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Submission: I simply wish to lodge my displeasure at the way that the recent surveys by council on the Special Rate Variation were conducted. I took part in the online survey and my wife took part in a phone survey about the issue. Both of us felt that councils preferred option (of the maximum rate increase) was a foregone conclusion and that the surveys were phrased in a way that led people to give them the answers they needed to justify their decision. The online survey did not give adequate scope to give an accurate view of my thoughts, instead I found that the simplistic and leading questions made the results incredibly skewed. My wife found the phone survey even less "subtle" in the outcome it was hoping to see, as demonstrated by the surveyors response when she said that she didn't support the largest rate increase, only the middle increase - they replied along the lines of "so you would be happy for the koalas in the shire to die off?".

I am not necessarily against the larger rate increase, my concern with it is those in the Shire struggling to keep up with the increasing cost of living already. My main concern though is a biased survey method. After doing some research into your proposal, I spoke to many local residents, most of whom were oblivious to the proposed changes, some of who had taken part in the survey, but didn't realise the amount of increase that was being proposed.

I feel that the survey methods employed make the results a very unfair justification for the proposals of council and they cannot claim the support of the residents of the Shire.

Yours sincerely,
Jon Bracht
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