



Community Survey

# Special Rate Variation

Summary of Results

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Guyra Shire Council is applying to the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to continue the current Special Rate Variation (SRV) of 8.43% (including the rate peg of 3.5%). As part of its wider community engagement strategy for the SRV application, Council has conducted a comprehensive survey of the community.

This survey was made available online, in print from Council, local businesses in Tingha and Ebor, or posted by request. Council also extracted a quick poll from this survey which was provided to every resident and ratepayer in the Shire by post.

The survey was conducted to measure support for the proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV) 2014/15, where Council was seeking community support for the retention of the 8.43% (including a rate cap of 3.5%) rate rise which was allocated in 2009. Council also took the opportunity to identify asset allocation priorities and to understand the community's satisfaction levels with a variety of Council provided services and functions.

The survey was available to the community from 12 November, 2013 to 10 February, 2014. During this period the comprehensive survey was completed by 137 respondents and the quick poll was returned by 49 respondents. This equates to a total of 186 respondents to the SRV survey. From the demographic information collected in the survey it can be determined that the respondents were a fair representation of the entire community.

# KEY CONCLUSIONS

## SUPPORT FOR VARIOUS SRV OPTIONS

1. A total of 79% of respondents support the continuation of the SRV.
2. 29% would be satisfied should the SRV be discontinued and see a resulting decline in service levels.
3. 55% of respondents identified that they would be willing to pay higher rates in order undertake renewal programs, following further consultation.

## IMPORTANCE / SATISFACTION OF COUNCIL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

1. In terms of the 17 facilities and services measured, satisfaction was highest with the library, playgrounds, and sporting facilities, respectively. Those with the lowest satisfaction ratings included unsealed road maintenance, animal control, kerb and guttering, and footpaths and cycleways.
2. The survey identified that the facilities and services with the highest rating of importance were sealed road maintenance, water, sewer, bridges, waste collection and disposal, and unsealed road maintenance. Those with the lesser perceived importance included town beautification and streetscaping, playgrounds, kerb and guttering, and animal control.

<p><b>Higher Importance / Lower Satisfaction</b> Sealed road maintenance Unsealed road maintenance</p>	<p><b>Higher Importance / Higher Satisfaction</b> Bridges Water Sewer Cleanliness of streets Sporting facilities Public Toilets Community facilities such as the Community Hall Waste collection and disposal Aged Care Library Cemeteries</p>
<p><b>Lower Importance / Lower Satisfaction</b> Kerb and guttering Footpaths and cycleways Animal control</p>	<p><b>Lower Importance / Higher Satisfaction</b> Town beautification and streetscaping Playgrounds</p>

This information identifies that the areas of sealed and unsealed roads are of particular concern to local residents.

## BUDGETTING

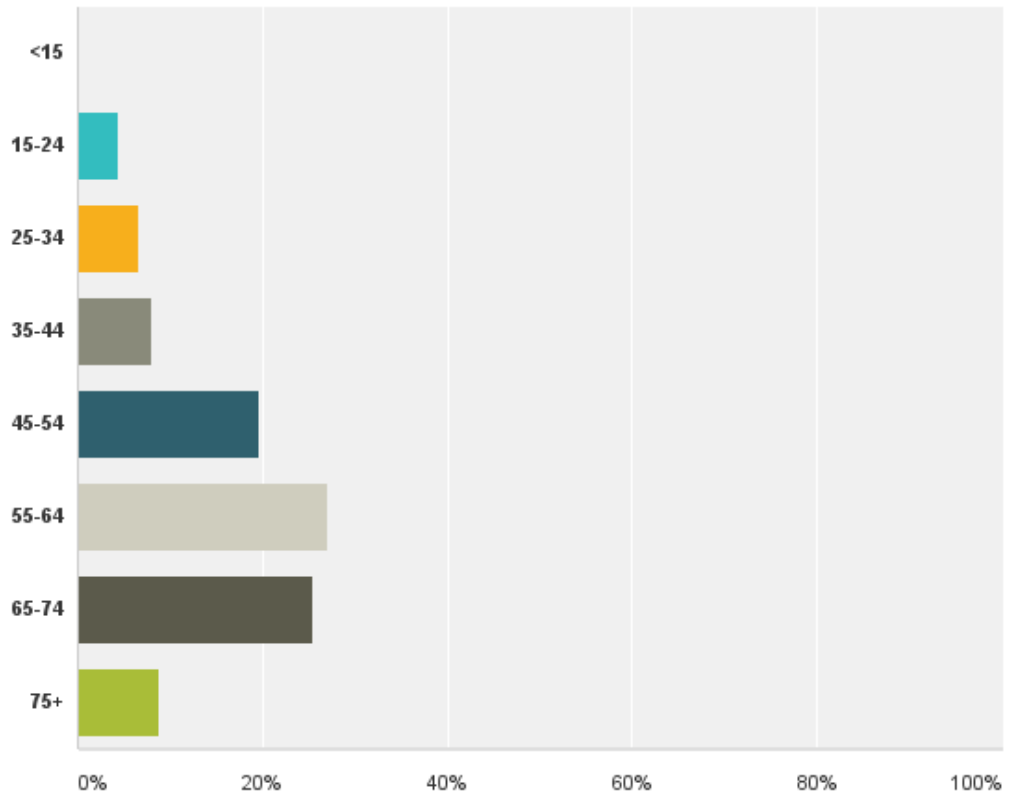
Respondents were most comfortable with reductions in services levels being applied to sporting facilities maintenance, footpaths and cycleways, animal control, and parks, reserves and maintenance respectively should the SRV be discontinued.

Should Council receive the SRV or other additional revenue, the majority of areas respondents would like to see improved are sealed roads maintenance and unsealed road maintenance, with each of these areas having more than 70% of respondents identify them.

# DEMOGRAPHICS

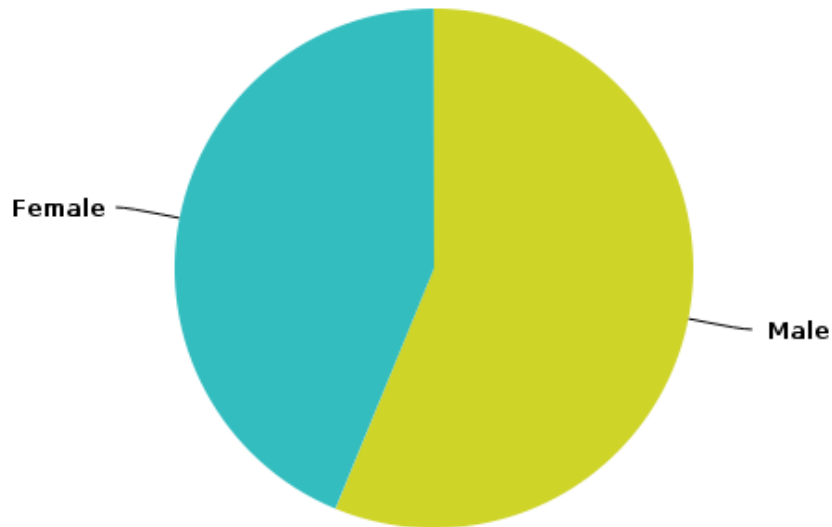
## Q1 Age?

Answered: 137 Skipped: 0



## Q2 Are you male or female?

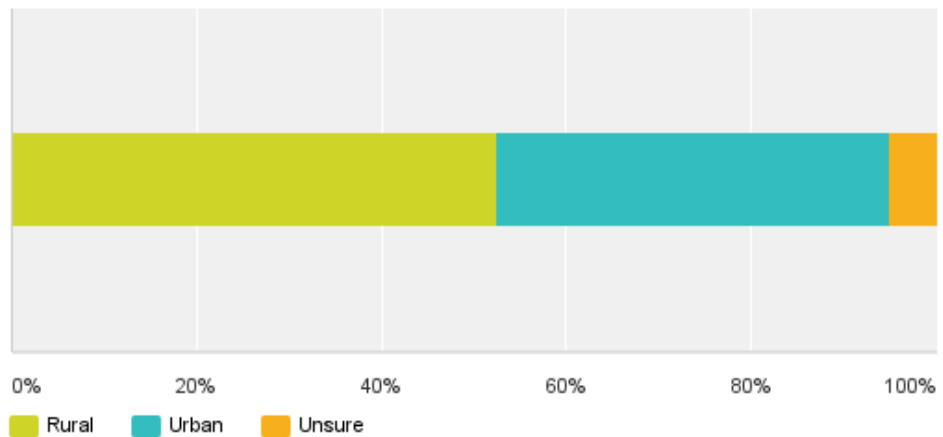
Answered: 137 Skipped: 0



There was a slight bias toward males (56.2% of respondents), who make up 50.1% of the population.

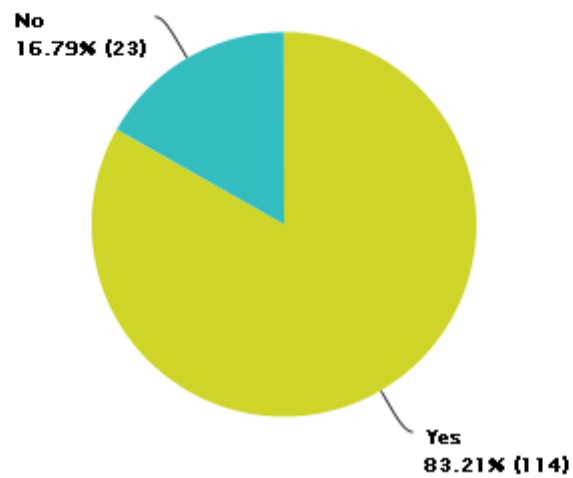
## Q3 Would you classify yourself as a rural or urban resident?

Answered: 137 Skipped: 0



## Do you own property in the Guyra Shire?

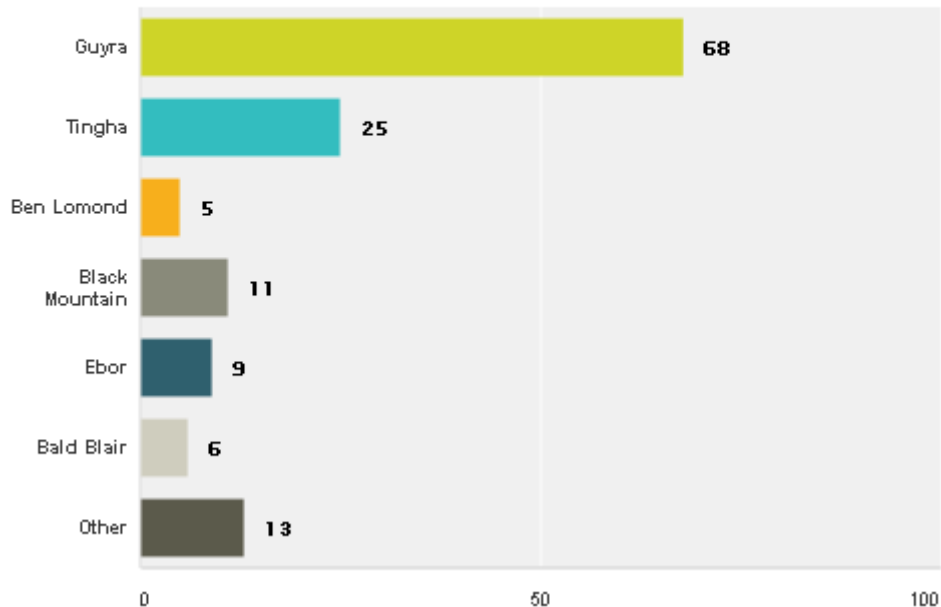
Answered: 137 Skipped: 0



According to the 2011 census, 72% of residents own their property in the Guyra Shire. The results of the survey are higher than this, as would be expected in a survey about a proposed rate variation, as those residents who currently pay rates have a more vested interest in Council services and funding.

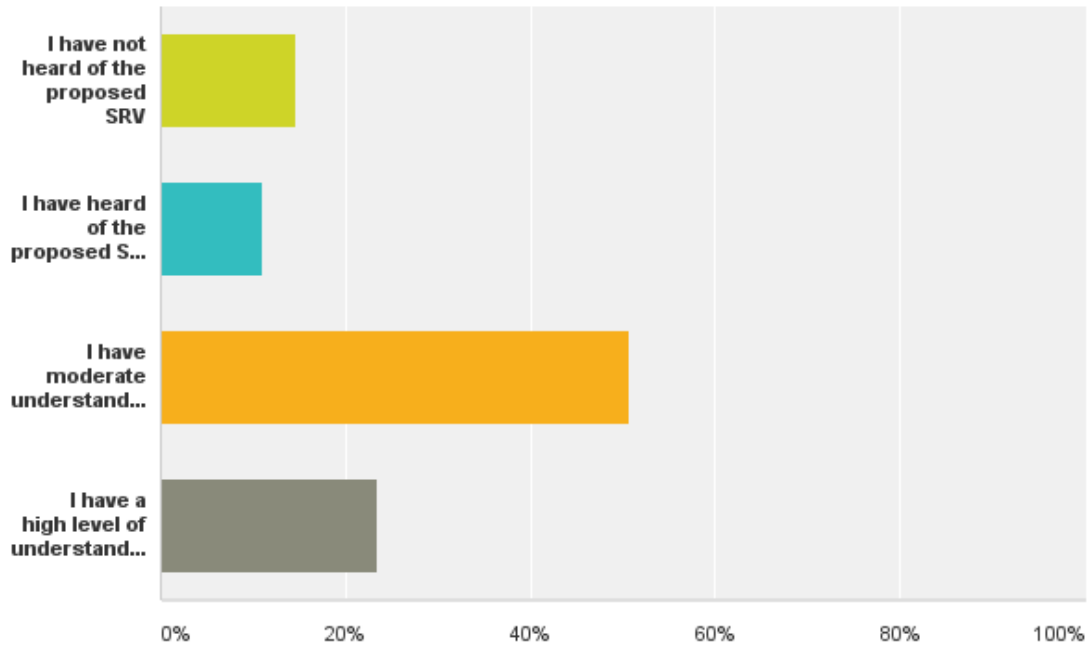
## In which area of the Guyra Shire do you predominately live or own a property?

Answered: 137 Skipped: 0



## Q6 What is your level of understanding of the proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV)?

Answered: 136 Skipped: 1

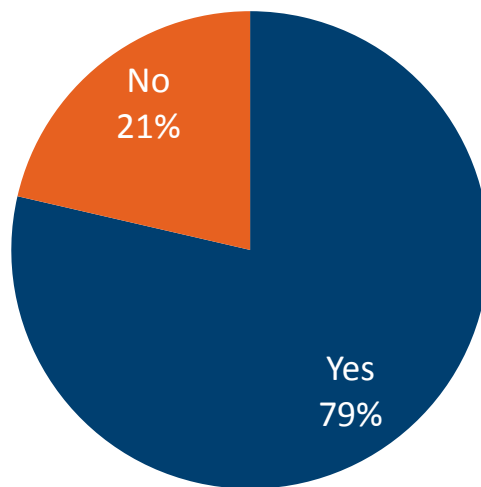




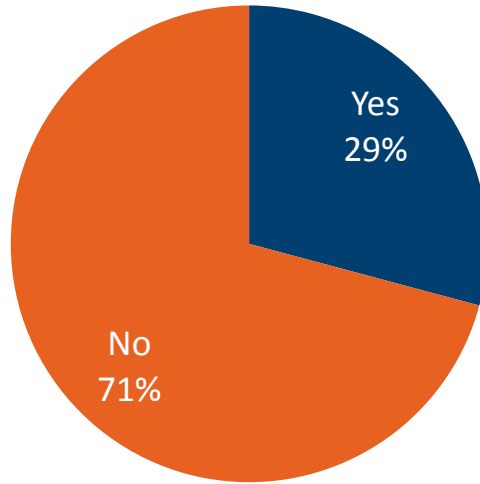
# SUPPORT FOR THE SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

Included in the flyer provided to every resident and ratepayer was a quick poll, asking 3 questions directly relating to residents support of the Special Rate Variation. These three questions were also asked in the comprehensive survey using the exact wording. The results depicted below are a combination of responses from both surveys, equalling a total of 175 responses to each question.

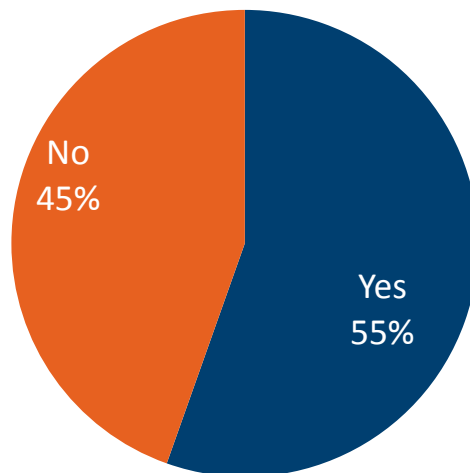
**Would you be prepared to continue the current rate variation to maintain current service levels?**



**Would you be prepared to have rates reduced by the amount of the current rate variation and have service levels reduced accordingly?**



**Would you be prepared to pay higher rates to renew roads and other community infrastructure? This option would involve further consultation throughout 2014/2015.**

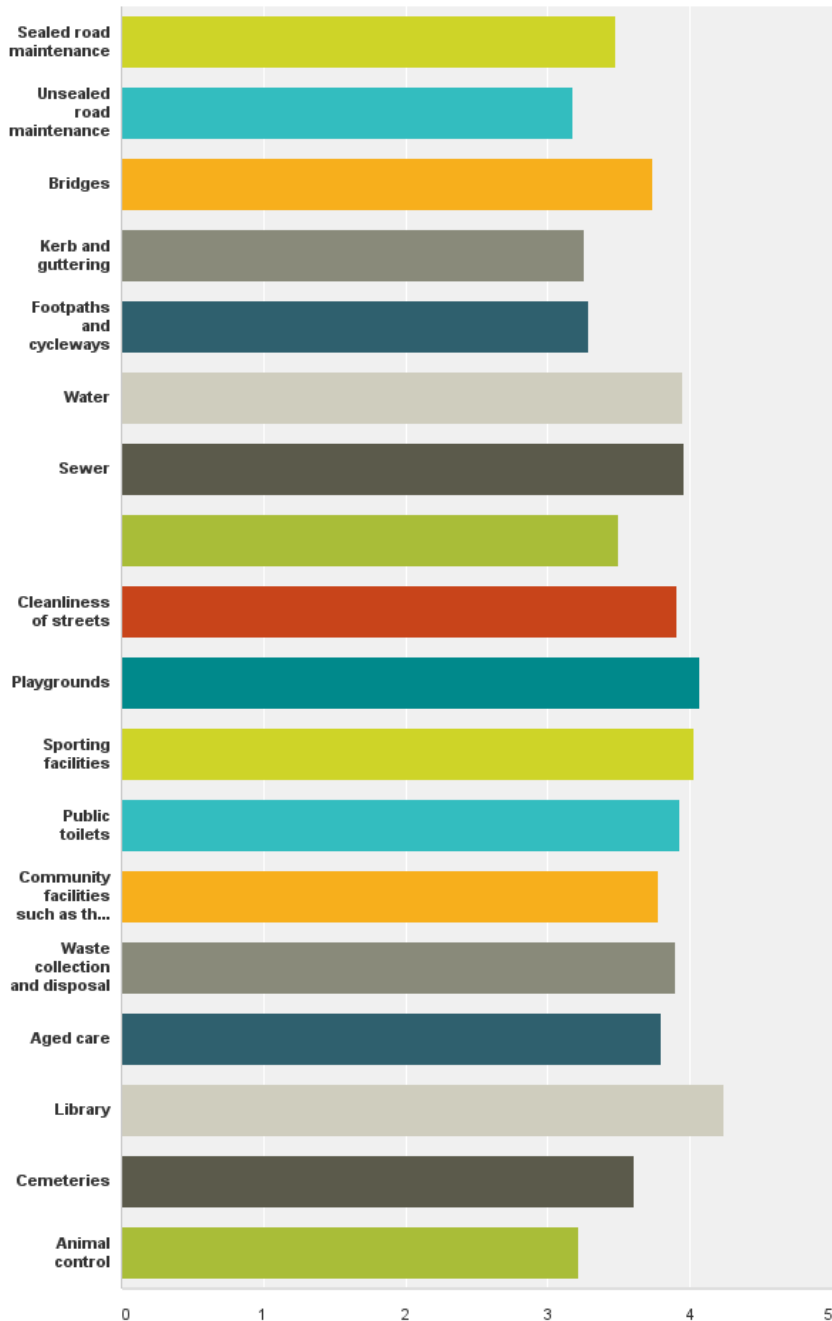


# SERVICE LEVELS

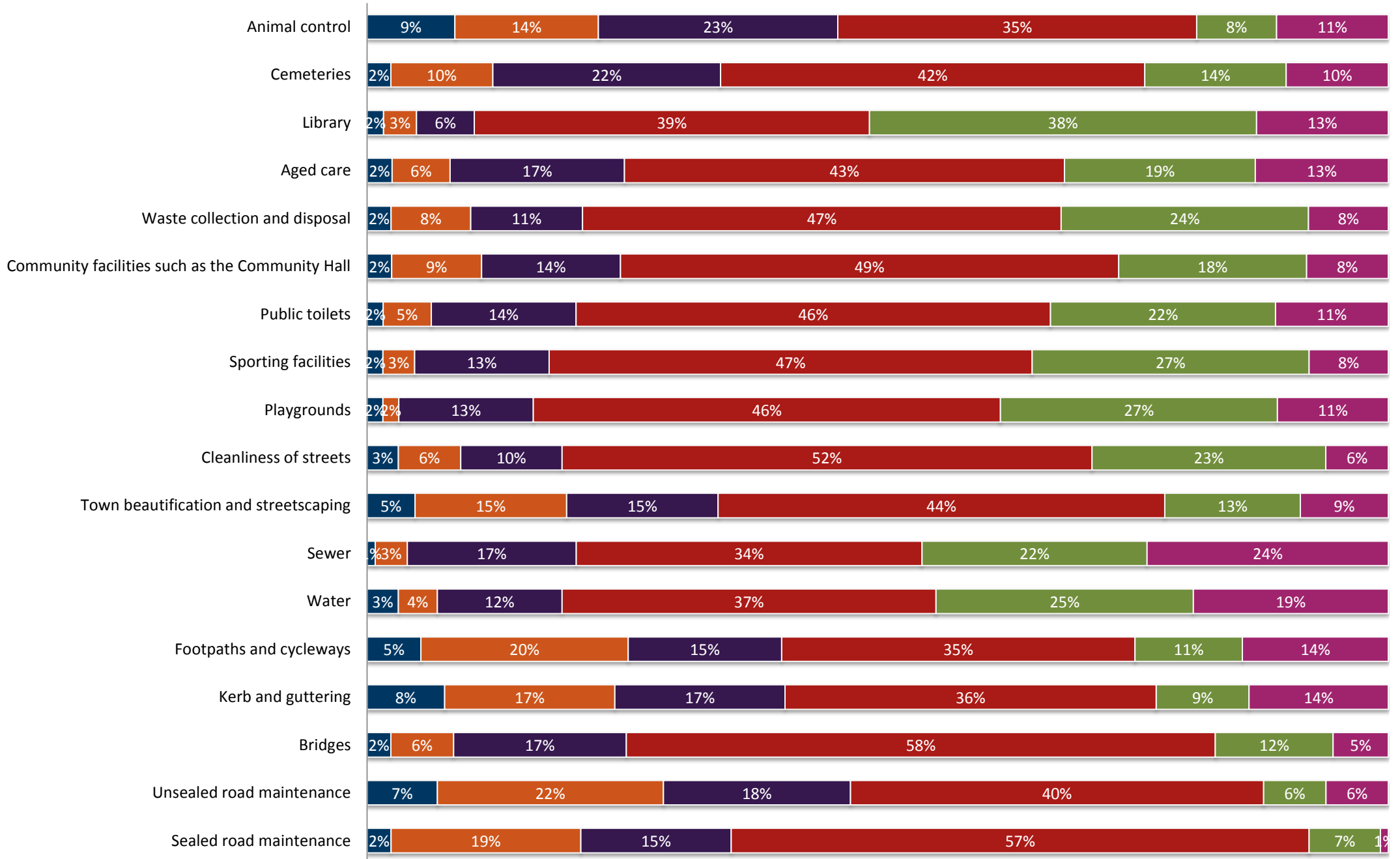
## SATISFACTION LEVELS

**Q10 Please rate your satisfaction level with each of Council's current services.**

Answered: 134 Skipped: 3



■ Completely Unsatisfied  
 ■ Unsatisfied  
 ■ Neutral  
 ■ Satisfied  
 ■ Very Satisfied  
 ■ Not Applicable / Unsure

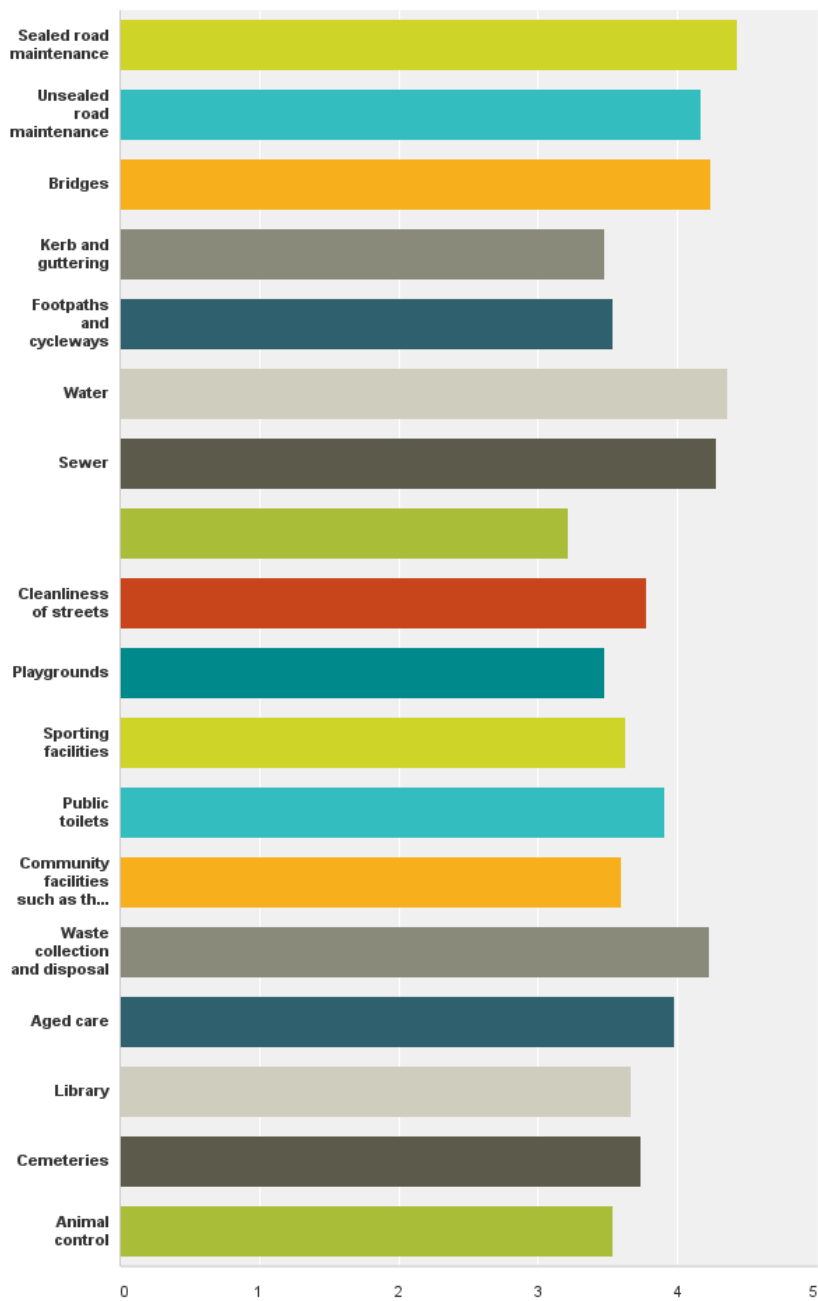


	Completely Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Not Applicable / Unsure	Average Rating
<b>Sealed road maintenance</b>	2.33%	18.60%	14.73%	56.59%	6.98%	0.78%	3.48
<b>Unsealed road maintenance</b>	6.87%	22.14%	18.32%	40.46%	6.11%	6.11%	3.18
<b>Bridges</b>	2.31%	6.15%	16.92%	57.69%	11.54%	5.38%	3.74
<b>Kerb and guttering</b>	7.58%	16.67%	16.67%	36.36%	9.09%	13.64%	3.26
<b>Footpaths and cycleways</b>	5.26%	20.30%	15.04%	34.59%	10.53%	14.29%	3.29
<b>Water</b>	3.05%	3.82%	12.21%	36.64%	25.19%	19.08%	3.95
<b>Sewer</b>	0.79%	3.15%	16.54%	33.86%	22.05%	23.62%	3.96
<b>Town beautification and streetscaping</b>	4.69%	14.84%	14.84%	43.75%	13.28%	8.59%	3.5
<b>Cleanliness of streets</b>	3.05%	6.11%	9.92%	51.91%	22.90%	6.11%	3.91
<b>Playgrounds</b>	1.55%	1.55%	13.18%	45.74%	27.13%	10.85%	4.07
<b>Sporting facilities</b>	1.55%	3.10%	13.18%	47.29%	27.13%	7.75%	4.03
<b>Public toilets</b>	1.57%	4.72%	14.17%	46.46%	22.05%	11.02%	3.93
<b>Community facilities such as the Community Hall</b>	2.40%	8.80%	13.60%	48.80%	18.40%	8%	3.78
<b>Waste collection and disposal</b>	2.34%	7.81%	10.94%	46.88%	24.22%	7.81%	3.9
<b>Aged care</b>	2.44%	5.69%	17.07%	43.09%	18.70%	13.01%	3.8
<b>Library</b>	1.61%	3.23%	5.65%	38.71%	37.90%	12.90%	4.24
<b>Cemeteries</b>	2.31%	10%	22.31%	41.54%	13.85%	10%	3.61
<b>Animal control</b>	8.59%	14.06%	23.44%	35.16%	7.81%	10.94%	3.22

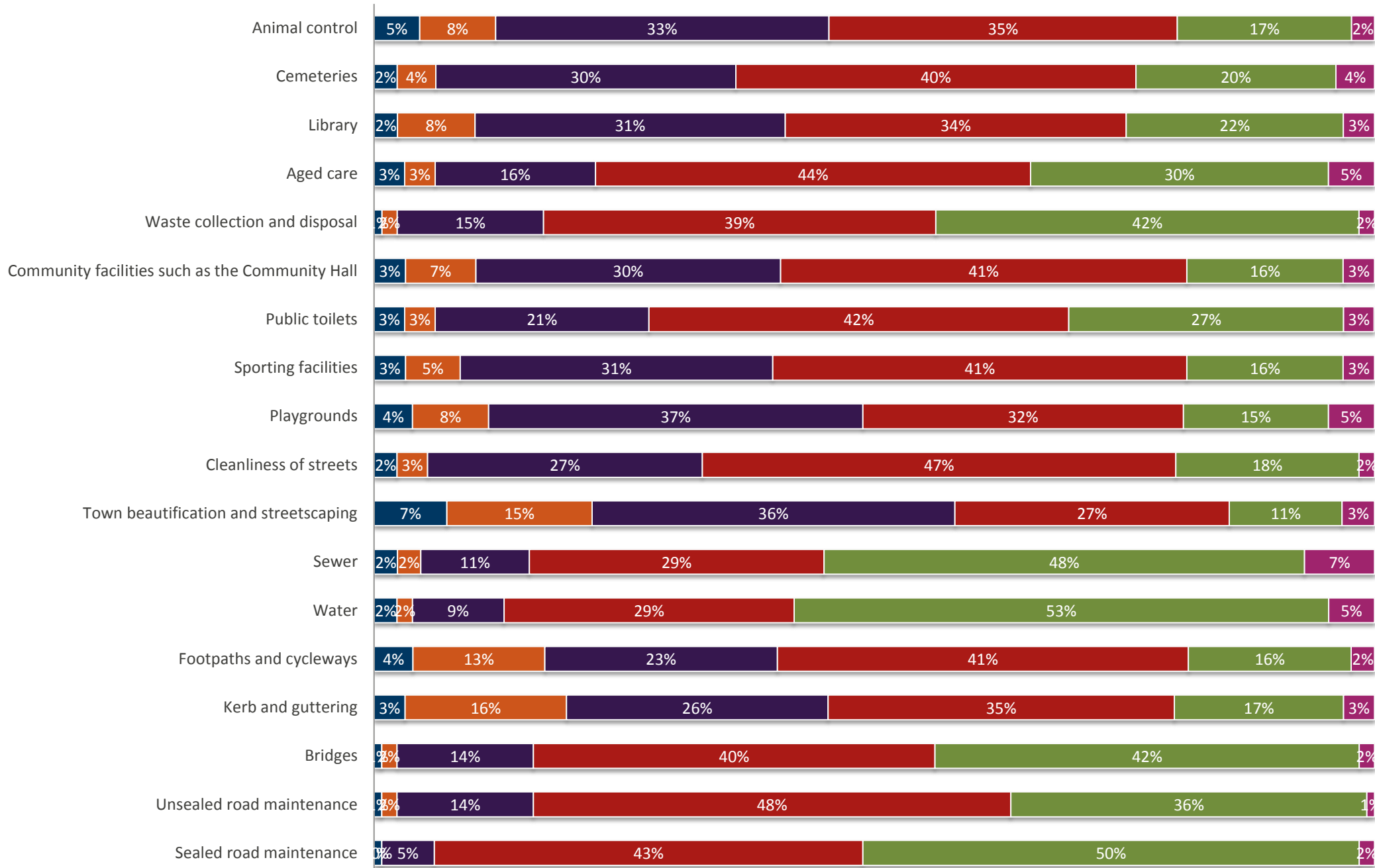
## IMPORTANCE OF SERVICES

### Q11 Please rate the importance of each of Council's current services.

Answered: 134 Skipped: 3



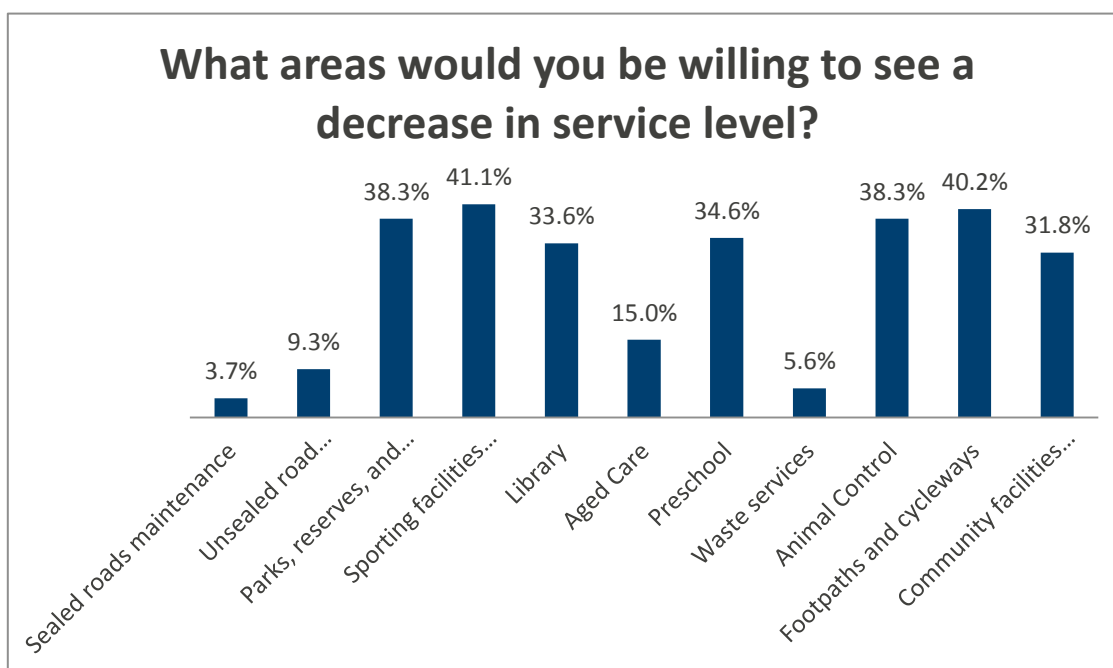
■ Not Important  
 ■ Low Importance  
 ■ Moderately Important  
 ■ Very Important  
 ■ Essential  
 ■ Not Applicable / Unsure



	Not Important	Low Importance	Moderately Important	Very Important	Essential	Not Applicable / Unsure	Average Rating
Sealed road maintenance	0.75%	0%	5.26%	42.86%	49.62%	1.50%	4.43
Unsealed road maintenance	0.76%	1.52%	13.64%	47.73%	35.61%	0.76%	4.17
Bridges	0.76%	1.52%	13.64%	40.15%	42.42%	1.52%	4.24
Kerb and guttering	3.08%	16.15%	26.15%	34.62%	16.92%	3.08%	3.48
Footpaths and cycleways	3.88%	13.18%	23.26%	41.09%	16.28%	2.33%	3.54
Water	2.29%	1.53%	9.16%	29.01%	53.44%	4.58%	4.36
Sewer	2.33%	2.33%	10.85%	29.46%	48.06%	6.98%	4.28
Town beautification and streetscaping	7.26%	14.52%	36.29%	27.42%	11.29%	3.23%	3.22
Cleanliness of streets	2.29%	3.05%	27.48%	47.33%	18.32%	1.53%	3.78
Playgrounds	3.82%	7.63%	37.40%	32.06%	14.50%	4.58%	3.48
Sporting facilities	3.13%	5.47%	31.25%	41.41%	15.63%	3.13%	3.63
Public toilets	3.05%	3.05%	21.37%	41.98%	27.48%	3.05%	3.91
Community facilities such as the Community Hall	3.13%	7.03%	30.47%	40.63%	15.63%	3.13%	3.6
Waste collection and disposal	0.77%	1.54%	14.62%	39.23%	42.31%	1.54%	4.23
Aged care	3.05%	3.05%	16.03%	43.51%	29.77%	4.58%	3.98
Library	2.33%	7.75%	31.01%	34.11%	21.71%	3.10%	3.67
Cemeteries	2.31%	3.85%	30%	40%	20%	3.85%	3.74
Animal control	4.55%	7.58%	33.33%	34.85%	17.42%	2.27%	3.54



## CHANGES TO SERVICE LEVELS



## Comments

RFS - too much gear over capitalised

Mowing - Don't mow anything, Canberra doesn't

Spending within villages.

Modifications in Bradley Street. E.g. median strip in Black Mountain village - initially done without consult, at cost, not practical.

Beautification?? Bradley Street not required to the extent of proposed works.

Resurface street, no need to bury power?

The Healthy Highlander pathways and equipment.

none

Do not want my rates spent on aged care.

Do not use the library.

none

All of these services are very important for a disadvantaged town like Tingha.

All are very important, I would not like to see any decrease in service level.

We get none of these services.

We do not get any services.

Town beautification and streetscaping - any work in this regard has been done by locals.

Waste collection and disposal - done by ADC.

Cemetery - done by volunteers.

Guyra Council does not provide luxuries or discretionary services. Libraries, preschools and swimming pools are essential and accordingly I do not support any decrease in services.

Decrease in labour costs and increase in output and productivity.

Aged care - privatisation

Preschool - should be a commercial enterprise as elsewhere (ie other communities)

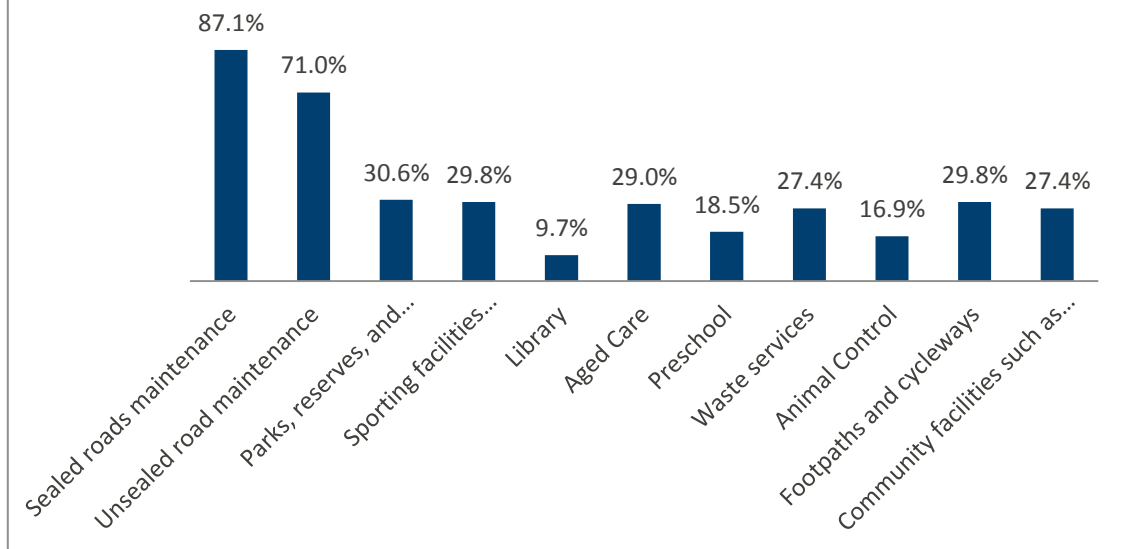
Waste - this is commercial isn't it?

Weed Control - this should go completely to the LLS. We currently pay twice (LHPA and Council) for a very poor return which appears to have no accountability process in place.

RFS - is currently inefficient and needs to be reviewed (as an outsider looking in)

Put some effort back onto volunteer groups.
Office and administration
They are all needed.
All services are important and I would not like to see any outback.
HACC service - should there be more funding from those using the service? Is there more government funding available?
Is there government funding available for preschool?
Look into the initial cost v benefits of solar street lights to save on electricity and the use of solar where possible.
Solar street lights - lower costs
Review of these facilities. Could be run by private enterprise or in the case of library council it use volunteer basis.
There is a number of private providers locally, of child care. Preschool - make it more user pay. Potential taking a % off the whole lot. Perhaps except sealed roads maintenance, bridges and risk service.
None - I don't think we should be reducing anything.
All are very important!
None of the above
Do not think there should be a reduced service level in any areas. I've responded in terms of what is available here in Black Mountain.
It's unfortunate that we need all of the above and to see service levels drop will mean that people will either be uncomfortable (as in poor road surfaces) or unsafe (maintenance of playgrounds, lack of animal control, waste services diminished and creating poor health outcomes). A number of the above could be ticked BUT that would mean that the users have to maintain/service - much like churches rely on the parishioners to keep things clean. BUT this would probably not happen. While I might make sure that the Community Hall is sparkling the person before me may not and then I'd have to clean twice. Lack of volunteers has impacted enormously on communities where we all need the support of others.
I don't support a reduction in services - we have to be prepared to pay for a reasonable standard of living
We need service in all above areas.
Maintain and create footpaths not new cycleways unnecessary and only portion of community would benefit. Why is swimming pool not included?
people using these should contribute help for maintenance
Recycling kerbside collection could be done once per fortnight. Lawn mowing could be done less frequently. Fees for preschool could be increased to cover costs.
I would prefer of course not to have any services reduced. But maybe not mowing as often maybe an option and I do not see any need for Council to be paying for Cycleways.....This only supports a very small group in the community
not willing to reduce services from one area to continue service levels of other. Further public consultation with the community would need to be carried out to confirm service levels

## What areas would you like to see an increase in service level?



### Comments

in this order:

Sealed Roads

Preschool

Aged Care

Unsealed Roads

Waste

Library

Community Facilities

Parks

Animals

Sporting facilities

Footpaths

I would like to see more assistance to sporting club reserves.

All of the above.

I support the other services but believe that the services I've identified and most in need of additional funding.

Youth

A more complete list of services would allow people to choose more realistically.

Some SES and RFS services back to volunteer groups.

Upgrade main street - improve lighting, footpaths, entrance to all shops for wheelchairs.

In regards to animal control, make farmers responsible for livestock.

Fines for not maintaining fences etc. Stops livestock problems, reduces costs, raises revenue.

Bridges

New facility to replace Kolora? When?

Mowing all grass in town (not getting mowed South Guyra).

to keep the town looking inviting to outsiders by mowing the town properly

Again, many of these are NOT applicable to the Black Mountain area and think that any allocation should recognise the needs of the people in Guyra and elsewhere -- that I do not feel qualified to respond to

Bigger park for the kids.

Trees cut down on the road tip on the left hand side.

Not cycleways only footpaths

Roads of course are the major priority...

Guyra is a sporting town so would like to see the sporting facilities kept up.

all existing service levels need to be maintained and increase where possible for the shire and the communities within it to grow and prosper

# ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1. Keep heavy vehicles out of residential areas - Williamson's off Manse Street, etc.
2. Open the rubbish dump for more days.
3. Mow more regularly in town area.
4. Clean up around guide posts / safety fences.
5. Fix top railway crossing like the bottom one.
6. Tidy up old railway line area. Make users tidy it. (Guyra Historical Machinery Group).
7. Animal control - particular persons dog defecating on streets.
8. Get rid of bitumen drop off edges in streets.

Good luck.

Now you need to get the information to those who don't turn up to community meetings.

1. Revenue - wind farms which there will be many are a potential source of recurring revenue. Community service tax per tower is happening elsewhere. Get your a\*\*es into gear on this one.
2. Adjust ad valorem tax to tax businesses so you can pay for services - lighting, cleaning, etc.
3. Guyra people have to have expectations managed - if they want the town mowed every 3.5 minutes put them on a roster to do it.
4. Don't change the colour of the footpath as often.
5. Charge business for main street program. Every other main street program came out of a special levy - Guyra came from road budget.

Since the improvements in the main street there has been no real increase in commercial rates. Commercial rates in Guyra are ridiculously low yet Council insists on continuing to spend money in the main street. It is the business houses that benefit from this and as such rents should be increased to pay increased rates set Council.

Please have a good look at commercial rates, I own property in the main street and am happy to have my rates increased there rather than rural areas where income is diminishing.

Dog control in Guyra very unsatisfactory. Julie Discals dogs barking, 24 Abercrombie Street Guyra. Many reports made over 5 years myself. 2 O'Donnell Ave Guyra, 3 dogs attacked local resident been told 3 dogs put down (2+dogs were hidden, now returned to 2 O'Donnell Ave Guyra.

The Council has to operate within its means.

What commitment and assurance will be given to the community by GSC to carry out these works.

I don't think Council has the ability to maintain or improve services without changes to service providing management.

I would like you to maintain all roads, bridges and other footpaths.

Council rates in country areas should be used for road maintenance, not aged care. It should be provided by state and federal governments.

Yes, prepared to pay higher rates but only conditionally! Council must make a guarantee such infrastructure improvements. How?

Council has not been able to improve service generally from its previous rate increases. So are not in favour of any increase as i live in a limited service area of the Shire.

Large landholders may object to rate increases because they will probably have to pay more than a householder in a town or village.

They may not think the services council provides such as preschool, aged care, library etc are necessary because they don't use them or have a political objection to public services being provided to the public.

If they are non resident may think they don't need them because they can access them elsewhere.

This are fallacious arguments that do not acknowledge the vital role these facilities & services contribute to the social capital of a community & the health & well being of all members.

All ratepayers should be required to make an equitable contribution to the upkeep of the community.

Council does have a role to play in service & facility provision - it's not just about roads & public toilets - it's about the quality of life for the community.

Only prepared to pay higher rates if I am not forced to sell up because of high rates. I am a pensioner. I want to see my life out here.

Council should be carefull about further involvement with Armidale Dumaresq Council as most of the services provided by ADC are less efficient and more costly.

The questions have been designed to get the answer Council desires, particularly the Quick Poll questions.

Road maintenance affects many rurally (I run 3 businesses as well as our rural enterprise) adversely.

Some of clients hire a 4wd vehicle because of the quality of the road (95% of our customers are from the city). There is also an increasing number of travelers with vans etc using rural roads.

I really feel I can't answer these questions in a truly informed way without more detail.

Improve signage.

Increasing grants? We need to petition the government for more money.

Dogs should not be allowed in the main street. Particularly get annoyed with people who don't clean up after their dogs or when they tie them up and let them bark outside my shop!!

The largest percentage of rate revenue comes from the rural sector, if rates were to increase more than the SRV, then the rural sector becomes the major funding source. Costs of production are increasing more than the CPI for the rural sector as well - rural can't be expected to keep 'propping up' the local economy.

Attract extra residents, e.g. trying to attract and convince young people to stay in Guyra.

Don't spend money on unnecessary round-a-bouts, i.e. the one near Council.

A round-a-bout is needed at the corner of Ollera and Bradley Street.

Look at possible further investments to raise revenue.

More money is required to be spent on youth youth services, the youth of Guyra is the future of the community and the more we have available to them, the more they will be willing and wanting to stay.

The Council could perform research into new ways and endeavors to decrease cost and increase revenue, and improve efficiency. i.e. solar energy - where able - short term cost for long term gain.

Ensure that extra unnecessary costs are not being spent on things such as extra cars, office items, etc.

More revenue raising ideas like Claret Ash estate - sell unnecessary buildings.

Animal control is unnecessary:

- let farmers handle livestock
- fine farmers who let livestock out of paddock because of poor fencing

Our roads are disgusting!

-need a roundabout at the corner of Bradley & Ollera Street, not the one at the Council

Youth services and youth in general need more attention. We need the youth of Guyra to stay here! Jobs will soon need to be filled and there will be no one within the Council to fill them. If there's no one in the Council and youth are leaving, then Council's future rate payers are leaving. Council could take money from aged care, as there are great facilities there, and put it into youth opportunities.

Council can reduce their own costs. i.e. Council cars, do we really need them? Really?

Solar will make Guyra more efficient within the future!!!

More housing...Claret Ash was a great idea!

-Tomato farm are having trouble with workers due to housing.

The state of Local Council's financial viability is a disgrace. The NSW Government should be doing away with the 'capped' rates system and the local member should be made to attend these meetings so the people can have a direct access to their representation.

Good transparency in payment by Council for services provided by contractors / shared Council resources.  
Look forward to more community consultation with 'average' rate payers. This invitation tonight was aimed at specific town and country people, chosen with what criteria?  
Not a cross section of Guyra ratepayers.

I feel that Council must be able to maintain the SRV at its present position.  
I know that people want lots of extra services but we must live within our means. It is not only tough for Councils but for lots of rate payers particularly at this present time and for many rate payers they must accept prices that are offered not prices that they would like to obtain.  
If the money is not available then some services may have to be cut.

Need to have input from specific interest groups.  
Default on behalf of State and Federal govt further responsibility having set / limited Council budget.  
Sale of excess properties.

Is Council able to raise additional rates by:

1. Rates collected on new subdivisions
2. Selling off unused town roads
3. Encouraging water using business to come to Guyra
4. Charging commercial rates on premises used as backyard businesses

Maintenance of essential roads so important for livestock freight and produce freight in this district.

Investigate solar power

Consistent with animal control (not just pick targets).

I answered No to question 9 but would have been happy answering "yes" TO a question such as "Would you be willing to consider a rate rise for a specific period to assist with improvements?"

More public notification of the meetings

It seems to me a catch 22 situation on this. we are an agricultural town and must remember this in all our decision making.

See comments in 'other' boxes -- that I have replied in terms of my residency in Black Mountain. I'm impressed by the way Guyra itself is looking, there's a positive outlook that hasn't always been there in previous years.

You're all doing a great job. Thank you for caring for our community.

Reduce Council wages and perks to make up the shortfall.

live within means

Do not see why rural rates have to go up for town projects, we live so far from Guyra that we DO NOT use any town facilities yet we have to pay rates for them and our unsealed roads are quite often neglected putting our and other people's lives in danger. I remember not long ago we got a note with rate rise to state that the rate rise was due to upgrades to certain town facilities that we never use. I think the rural areas further away from Guyra should be somehow exempted from some of the same % of rate rises as those using the town facilities. Our service towns are Inverell and Armidale.....We do it extremely tough on the land and find it hard to make ends meet only to have to pay rates for services we do not utilise and have to travel on gravel roads which cause many flat tyres from rocks and high maintenance cost to our cars from the rough roads Eg. more wheel alignments, shock absorbers, cracked rims etc . It is upsetting to see our rates go to things like beatification of the town. Thank you

Increase public transport from Tingha to other towns.  
Strengthen the relationship between Tingha and Guyra.

Need public transport, especially for aged.  
More for children to do, teens especially.  
More playgrounds.

Footpaths & cycle ways are two totally different things and should be separated foot paths are important and need to be maintained cyclist should be using our roads not our footpaths

I believe the Preschool is costing Council monies which could be spent elsewhere. Maybe it could be privatised.