

Lithgow City Council

SRV Community Research

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Background & Methodology

Objectives (Why?)

- Identify community awareness of Council's exploration of a Special Rate Variation
- Explore and understand resident support for a Special Rate Variation
- Identify the community's overall level of satisfaction with Council performance
- Understand and identify community priorities for the Lithgow City Council LGA

Sample (How?)

- Telephone survey to N = 405 residents (N=239 landlines, N=166 mobiles)
- We use a 5 point scale (e.g. 1 = not at all satisfied and not at all supportive, 5 = very satisfied and very supportive)
- Greatest margin of error +/- 4.9%

Timing (When?)

- Implementation 5th – 11th October 2022



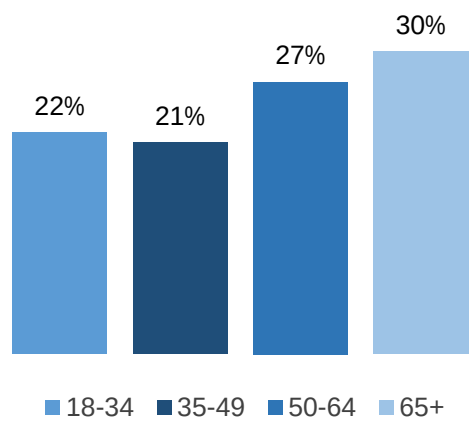
Sample Profile

The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2021 ABS community profile of Lithgow City Council.

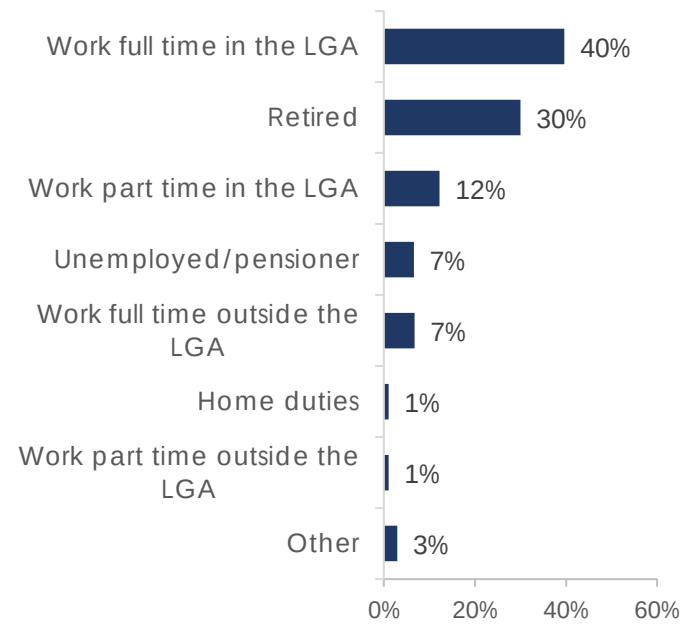
Gender



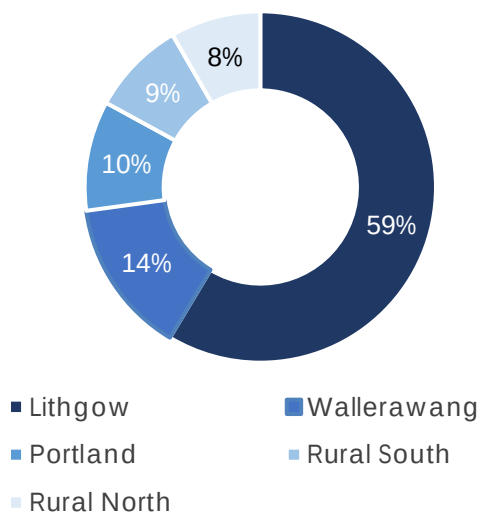
Age



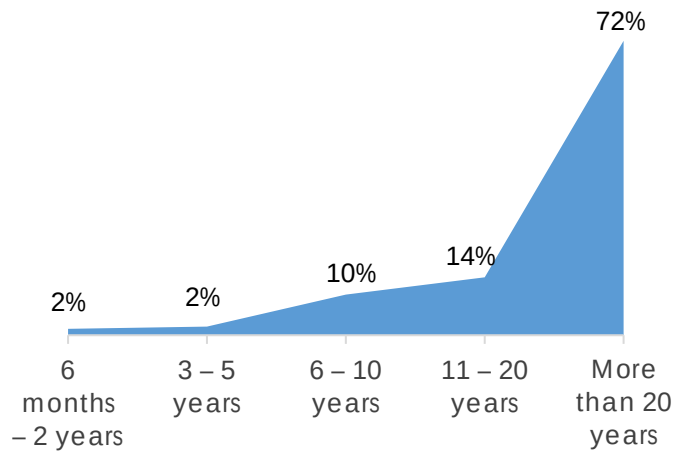
Employment status



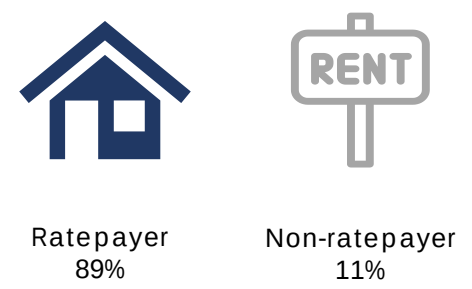
Area



Time lived in the area



Ratepayer status



Summary



Summary of Results

High Community Awareness

- 85% of residents were aware, prior to contact, of the SRV
- Primary modes of awareness were social media (46%) and mail out (46%)

Preference for Option 2

- Community preference was for Option 2 (Reduce service levels - rate peg only), with 58% of residents ranking this option as their first preference
- Key reasons for the preference centred on affordability/cost considerations (24%) and a lack of confidence in Council financial management (24%)

Satisfaction with Council

- 49% of residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the performance of Council over the last 12 months

What do residents want prioritised?

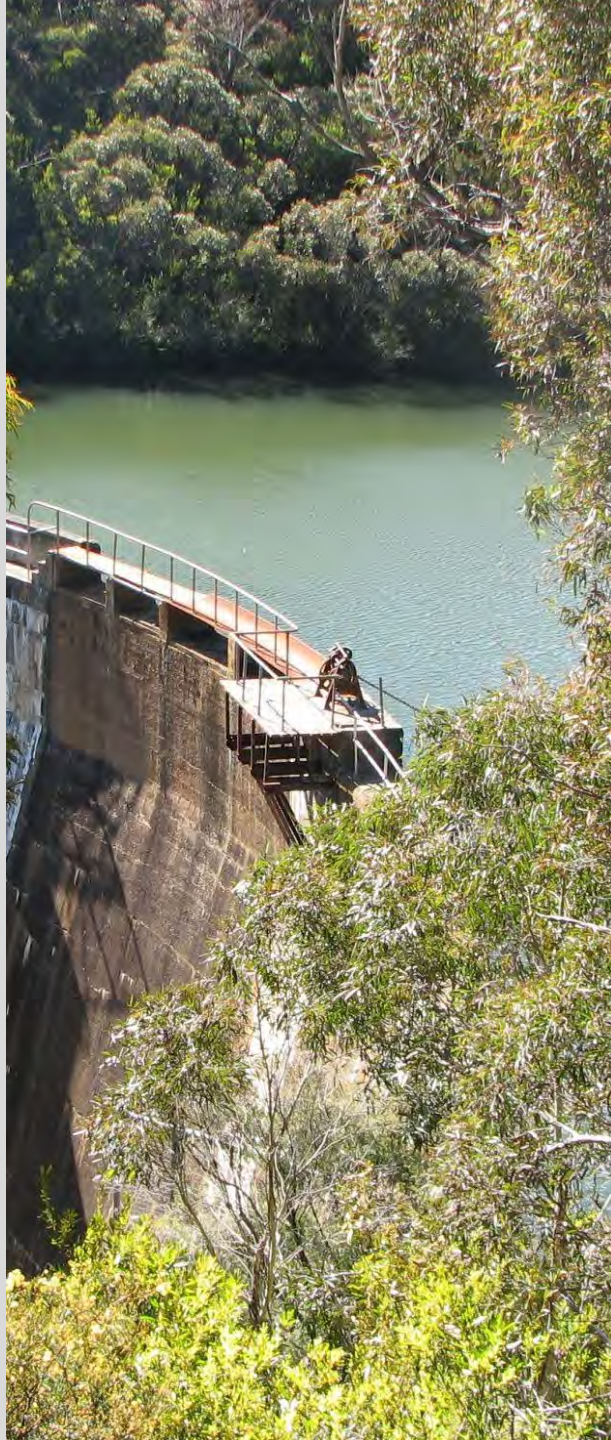
- The majority of residents (80%), believe improving/maintaining roads and kerb and guttering is a key priority for Council in the local area



Detailed Results



1. Awareness of a Special Rate Variation



Detailed Results

- 1. Awareness of the Special Rate Variation**
2. Support for a Special Rate Variation
3. Performance of Council
4. Planning for the Future

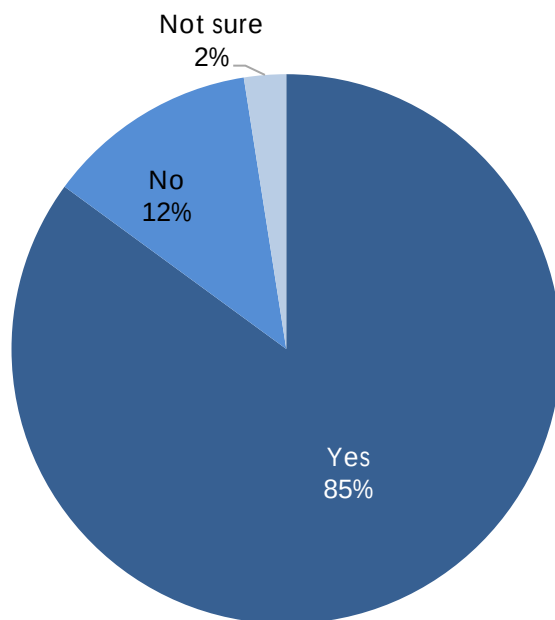
This section explores residents' awareness of Council's exploration of a proposed Special Rate Variation.

Awareness of Special Rate Variation

Q4a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring a proposal to increase land rating by Special Rate Variation?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Yes %	85%	83%	87%	84%	87%	87%	82%	87%	66%
Base	405	201	204	90	83	109	123	360	45

	Residential location				
	Rural North	Lithgow	Rural South	Wallerawang	Portland
Yes %	83%	91%	83%	86%	87%
Base	237	58	41	35	34



	Lithgow City Council	2021 LGA Benchmark - Regional
Yes %	85%↑	49%
Base	405	5,443

Base: N = 405

A significantly higher/lower level of awareness (by group)

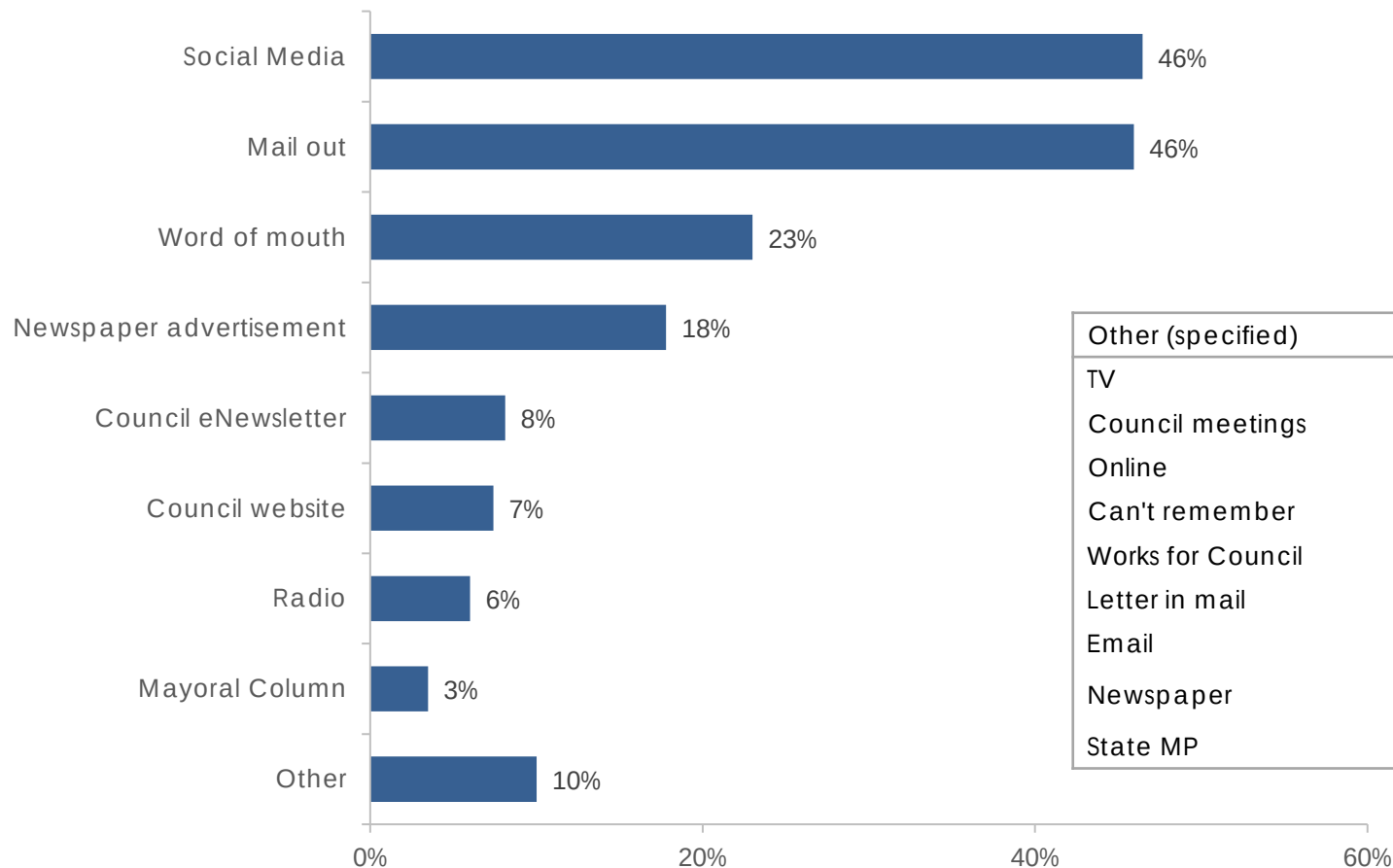
Prior awareness of Council's exploration of the Special Rate Variation was very high, with 85% aware prior to contact.

Awareness is significantly higher than our 2021 Regional SRV benchmarks.

Means of Learning About the SRV

Q4b. How were you informed that Council was exploring a proposal to increase land rating?

Asked of those aware of the SRV



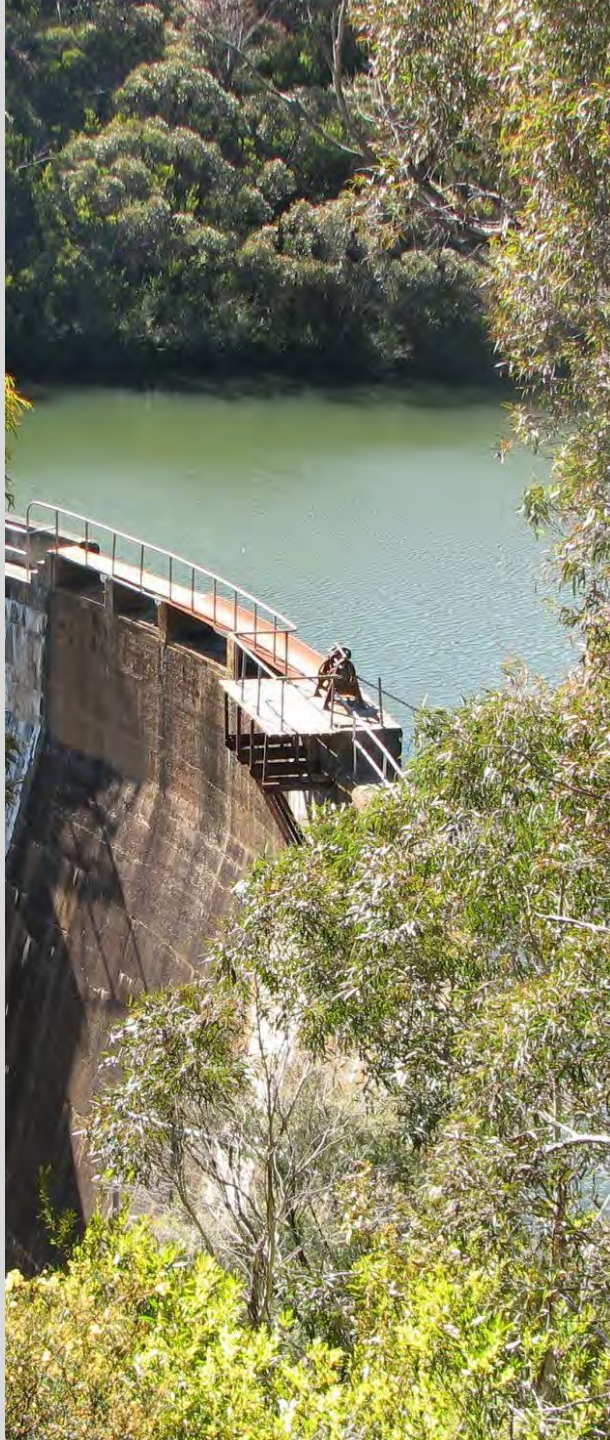
Other (specified)	Count
TV	11
Council meetings	9
Online	3
Can't remember	2
Works for Council	3
Letter in mail	2
Email	1
Newspaper	1
State MP	1

Base: N = 344

See Appendix A for prompted options by demographics

For those aware of Council’s exploration of the SRV, 46% were informed via social media, 46% via mail out and 23% word of mouth.

2. Support for a Special Rate Variation



Detailed Results

1. Awareness of the Special Rate Variation
- 2. Support for a Special Rate Variation**
3. Performance of Council
4. Planning for the Future

This section seeks to explore and understand resident support for a Special Rate Variation.

Concept Statement

Residents were read the following concept statement:

Currently Council delivers a broad range of services such as roads, bridges, drainage, waste collection, sorting, recycling and landfilling, parks and playgrounds, cultural facilities and events, libraries, swimming pools, environmental protection and much more.

Council is facing the challenge of balancing community expectations with future financial sustainability. There is a growing gap between the cost of providing services and facilities and the available funding to meet those costs.

We are considering two options in planning for the future.

Each option will have varying impacts on the services and facilities that Council can deliver and the cost of council rates.

- *Option 1 – Service Levels Maintained*
- *Option 2 – Service Levels Reduced*



Option 1: Service Levels Maintained

Residents were provided with the following details regarding Option 1:

This option involves a single year permanent overall increase to Council's land rating revenue of 44.5%, including assumed rate peg of 2.5%. Council would limit the increase for the residential, business and farm rating categories to the assumed rate peg amount of 2.5% in 2023/24 plus an extra 24% SRV – so an overall increase of 26.5% in 2023-24. Mines, quarries and power generators would have rates increases above 26.5%.

- The average residential ratepayer currently paying \$869.26 per year would pay approximately \$230.35 more in general rates.*
- The average farmland ratepayer currently paying \$1705.50 per year would pay approximately \$451.96 more in general rates.*
- The average business ratepayer currently paying \$4214.67 would pay \$1,116.89 more in general rates.*

Under this option, Council assesses that it will be able to maintain its present infrastructure and services sustainably into the future. 51% of the increase is proposed for road maintenance and renewal.

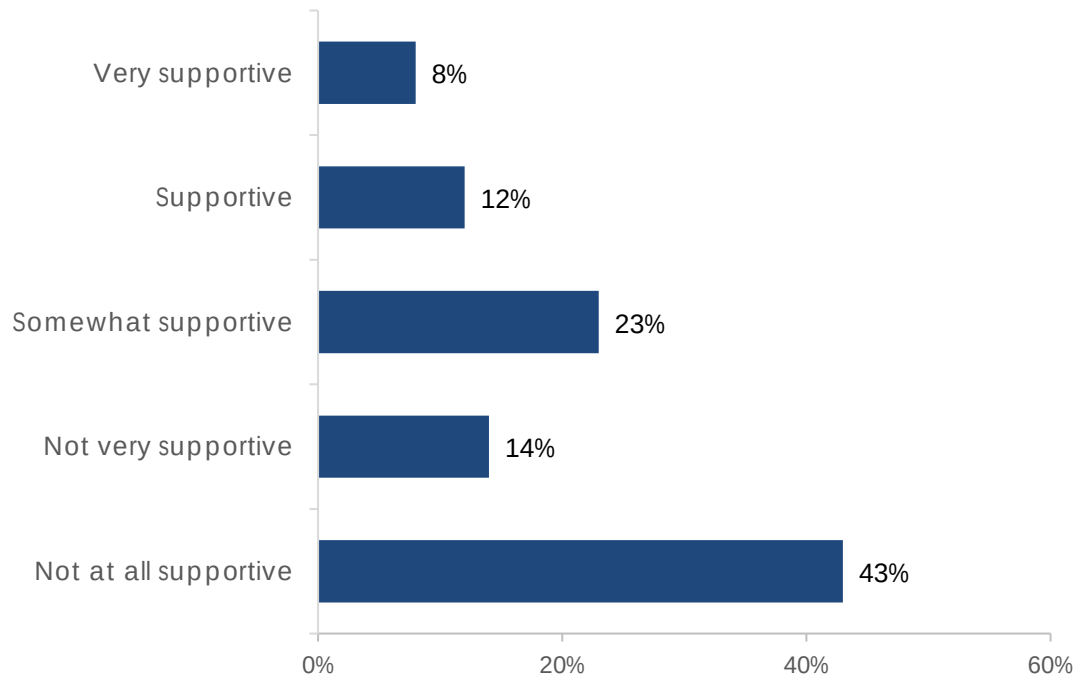
There is also funding for additional economic development services as the community faces the challenge of local economic transition, and for capacity building within the Council organisation to ensure financial sustainability in all future periods.



Support for Option 1: Service Levels Maintained

Q2a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 1?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	2.28	2.31	2.26	2.22	2.03	2.21	2.56	2.31	2.09
Top 3 Box %	43%	41%	45%	49%	34%	39%	49%	43%	42%
Base	405	201	204	90	83	109	123	360	45



Base: N = 405

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive
A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)

43% of residents are at least somewhat supportive of Council proceeding with Option 1 (Maintain service levels – SRV + rate peg).

Support for this option is highest amongst residents aged over 65 years (49%).

Support for Option 1: Service Levels Maintained

Q2a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 1?

	Overall	Residential location				
		Lithgow	Wallerawang	Portland	Rural South	Rural North
Mean rating	2.28	2.33	1.89	2.33	2.66	2.20
Top 3 Box %	43%	45%	29%	45%	52%	40%
Base	405	237	58	41	35	34

	Overall	Awareness of the SRV		
		Yes	No	Unsure
Mean rating	2.28	2.25	2.45	2.75
Top 3 Box %	43%	42%	47%	69%
Base	405	344	51	10*

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive
A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)

*Caution low base size

Residents located in the Wallerawang area were least supportive of this option (29%).

Option 2: Service Levels Reduced

Residents were provided with the following details regarding Option 2:

This option would continue the status quo with rates only increasing by the assumed rate peg amount of 2.5% per year.

In 2023/24:

- The average residential ratepayer currently paying \$869.26 per year would pay approximately \$21.73 more in general rates.*
- The average farmland ratepayer currently paying \$1705.50 per year would pay approximately \$42.64 more in general rates.*
- The average business ratepayer currently paying \$4214.67 would pay \$105.37 more in general rates.*

Under this option, Council assesses that it will not be able to maintain its present infrastructure and services sustainably into the future.

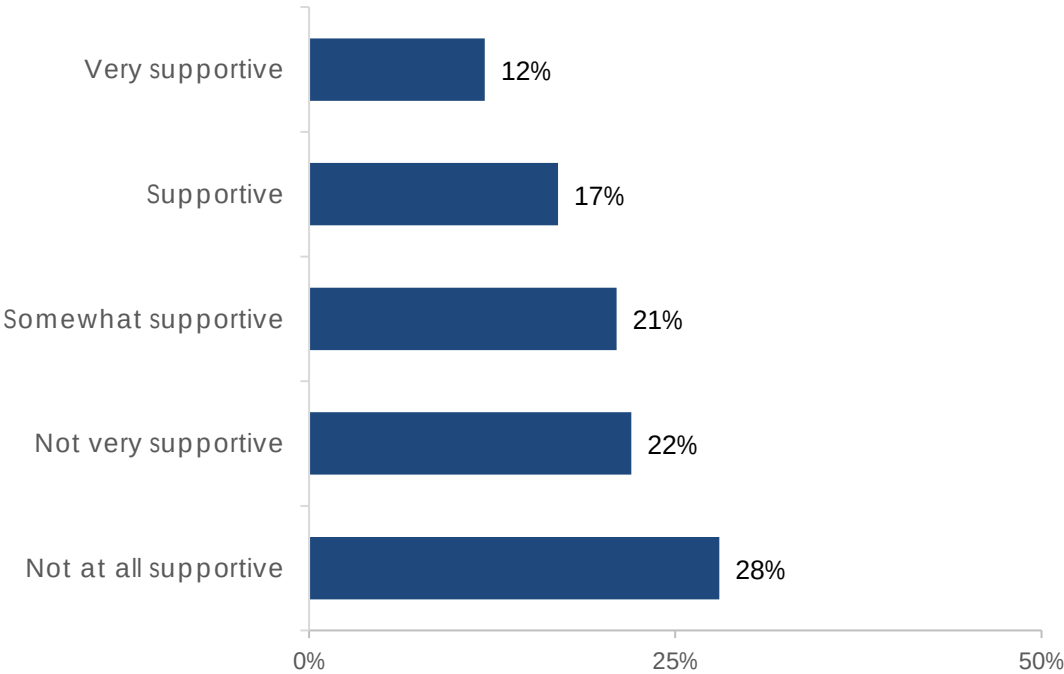
As OPTION 2 does not deliver the additional funding required to meet existing service levels, including overcoming future modelled deficits AND addressing an infrastructure backlog to maintain/renew roads and other infrastructure, there will be the need to REDUCE service levels. A gap of approximately \$4.7M per year will grow in future periods and will require extensive community consultation to reduce infrastructure and services to match available revenues. Under this option, Council will recommend the maintenance of essential services over more discretionary services.



Support for Option 2: Service Levels Reduced

Q2b. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 2?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	2.64	2.57	2.70	2.44	2.69	2.64	2.74	2.67	2.41
Top 3 Box %	50%	49%	51%	38%	52%	52%	56%	51%	44%
Base	405	201	204	90	83	109	123	360	45



Base: N = 405

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

50% of residents are at least somewhat supportive of Option 2 – Service Levels Reduced – rate peg only (2.5%). Comparisons by demographics show resident support to be relatively consistent across groups, with the exception of residents from the Portland region, who expressed significantly lower levels of support (32%) (see slide 17).

Support for Option 2: Service Levels Reduced

Q2b. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 2?

	Overall	Residential location				
		Lithgow	Wallerawang	Portland	Rural South	Rural North
Mean rating	2.64	2.67	2.86	2.11	2.51	2.76
Top 3 Box %	50%	50%	59%	32%	51%	56%
Base	405	237	58	41	35	34

	Overall	Awareness of the SRV		
		Yes	No	Unsure
Mean rating	2.64	2.64	2.67	2.47
Top 3 Box %	50%	49%	56%	48%
Base	405	344	51	10*

*Caution low base size

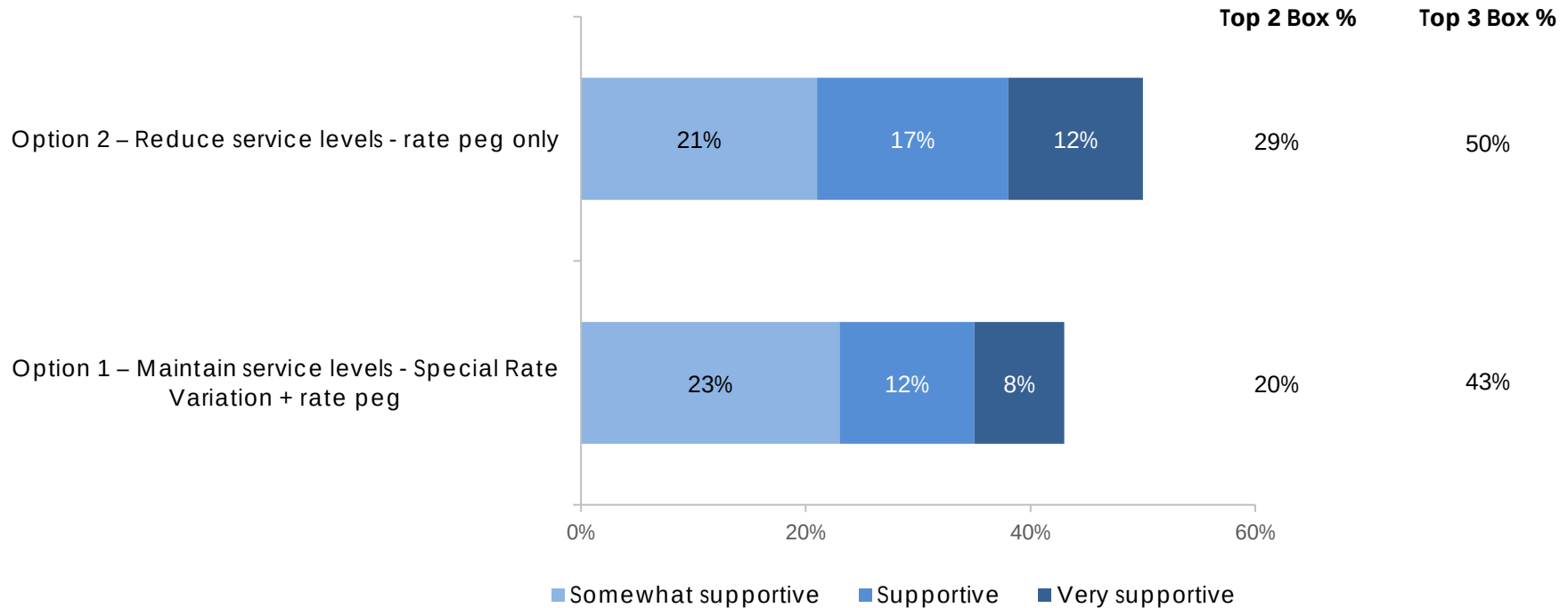
Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive
A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)



Support Levels – Further Analysis

Q2a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 1?

Q2b. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 2?



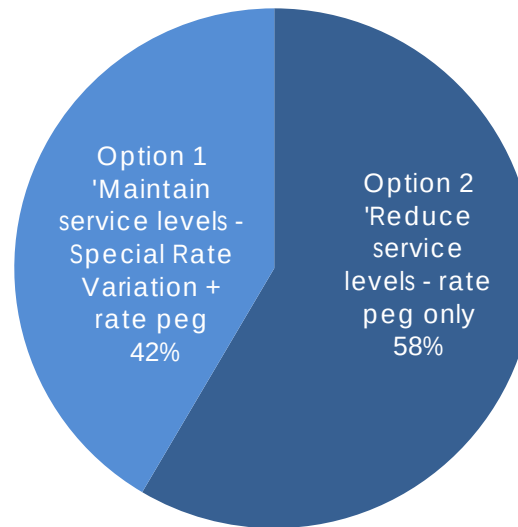
Base: N = 405

Neither reality is strongly supported.

Preferred Option

Q3a. Please rank the 2 options in order of preference:

First preference %	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Reduce service levels - rate peg only	58%	57%	60%	60%	64%	62%	50%	58%	58%
Maintain service levels - SRV + rate peg	42%	43%	40%	40%	36%	38%	50%	42%	42%
Base	402	200	202	90	82	109	121	357	45



Base: N = 402

A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group)

There was a preference for Option 2 (Reduce service levels - rate peg only), with 58% of residents ranking this option as their first preference.

Residents 65+ had significant preference towards a service reduction.

Preferred Option

Q3a. Please rank the 2 options in order of preference:

First preference %	Overall	Residential location				
		Lithgow	Wallerawang	Portland	Rural South	Rural North
Reduce service levels - rate peg only	58%	57%	65%	51%	56%	67%
Maintain service levels - SRV + rate peg	42%	43%	35%	49%	44%	33%
Base	402	236	58	40	34	34

First preference %	Overall	Awareness of the SRV		
		Yes	No	Unsure
Reduce service levels - rate peg only	58%	59%	53%	55%
Maintain service levels - SRV + rate peg	42%	41%	47%	45%
Base	402	341	51	10*

*Caution low base size

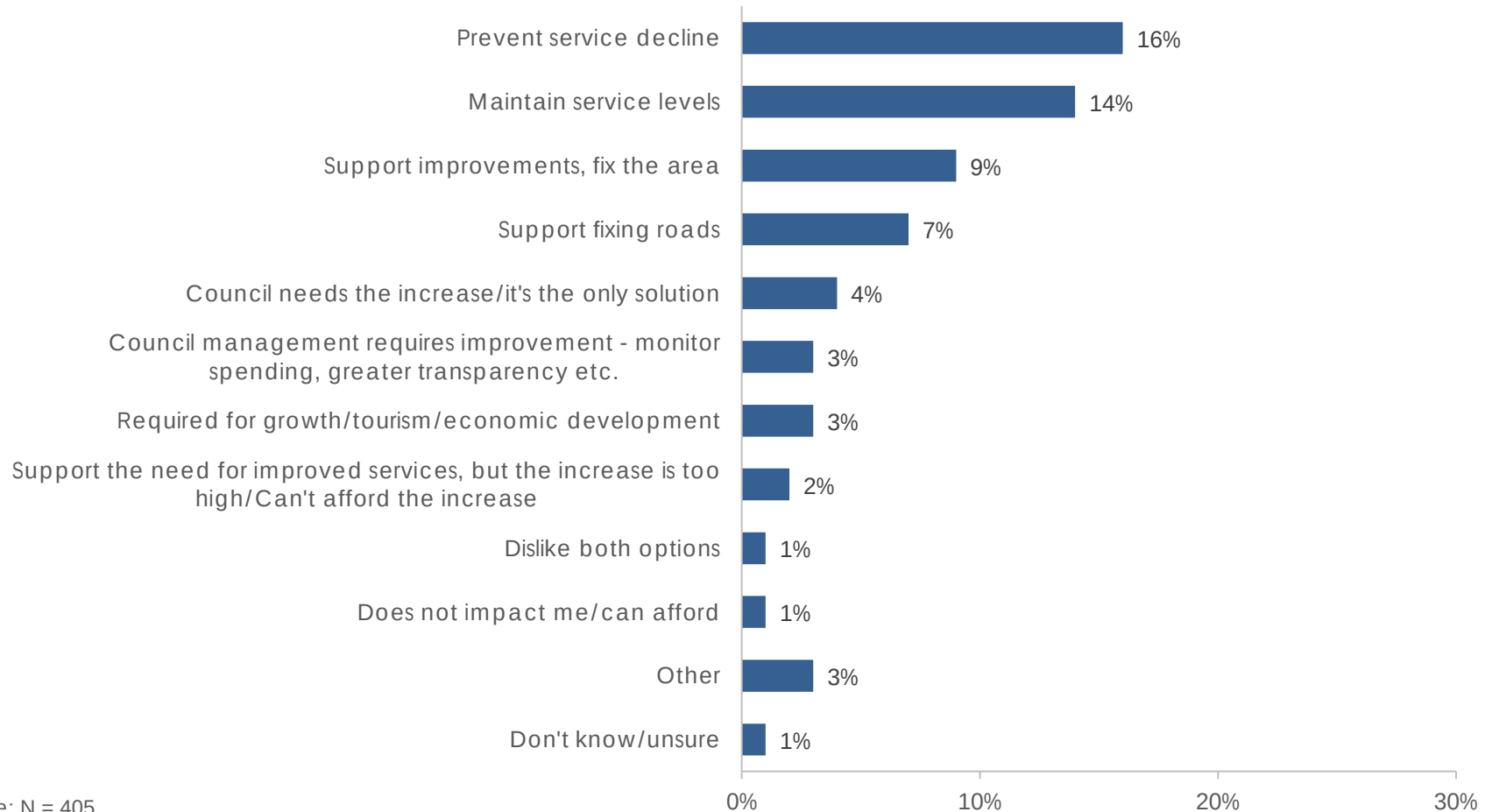
There was no significant difference in preference when compared by residential location or prior awareness of the SRV.

Reason for Preferring Option 1:

Maintain service levels - Special Rate Variation + rate peg

Q3a. Please rank the 2 options in order of preference:

Q3b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?



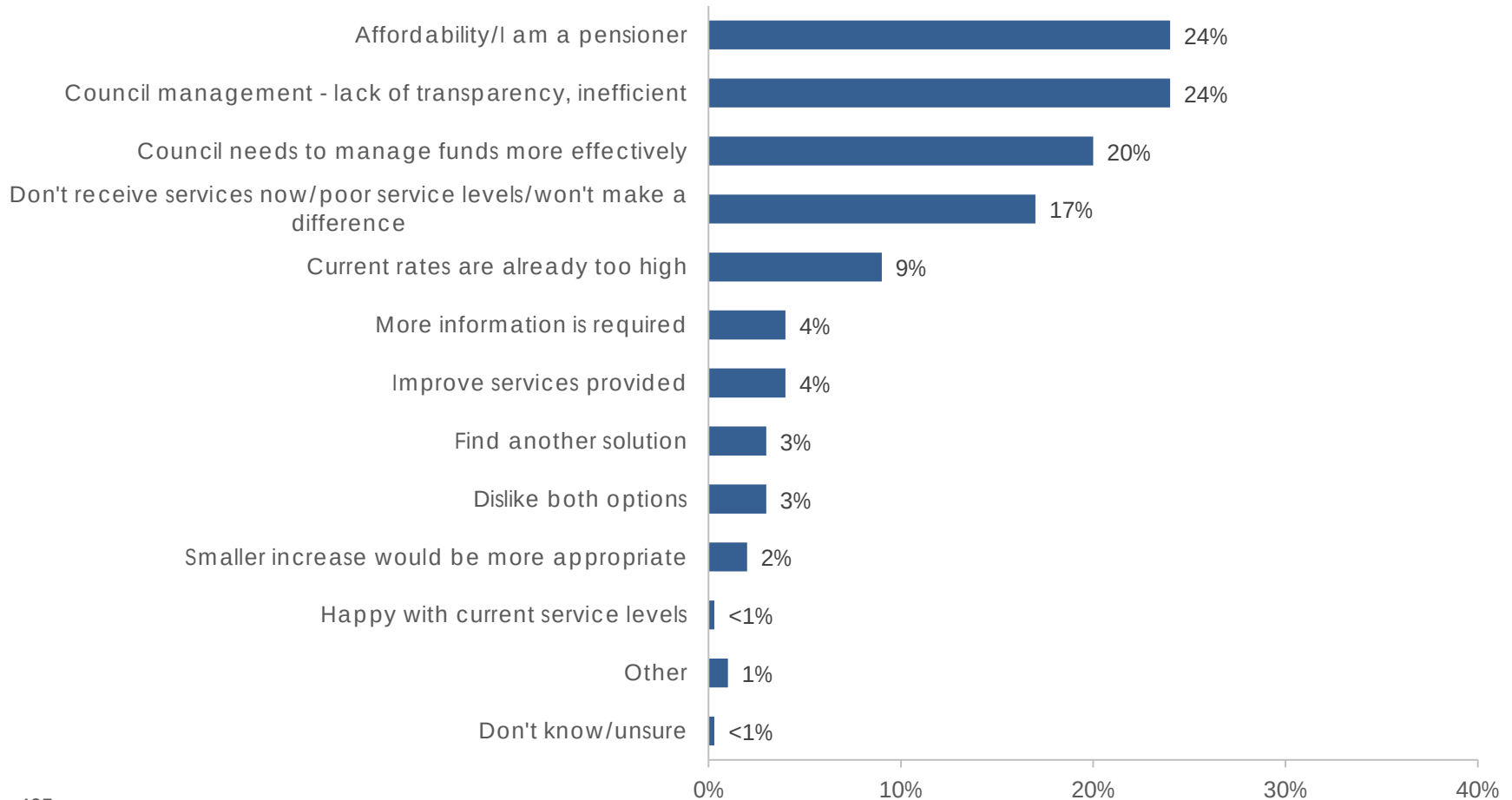
For those who prefer Council to maintain service levels (Option 1 – Special Rate Variation + rate peg), primary reasons given for this preference centre on the prevention of further service decline (16%) and a maintenance of existing service levels (14%).

Reason for Preferring Option 2:

Reduce service levels - rate peg only

Q3a. Please rank the 2 options in order of preference:

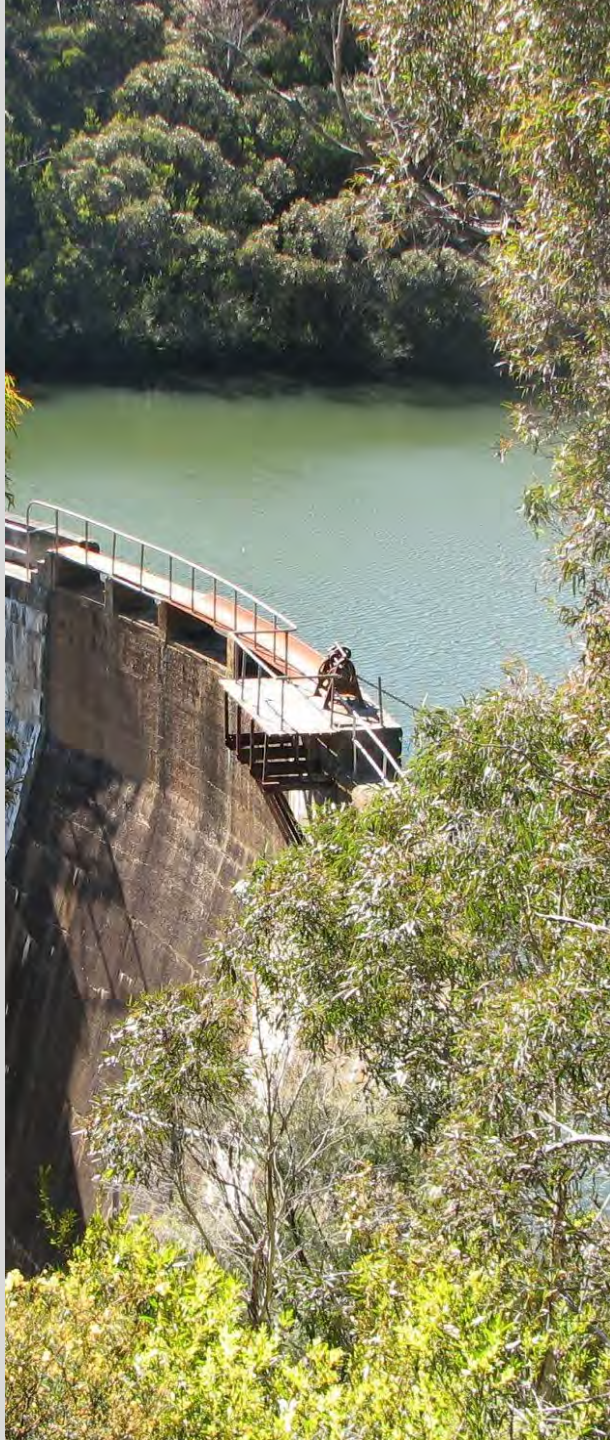
Q3b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?



Base: N = 405

For residents who prefer Option 2 (reduce service levels – rate peg only), primary reasons for supporting this preference centre on a lack of affordability/cost considerations (24%), a lack of confidence in Council management (24%) and funds allocation/management (20%).

3. Performance of Council



Detailed Results

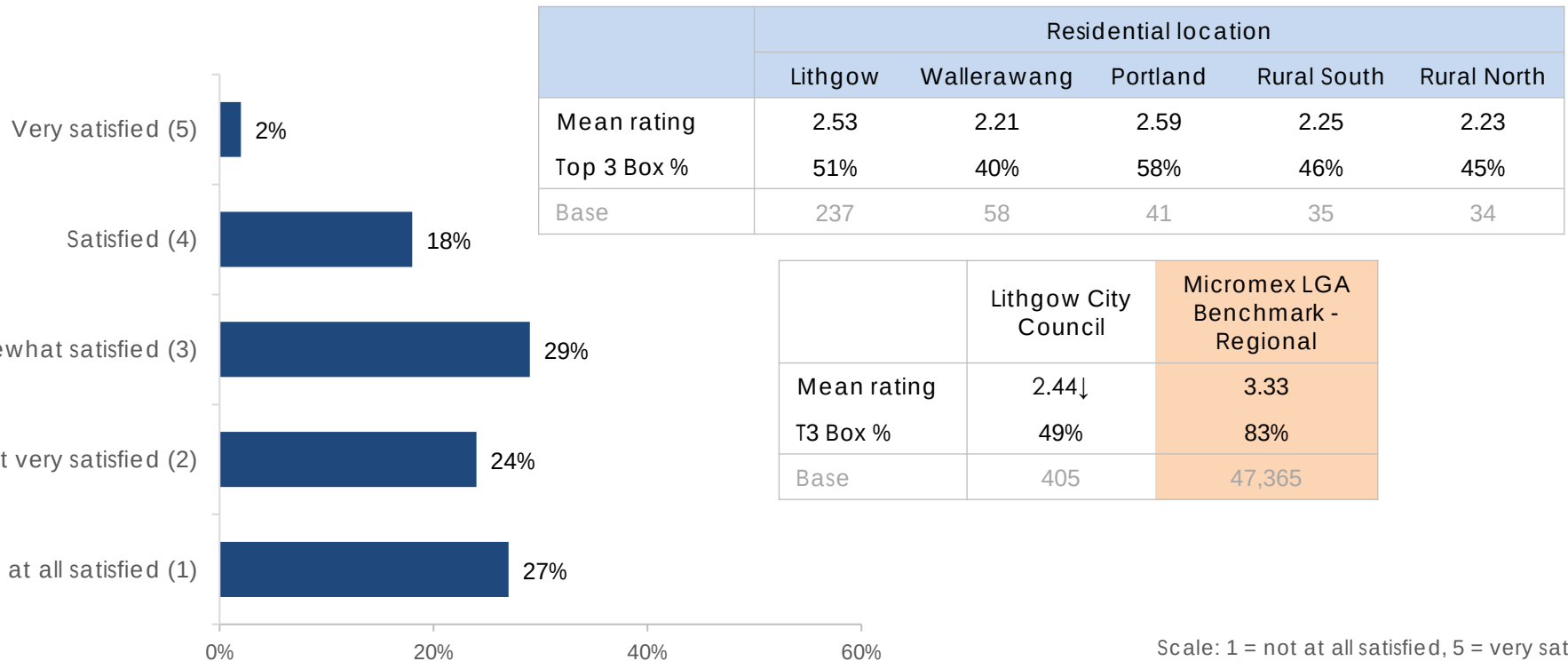
1. Awareness of the Special Rate Variation
2. Support for a Special Rate Variation
- 3. Performance of Council**
4. Planning for the Future

This section explores residents' perception of the performance of Council.

Overall Satisfaction

Q1b. Overall, for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?

	Overall 2022	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	2.44	2.44	2.43	2.11	2.09	2.56	2.81	2.44	2.48
Top 3 Box %	49%	50%	48%	38%	34%	56%	61%	49%	51%
Base	405	201	204	90	83	109	123	360	45



	Lithgow City Council	Micromex LGA Benchmark - Regional
Mean rating	2.44↓	3.33
T3 Box %	49%	83%
Base	405	47,365

Base: N = 404

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied
A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

↑↓ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (compared to the Benchmark)

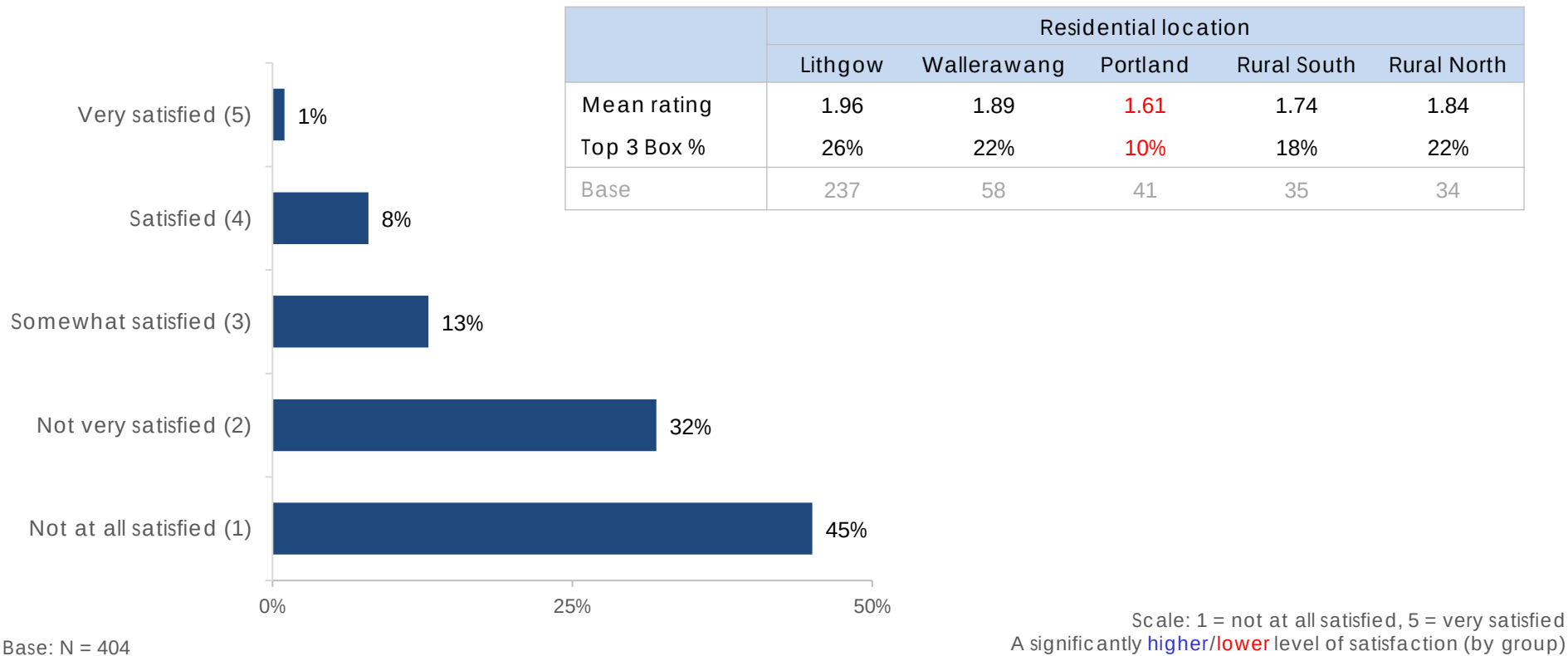
49% of residents are at least somewhat satisfied with the performance of Council over the last 12 months.

Satisfaction is significantly lower across the younger age groups and is significantly lower than the Micromex LGA normative data for regional councils.

Satisfaction with the Quality of the Road Network

Q1c. How satisfied are you with the quality of the road network in the Lithgow local government area?

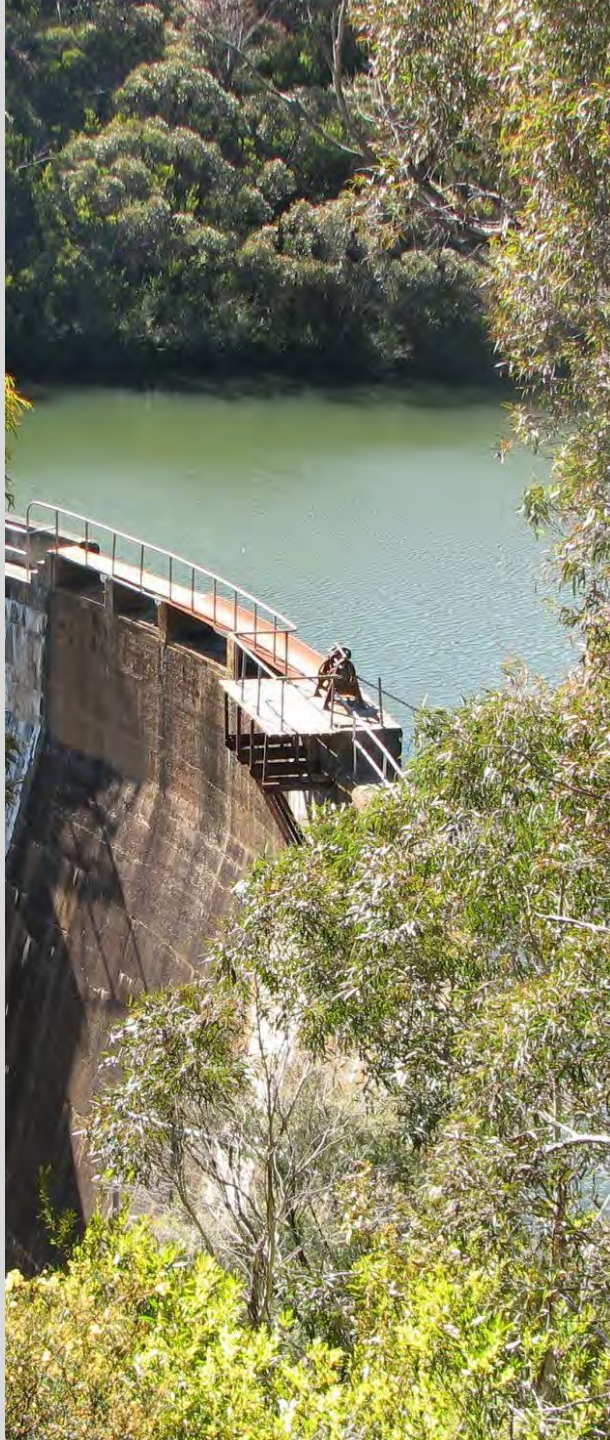
	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean rating	1.89	1.92	1.85	1.82	1.71	1.87	2.07	1.89	1.90
Top 3 Box %	23%	24%	22%	19%	17%	20%	33%	23%	24%
Base	404	201	204	90	83	109	123	359	45



Over three quarters of residents are not very or not at all satisfied with the quality of the road network in the Lithgow LGA.

Comparisons by residential location show residents in the Portland area significantly less satisfied.

4. Planning for the Future



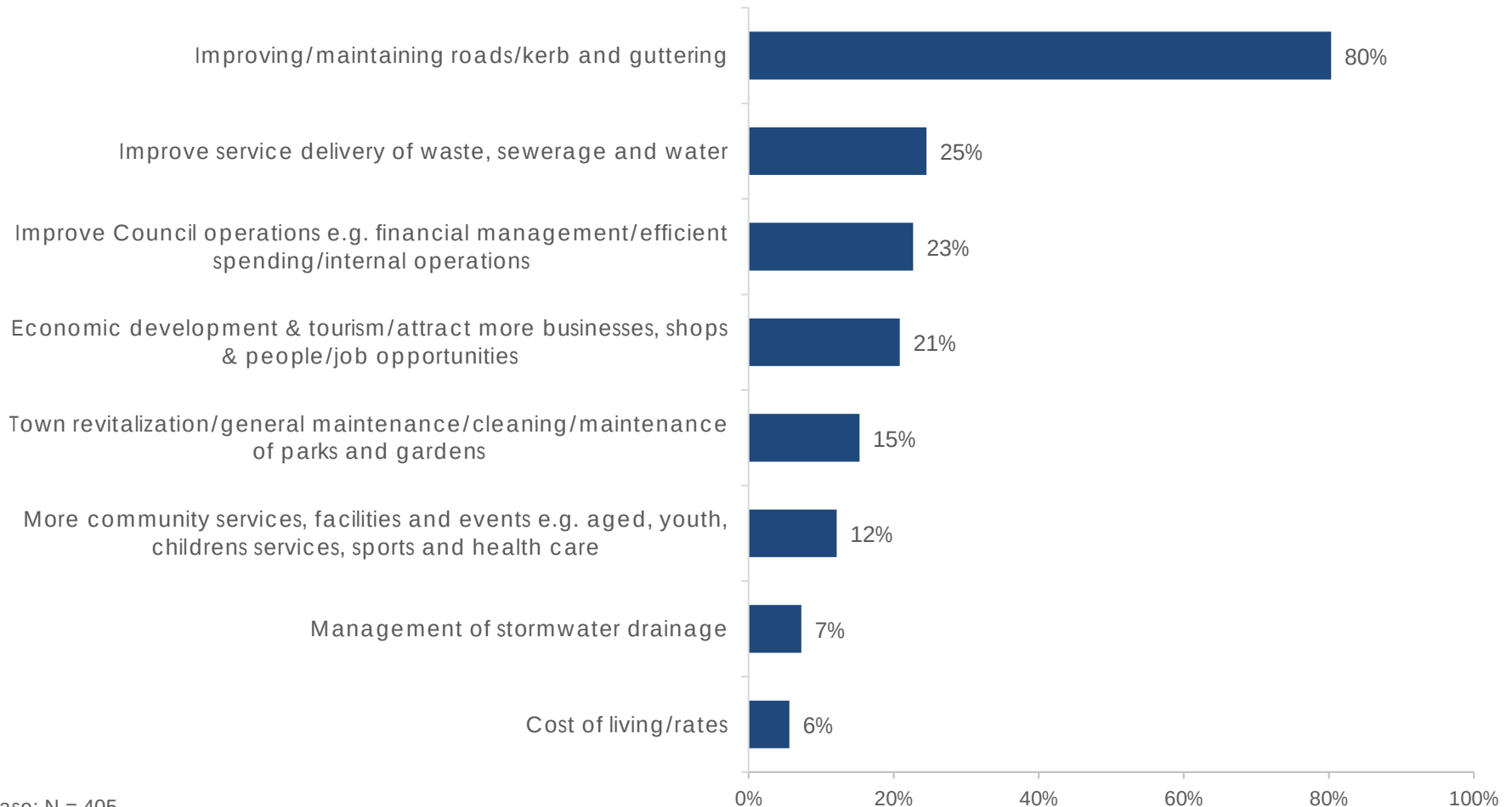
Detailed Results

1. Awareness of the Special Rate Variation
2. Support for a Special Rate Variation
3. Performance of Council
- 4. Planning for the Future**

This section explores residents' key priorities for Council in the local area.

Key Priority Areas for Council in the Local Area

Q1a What do you think should be the key priorities for Council in the local area?



Base: N = 405

Please see Appendix A for responses <6%

Please see the next slide for a sample of verbatim comments for the top 3 priorities for Council in the local area.

The majority of residents (80%), believe improving/maintaining roads and kerb and guttering should be a key priority for Council in the local area.

Furthermore, 25% believe improving sewerage/water/waste service delivery and 23% improving Council operations/management should be priorities for Council.

Key Priority Areas for Council in the Local Area

Q1a What do you think should be the key priorities for Council in the local area?

Improving/Maintaining Roads/Kerb and Guttering (80%)

"Maintaining and improved roads"

"To maintain the roads better, fix potholes"

"Sealed road resurfacing"

"Maintenance of roads, streets and guttering"

"Better quality grading of unsealed roads e.g. previous grading is poor quality"

"Fixing potholes in sealed streets and lanes within the city"

"Roads to be improved in the rural areas"

"Road maintenance such as sealing and fixing pot holes"

"Road maintenance to ensure they are safe"

Improve service delivery of waste, sewerage and water (25%)

"Stability of water infrastructure - they keep bursting, including drainage"

"Better, more durable water infrastructure e.g. to prevent mains pipe bursts resulting in length water outages"

"Upgrade the water pipes as they are cracking"

"Better waste management facility options available locally to residents in rural areas"

"Sewerage needs to be addressed"

"Sewage and water prioritisation"

"Ensuring the maintenance of water and sewerage services"

"Improve sewerage services - currently leaking when it floods and rains"

Improve Council Operations (23%)

"Management of the Council finances needs to be improved"

"More community consultation about projects"

"Improve the management of Council itself"

"More staff to ensure Council works are being done e.g. supervisors"

"Better management of Council finances. Look at different ways to bring money into the community e.g. events, concerts"

"Paying attention to the ratepayers' wants and needs"

"Making better financial decisions to benefit the entire community"

"Better customer service from Council staff to the community. Act upon community requests efficiently and appropriately"

Appendix A: Additional Analyses



Top Priority Areas for Council in the Local Area

Q1a What do you think should be the key priorities for Council in the local area?

All comments	Base N=405
Improving/maintaining roads/kerb and guttering	80%
Improve service delivery of waste, sewerage and water	25%
Improve Council operations e.g., financial management/efficient spending/internal operations	23%
Economic development & tourism/attract more businesses, shops & people/job opportunities	21%
Town revitalization/general maintenance/cleaning/maintenance of parks and gardens	15%
More community services, facilities and events e.g., aged, youth, children's services, sports and health care	12%
Management of stormwater drainage	7%
Cost of living/rates	6%
Communication- Community consultation/engagement	5%
Footpaths/cycleways	5%
Maintenance of infrastructure/facilities	4%
Resident wellbeing/support/addressing homelessness	4%
Energy efficiency/alternative energy/sustainability	2%
Equity across all communities	1%
Development application process	1%
Other comments	5%
Don't know/nothing	1%

Means of Learning About the SRV – By Demographics

Q4b. How were you informed that Council was exploring a proposal to increase land rating?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Social Media	46%	46%	47%	62%	64%	41%	28%	45%	64%
Mail out	46%	46%	46%	42%	38%	42%	57%	49%	16%
Other	34%	35%	33%	32%	30%	42%	32%	34%	33%
Newspaper advertisement	18%	18%	18%	13%	3%	19%	31%	19%	7%
Council eNewsletter	8%	8%	9%	13%	9%	3%	8%	9%	4%
Council website	7%	8%	7%	6%	12%	4%	8%	8%	6%
Mayoral Column	3%	4%	3%	6%	3%	1%	4%	3%	4%
Base	344	168	177	75	72	95	102	314	29

A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group)

Younger residents were more likely to have learnt of Council's exploration of the SRV via social media, while those aged over 65+ were more likely to have been informed via a mail out.

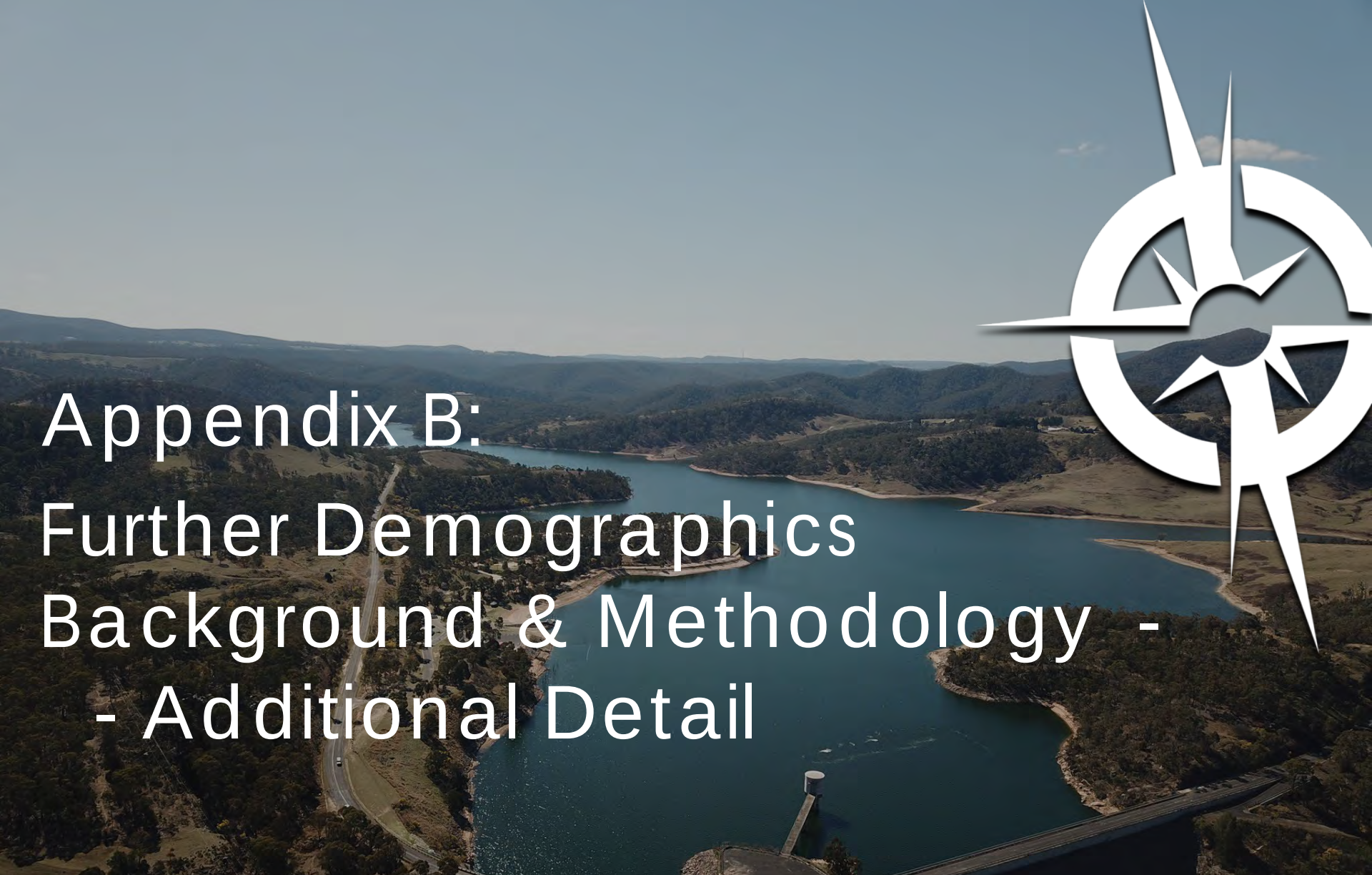
Means of Learning About the SRV – By Demographics

Q4b. How were you informed that Council was exploring a proposal to increase land rating?

	Overall	Residential location				
		Lithgow	Wallerawang	Portland	Rural South	Rural North
Social Media	46%	52%	51%	18%	39%	42%
Mail out	46%	41%	45%	58%	44%	67%
Other	34%	35%	35%	23%	40%	36%
Newspaper advertisement	18%	18%	18%	19%	15%	19%
Council eNewsletter	8%	9%	10%	0%	6%	8%
Council website	7%	9%	8%	2%	3%	6%
Mayoral Column	3%	4%	0%	7%	4%	4%
Base	344	198	53	34	30	29

A significantly higher/lower percentage (by group)

Residents from the Lithgow area were more likely to have found out about the SRV via social media, while those from the Rural North were most likely to have been informed via a mail out.



Appendix B: Further Demographics Background & Methodology - - Additional Detail

Residential Suburb

QC. Which town/village do you live in/near?

	Base N=405
Lithgow	38%
Wallerawang	12%
Portland	9%
Bowenfels	7%
Littleton	6%
South Bowenfels	6%
Lidsdale	2%
Little Hartley	2%
Marrangaroo	2%
Ben Bullen	1%
Capertee	1%
Cullen Bullen	1%
Glen Davis	1%
Hampton	1%
Hartley	1%

	Base N=405
Hartley Vale	1%
Hermitage Flat	1%
Kanimbla	1%
Lowther	1%
Pipers Flat	1%
Rydal	1%
Vale of Clwydd	1%
Bogee	<1%
Clarence	<1%
Glen Alice	<1%
Good Forest	<1%
Round Swamp	<1%
Sodwalls	<1%
Tarana	<1%



Rates Paid to Lithgow City Council

QD. Does your household pay Council rates to Lithgow City Council, if so, which type(s) do you pay?

	Base N=405
Residential	82%
Farmland	12%
Business	1%
None of these	8%



Background & Methodology – Additional Detail

Sample selection and error

A total of 405 resident interviews were completed. Respondents were selected by means of a computer based random selection process using Australian marketing lists, List Brokers, Sample Pages and the Electronic White Pages (N=239 landlines, N=166 mobiles).

A sample size of N=405 residents provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.9% at 95% confidence. This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of N=405 residents, 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.9%.

For the survey under discussion the greatest margin of error is 4.9%. This means, for example, that an answer such as 'yes' (50%) to a question could vary from 45% to 55%.

The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2021 ABS Census data for Lithgow City Council.

Interviewing

Interviewing was conducted in accordance with The Research Society Code of Professional Behaviour.

Prequalification

Participants in this survey were pre-qualified as being over the age of 18 and living within the Lithgow City Council LGA.

Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

Within the report, **blue** and **red** font colours are used to identify statistically significant differences between groups, i.e., gender, age, ratepayer status and residential location.

Significance difference testing is a statistical test performed to evaluate the difference between two measurements. To identify the statistically significant differences between the groups of means, 'One-Way Anova tests' and 'Independent Samples T-tests' were used. 'Z Tests' were also used to determine statistically significant differences between column percentages.



Background & Methodology – Additional Detail

Ratings questions

The Unipolar Scale of 1 to 5 was used in all rating questions, where 1 was the lowest satisfaction or support and 5 the highest satisfaction or support.

This scale allowed us to identify different levels of importance and satisfaction across respondents.

Top 3 (T3) Box: refers to the aggregate percentage (%) score of the top three scores for satisfaction or support. (i.e. somewhat satisfied, satisfied & very satisfied).

We refer to T3 Box Satisfaction in order to express moderate to high levels of satisfaction in a non-discretionary category.

Percentages

All percentages are calculated to the nearest whole number and therefore the total may not exactly equal 100%.

Micromex LGA Benchmark

Micromex has developed Community Satisfaction Benchmarks using normative data from 75 unique councils, more than 175 surveys and over 93,000 interviews since 2012.



Councils Used to Create the Micromex Regional Benchmark

The Regional Benchmark was composed from the Council areas listed below:

AlburyCity Council	Great Lakes Council	Narrandera Shire Council
Ballina Shire Council	Hawkesbury City Council	Parkes Shire Council
Bathurst Regional Council	Kempsey Shire Council	Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
Bland Shire Council	Lachlan Shire Council	Richmond Valley Council
Blue Mountains City Council	Lake Macquarie City Council	Singleton Shire Council
Byron Shire Council	Leeton Shire Council	Tamworth Regional Council
Cabonne Shire Council	Lismore City Council	Tenterfield Shire Council
Central Coast Council	Lithgow City Council	Tweed Shire Council
Cessnock City Council	Liverpool Plains Shire Council	Upper Hunter Shire Council
Coffs Harbour City Council	Maitland City Council	Wagga Wagga City Council
Devonport City Council	MidCoast Council	Walgett Shire Council
Dungog Shire Council	Mid-Western Regional Council	Weddin Shire Council
Eurobodalla Shire Council	Moree Plains Shire Council	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Forbes Shire Council	Murray River Council	Wollondilly Shire Council
Glen Innes Severn Shire Council	Murrumbidgee Shire Council	Yass Valley Council
Gosford (Central Coast Council)	Narrabri Shire Council	



Appendix C: Questionnaire



Lithgow City Council
Community Survey – SRV
October 2022

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is from Micromex Research and we are conducting a survey on behalf of Lithgow City Council to assess community awareness of, and support for, a proposal to increase Council rating above the rate cap. The survey will take about 10-15 minutes, would you be able to assist us please?

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

- ☐ Under 18 (terminate survey)
- ☐ 18-34
- ☐ 35-49
- ☐ 50-64
- ☐ 65+

QB. How long have you lived in the Lithgow City Council area?

- ☐ Under 6 months
- ☐ 6 months – 2 years
- ☐ 3 – 5 years
- ☐ 6 – 10 years
- ☐ 11 – 20 years
- ☐ More than 20 years

QC. Which town/village do you live in/near?

Rural North

- ☐ Ben Bullen
- ☐ Blackman's Flat
- ☐ Bagee
- ☐ Capertee
- ☐ Clarence
- ☐ Cullen Bullen
- ☐ Dargan
- ☐ Glen Alice
- ☐ Glen Davis
- ☐ Marrangaroo
- ☐ Round Swamp
- ☐ Wolgan Valley/Newnes

Lithgow

- ☐ Bowenfels
- ☐ Hermitage Flat
- ☐ Lithgow
- ☐ Littleton
- ☐ South Bowenfels
- ☐ Vale of Clwydd

Rural South

- ☐ Good Forest
- ☐ Hampton
- ☐ Hartley
- ☐ Hartley Vale
- ☐ Kanimbila
- ☐ Little Hartley
- ☐ Lowther
- ☐ Megalong
- ☐ Rydal
- ☐ Sadiwals
- ☐ Tarana

Wallerawang

- ☐ Lidsdale
- ☐ Wallerawang

Portland

- ☐ Pipers Flat
- ☐ Portland

QD. Does your household pay Council rates to Lithgow City Council, if so, which type(s) do you pay?
Prompt

- ☐ Residential (1)
- ☐ Farmland (2)
- ☐ Business (3)
- ☐ None of these (Default to residential script)

Q1a. What do you think should be the key priorities for Council in the local area?

.....

Q1b. Overall, for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?

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

Q1c. How satisfied are you with the quality of the road network in the Lithgow local government area?
Prompt

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

Concept statement

Currently Council delivers a broad range of services such as roads, bridges, drainage, waste collection, sorting, recycling and landfilling, parks and playgrounds, cultural facilities and events, libraries, swimming pools, environmental protection and much more.

Council is facing the challenge of balancing community expectations with future financial sustainability. There is a growing gap between the cost of providing services and facilities and the available funding to meet those costs.

We are considering two options in planning for the future.

Each option will have varying impacts on the services and facilities that Council can deliver and the cost of council rates.

- Option 1 Service Levels Maintained
- Option 2 Service Levels Reduced

Let's look at the options in more detail:
ROTATE EXPOSURE (1/2 or 2/1)

OPTION 1 – Service Levels Maintained

This option involves a single year permanent overall increase to Council's land rating revenue of 44.5%, including assumed rate peg of 2.5%. Council would limit the increase for the residential, business and farm rating categories to the assumed rate peg amount of 2.5% in 2023/24 plus an extra 24% SRV – so an overall increase of 26.5% in 2023-24. Mines, quarries and power generators would have rates increases above 26.5%.

- The average residential ratepayer currently paying \$869.26 per year would pay approximately \$230.35 more in general rates.
- The average farmland ratepayer currently paying \$1705.50 per year would pay approximately \$451.96 more in general rates.
- The average business ratepayer currently paying \$4214.67 would pay \$1,116.89 more in general rates.

Under this option, Council assesses that it will be able to maintain its present infrastructure and services sustainably into the future. 51% of the increase is proposed for road maintenance and renewal.

There is also funding for additional economic development services as the community faces the challenge of local economic transition, and for capacity building within the Council organisation to ensure financial sustainability in all future periods.

Q2a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 1? Prompt

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

Option 2: Service Levels Reduced – rate peg only (2.5%)

This option would continue the status quo with rates only increasing by the assumed rate peg amount of 2.5% per year.

In 2023/24:

- The average residential ratepayer currently paying \$869.26 per year would pay approximately \$21.73 more in general rates.
- The average farmland ratepayer currently paying \$1705.50 per year would pay approximately \$42.64 more in general rates.
- The average business ratepayer currently paying \$4214.67 would pay \$105.37 more in general rates.

Under this option, Council assesses that it will not be able to maintain its present infrastructure and services sustainably into the future.

As OPTION 2 does not deliver the additional funding required to meet existing service levels, including overcoming future modelled deficits AND addressing an infrastructure backlog to maintain / renew roads and other infrastructure, there will be the need to REDUCE service levels. A gap of approximately \$4.7M per year will grow in future periods and will require extensive community consultation to reduce infrastructure and services to match available revenues. Under this option, Council will recommend the maintenance of essential services over more discretionary services.

Q2b. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 2? Prompt

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

Q3a. Please rank the 2 options in order of preference:

- ☐ Option 1 – Maintain service levels - Special Rate Variation + rate peg
- ☐ Option 2 – Reduce service levels - rate peg only

Q3b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

.....

Should OPTION 2 be the preferred option, Council would develop a plan which proposes the prioritisation of essential services. The reductions would occur for non-essential services. This plan would be developed and finalised with extensive community consultation.

Q4a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring a proposal to increase land rating by Special Rate Variation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (Go to Q5)
- ☐ Not sure (Go to Q5)

Q4b. How were you informed that Council was exploring a proposal to increase land rating? Prompt

- ☐ Mail out
- ☐ Council website
- ☐ Newspaper advertisement
- ☐ Council eNewsletter
- ☐ Mayoral Column
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Demographics

The following information is used for demographic purposes only.

Q5. Which of the following best describes the house where you are currently living? Prompt

- ☐ I/We own/are currently buying this property
- ☐ I/We currently rent this property

Q6. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? *Prompt*

- ☐ Work full time in the LGA
- ☐ Work full time outside the LGA
- ☐ Work part time in the LGA
- ☐ Work part time outside the LGA
- ☐ Home duties
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Unemployed/pensioner
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q7. Gender by voice:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

To find out more information about Lithgow City Council's policies and Special Rate Variation proposal, please access www.ourplaceourfuture.lithgow.com

An aerial photograph of a large, winding lake surrounded by dense green forests and rolling hills. A road runs along the left side of the lake, and a dam structure is visible in the lower right corner. The sky is clear and blue.

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