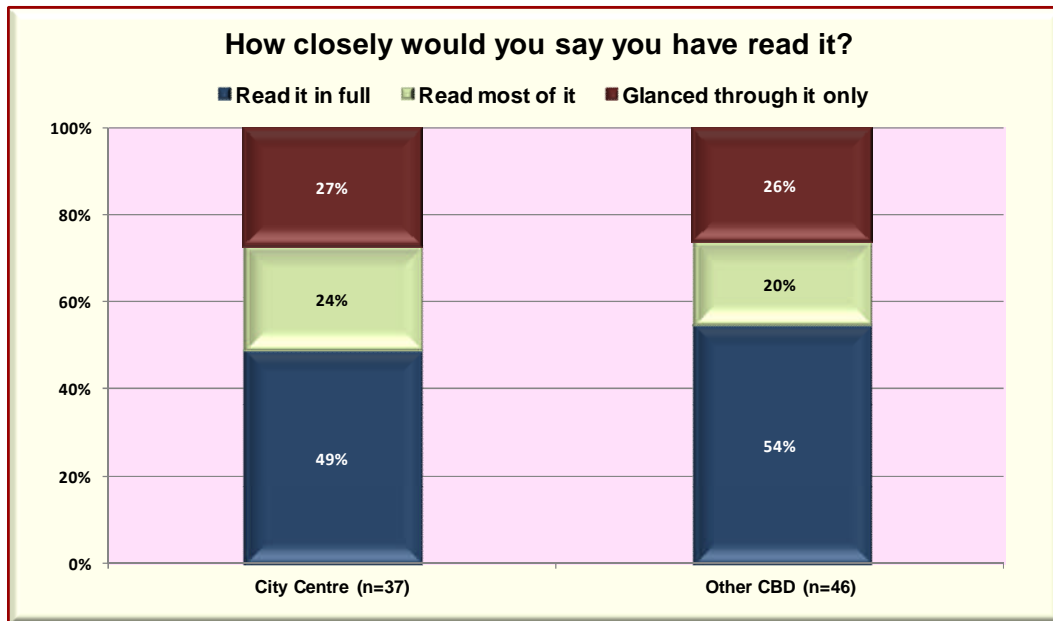
Two-thirds of all respondents recalled having received the letter and information sheet relating to the SBR. This included 72 per cent of city centre business owners, against 61 per cent of those in the rest of the CBD.

Graph 1.2: Have you had a chance to read it?



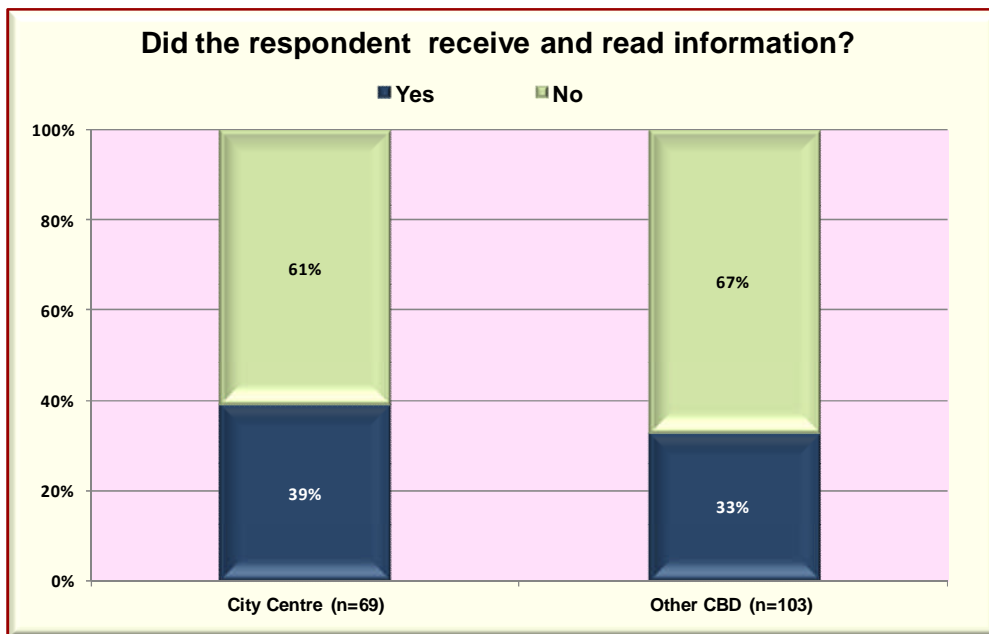
Of those who had received it, approximately 73 per cent within each group claimed to have read it.

Graph 1.3: How closely would you say you have read it?



And of those who had read it, approximately 73 per cent of all property owners surveyed claimed to have read most or all of it. Again, this was broadly consistent between city centre and rest of CBD owners.

Graph 1.4: Did the respondent read the information sheet?



In total, then, 39 per cent of city centre business owners and 33 per cent of those in the rest of CBD polled claimed to have received and read (most or all of) the letter and information sheet sent by Council.

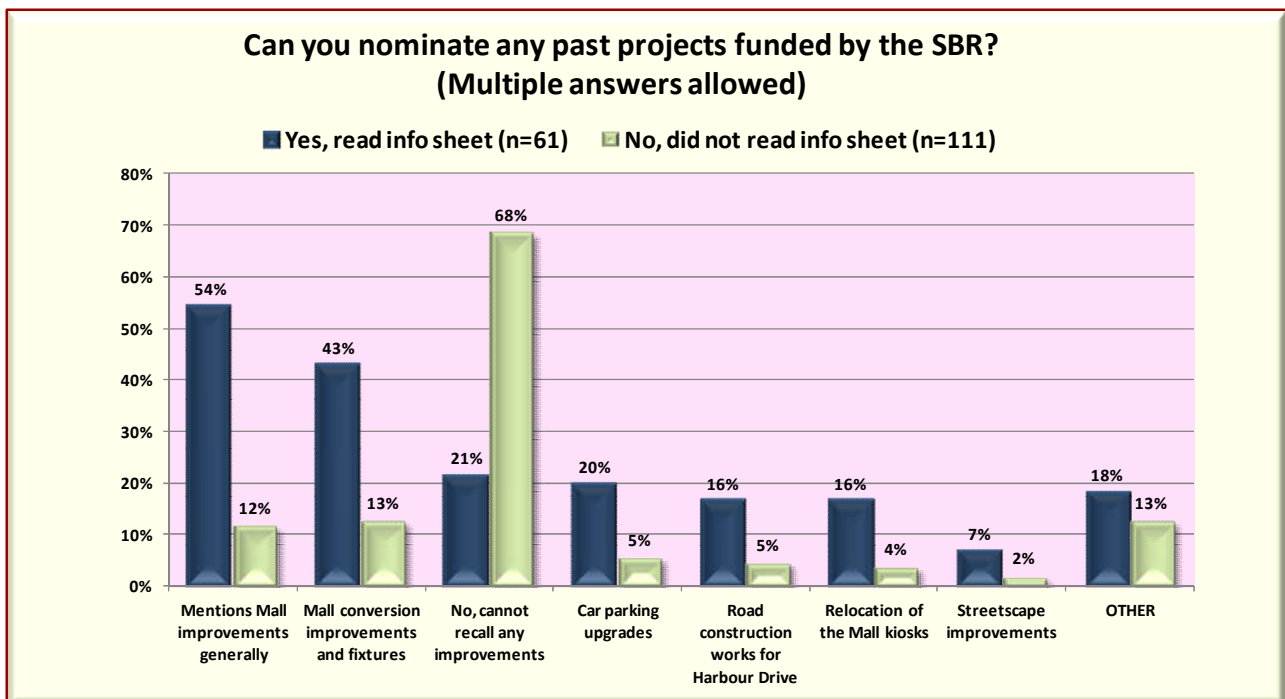
Part 2: Past uses for the Special Business Rate

Council was also keen to understand whether business owners in both city centre and the rest of the CBD understood how past SBR contributions had been spent, and proposed uses for any future SBR.

In each instance, responses have been divided by: (a) whether the respondent claimed to have read the letter and information sheet sent by Council; and (b) business location.

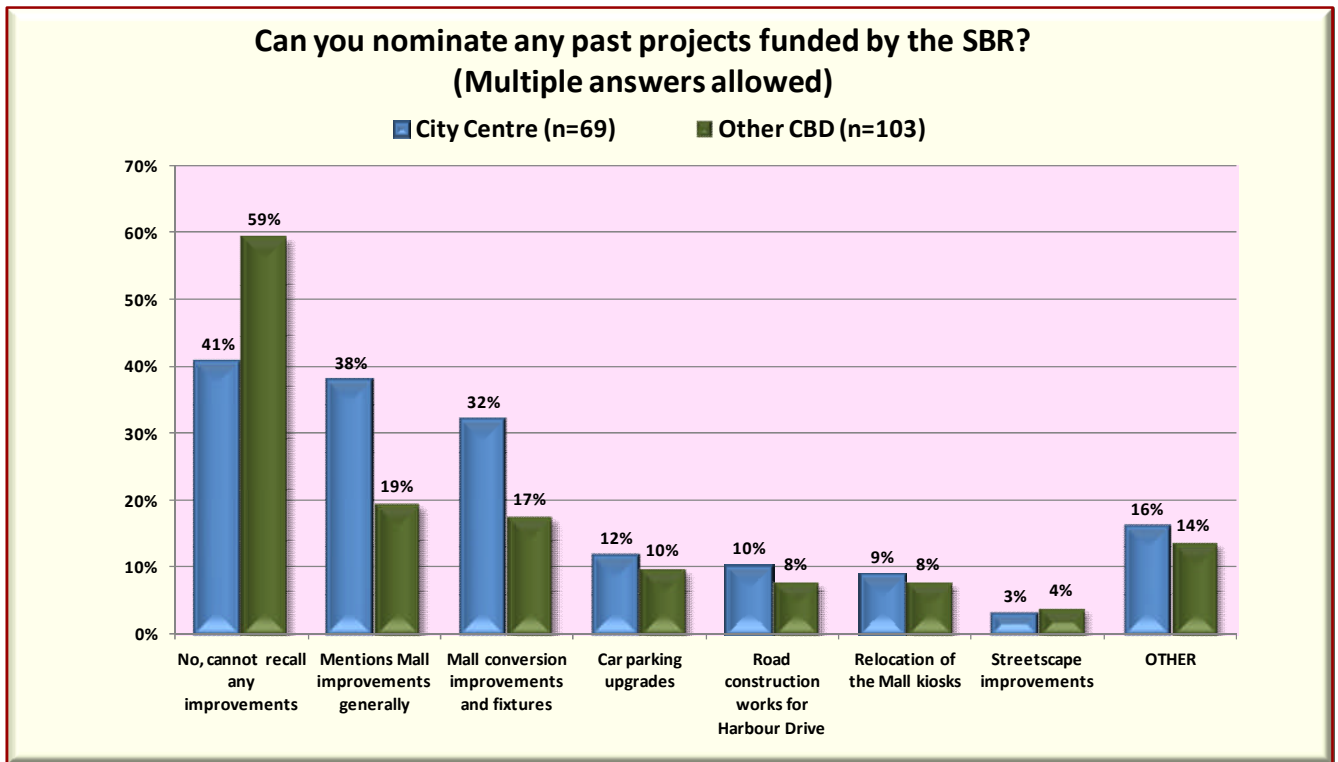
Looking first at knowledge of past projects, respondents were asked (unprompted) to nominate any projects funded by the current SBR:

Graph 2.1.1: Can you nominate any past projects funded by the SBR? (by whether respondent had read prior information)



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Graph 2.1.2: Can you nominate any past projects funded by the SBR? (by business location)



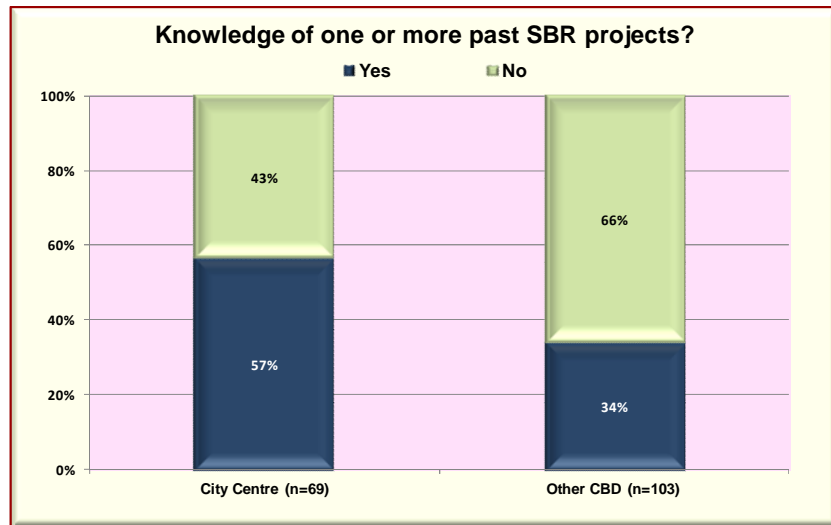
Among those claiming to have read the letter and information sheet, there was a high level of knowledge regarding the previous SBRs contribution to the mall redevelopment - but not for other uses. For those who had not read the prior information, there was very little awareness of how the SBR had been used.

As one would expect, city centre business owners were significantly more likely than those in other CBD areas to know about the mall improvements. (N.B. Most comments in “other” related to improved drainage or other flood-prevention measures.)

Looking then at whether respondents were able to correctly identify at least one use for the previous SBR:

(Continued next page)

Graph 2.2: Knowledge of any past SBR funded projects (by business location)



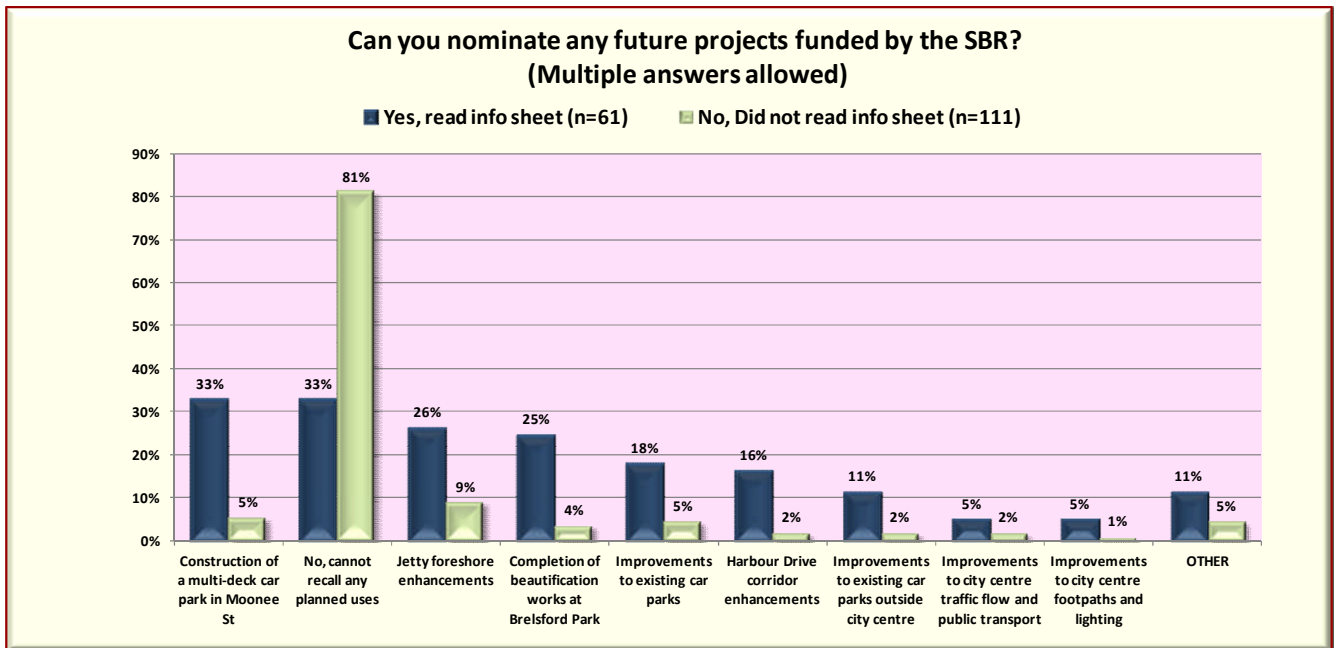
In total, 57 per cent of city centre and 34 per cent of other CBD owners – totalling 43 per cent of all respondents - were able to identify one or more of the correct SBR-funded projects.

Part 3: Proposed uses for the SBR

Business owners were then asked whether they were aware of any projects planned for the Coffs Harbour business districts over the next ten or so years should a SBR be approved. (This information had been included in the letter sent initially by Council.)

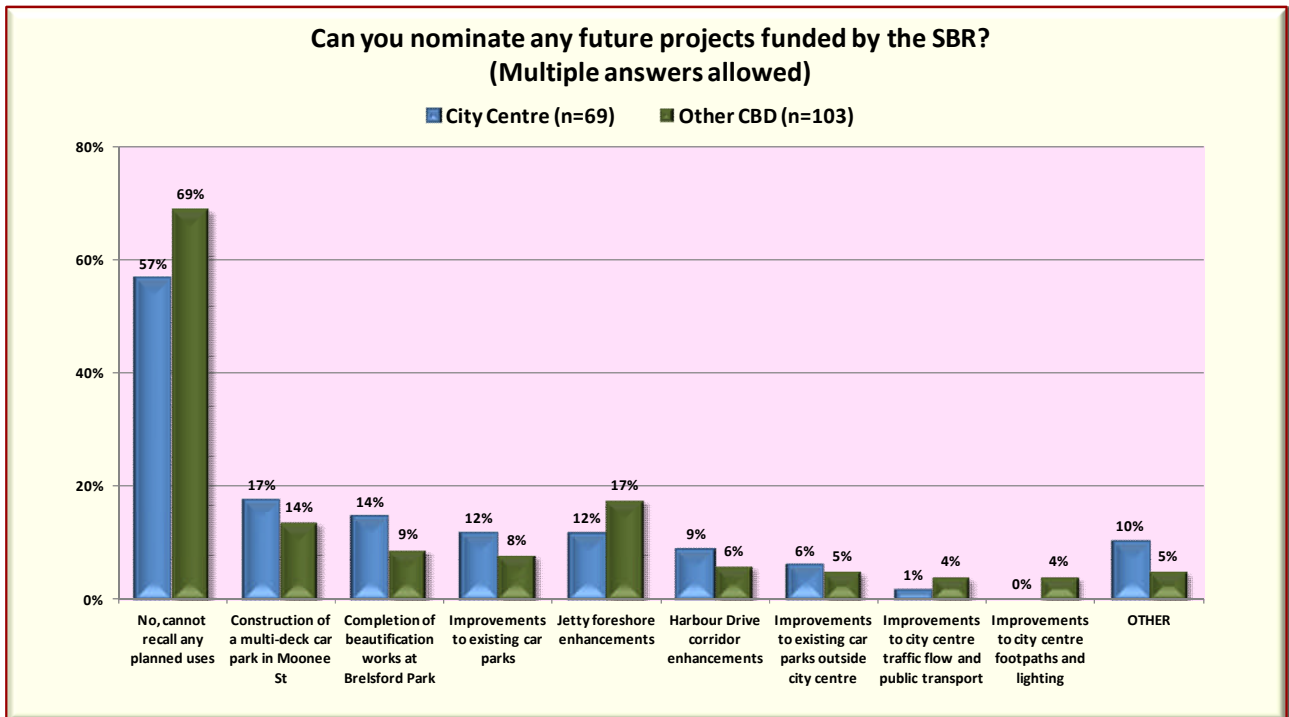
Results have again been analysed by claimed readership of the letter and information sheet, and location:

Graph 3.1.1: Can you nominate any future projects funded by the SBR? (by whether respondent had read prior information)



(Continued next page)

Graph 3.1.2: Can you nominate any proposed projects funded by the SBR? (by business location)



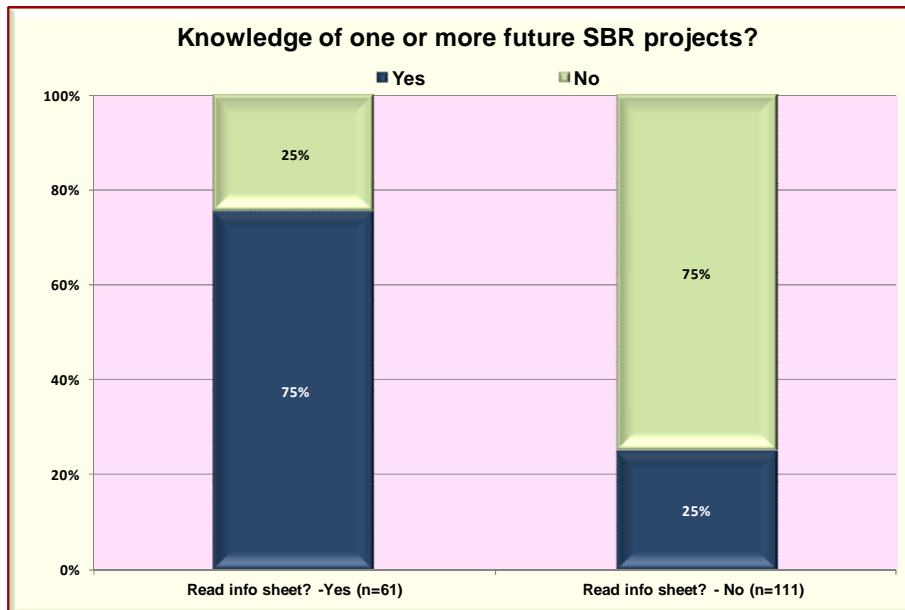
Knowledge of proposed projects was relatively poor across all groups. Of those claiming to have read the information sheet sent by Council, only 33 per cent were able to nominate (unprompted) the building of a multi-storey carpark in Moonee St while 26 per cent mentioned Jetty foreshore improvements, and 25 per cent mentioned Brelsford Park. Among those who hadn't read the information sheet, these figures were 5, 9 and 4 per cent respectively.

By area, knowledge of likely projects was relatively consistent - but never rising above 17 per cent awareness for any project.

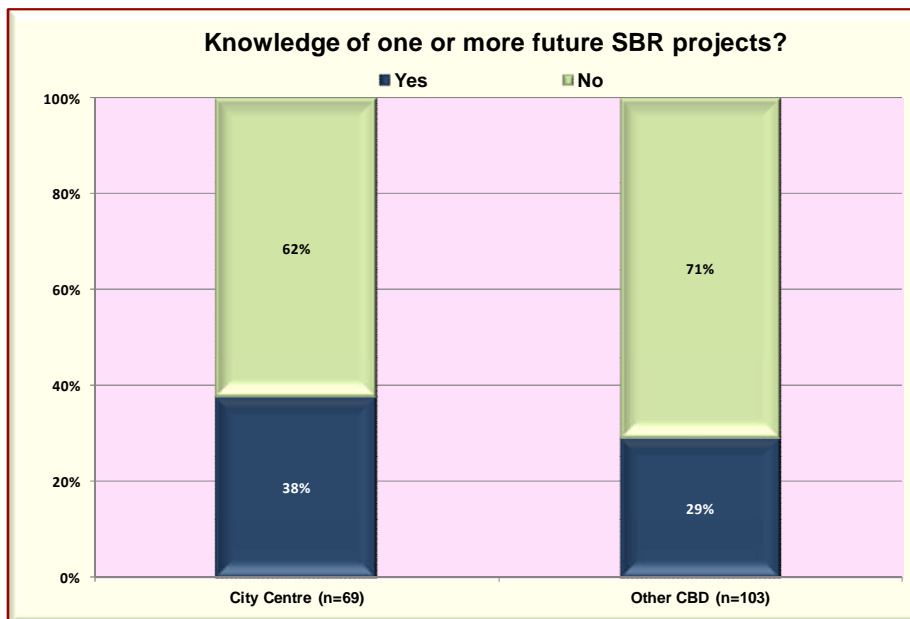
As with past use, we were also able to summarise awareness of at least one planned use for the SBR by prior readership of the information sheet and location:

(Continued next page)

Graph 3.2: Knowledge of any proposed SBR funded projects (by whether respondent had read the prior information)



Graph 3.3: Knowledge of any proposed SBR funded projects (by business location)



In total, 75 per cent of those who claimed to have read the information sheet were able to nominate at least one future project, against just 25 per cent of those who hadn't. (The fact that 15 of those respondents claiming to have read the information sheet could not nominate a single proposed use for any future SBR reinforces the poor level of business owner knowledge regarding how any future SBR might be spent.)

Meanwhile 38 per cent of city centre business owners could nominate at least one proposed use for any future SBR, against 29 per cent for the remainder of the CBD.

Part 4: Support for the SBR

At this point in the survey, and in order to get all respondents “onto the same page” for subsequent questions, city centre business owners were told that:

“The current special business rate has been used for a variety of special projects, including the mall conversion on Harbour Drive, car parking upgrades in the city centre, and various streetscape improvement works.

“Should it be approved, the new special business rate may fund projects such as construction of a multi-deck carpark in Moonee Street, completion of beautification works at Brelsford Park, enhancements to Harbour Drive and the Jetty foreshores, and improvements to car parks outside the city centre.

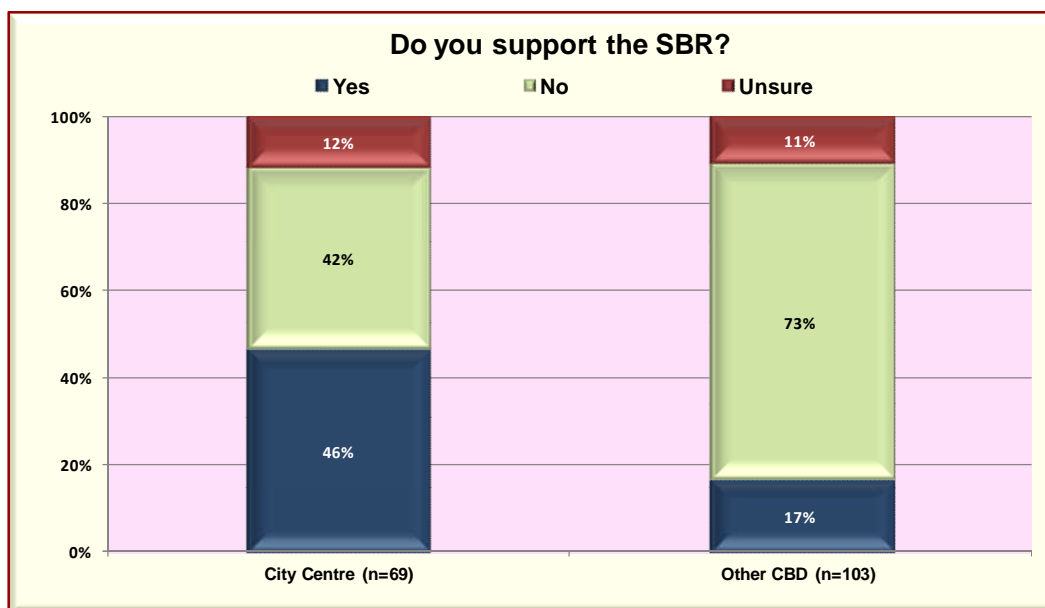
“If the special business ordinary rate is continued from 2012, your business rates will rise by the Government-approved rate pegging allowance, predicted at this stage to be 3.8 per cent. [Name], do you support a continuation of the special business rate? “

For owners in other parts of the CBD, the final paragraph of the above script was replaced by:

“If the special business ordinary rate is widened to include properties outside the CBD, the average business rate in these areas will rise by approximately 24 per cent in 2012. Otherwise the rate will rise by the Government approved rate pegging maximum, predicted to be 3.8 per cent next year. [Name], do you support the special business rate being extended to properties such as yours which lie outside the designated CBD, but in the city centre?”

Results were as follows:

Graph 4.1: Do you support the Special Business Rate?



This shows that support for a continuation of the city centre SBR was almost evenly divided, with 46 per cent of owners supportive, 42 per cent opposed and 12 per cent unsure.

Among business premise owners in other parts of the CBD, however, opinion was heavily weighted against an introduction of a SBR. Just 17 per cent supported the initiative, against 73 per cent opposing it and the remaining 11 per cent unsure.

Table 4.2.1: Do you support the SBR? (by whether respondent had read the prior information)

Survey				Did respondent read info sheet?		Total
				Yes	No	
City Centre	Do you support special business rate?	Yes	Count	14	18	32
				51.9%	42.9%	46.4%
		No	Count	11	18	29
				40.7%	42.9%	42.0%
		Unsure	Count	2	6	8
				7.4%	14.3%	11.6%
	Total		Count	27	42	69
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Other CBD	Do you support special business rate?	Yes	Count	4	13	17
				11.8%	18.8%	16.5%
		No	Count	28	47	75
				82.4%	68.1%	72.8%
		Unsure	Count	2	9	11
				5.9%	13.0%	10.7%
	Total		Count	34	69	103
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

The table above indicates that among city centre owners, 52 per cent of those who had read the information sheet supported a continuation of the SBR against 43 per cent of those who hadn't. However there was almost no difference in support among "rest of CBD" owners regardless of having read or not read the information sheet (at 12 and 19 per cent respectively).

Analysed by whether the respondent had been able to recall past SVR-funded projects:

(Continued next page)

Table 4.2.2: Do you support the SBR? (by knowledge of past SBR projects)

Survey				Knowledge of one or more past SBR projects?		Total
				Yes	No	
City Centre	Do you support special business rate?	Yes	Count	22	10	32
				56.4%	33.3%	46.4%
		No	Count	13	16	29
				33.3%	53.3%	42.0%
		Unsure	Count	4	4	8
				10.3%	13.3%	11.6%
	Total		Count	39	30	69
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Other CBD	Do you support special business rate?	Yes	Count	4	13	17
				11.4%	19.1%	16.5%
		No	Count	27	48	75
				77.1%	70.6%	72.8%
		Unsure	Count	4	7	11
				11.4%	10.3%	10.7%
	Total		Count	35	68	103
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Support among city centre owners was significantly higher for those with an awareness of past SBR-funded projects, at 56 per cent, against those without such knowledge (33 per cent). However of those owners in other parts of the CBD, support fell with knowledge of past projects (at 11 and 19 per cent respectively).

Table 4.2.3: Do you support the SBR? (By knowledge of proposed SBR projects)

Survey				Aware of at least one planned use for SBR?		Total
				Yes	No	
City Centre	Do you support special business rate?	Yes	Count	16	16	32
				61.5%	37.2%	46.4%
		No	Count	10	19	29
				38.5%	44.2%	42.0%
		Unsure	Count	0	8	8
				.0%	18.6%	11.6%
	Total		Count	26	43	69
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
Other CBD	Do you support special business rate?	Yes	Count	3	14	17
				10.0%	19.2%	16.5%
		No	Count	25	50	75
				83.3%	68.5%	72.8%
		Unsure	Count	2	9	11
				6.7%	12.3%	10.7%
	Total		Count	30	73	103
			100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Of those who had an awareness of at least one of the proposed uses of the SBR, 62 per cent of city centre business owners supported a continuation of the levy against 37 per cent of those without such knowledge.

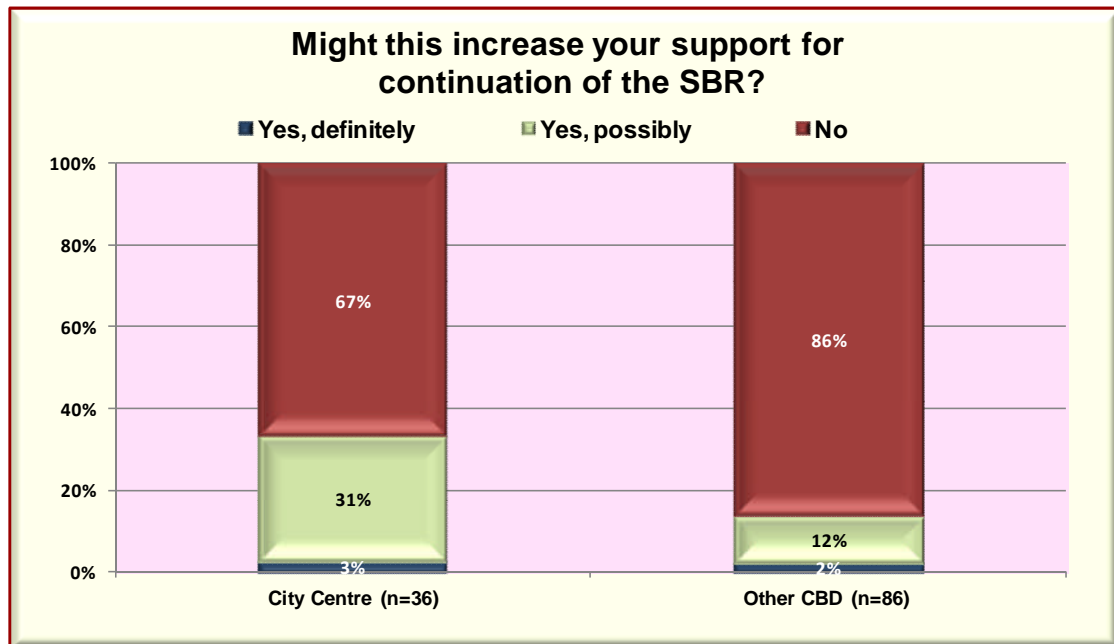
For affected owners outside the city centre, the figures were 10 and 19 per cent respectively.

Those who were opposed to the SBR or unsure about their support were then asked a follow-up question:

“If approved, the special business rate revenue will underwrite loans which will be added to other Council funding to pay for a potential \$22-million program of projects over the next decade. However without the special business rate, the total funding package will be much smaller, meaning most of the planned projects will not be able to proceed. Might this increase your support for continuation of the special business rate?”

This question was designed to explain the fuller implications of the SBR not being accepted. Results were as follows:

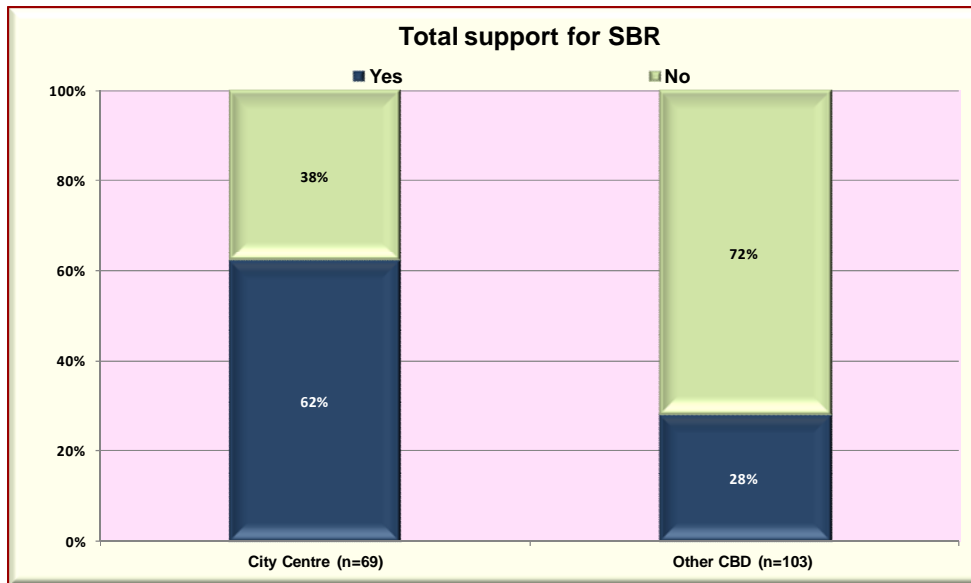
Graph 4.3. Might this increase your support for the Special Business Rate?



This indicates that the longer explanation made some difference to city centre business owners, with 34 per cent of respondents previously saying “no” or “unsure” prepared to consider the SBR given this additional information. However it did not impress the “other CBD” owners, with just 14 per cent of these respondents now showing some support.

Adding support for a SBR through questions 10 and 11 provides a total support figure for both city centre and “other CBD” respondents:

Graph 4.4: Total support for the SBR



This suggests that there is majority support for a continuation of the SBR among city centre owners, but that owners in other CBD areas remain strongly opposed to having the levy apply to them.

Section 5: Other comments

At the conclusion of each survey, respondents were asked if they had any final comments or suggestions for Council on the SBR, or how they would like to see it spent should the rate be accepted. The full list of comments (among the 131 respondents choosing to answer this question) are shown in Appendix 3, sorted by (a) location and then (b) whether or not respondents supported a SBR.

The main themes to emerge among opponents of the SBR were (in no particular order):

- That the timing is wrong given the tough economic environment;
- A fear (principally among “other CBD” owners) that a 24 per cent SBR may adversely impact the continued survival of their business/es or tenancies;
- (Again among “Other CBD owners”) a belief that the proposed uses will not benefit their particular business or location; and
- Owners having little faith in Council to spend the money wisely, or disagreeing with proposed uses for the proposed SBR.

However it should be emphasised that those opposed to the SBR were more likely to add comments or suggestions than those who supported it. Hence the above does not necessarily reflect the views of a majority of respondents (and in particular city centre owners).

Of those supporting the SBR, principal themes for comment were that:

- They were in favour of a continuation of a SBR as long as it was well managed; and
- Improved parking should remain a priority for any future SBR.

Appendix 1: Survey

Version 1 CHCC_BSR

Last modified: 25/11/2011 4:27:33 PM

- Q1. Good morning/afternoon, I'm calling from Jetty Research on behalf of Coffs Harbour City Council. Council is currently conducting a short random telephone survey of business ratepayers in relation to a possible special business rate over the coming ten years. The survey should only take around three to five minutes, and all responses are confidential. Would you be willing to assist Council this morning/afternoon?

Offer a call back if inconvenient time. If person has already responded to Council's request for feedback, tell them ' This is a separate process and we would still appreciate you doing the survey to ensure we have a representative sample of opinion'

Yes	1
No	2

Answer If Attribute "No" from Q1 is SELECTED

Q1

- Q2. Thank you for your time

End

- Q3. Can I please confirm you are business ratepayer within the Coffs Harbour CBD?

The CBD is an area extending from Park Beach in the north to the harbour in the south, and a kilometre or so west of the highway. IF NOT a business ratepayer survey will TERMINATE

Yes	1	
No	2	End

Q3

- Q4. May I have your first name for the survey?

Type na if not willing to give name

Q4

Q5. Thanks so much [Q4], let's get started. Firstly, have you recently received a letter and information sheet from Council regarding its proposed special business rate?

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1	
No	2	Go to Q8

Q5

Q6. Have you had a chance to read it yet?

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1	
No	2	Go to Q8

Q6

Q7. And how closely would you say you have read it?

PROMPTED

Read it in full	1	
Read most of it	2	
Glanced through it only	3	

Q7

Q8. There has been a special business rate in place for the past 12 years in the Coffs Harbour City Centre, which has been used for a number of specific projects. Are you aware of what any of these projects might have been?

UNPROMPTED *Tick any that are mentioned*

Road construction works for Harbour Drive Mall	1	
Mall conversion improvements and fixtures	2	
Relocation of the Mall kiosks	3	
Mentions Mall improvements generally	4	
Car parking upgrades	5	
Streetscape improvements	6	
No, cannot recall any improvements	7	

Q8_1

Q8_2

Q8_3

Q8_4

Q8_5

Q8_6

Q8_7

Q8_O

Q9. And are you aware of any of the projects planned for the Coffs Harbour business districts over the next ten or so years should a new special business rate be approved?

UNPROMPTED Tick any that are mentioned OR 'No cannot recall any planned uses'

Construction of a multi-deck car park in Moonee St	1	Q9_1
Improvements to existing car parks (e.g. shade sails, improved security and traffic flow at Castle St and Park Ave car parks)	2	Q9_2
Completion of beautification works at Brelsford Park	3	Q9_3
Harbour Drive corridor enhancements	4	Q9_4
Jetty foreshore enhancements	5	Q9_5
Improvements to city centre traffic flow and public transport	6	Q9_6
Improvements to city centre footpaths and street lighting	7	Q9_7
Improvements to existing car parks outside the CBD precinct	8	Q9_8
No, cannot recall any planned uses	9	Q9_9
		Q9_0

- Q10. [Q4], the current special business rate has been used for a variety of special projects, including the mall conversion on Harbour Drive, car parking upgrades in the city centre, and various streetscape improvement works.
- Should it be approved, the new special business rate may fund projects such as construction of a multi-deck carpark in Moonee Street, completion of beautification works at Brelsford Park, enhancements to Harbour Drive and the Jetty foreshores, and improvements to car parks outside the city centre.

(For city centre owners) If the special business ordinary rate is continued from 2012, your business rates will rise by the Government-approved rate pegging allowance, predicted at this stage to be 3.8 per cent. [Q4], do you support a continuation of the special business rate?

(For owners in rest of CBD) If the special business ordinary rate is widened to include properties outside the CBD, the average business rate in these areas will rise by approximately 24 per cent in 2012. Otherwise the rate will rise by the Government approved rate pegging maximum, predicted to be 3.8 per cent next year. [Q4], do you support the special business rate being extended to properties such as yours which lie outside the designated CBD, but in the city centre?

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1	
No	2	Q10
Unsure	666	

Q11. If approved, the special business rate revenue will underwrite loans which will be added to other Council funding to pay for a potential \$22-million program of projects over the next decade.. However without the special business rate, the total funding package will be much smaller, meaning most of the planned projects will not be able to proceed. Might this increase your support for continuation of the special business rate?

Answer If Attribute "No" from Q10 is SELECTED OR

Answer If Attribute "Unsure" from Q10 is SELECTED

PROMPTED

Yes, definitely	1
Yes, possibly	2
No	3

Q11

*Q12. And finally [Q4], did you have any comments or suggestions for Council on the special business rate, or how you would like to see it spent should the rate be accepted?

PROBE for response

Q12

Q13. Thanks so much [Q4], that's the end of the survey. This survey has been sponsored by Coffs Harbour City Council as part of the consultation process for a new Special Business Rate application. However if you haven't yet done so, you are still encouraged to submit your feedback to council by December 2nd: Would you like the mailing or email address for this? Did you have any questions about the survey? Thank you, and have a good day.

Email: business_rate_proposal@chcc.nsw.gov.au Mail:

Business Rate Proposal, Coffs Harbour City Council, Locked bag 155, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450



Appendix 2: Letter sent to businesses without telephone numbers



25th November 2011

NAME
COMPANY
ADDRESS 1
SUBURB STATE POSTCODE

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Random telephone survey of Coffs Harbour commercial property owners re Special Business Rate

Coffs Harbour City Council has commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random and representative telephone poll of Coffs Harbour commercial property owners regarding the proposed Special Business Rate.

You have been selected at random – as one of those property owners for whom Council does not possess a current telephone number - to participate in this survey. It takes less than five minutes to complete, and any answers you provide would be confidential.

Although participation is, of course, voluntary, we would greatly appreciate your input to ensure we understand the views of a representative sample of Coffs Harbour commercial property owners on this important and far-reaching issue.

To take part in Council's short telephone survey, simply call our office on 02-6650 9175 during business hours and ask for James or Shane. Alternately, email info@jettyresearch.com.au with a daytime number and the best time/s for us to call you.

The deadline for completion is close of business on **Tuesday, December 6th**.

Thank you in advance for your assistance regarding this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

James Parker, B.Ec, Grad. Cert. Science (Stats), MAMSRS
Managing Director
Jetty Research

p: 02 6650 9175 f: 02 6650 9275 e: info@jettyresearch.com.au w: www.jettyresearch.com.au
a: Level 1, 30 Industrial Drive Coffs Harbour NSW m: PO Box 1555 Coffs Harbour NSW 2450
Jetty Research Pty Ltd ACN 121 037 429

Appendix 3: Other comments and suggestions

Survey	Support SBR?	Comment
City Centre	Yes	Would like to see the public toilets upgraded in the Mall as it is disgusting that we don't have enough and the ones we do have are awful and not nice for locals and visitors
City Centre	Yes	happy with the car parking
City Centre	Yes	Quality control should be utilised and local companies should be used.
City Centre	Yes	If the town does well do does business and retail so I'm all for it.
City Centre	Yes	As long as we get value for money its fine to continue the special business rate
City Centre	Yes	As long as it is used for the purposes they say, then it's ok
City Centre	Yes	Parking is the highest priority , improved facilities for shoppers
City Centre	Yes	Definitely car parking in general, not just in Moonee St
City Centre	Yes	Just get on with it
City Centre	Yes	They should fix Coffs Creek to stop flooding They have to dredge out the creek so fix that first before you spend anymore money on infrastructure in the CBD
City Centre	Yes	Concerned they won't get support. Need to have plan B if they don't
City Centre	Yes	Someone has to pay for it so it may as well be us
City Centre	Yes	Rates shouldn't be spend on a \$10 million car park west of the highway. Carpark should be on the mall side of the highway to make it easier for shoppers to get to the shops while not trying to cross a highway.
City Centre	Yes	Support improvements to the CBD area
City Centre	Yes	Car parking is the main concern
City Centre	Yes	The support is conditional. Has concerns about Brelsford Park that it is more for the city rather than the businesses.
City Centre	Yes	The sooner the better and no one should be in objection and we all should contribute but understands if the non-CBD businesses object
City Centre	Yes	Multi storey carparking. 2. Reduction of crime and anti social behaviour by police and council rangers. Lives in the CBD and its full of crime and teenagers running rampant. Trees are broken down there and people having sex on his verandah. Council should pick them up on Friday night and bring them back on Monday . Has lived here for 60 yrs and approves of the rates if they are used properly.
City Centre	Yes	Council wastes money on planting trees then pulling them out as the leaves then blow in the businesses. That's just one example. Basically the rates should be pro rata'd, it's not fair to charge the same percentage to all types and sizes of properties.
City Centre	Yes	As long as it spent wisely for things that are needed public works will cost double if using state money seems to be what happens
City Centre	Yes	Coffs needs an injection and is in total agreeance of a rate rise
City Centre	Yes	Priorities should be additional parking within the city centre
City Centre	Yes	Upgrades should be made for the vicinity of respondent's business and local area.
City Centre	Yes	Reserved support-doesn't think inner CBD should pay higher rates for the outer CBD

City Centre	Yes	Just came from Europe and they have access to bike riding rather than car parking as they want to keep cars out of the city centre. The whole system has to work but understands that we are not as big as some cities
City Centre	Yes	Like a to be a good corporate citizen: as long as the money is used properly, that's ok
City Centre	Yes	Alcohol ban on the mall after 5pm & have Alfresco dining. Doesn't think the inner CBD should be paying for the Jetty upgrade
City Centre	Yes	You need to spend money to get anything done these days so all for it everyone should be thinking to do the same thing
City Centre	No	Projects listed during the survey sounded relevant to his business location
City Centre	No	Would like to see jetty foreshores & harbour drive fixed up - it's supposed to be a tourist centre.
City Centre	No	One would hope they use it efficiently
City Centre	No	More information and explanation on what is happening with the SBR.
City Centre	No	Has been in Coffs for 5 years & knows nothing about the SBR. Would be happy to support the SBR if they put in a water slide down at the foreshore & a kiosk. Townsville & Cairns (have fixed their waterfront) very successfully. Coffs cannot trade on the Pet Porpoise Pool & the Big Banana forever. Also money needs to be spent on an entertainment centre & more parking
City Centre	No	Coffs made a big mistake when they sold the Town Hall to Coffs CEX. Seems that things revolve around the businesses & not the community. Should be some differential made between big business & small Bussiness-eg. Offices contribute to car parks & big business like Woolies look after beautification of Coffs
City Centre	No	not really aware of SBR
City Centre	No	Just a complete lack of confidence as Council just don't deliver
City Centre	No	Has written a letter to council which of only 2 replied as very annoyed as when they sell properties they don't bring it to business rate payers attention, and they wasted money investing in the GFC . They should be made to bring everything to the table so that we all know what is going on and be made accountable for their actions.
City Centre	No	Would of liked to be fully informed. Wasn't aware of the existence of the new special business rate. , Pays business commercial rates but is zoned as a residential property, council must change the zone on their property to commercial.
City Centre	No	The area that they spend does not affect his business, better solutions and money should be spent over a wider area as he is on the outskirts and gets no benefit at all. As for Brelsford Park that should be supported by everyone not just business rate payers.
City Centre	No	Was part of the city centre group and 11% was the rate paid back then and the plaza only paid 1%. Reason such high rates in city is because of land rates, would like to see the difference of rates comparing much higher and city money should be kept in the city and consider traffic and reduced parking because of trees and pathways and looking out for the needs of the town centre
City Centre	No	Charitable organisation-Parking is a big issue & would be the only thing they would support
City Centre	No	Pays rates but not sure how they spend it
City Centre	No	Don't need to spend any more on car parking, there is enough already
City Centre	No	No benefit what so ever in their business area , Council does not use the money properly

City Centre	No	CBD is doing it tough-landlords are already giving tenants discount rent. The proposed changes will not enhance their business & the concern is that the Moonee St Carpark will be used by employees. These changes should be borne by the ratepayers.
City Centre	No	1) Do not introduce a special rate 2) if the rate is going to be introduced extend it to all business owners in the area. 3) CHCC should be more accountable with its investments...e.g. Lehmann Bros debacle
City Centre	No	No because council don't follow through. Nothing is thought out properly and until they keep their promises in what they say they are going to do it is impossible to support another business rate rise. Firstly Coffs Harbour needs a ring road around the town and parking needs should also be looked at on the east side of the highway. And last time Park Ave was totally ignored in everything that was suppose to be done. So how can you expect business rate payers to believe in this Council
City Centre	No	Rating principle is fine , Focus of the scheme needs to focus on the harbour precinct and harbour as this is the most important development for Coffs , Development of the Moonee St cark park is a secondary, not primary project
City Centre	No	Business is run from a small cottage in West High St. After paying this rate for 10 years all we have seen in our area is a few trees planted for all that money. It isn't worth paying the levy for us.
City Centre	No	More parking for Park Ave. Can't afford to pay anymore. Only a small business. Stop talking about the Jetty & do something about it. Turn it into a waterslide & put a skate park in for the kids & tourists. Make it look good & inviting. Council needs to start listening to the people & businesses
City Centre	No	Money should be spent on an entertainment/art centre with a capacity for 2000 people. Also some benefit for West High St.
City Centre	No	Create a bypass for Coffs Harbour for trucks - that's where the money should go. Coffs needs to be make available more land for commercial properties. Tourism needs to become a first priority, for example money for the jetty foreshores to attract more tourists.
City Centre	No	The rate increase was high enough already, do not want the burden of more rate spending. Jetty needs a lot more improved to it, as it has not been upgraded in a long time , Coffs Harbour needs a beautiful public space somewhere
City Centre	Unsure	The road between Marcia & Elbow streets, near the Clog Barn is disgusting and needs repair and replace. This is bad for tourism.
City Centre	Unsure	Spoken to all moteliers in their area and none of them want to go ahead, depends whether they are freehold or not. Just can't see the benefit
City Centre	Unsure	Don't disagree with what they are proposing. Public money is not properly handled. Tighter control over the way the funds are handled.
City Centre	Unsure	Park Ave wood chip blocked drains back when town flooded last time so he would suggest that something else should be used instead, as his property flooded
Other CBD	Yes	It's good they're improving the area and increasing the value of homes in the area.
Other CBD	Yes	I haven't thought about it but I know Brelsford Park needs something done, a civic centre with gardens. The town itself should be modernised with car parking possibly mixing some units above the buildings in the city. Other towns like Port Macquarie have been smartened up where as Coffs has been left behind.
Other CBD	Yes	As long as its being used for the benefit of the community and its infrastructure.

Other CBD	Yes	What will be done down at the Jetty?? Don't like the idea of Jetty changing too much.
Other CBD	Yes	Would love to see more concentration of the Jetty Strip and area rather than the CBD.
Other CBD	Yes	Any growth in the area is only beneficial.
Other CBD	Yes	Yes, however the rate is too high, feels it too much for small business.
Other CBD	Yes	What is planned sounds good already
Other CBD	Yes	Supports this but would like to see something happen at the jetty. In dire need of more parking.
Other CBD	Yes	Being outside the city area would hate to see it spent on the down town city area alone not sure how it would be apportioned - would like to see a balance
Other CBD	Yes	Keep the Jetty as natural as possible east of the railway line
Other CBD	Yes	Would support it if it was relevant to the business. they need to link Coffs together a bit more & make it more pedestrian friendly
Other CBD	Yes	Most important thing is to complete the Jetty project
Other CBD	No	Would rather see CHCC encourage more businesses into town, rather than keep increasing costs for existing businesses.
Other CBD	No	Educate people more and sell the rate rise
Other CBD	No	Doesn't believe it's appropriate, they should manage their money better. Respondent doesn't live in Coffs Harbour but their property is used for residences and business so where does that leave them. Just doesn't agree with a 24% rate rise in this current climate.
Other CBD	No	Will not be paying this.
Other CBD	No	They have been taking money for car parks for years but have not been producing, so will not support the new rate
Other CBD	No	Nicer footpaths, trees, shelters at Jetty. Money and time should be donated by the whole community. Business are already doing it tough.
Other CBD	No	Does not support this because it's hard enough for his tenants to pay rent at the moment let alone the new rate rise.
Other CBD	No	15 million dollar in America GFC off shore wrongly invested so the council is not letting us the public know just what they lose with our money
Other CBD	No	Doesn't want to pay, pays enough as it is and doesn't see anything for it.
Other CBD	No	Can't see any benefit being a small business. Need more parking down at the jetty. Bit tough in this economic climate
Other CBD	No	if they could provide more information on these types of projects and rates that would be good. Council should work with chamber of commerce also
Other CBD	No	Spend money on more footpaths around town & also cleaning up the river so it doesn't flood
Other CBD	No	It needs to be more concrete as why should ratepayers give, give, give, when nothing is definite. Totally against a rise or increase
Other CBD	No	Times are tough so any cost increases are not going to do people any favours. Not in favour of the 24%. If Council wants to raise money they should do it honestly by raising all rates or making it more specific to the area of improvement such as when the mall was improved: the premises that benefited paid the extra.
Other CBD	No	Sudden increase in rates in this economic climate is not good

Other CBD	No	Objects to Brelsford Park being upgraded and should put money to other parks that need it. Not in support of this rate plan as council needs to put rate payers money to better use.
Other CBD	No	They need to find another way, people want the public toilets in the mall renewed but that is not mentioned. They should find another way to fund the projects. Parking levies have been taken for years, are they using that money correctly?
Other CBD	No	it shouldn't be such a big increase in one big hit, should be introduced over a few years to ease in the costs
Other CBD	No	Council should spread the cost of the communal works across the whole community and everyone should pay their share of improvement the Coffs Harbour area. They've already made their decision, they're just trying to look transparent with consultations but they will do what they want regardless.
Other CBD	No	The changes are centred around the city centre and as such are of no benefit to his business, and they already pay council for their parking.
Other CBD	No	They need to control their own money better instead of taking it off (businesses) to do the improvements. It's just another tax.
Other CBD	No	Definitely do need more car parking in the CBD.
Other CBD	No	If rate rise is 24 per cent then staff will have to laid off. At the moment it's about survival, not profit
Other CBD	No	All the paperwork & stuff small business has to put up with, they can't afford it. The rate payers should be sharing this
Other CBD	No	Fix the corner of Marcia St. The roadworks in the outer area are not good enough
Other CBD	No	Can't see why the current costing of everything should cover (local) needs, no need to spend any more in this economic climate.
Other CBD	No	Does not trust the council, they do not deliver in anything they say
Other CBD	No	Can't have such a huge rate rise in this economy-
Other CBD	No	25 percent over a year is such a big hit and shouldn't be done
Other CBD	No	I think if you put the rates up by that much, you need to make sure businesses get something back from it. Rezone areas such Rose Ave.
Other CBD	No	At the present moment that type of increase would be crippling and not in keeping with the services provided. Absolutely against 24% increase - some type of smaller levee maybe, but not 24%.
Other CBD	No	In Druitt Court the roads are not good and these areas are not looked at enough, and so does not want to pay for things that don't affect his business
Other CBD	No	Hopes that is not accepted. Feels decisions have been made but just hopes it is not accepted.
Other CBD	No	If the rate is accepted, contact people who will benefit in the vicinity and anyone else shouldn't have to pay as much.
Other CBD	No	Does not support this rate increase, already pay rates and environmental levy which is separate on 14 properties. If this passes business are going to go bankrupt.
Other CBD	No	Doesn't support this at all, council needs to use value for money. Roundabouts, who is looking at the flowers when they are busy watching traffic? If this goes through you may as well take our businesses off us.
Other CBD	No	Jetty needs to be improved, development of restaurants, parking, how Coffs portrays itself as a city to the country.

Other CBD	No	The works council are proposing will not benefit his business (off Orlando St) or be anywhere near his business location. Paying this rate will only benefit other businesses. Asks why should he pay extra so other businesses will benefit and not him.
Other CBD	No	Would possibly support the business rate if it was spent on improving Coffs Harbour but what they have in mind is not in business's interest and he will not support.
Other CBD	No	Needs to be made aware of the plans that the council have for the jetty area if he is to pay this rate. Is he going to see what they are planning before this new rate is imposed?
Other CBD	No	If he is going to approve any business rate rise he should be able to vote on what exactly it should be spent on. And council should not have control over the money, that way it keeps everyone happy
Other CBD	No	User to pay. This new rate will not assist his business, would prefer to see a general rate rise across the whole city and/or introduce paid parking within the wider city CBD - same as at the airport.
Other CBD	No	Can't understand that in the last ten years there have been no real improvements to parking and that the Plaza and Homebase don't have an equitable rate in comparison to the city, and that their money is not kept in the town whereas the 25 or more local owners keep their money in town. Also questions how these so called retailers can hide behind wholesale banners especially in the Isles Drive area.
Other CBD	No	Keep it within normal council budget - it's just bad management there is no private business that operates the way councils do. There should be administrators in place. People outside the CBD have had no major work done, the foreshore money wasted for the rally 2nd roads are awful on highway and between Palm centre and Plaza they knocked back a wonderful project that would of benefited the town where the Midway Motel used to be. The only way his business will increase in value is because of the Plaza and the town centre.
Other CBD	No	Does not support SBR because they have spent a lot of money for parking for their tenants & have also given money to various projects that haven't happened.
Other CBD	No	Get the money from those in the CBD who are going to benefit from it, not those who are not in it.
Other CBD	No	Beautification along the highway, extra parking facilities for businesses who are not within close proximity of a car parking centre.
Other CBD	No	They have not asked what the priorities are for the city. Not enough consultation and in the 30 years he have been here they have not got any idea of how to run a council. Think long and hard about what they do, and the rate for the outer business land holders is a joke as we see nothing in return and we cannot keep passing this onto our tenants as we will end up with no tenants. Also there should be a poll tax on caravan parks.
Other CBD	No	Has only lived here a short time, is outside the area as far as she is concerned so doesn't think they should have to pay it. If it was in the Park Beach area they would be more than happy to pay for the tourist section and improve protection in the area from crime.
Other CBD	No	Pretty happy with the way things are at the moment.
Other CBD	No	A smaller increase should be placed across the whole community because the whole community will benefit from the improvements, not just the businesses.

Other CBD	No	Why can't they use the current ordinary rates or the Government rate rise and do what they've been doing with improvements to Coffs Harbour like they have with the rates they've had over the last decade without such a hike. Believes we are behind all other cities in modern terms and doesn't understand why they can't use their money wisely, other towns are doing it. The major things town wants doing never seem to happen.
Other CBD	No	Doesn't want to see the special levy accepted at all. A lot of businesses won't survive if a special levy is passed.
Other CBD	No	Doesn't support the special rate at all, its fiscally unsound and puts too much pressure on businesses at this time.
Other CBD	Unsure	Commercial properties in Rose Avenue need more parking space availabilities.
Other CBD	Unsure	Id like to see it spent more efficiently, they need to be better at planning their work with more productivity.
Other CBD	Unsure	If it helps business then yes, if it doesn't then no.
Other CBD	Unsure	Not in favour because it would not benefit his site or business at all. He is a 15 minute walk from the CBD and we has parking. However with more information he may have a different opinion i.e. if it was for the greater good of the community.
Other CBD	Unsure	No comment, only shock at the amount of the rate rise - yes we need the improvements, but not at 24%
Other CBD	Unsure	Happy to pay the rate if it was used for the Moonee St parking and to upgrade the jetty but no development east of the railway, only open space and the old quarry needs to be made more user-friendly. We also need a better community centre.
Other CBD	Unsure	IF it was 10 or 15 % okay. But 24 % is too much especially as his property is too far out - would receive no benefit and his rates would go up by \$1000 per year. Rezoning has to be sought out first, as far as the gateway goes.