



Date _____

WIN A 2-FOR-1 MOVIE PASS

Gunnedah Shire Council is currently **consulting the community** about possible rate increases over the next three years. This is called a **Special Rate Variation** or SRV because it is over and above the relatively small rate increases that the community is asked to pay each year.

HOW TO WIN YOUR 2-FOR-1 MOVIE PASS

- **Watch the short film screening before today's feature film**
- **Answer the following three questions**
- **Return this form to the Box Office to collect your 2-for-1 Movie Pass**
- **Please note the Movie Pass is valid until 28 February 2013* (subject to capacity)**

1. Community assets are the roads and public facilities that Local Government maintains on your behalf. Circle those facilities that are **NOT** maintained by Gunnedah Shire Council:

Cemeteries	Sporting Fields	Public Toilets
Swimming Pools	The Civic Centre	Gunnedah Golf Course
Rural Roads	The Rugby Club	Gunnedah Showground
The Services & Bowling Club	Town & Village Streets	Visitor Information Centre
Parks & Gardens	Waste Management (The Tip)	Sewerage Treatment Plant
Library	Airport	TAFE College
Water Supply	Rural Halls	

2. A toilet block costs approximately \$200,000 to build in 2012. What will be the total cost of building, cleaning, repairs, vandalism, insurance and replacement at the end of 30 years?

- (a) \$350,000
- (b) \$550,000
- (c) \$750,000
- (d) \$950,000

3. Like your own house and garden, Local Government's existing assets will not last for the next generation unless we spend more money on repairs and maintenance.

The Gunnedah community may decide that it doesn't want to accept significant rate increases. If so, which Council buildings, roads or other facilities would you be prepared to lose? If you want to, please include your reasons.

**RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO THE BOX OFFICE
TO RECEIVE YOUR TWO-FOR-ONE PASS TO THE CIVIC**

Please submit only one form per person

HAVE YOUR SAY



Community Forums Your chance to ask questions and have a say

Community Forums be held on the following dates at different locations in the shire. Councillors and Staff will present the background information, answer questions and gather feedback from the community about the special Rate Variation (SRV).

Location	Venue	Date	Time
Kelvin Community Forum	Kelvin Hall	Tues. 22/01/2013	7.30am-9am
Mullaley Community Forum	Mullaley Hall	Wed. 23/01/2013	6pm-8pm
Carroll Community Forum	Carroll School	Thurs. 24/01/2013	6pm-8pm
Curlewis Community Forum	Curlewis Hall	Tues. 29/01/2013	5pm-7pm
Breeza Community Forum	Breeza Hall	Tues. 29/01/2013	7.30pm-9.30pm
Gunnedah Community Forum	Smithurst Theatre	Thurs. 31/01/2013	5.15pm-7.15pm
Gunnedah Community Forum	Smithurst Theatre	Sat. 02/02/2013	10am-12 noon
Gunnedah Community Forum	Smithurst Theatre	Thurs. 07/02/2013	12 noon-2pm

Gunnedah Community Comments on what services to cut:	Support the SRV
When any business is in financial trouble the first to be looked at is excess staff not outdoor but indoor.	N
Sporting fields - user pays	N
3 councillors	N
A review of operational efficiency would be a primary recommendation. The ????? of value adding to local assets that may be in time become self sufficient.	N
Development of Tourism may be an option in need of investigation.	
Age of technology & most families have access to internet & computers	N
Airport	N
Airport - Commercial Airlines within 60 minutes of Gunnedah	N
Airport - currently only used by private planes	N
Airport - currently only used by private planes	N
Airport - it's not used for regular people only for private use so should be maintained or sold. If there were flights to Sydney or Brisbane for Qantas or Brindabella then that would be ok.	N
Airport - No commercial flights coming in	N
Airport not used by general community. Commercial airlines within 60 minutes of Gunnedah and cut off in a flood.	N
Airport , Gunnedah Showground	N
Airport, Golf course, Sports fields, Swimming Pools	N
All facilities are significant to the area therefore costs should be taken elsewhere.	
Anything that flood damages repeatedly. Incorrect signage - or village signs that have shelf lives of less than 4 years. Cement paths - for bikes. Not needed	N
Anything that isn't currently used or that doesn't have the proper amount of staff / volunteers to maintain. Do we really need two theatres? The Civic can be used for most functions/ meetings, as it is new	N
Become better money managers and lose unnecessary staff in the office you wont have to increase the rates as high. Outdoor staff should also have a better work ethic.	N
Become better money managers and lose unnecessary staff in the office you won't have to increase the rates as high. Outdoor staff should also have a better work ethic.	N
Building future sustaining life style???? Why then did my 2 young children lose their swimming coach. Lets have a look at the money and to me wasted on road works, is there an excess of people doing the job?	N
Cemeteries - cremate everyone	N
Cemetery Grave Digging, the business should employ their own staff to do	N

Gunnedah Community Comments on what services to cut:	Support the SRV
Cemetery's - cemetery's in Gunnedah employ their own staff and our family services	N
Council Chambers	N
Council Vehicles admin staff	N
Cut down on indoor council staff as the staff numbers have increased with wages. Long service leave etc also has been increased	N
Don't want to lose anything. Get rid of the Deadwood.	N
Don't pay rates .not a rate payer	N
Excess administration staff and other Parks. Stop Employment of Staff who Don't Reside in Gunnedah Shire. Monitor Council estimates and over run expenditure on jobs.	N
Gunnedah Show Ground	N
Has and Individual/External Audit been conducted; Recommendations on reducing/efficiency of internal costs.	N
I don't think we have to lose our services it should be on a user pays system e.g. the Town Airport should have Landing Fee of \$10.00 per tine like every other airport in NSW.	N
I don't think we have to lose our services it should be on a user pays system e.g. the town airport should have landing fee of \$10.00 a ton like every other airport in NSW	N
I regret the proposed increase in rates councils should reduce the overheads i.e. overpaid management!!	N
I would probably say the Airport as it isn't really needed here and we can always go to Tamworth. Also it is probably the most expensive.	N
I'd be prepared to lose the asphalt spraying machines as it seems fairly ineffective and the don't even compact the asphalt afterwards. I prefer the sections the contractors have done. Don't even start me on Memorial Avenue recent Works.	N
If we the rate payers could see where our money was going and same had some say then we may not mind the rate rise but how could that be possible I don't know. Money is hard to get and I don't like wasting it so how can we YOU be smarter with OUR money. PS We need one really good park, not lots of high to maintained wasted spaces.	N
If we the rate payers could see where our money was going and same had same say. Then we may not mind the rate rise. But how could that be possible. I don't know. Money is hard to get and I don't like wasting it. So how can we you be smarter with our Money? PS We need one really good park not lots of highly maintained wasted spaces.	N
Information centre - No one ever goes there. The Rugby Club.	N
Less beautiful of CBD. Waste of money on "Welcome to Gunnedah" signs	N

Gunnedah Community Comments on what services to cut:	Support the SRV
Less money spend on continually repairing damage done to roundabout structure in town that are continually damaged by the trucks. Money spent on infrastructure bridge on the footpaths that could have be more wisely spent by other infrastructure does the same purpose but would be cheaper to maintain.	N
less money spent on continually repairing damage done to roundabout structure in town that are continually damaged by trucks. Money spent on infrastructure e.g. bridges on footpaths that could have be more wisely spent by other infrastructure does the same purpose but would be cheaper to maintain.	N
Less plant and machinery - more productivity office working - more open house more explanation of who does what - more client approached - more productivity Less sporting fields	N
Library - in this age we have most of these facilities available at home	N
Middle management, not wasting existing rate funds e.g. road works. Should be privatised ratepayers would get better value for money.	N
More funding and Grant Applications for funding to cover for State and Federal Government. Get rid of Halls Kelvin Breeza Mullaley No longer needed of transport improvements and increased traffic developments and technology	N
New Council Vehicles Admin Staff	N
None just get rid of some of the office workers	N
None more funding & grant applications for funding to cover for State 7Federal Government. Get rid of halls Kelvin, Breeza, Mullaley No longer needed of transport improvements & increased traffic developments& technology	N
None would expect more funding from state and federal governments	N
Outdoor maintenance staff & road maintenance and use contractors. Where contractors have been used in the past in other towns the jobs have generally been done much faster and well in budget.	N
Parks & gardens could be successfully privatised . Community halls can be run by local communities. Sporting fields can be run by sporting clubs.	N
Parks and gardens because of the vandalism costs	N
Parks and gardens could be successfully privatised. Community halls can be run by local communities, sporting fields can be run by sporting clubs.	N
Please reduce Council Management	N
Public Toilets people treat them badly anyway so why have them there for people to destroy. Yes tourists wont have somewhere to stop in town but vandals have ruined that for people.	N
Reduce bad management decisions e.g. wide barrier in front of old sheep yards at stock selling centre. Make the increases over 5 years rather than 3 years. Produce a public budget to back up your claims.	N
Reduce council management	N
Reduce the number of administrative staff in council offices - lessen vehicles used from same	N

Gunnedah Community Comments on what services to cut:	Support the SRV
Remove some of the Deadwood to start with and get someone that is qualified.	N
Replacing brickwork on roundabouts that repeatedly gets knocked down	N
Roads being upgraded	N
roads being upgrading	N
Rural Halls	N
Rural Halls	N
Rural Halls , Airport, Rural roads [not much done to them now]	N
Rural Halls ,Parks & Gardens	N
Rural Halls could be maintained by Progress Societies e.g. Breeza. Airport could be given to free enterprise	N
Rural Halls swimming pool	N
Rural Halls swimming pool	N
Rural Halls, Airport and Rural Roads (not much done to them now)	N
Rural Halls, swimming pool	N
Rural Roads, Specialised Sporting Fields e.g. 1st grade cricket pitch, cemeteries	N
Shire council middle management, further efficiencies with workings of council need to be reviewed and streamlined ?????????? where appropriate, more actively pursuing grants/funding for assets such as swimming pool etc.	N
Showground	N
Showground-	N
Showground - only used a few times a year but still need facilities for sport [e.g. basketball, Gym]Please look at stopping WASTAGE within council e.g. car travel -- efficiency of work	N
Showground- only used a few times a year but still need facilities for sporting e.g. basketball and gym. Please look at stopping wastage within council. e.g. car travel and efficiency of work.	N
Smaller parks not significant i.e. Jae High Park on Hunter & Meldrum	N
Spend more money on maintaining these facilities efficiently	N
The Airport - doesn't have enough flights to cater for everyday people .Most people go to Tamworth anyway.	N
The airport and rural halls	N
the rate increase is too large and I see it as unjustified. Council receives money for infrastructure from state and federal governments.	N
The roads are substandard as it is, that won't be a great loss. One of the two theatres	N
The toilet	N
This question was obviously designed by a spy doctor. There are better ways to avoid huge rate rises- cut out appointing extra managers	N
To ask for a 40% increase from rate payers what do we get for our money? Less council admin and more much less paid working employees.	N
Toilets	N
Too many workers in council.	N

Gunnedah Community Comments on what services to cut:	Support the SRV
Town Hall - Too Costly	N
Trees / plants -Main Street. Brick wall around roundabout	N
Trees on side of Roads(Black Jack Creek)	N
Upgrades to town council chambers, upgraded to main street. Spend more on road sealing on rate payers areas that have been promised for years and always spent on town areas where councillors live.(Screw the rural areas again policy)	N
We don't have our road maintained very well Kilphysic Rd, 2 mail services a week, have to be responsible for all rubbish removal. Have not had a taxable income for 5 years(farmers).	N
Work more efficiently	N
A hard pill to swallow but necessary.	Y
A rise -yes - but don't drain our meagre money we have to live on. My budget is strained already. Council employees need to be worth their pay before I can want to pay more rates	Y
Airport	Y
Airport	Y
Airport - Little use for the general community	Y
Airport-Can't get a plane from Gunnedah.	Y
All facilities are needed so it is advised that the rate will need to increase over a period of years	Y
All Gunnedah Facilities are essential and respond to the diversity in the community . A small rate rise can be accommodated.	Y
All infrastructure is important in its own way, all is needed to be maintained.	Y
Cemeteries- volunteers	Y
Don't know	Y
Don't want to lose any so we will pay.	Y
Don't want to lose any thank you.	Y
Don't want to lose any facilities. Prepared to accept some rate increase if rural roads maintained.	Y
Don't want to lose anything. Get rid of dead wood.	Y
From the list in question 1 none really. Visitor information could be unmanned. Sport areas could be more multipurpose e.g. showground.	Y
Golf Course	Y
Gunnedah thrives because of all that we have ,for us as a community & for all who visit our town- I would be very disappointed to lose any of our facilities therefore understand fully the need for the rate rise.	Y
Happy to pay increased Rates	Y
Happy to pay increased rates.	Y
I agree with the rate increase as I believe all community facilities should be retained and maintained to a high standard for future generations	Y
I am happy to accept the significant rate increases as I do not wish to lose any of our facilities	Y

Gunnedah Community Comments on what services to cut:	Support the SRV
I am not prepared to lose any	Y
I am not prepared to lose anything	Y
I don't think our community deserves to lose any of our facilities. This means increasing rates by a tiny amount each person. I believe it should be done.	Y
I don't want to see any of our town's facilities downgraded. I fully support the rate rise and believe we have a responsibility to future generations.	Y
I don't feel that we should lose any facilities so I believe that the rates do need to increase but in small increments	Y
I don't want any lessening of our assets or services. Am willing to accept rate rise and not leave to future generations	Y
I have no problem with an increase in rate if our assets are maintained efficiently	Y
I have No problem with an increase in rates if our assets are managed effectively	Y
I support the increase - all community facilities must be retained for the future.	Y
I understand that a rate increase is necessary and would not like to see assets lost or poorly maintained however expenses should be cut back as much as possible [i.e. out sourcing surveys / studies etc at considerable expense when we have the ability & talent in town] Every dollar spent should be carefully scrutinised..... is it really necessary!	Y
I would prefer to keep our current facilities and perhaps even improve on them.	Y
I wouldn't want to lose any.	Y
Increasing rates are always an unpopular decision . Each facility that is maintained by Council Seems very important in one way or another . I wouldn't like to lose anything. I hope things can be decided fairly and amicable - maybe we can do without public toilets!	Y
Irritating Documentaries before Movies	Y
It has to happen we can't stand still	Y
It would be undesirable to lose any of our services	Y
Keep all existing Services	Y
Keep all existing services	Y
N/A	Y
NA	Y
Nil	Y

Gunnedah Community Comments on what services to cut:	Support the SRV
Nil	Y
Nil!	Y
No comment	Y
None	Y
None - All facilities benefit the community rates can be increased if needed to maintain services for the future of the town our children and community welfare	Y
None - as have use for them all	Y
None - I approve the rate increase but more info to the public on councils budget what it intends to plan for.	Y
None - Put up the rates	Y
None - The facilities should be kept within the budget & regular small increases preferable to one large one. 1 to 1 office to field staff also seems not tenable. And for small electorates small numbers of councillors would seem appropriate.	Y
None - would expect more funding from state and Federal Governments	Y
None Maintain all assets.	Y

Gunnedah Community Comments on what services to cut:	Support the SRV
None. I believe all are important. Poorly maintained roads lead to accidents. Poorly maintained buildings lead to greater cost in the long run. We need to look after what we have for the future.	Y
None. I'll happily pay the rate increase	Y
None. Put my rates up	Y
None. We have a well resourced town that requires constant maintenance. There must be increases [unfortunately]	Y
Not wanting to lose services / infrastructure but need to look closely at the economics of providing them e.g. staff costs	Y
Nothing	Y
Nothing - put up my rates	Y
Nothing just pay rates	Y
Park Lands - Roads	Y
Rate revenue & user fees should be used for maintenance & repairs. Appropriate borrowing should be used to pay for new infrastructure & major replacements to spread the cost over the life of each asset.	Y
Rates should increase by small increments each year to maintain all areas	Y
Spread increase over % years & consider amalgamating with an adjoining council to reduce the huge amount of staffing admin, executive etc roles	Y
Swimming pool [why open everyday]	Y
There are no facilities by council which this community should have e to lose. Rate increases may will be the way to go but there should also be a committed effort by council to cut the waste e.g.: ripping up freshly poured concrete footpath and curbs just because it was done wrong. A fleet of less expensive cars which are more fuel efficient rather than allowing more expensive fuel guzzlers to be chosen.	Y
Top heavy to management	Y
trees on side of roads [Black Jack Creek]	Y
We cannot afford to lose any facilities	Y
We don't want to lose any facilities!!!!	Y
We need progress which costs so rates must increase	Y
We need them all to be maintained	Y
We need them all to be maintained	Y
Why Lose? A little extreme! Why not introduce e.g.: voluntary rosters, work for the dole, community service.	Y
	Y
	Y
	Y
	Y
	Y
	Y

Summary Report For Special Rates Variation Survey

Question	Answered	Skipped
1. Have you read the information on the website about the proposed rate variation?	141	0
Yes	96.9% (127)	
No	3.1% (4)	

2. Council recommends reading the information on the website before taking the survey:	141	0
No thanks	3.8% (5)	
I have read it	96.2% (126)	

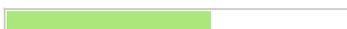
3. Please indicate how important the following types of infrastructure are to you.	1	2	3	4	5
Airport	41	27	28	6	38
Bicycle Paths	38	31	40	15	15
Community Buildings	8	13	42	48	28
Footpaths	9	13	35	52	29
Roads – Rural Sealed	3	13	17	43	62
Roads – Rural Unsealed	9	18	22	37	52
Roads – Urban	7	7	23	43	59
Showground	19	35	51	18	16
Stormwater Drainage	8	13	26	42	49
Swimming Pool	22	18	26	37	36
Sporting Fields and Parks	12	13	32	45	36

1 means the Infrastructure is not at all important and 5 means that it is very important.

4. Please indicate how important it is for Council to renew and maintain each type of infrastructure at an acceptable level?	1	2	3	4	5
Airport	41	24	26	14	36
Bicycle Paths	36	31	41	19	13
Community Buildings	5	12	50	42	31
Footpaths	7	17	40	47	28
Roads – Rural Sealed	3	14	20	44	58
Roads – Rural Unsealed	5	19	23	41	50
Roads – Urban	3	11	25	43	58
Stormwater Design	7	12	33	42	46
Swimming Pool	21	22	32	31	34
Showground	23	27	53	21	16
Sporting Fields and Parks	12	15	37	41	33

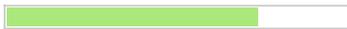
1 means that it is not at all important and 5 means that it is very important.

5. As a ratepayer / resident of Gunnedah Shire Council, would you prefer to see a Special Rate Variation to cover the gap in funding for renewal and maintenance of infrastructure or would you prefer a reduction in standards of infrastructure and services? 141 0

Special Rate Variation	60.3% (85)	
Reduction on standards of infrastructure and services	41.1% (58)	

6. Can you identify any circumstances where you would support the proposed Special Rate Variation? 76 65

7. Do you have any infrastructure renewal projects you would like to suggest that Council should undertake on a priority basis? 141 0

Yes	27.0% (38)	
No	74.5% (105)	

8. If 'Yes', please describe the infrastructure renewal project/s 36 105

9. On the following scale how would you rate your support for a Special Rate Variation to allow Council to maintain, renew infrastructure within the community at an acceptable level?

Do you oppose / favour Council's proposal	Answered	Skipped
Response 1	(34)	(107)
Response 2	(19)	(122)
Response 3	(28)	(113)
Response 4	(28)	(113)
Response 5	(31)	(110)

10. Please enter any other comments you wish to make. 58 83

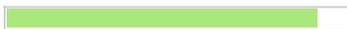
11. Which town/village or surrounds do you live in? 141 0

Breeza	0.7% (1)	
Carroll	2.1% (3)	
Curlewis	5.7% (8)	
Emerald Hill	2.1% (3)	
Gunnedah	78.7% (111)	
Kelvin	1.4% (2)	
Mullaley	4.3% (6)	
Tambar Springs	2.1% (3)	
Other	6.4% (9)	

12. What type of dwelling do you live in? 141 0

Duplex/Unit	5.7% (8)	
Multi Dwelling	2.1% (3)	
Single House	93.6% (132)	

13. Do you own or rent this dwelling? 141 0

Own / Purchasing (129)	91.5%	
Rent	9.9% (14)	

14. What age group are you in?

0-18 years	0.7% (1)	
19-34 years	10.6% (15)	
35-44 years	19.1% (27)	
45-54 years	27.0% (38)	
55-64 years	26.2% (37)	
65 years and over	17.0% (24)	

15. What gender are you?

141 0

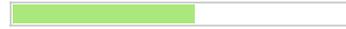
Female

41.8% (59)



Male

53.9% (76)



Rather not say

7.1% (10)



16. If you wish to receive Council's Newsletter please provide us with your email address:

15

126



Summary Report For Special Rates Variation Survey – Comments

Question 6. Can you identify any circumstances where you would support the proposed Special Rate Variation?

Additional Comments

If we were to receive the quality of services that could be justified by the special rate variation
No. It just goes to show how poor money managers the previous councils were. Neglecting regular maintenance in preference to projects that only serve a minority of the community
Would only support it if the rise is reasonable and it is shown that the Council are prepared to make cutbacks in the Shire offices.
The previous question is too narrow. It does not allow for a third option, which is to divert finances from non essential services and activities which are only self-serving for some councillors, to essential services which ratepayers demand and expect for their money. Most will have no option but to tick the first box.
I wouldn't, The rates are already High. If the Council has not spent wisely or invested appropriately in the past, why should the residents have to pay for your stuff ups. I am an investor in your town and I will now sell the property. Your rates are comparable to my house in Redfern NSW
I would support a MUCH LOWER special rate variation if I genuinely thought council had reviewed their own operations and addressed numerous examples of waste, inefficiency and incompetence BEFORE demanding more from ratepayers
No, the project list has more than just maintenance of infrastructure and has new expansion projects included. It is misleading and the above survey question is biased, it should also ask if you prefer to maintain the existing infrastructure & services. For example, the new cycle ways are nice things to have however our roads are NOT congested like Sydney and our streets are much wider than Sydney roads. Therefore cycle ways are NOT essential, they are a luxury! The upgrade & expansion of the airport is NOT essential as we are well serviced by Narrabri & Tamworth, plus we were unable to support a commercial route in the past. If the airport upgrade is required for the mining industry & their FIFO workers, let them pay for it as part of their DA. When the mining boom ends the stranded asset of an upgraded airport that can no longer be supported will be at the cost of the mining company, NOT ratepayers. Council management have to demonstrate that they have also tightened their belt and increased their efficiencies before they deserve new funds to waste away.
I don't wish to see the services in the area decline
I would support a one-off single figure special rate variation if council genuinely needed it. I would not support it until council had undergone an extensive review process in which they improved their operations and procedures to avoid current high levels of waste and inefficiency. Throughout the community consultation process I have been astounded to hear so many stories about council's waste and incompetence that I have no confidence that they would use any extra money efficiently and productively. I would like council to abandon it's current application to lpart and spend the next 12 - 24 mths getting their operations in order, then come back to the community with a more realistic figure. One small example - I still get all my rate notices on the same day in 3 separate envelopes whereas my neighbours who have several properties in a different shire get all theirs in the same envelope. This is despite the fact that I have asked council to put them in the same envelope nearly every time I have paid my rates in the last 25 years. Hmm.... One large example - a couple of years ago the council upgraded an area of the Kelvin Road near Rangari. As part of the process they blasted some hills to make the road flatter. They kept going until they actually had dips instead of flats. After truckload and truckload of dirt/rock had been carted away, they then

<p>had to bring half of it back again....at great expense to ratepayers....Is this the fault of the road workers??? the engineers??? or a communication problem between them???? Something is very wrong with the way council does these jobs. There are numerous examples of work (eg. roundabouts, storm water drainage, roads) being done then having to be done again (and sometimes yet again) before they get it right. I don't think council has a right to ask ratepayers for more money when they waste what they already have. I have just been told that the councilors are looking into appointing independent experts to conduct an Organizational review of the council. I believe this confirms that there are serious concerns about the efficiency and productivity of Gunnedah Shire Council. I believe this process should be finalised and recommendations acted on BEFORE any application to Ipart is made.</p>
<p>I support the variation if not so much money is given to individuals and community groups. Use the money to provide better assets and decrease the services offered or move to user pays for building hire, sports fees and swimming pool.</p>
<p>Removal of the Riverine Project and movement of sporting fields from the LTF and Delivery Plans</p>
<p>Neither the SRV or reduction on standards of infrastructure and services is an acceptable option.</p> <p>The proposed SRV is way too high for the socioeconomic background of the Gunnedah Community. Not every family is employed by the mining companies and on good wage.</p> <p>The only way I would support a SRV is if it were at a lower percentage.</p>
<p>Where it is applied to the industry & business that can handle the cost of it , that is those that have also been mainly responsible for the increase in rate of depreciation on council assets and the increase in costs for services . Here is a chance at local government level to correct the balance of the two tiered economy as well as offset state government's reluctance to introduce royalties for regions, which I believe council unanimously supports.</p>
<p>renewal of existing road infrastructure/not basic maintenance.</p> <p>concrete causeway construction/to eliminate ongoing expensive maintenance.</p> <p>continue to upgrade our plant fleet to high standards.</p> <p>plan to construct new culverts/pipes in problem areas of road network,</p>
<p>I would support a rate increase IF I am able to advertise my business on signage on all incoming roads to Gunnedah. At present I am told I cannot because I don't supply food however there are numerous businesses such as real estate and chemists which have fixed signage on the out skirts of the town. I am being discriminated against and would never agree to any rate increase until I am allowed to have a fixed sign as other non food providing businesses do</p>
<p>I support it but would prefer to see the airport dropped. I also think it is important that the town looks attractive.</p> <p>don't just focus on infrastructure cuts, consider elimination of community services that don't pay their way</p>
<p>Only if the extra money required is levied across all shire residents (those on the electoral roll), not just rate payers.</p>
<p>If council addressed some of its own wastage problems (and there are many) and was able to show that they had really tightened THEIR belt and that they were in real need of a small increase I would perhaps give the matter my consideration BUT NOT to the extent of the current proposal</p>
<p>Only if council makes all available efficiency and productivity improvements</p>
<p>Maintenance in every community asset</p>
<p>Given that elected councilors have no qualifications to handle the assets and services I see no reason to be increasing rates. The money will be wasted as is the norm and more people will be paid more to waste it.</p>

<p>Spread over a much longer period, most people cannot sustain high increases in their budget if there was value for the extra money it is going to cost me to live in Gunnedah</p>
<p>I support the rate increase on the following conditions</p> <p>The maintenance of all infra structure</p> <p>A more positive attitude toward industry</p> <p>A better and more efficient of available Funds</p> <p>The absolute retention of the airport</p>
<p>The airport and swimming facilities are vital to me. The airport is one of the State hotbeds of aviation in my opinion, given that I travel widely. The idea this might be closed is very concerning to me.</p>
<p>We need the airport so everything to keep it operational I support</p>
<p>Less money spent on such high wages for senior staff. Many would not obtain the same income level if they were outside of the public service structure.</p> <p>Better utilisation of council plant and equipment.</p> <p>Subcontract some of the work to private enterprise, but only to local firms who employ local people.</p>
<p>Only after ALL road/parks/airport/showground groundkeeping and maintenance has been opened to tender to the private sector, and all affected Council staff offered redundancy as a matter of urgency.</p>
<p>I support the rate increase as being absolutely necessary.</p>
<p>Retention and upgrading of airport and pool</p>
<p>If council implemented an efficiency dividend such as the state and federal governments operate under. A forced percentage saving implemented annually where departmental budgets have to find, for example 2.5% budget savings annually. It forces departments to be as efficient as possible.</p>
<p>If Council can clearly show where they have made savings in efficiencies of doing things and still cannot meet budget. Does Council have a efficiency/saving strategy?</p> <p>Loss of some of the senior management which has grown with salary increases in recent years to the detriment of on ground works staff</p>
<p>When the value of property increases dramatically.</p>
<p>Once Council starts to remove ineffective management positions I would support a special rate variation if required. At present there are other ways to reduce spending & getting rid of some ineffective management positions would certainly help.</p>
<p>Support SRV to ensure current services and facilities are maintained - do not wish to see reduction in amenity standard particularly given probable population increase in next few years.</p>
<p>No. Council already charge too much for essential services. e.g. greenwaster to the tip should not cost anything, granted if you come and collect it we'll pay, but when we dispose of it for you, and it is only green waste it's not right. Council already spend too much on the wrong things, e.g. re-tarring roads that have no problems and are not high traffic (e.g. OLD Tamworth road which is a dead end and was quite suitable), while other unsealed roads (e.g. wandobah rd) continue to have high traffic flows and continue to be in disrepair. Then there's View Street which was tarred twice in two months. Consumers are continually being told we need to tighten our belts and cut our spending in order to meet the rising costs of other infrastructure like electricity. It's time Council needs to look internally to become more efficient, instead of passing the buck for their overspending on to ratepayers.</p>

<p>If council could demonstrate a savings plan in their operations from everything like vehicle costs, staff numbers, reducing beaurocracy, outsourcing major road works to private companies, more transparent accounting to rate payers,</p>
<p>I don not believe the above question is fair. I do not support the current plan for a rate variation as I do not believe it can be justified. I would support a smaller increase.</p>
<p>Assurance that maintenance of infrastructure is conducted to a suitable level and on appropriate ventures. Should be conducted in accordance with most needed services first.</p>
<p>water supply to the south Wandobah area leaves a lot to be desired with water restriction meters in use with Gunnedah;s reputation in question. This supply should be upgraded & paid by developers as they are tapping into a supply that has not been able to supply mains pressure enjoyed by town residents.</p>
<p>1. I would like to support it more strongly than I do and these are the reasons why. I think it is wrong that a mining company can for example buy a thousand hectares of land and then only mine say 100 hectares and only pay mining rates on the 100 hectares. They have obviously bought it as a mining company and should pay the mining rate on the 1000 hectares. The same applies to land already mined and just sitting there doing nothing after rehab. Why should we ratepayers be asked to subsidise multinational coal companies. 2. Why not pay the Mayor a mileage allowance or have him use a council vehicle rather than supply him with a vehicle that is parked on his front lawn when not in use, I feel this is one way councilors could lead by example that they are serious about cutting costs. I don't have a problem with staff vehicles as I realise that if vehicles are not part of a package these days you don't get applicants for jobs.</p>
<p>We currently pay \$3500 in rates and cannot get our gravel road graded. This year alone the road has cost me personally 2 new tyres and a new windscreen. This really is not acceptable and the road has become unsafe.</p> <p>Besides having access to services when we visit town, we supply our own water, sewage, garbage etc and still are charged hefty rates. We also built a new home on acreage and paid \$10000 for a DA but travel to town on a gravel road which is not maintained properly by Council.</p>
<p>Ensuring that Swimming Pool is renewed and the Namoi parkands Complex proceeds.</p> <p>That renewal of road works both urban and rural is undertaken to bring roads to a safe and serviceable standard.</p>
<p>Council needs to be better money managers and show economic restraint in many areas before I would support a SRV.</p>
<p>Improved treated town water at Curlewis</p>
<p>The roads in the Carroll village need to be sealed to increase the value of the houses owned in the village. I would support the increase Rate Variation if this was to happen. People are moving to country areas, we need sealed roads, this will also cut the amount of dust in homes and stone marks on vehicles.</p>
<p>I would only support the special rate variation if all Community Infrastructure were guaranteed full funding as promised at the Community consultation forums.</p>
<p>Spend more on the urban villages for unsealed roads and infrastructure.</p>
<p>Neither of the above - Fix problems within the council first, why should we have to pay for your stuff ups. see my comment on the next question.</p> <p>We see your big brand new graders out on our unsealed roads about twice a year. why do we pay such big rates?</p>
<p>Only if I could see council being more efficient and prudent in their in-house spending.</p>
<p>The rise in rates should be at the same level that our wages are increased 3%</p>

No. Council already gets an increase to cover cost increases/inflation (unlike farmers) and should work within their budget as everyone else has to. These proposed increases are outrageous considering the current economic climate. People not experiencing the coal/gas boom are doing it tougher than ever. If anything, council should be considering a special rate variation in the form of a decrease for rural ratepayers.
Council needs to review its administration expenditure and then look at services and infrastructure projects
To enable all to enjoy and use infrastructure to the fullest, Council must think laterally to enable our district's potential to be achieved - if needs doing. do it!
to maintain and improve infrastructure that will help Gunnedah grow as a rural centre and encourage business to come to Gunnedah and surrounds
if mining companies injected funds at proportional rates
Only if our income - ability to afford the increase miraculously happened
Investment in major infrastructure now so that failure to do so now does not cost more in the future. Gunnedah has to retain an attractable level for investors and those passing through. Unfortunately this is mainly seen in the built up area the majority of time.
In relation to above question, I do not believe there is a gap in funding for the need to increase rates
If there was more infrastructure implemented to try to stop the high crime rate, disgusting events such as burning down of homes
Only if complete asset management assessment is undertaken and savings can be identified esp in areas such as wages efficiency and labor efficiencies.
I would propose better management of Council resources. The time and money spent on footpaths that were incorrectly done and then had to be redone was ridiculous.
i am NOT in support of the rate variation as i feel you already get an increase every year with i feel that does not help the community i feel you have tried all stops to save money and if that is not working you are not doing your job i feel that you have far to many bosses in one office that needs only to be one when i see the council workers i don't feel they are doing their job in a quick manner in the area we have had so many broken promises from the council so there is no way i am going to send you my blessing for a rate increase as i feel you do nothing much to help the smaller communities

Question 8

Do you have any infrastructure renewal projects you would like to suggest that council should undertake on a priority basis?

If 'Yes', please describe the infrastructure renewal project/s

Blackjack Creek storm water
Council should look into alternative parking arrangements in the main street of Gunnedah. Reverse angled parking is a disaster, especially with greater volume of traffic. Drivers are reluctant to use off street parking as it is too inconvenient. front in parking is quicker, allowing better traffic flow, and puts the onus on the parked vehicle to re-enter traffic flow, rather than traffic having to be held up and clogging the roadway. Council should be looking to attracting supermarket chains to establish stores such as Big W and KMart. Serious shopping requires trips to Tamworth. There goes the money.
The main town toilets could do with an upgrade and the Gunnedah main street paving program should be

continued.
Hunter Street between View and Wentworth Streets
Roads
Basic infrastructure like roads & storm water, followed by other council infrastructure that is part an parcel of the necessary everyday use by the community which if it's fails would have unpleasant results for the electorate and legal ramifications for council. Airport is extremely important but outside funding should be sought either from state or federal as well be part of Independent Planning Agreements as the Mining Companies would directly benefit from this.
Maintain beautification programs
street tree renewal work
Airport, rubbish tip, swimming pool, show ground
The only thing that I can directly relate to the rates that I pay is that if I am lucky the road that I travel to access my home may be graded every 18 months. I shop in Gunnedah but can no longer get a park for my vehicle due the way over budgeted main street upgrade. Not a good move.
cut staff duplications
Swimming Pool
Swimming Pool. Finish Town Hall project
Airport
Storm water, sewerage works use treated water for sports field get rid of the weeds
possibly some form of energy efficiency within the town area.
I think the airport should be maintained to a better standard. There have been an average of one medical air transport each week since June 2012. There is also constant use by RFS and private aeroplanes.
All progressive towns have one very important infrastructure and that is a modern & up to date airport. Gunnedah is extremely fortunate that the airport is very close to to our CBD. Very Important Decision making CEO's fly in ,as well as several air ambulance aircraft, fire fighting and flood relief personnel, medivac planes, & helicopters requiring fuel.
The Pool (although I or my family dont use it). The Riverine project should be wound back and not so much money spent on it.
The town hall is far too small for functions such as the Deb Ball etc. Narrabri has the Crossing Theatre and Gunnedah is in need of such a structure. Unfortunately, Gunnedah lags behind other towns of a similar size when it comes to community services and infrastructure, but I'm not sure why.
Pool upgrade
1. Swimming Pool

2. Urban Roads
3. Rural Roads
4. Town Hall renewal
Swimming pool upgrade
Curlewis Town Treated water
Carroll village roads
safety of rural roads after flood damage
More public carparks near south school
Provide sewerage to commercial zoned areas (eg Quia Rd). Construct flood levee to protect Gunnedah from floods, which would reduce flood repair costs & protect riverside assets such as roads, sporting fields, cycle ways etc.
Roads in the Breeza village.
Booloocooroo Road should be widened before an accident happens it is a very busy road now with all the new houses being built
swimming pool, showground and dog show facilities
Grain Valley Road
More security cameras, advocating for more Police presence in streets, especially late at night when most of the shop windows and vandalism occurs
The swimming pool is very important and should be renewed / maintained
The airport. For continued growth of the community, don't be short sighted!!!! As with previous Councils.

Additional Comments

Please enter any other comments you wish to make.

Gunnedah infrastructure and services has been placed under great stress by the influx of mining and the associated population and service demand that mining brings. Not everyone in Gunnedah is a high paid miner and we are going to be expected to pay for services to meet the needs of these people. The mining companies should bear a huge responsibility in maintaining and upgrading our infrastructure and services as it is their business that is stressing our town. It is interesting to note that our Local member upon his campaign trail made the outstanding promise of royalties for regions and look what's happening now, you are asking us to pay for it.
Learn how to prioritise maintenance and upgrades. Plan for the future as it is cheaper to upgrade at today's prices than to half do a job today only to have to do more tomorrow
If there were less Chiefs within staff and more Indians to carry out the work required instead of managers and directors on very high salaries taking up the bulk of council's finances. It seems that nearly every week there are more internal staff employed while there are very few replacements of outdoor staff who leave or a fed up with trying to carry the burden of staff that have left. Please have a review of internal staffing levels,

and justify why there are so many.
I support it but will be furious if the council still goes ahead and sells off community assets like local parks. The fear is that the council will increase rates but still sell assets and reduce services as well. Nowhere has council committed to do anything in return for the increased revenue - such as a guarantee that current services will be maintained. If council gave this undertaking then there would be more community support
Perhaps a clean out of the pen/paper walkers in the Shire office would cancel the need for a rate variation and still maintain the high standards of infrastructure and stands.
I believe it is possible for council to maintain and renew infrastructure by cutting waste and inefficiency in council operations and reducing staff levels without the need for such a huge rate increase. To date council has taken no positive steps to optimize their efficiency and increase their productivity prior to asking ratepayers for this increase.
Is it possible Council could downsize it's staff numbers. eg more part time and less full time employees? Lease more of it's assets over short term or long term commitments, with a provision that they are maintained by the lessee? E.g. Civic theatre complex, information centre.
Council should summarise how they have done a review of council itself for effectiveness & efficiencies and reduced costs & overheads as a response to the increasing costs of inputs. All businesses have to live within their means, council needs to demonstrate that a) they have considered this & b) taken action to reduce costs & overheads (each action & cost saving should be itemised). We all have to do more with less & live within our means. Management has not demonstrated how they are doing this. How has Council taken into consideration the possibility of the Local Council Review findings, due in June 2013? This review could outline that Council amalgamations must occur and reduce the responsibilities of Council back to their legislative requirements only? At the moment Council have taken on the role of many activities which is outside their scope of responsibilities & hence puts pressure on the budgets. Council should do a review of the essential core activities based on legislative requirements, the extra activities that are nice to have & the wish list activities that are not essential & a luxury for the community to have. It appears that Council is trying to boost their future activities as per the project list to 2021-22 to demonstrate that they have value and justify the rate increase. This is an inefficient and self serving way to justify Councils activities at the expense of the rate payers. I strongly disagree with the rate increases and strongly support a complete forensic review of Managements activities, efficiencies & effectiveness as the first step to getting the council budget back to the Black. Beaurocracies should NOT be immune to the downsizing we are all doing in response to the increases of costs of doing business.
The council needs to look at ways of making do with the funds they are already receiving. The suggested rate increase is unreasonable and not affordable. If rates are increased now to maintain and renew infrastructure, rates will continue to increase forever. This is because there will forever be expenditure required to maintain and renew them. And this is unsustainable.
A more equitable distribution of rates across the user types should be reached quickly. We have a high Commercial rate and a low Rural rate compared to other councils.
I understand the increasing pressure on council's to provide and maintain services. However, the proposed increases are just too high for many sections of our community. Everyone has to live within their means - why should council be any different. Council cannot keep providing extra services without commensurate growth in industry, businesses and population. Our council needs to work smarter with what they have got.
Increase user charges to cover the shortfall and concentrate on core business such as roads, drainage and regulation.
If the council were to make a concerted effort to cut back spending in other areas there may be a way to

<p>bridge the gap.</p> <p>Does the council really need to spend \$80,000 on carpet for the administration building next financial year or \$350,000 on the council building? The council needs to find other areas of the budget that could be "tweaked" in order to make sure the rate rise is not so unaffordable for struggling families.</p>
<p>Need to maintain current services and assets</p>
<p>Only if the impost of this is targeted at the Mining & Associated Business that are reaping the benefits which is unfortunately having a negative effect on non related industries and business</p>
<p>Council provides many services and not just infrastructure and maybe there needs to be real consideration to remove these instead of the pool. The art gallery, tourist office and overall administration need review. Unfortunately this survey only focuses on infrastructure.</p>
<p>I am a rural rate payer. I feel the 1200 rural ratepayers pay an excessively disproportionate amount to the shire finances , currently 40%. The 9000 other non rural residents pay 32% currently. Urban residents are being effectively subsidised by a ratio of 7:1 by the farming sector. I currently pay \$6400 in shire rates this will increase to \$8512, more than enough to have the road graded twice a year ,don't you think?</p>
<p>Just one small matter which I have brought to Council's attention on numerous occasions to no avail: 8 rate notices come to the same address in 8 separate envelopes when ONE would be sufficient. There must be many instances throughout the Shire where the same situation arises.</p> <p>Council should put aside money each year for repairs and maintenance of infrastructure (invested) so that a huge increase is not necessary all at once.</p> <p>Most successful farmers have done this for generations.</p> <p>It should be noted that farmers in particular have a tough time at best with decreased commodity prices, fires, floods, droughts and the like. Where does our extra money come from? We cannot pass on price increases.</p> <p>Where do pensioners get the extra money? They have a hard enough time trying to manage on their money. .</p> <p>When times are tough ALL PEOPLE WITHIN THE SHIRE have to tighten their belts including the Shire.</p>
<p>I have answered the question about preference for rate increase or reduction in services only because I am required to by the survey. I do not agree with either of the alternatives offered. I feel council should make better use of its existing resources through productivity improvements.</p>
<p>Without a rate variation Gunnedah will decline rapidly</p>
<p>Apart from garbage service and lousy water supply not much else gets done in the village</p>
<p>I am a farmer and my costs continue to rise and my returns reduce and there is nothing I can do to stop this decline. You now wish to increase my rates or councils income by 40% over 4 years. I know this will be ignored, so again I waste my time being consulted when the decision has already been made. I don't know whom you think you are fooling</p>
<p>Restructure the Planning and Development section of Gunnedah Shire Council. Conduct Customer Service Training for the staff. Encourage the staff to be flexible and think of solutions to issues, rather than actively finding ways to oppose development in our town.</p>
<p>Every taxpayer in Australia has increased costs of living but no one is subsidising me and my family so why should residents have to pay taxes twice. We already are paying higher fuel prices ourselves and than to have to pay extra rates to cover councils expenses for fuel etc mean we are paying the higher costs twice.</p>
<p>Airport is vital to town. Most days at least 1 charter flight brings business people to town.</p>

<p>In the year to November 2012 the Air Ambulance visited Gunnedah airport 42 times to collect or return patients who were incapable of travelling by other means.</p> <p>Angel Flight has used Gunnedah airport more than 140 times in the past few years to transport seriously ill patients to medical appointments.</p> <p>How can council justify throwing this lifeline away?</p>
<p>Continue to lobby government for more of the mining money. Community growth is good, but agriculture cannot sustain the growth caused by mining.</p>
<p>Cut back on middle management, and general staff. Stop the river project it floods all the time and the clean up bill will only get bigger each time. Young people will not be able to afford the rent increase or rates and the old people will not be unable to afford it on the pension. Live on the coast and the rats are a lot cheaper by hundreds.</p>
<p>Council must look to cutting expenditure rather than just raising rates.</p>
<p>Support proposal must maintain standard of assets and servit go backwards</p>
<p>Council need to adjust their spending, not their income!</p>
<p>it is obvious with rapid increase of Gunnedah town area will require a larger amount of maintenance from council's staff. this will result in a larger demand on council's budgeted for maintenance of all areas of the town area. people are always happy to complain about lack of services and or maintenance of these services but when it comes to people having to put more money forward to ensure that these services are maintained people complain. the cost of services has increased so cost of providing services will increase also.</p>
<p>I have lived in Gunnedah for 47 years, and have promoted this town far & wide with all the benefits of living in a modern clean progressive sporting and friendly town, & it disappoints me that council is not encouraging new business because of the negativity of some representatives of our town, I think because it may involve a little more participation that is sadly lacking.</p>
<p>The money being spent on Blackjack Creek is a joke. Here is a problem that could be solved by a small levy bank and other work to mitigate flooding on both sides of the levy that may cost a couple of million dollars. Also the bike track could be put on top with some nice landscaping. Here is council paying consultants thousands of dollars and looking at a final bill of 12 million when it is totally unnecessary. Another example although not as big is the removal of the silk trees in front of the Bowling Club why spend \$20000 to remove the only decent silk trees in the main street if your going to remove trees remove the ones that have had to be chopped to bits because of power lines. To myself, to remove good trees is a total waste of money. I am aware that the airport costs ratepayers a lot of money, in my opinion it should be leased for a minimum amount but not sold because no one can project the way the town may go in the future and one day it may be a profitable piece of infrastructure.</p>
<p>Love to see the Wildlife park supported and promoted by Gunnedah Council and see the town presented by Council in a manner where Gunnedah Council residents can be proud to say they live in Gunnedah. Get some fresh ideas and give the town a facelift! It doesn't have to cost a fortune.</p>
<p>Gunnedah Council have not demonstrated restraint in these times of economic hardship. Council has not offered appropriate questions on this survey. There are many areas that demonstrate a waste of ratepayers funds, but all we are asked is do we want infrastructure to be neglected? A look at proposed spending from Councils budget shows many projects that are not necessary in the next 12 months - 2 years.</p>
<p>Why has infrastructure Budgets not been thought of before now.</p>
<p>I don't think the council should employ corrupt councilors and then pay for the court action for them, do you really need to do that when it would help council to keep its money for the community its meant to serve.</p>
<p>As long as the increase in rates are spread over the entire Gunnedah shire.</p>
<p>I think most people would be in favor of the rise if council took action themselves in saving money. When</p>

about eight employees turn up to patch up two sections of pathway around the golf course and most are sitting down while two do all the work is a bit frustrating for the average ratepayer
if so many mistakes were not made by the council workers you would not have to have this special rate rise. For example pouring of cement for kerb and guttering at the tip, workers were advised to cover the wet cement as there was a storm approaching, but they would not take that advise and all the cement was washed away from the storm. One of many fails that happen too often in our council.
Reduce the financial burden on small business and transfer that responsibility to the mining sector. At the very least, they should be paying a much higher percentage of road maintenance costs.
Please send each rate payer a proforma invoice of what their rates installment's will be over the the next four years.
It is just another 'overhead' that ratepayers will be expected to fund, when things are tough with the current difficult economic climate.
staff reduction would be a good starting point
Council should never have built infrastructure without the funds to maintain it in the first place. New infrastructure should only be built when adequate funds for its on-going maintenance are accounted for. Council should consider selling some of its assets to private enterprise. Council has an inefficient workforce and should contract some of its services out to private enterprise to ensure efficient use of ratepayers money.
Tighten belt first
I find it a waste of money building a Riverine area when it will be destroyed with the first big flood = I would rather see the money spent renewing the swimming pool, keep Wolsley Park etc in the beautiful showcase way it is, repairing or replacing the infrastructure at the showground/dog show area which brings in many money spending outsiders throughout the year. also would like to see Council prune their expenditure internally which hopefully the Blackadder review will achieve.
There must be a way to minimize the perception, real or imagined, that a disproportionate amount of Council income goes on administration
Gunnedah Council should offer its self up for amalgamation. Why should people who have gone without many things in order to buy their own home subsidise and pay for the facilities of people who live in the area who spend their money irresponsibly and never buy their own home
Why do we maintain the infrastructure at the Airport who gets the benefit of this because if we want to travel we have to go to Tamworth to catch a plane, it seems only the drag races and private people get any use of the airport.
If a business was run by spending more than it is making, it wouldn't be a business for very long, and it shouldn't expect to be shored up by other "businesses" because of it's own inadequacies. Council have to do proper audits over all levels to cut out the blatant waste of funds that has been going on for years.
Difficult but you have to survive and continue to invest. You need to demonstrate efficient council expenditure on administration and continue to be transparent. Good luck
I believe the current rates should already cover the costs associated with maintaining and renewing infrastructure within the community, after all that is what rates are intended for. As a ratepayer in another Local Government area also, It is disappointing to see that Gunnedah Shire Council are unable to manage ratepayers funding, knowing that other Councils are capable of doing this.
strongly encourage Council take more cost cutting in the running of the Council itself, there appears to be

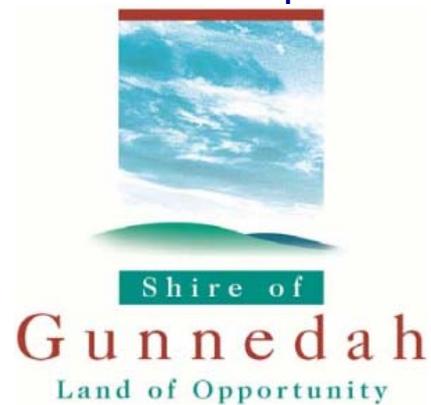
always jobs being advertised for Council, perhaps multi-skilling of staff to be able to save on wages
HAVE A GOOD LOOK AT WORKERS IN COUNCIL AND GET RID OF SOME OF THE BLUDGERS
i strongly oppose for the rate increase



Insight for
Business & Government

Gunnedah Shire Council Special Variation to Rates Survey 2013

Prepared for



Prepared by
IRIS Research Ltd

March 2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the Gunnedah Shire Council special variation to rates survey, 2013. IRIS Research was commissioned by Council to conduct a comprehensive telephone-based survey among the area's ratepayers. The survey sought to gauge community support and reaction to the proposed special variation to rates.

The key finding of this survey is that after a period of deliberation, 61.9% of Gunnedah residents said that they would prefer a special variation to rates to cover the gap in funding the renewal and maintenance of infrastructure and services. The remaining 38.1% preferred no special variation to rates and a reduction in the standards of infrastructure and services. When these respondents were asked why they preferred this option, 31.7% said they believed Gunnedah Shire Council wasted too much money and should cut back, and 29.6% said that it was too expensive and they couldn't afford to pay more.

Furthermore, when presented with the idea that it is better to increase residential rates rather than to increase user charges on services, 71.1% of Gunnedah ratepayers expressed a degree of support (31.1% were somewhat supportive, 20.0% were supportive and 20.0% were very supportive).

A series of questions explored residents' satisfaction with Gunnedah Shire and Council's delivery of services and facilities, and the importance of providing and maintaining infrastructure and services;

Gunnedah Shire as a place to live

The majority of residents (85.8%) highly rated Gunnedah Shire as a place to live. While just 5.0% did not like living in Gunnedah.

Range of services and quality of infrastructure currently provided by Council in the local area

Results show that 54.7% of residents were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the range of services that the Council currently provides, while 15.3% provided a low satisfaction rating. Three in ten (29.0%) residents rated their satisfaction a '3' out of 5 suggesting they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

When asked about the quality of infrastructure provided, 46.1% of ratepayers expressed satisfaction and 16.6% were dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with customer service provided by Council

More than half of Gunnedah's residents (57.4%) were satisfied with the level of customer service provided by Council. At the other end of the scale, 13.9% expressed some dissatisfaction.

Importance of Council maintaining services and infrastructure and undertaking programs to provide improved infrastructure and services

Almost nine in ten Gunnedah residents (87.1%) place high importance on Council's maintenance of services and infrastructure, while just 3.0% provided a low importance rating.

Three in four residents (76.4%) believed it was important for Gunnedah Shire Council to undertake programs to improve services and infrastructure, however, a small percentage (5.0%) gave a low importance score.

Importance of various Council infrastructure and services

Gunnedah residents placed high importance on the maintenance of roads, with over four in five residents providing a high rating for the maintenance of sealed rural roads (83.6%) and the maintenance of urban local roads (81.0%). These services attained high level mean

importance scores of 4.35 and 4.21, respectively. The maintenance of unsealed rural roads (4.18) and stormwater drainage (4.01) also achieved high level importance mean scores.

At the other end of the scale, two Gunnedah infrastructure items received low range mean importance scores, these were bicycle paths (2.52) and the airport (2.66). One in two residents (50.7%) provided a low importance rating for each of these items.

Low priority infrastructure and services

When Gunnedah residents who said they preferred not to have a special rate variation were asked which Council infrastructure and services were their lowest priorities, bicycle paths came out on top, with 38.7% of residents citing this as their lowest priority and 24.6% selecting this as their second lowest priority.

A further 36.6% of these Gunnedah residents said the airport was their lowest priority and 16.2% indicated it was their second lowest priority.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

IRIS Research was commissioned by Gunnedah Shire Council to undertake a survey of ratepayers within Gunnedah Local Government Area. The Gunnedah Shire Council needs to spend more money on the renewal of vital infrastructure such as local roads and upgrades of building, recreation and sporting facilities. The Council is proposing to raise general rates to cover the gap in funding the renewal and maintenance of infrastructure and services. This quantitative study is one component of Gunnedah Shire Council's engagement with the community on the topic of the proposal to apply for a special variation to rates.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study were;

- To assess the level of support and reaction to Council's proposal to apply for a special variation to rates,
- To explore ratepayer satisfaction with the quality of infrastructure and the range of services and facilities provided by Gunnedah Shire Council,
- To explore ratepayer importance of the Gunnedah Shire Council proposed infrastructure improvement programs,
- To assess ratepayers' perceptions on the value of the rates they pay, and
- To establish ratepayers' awareness of Council's financial position.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Deliberative polling was the method chosen to conduct the investigation.

Deliberative polling is a combined communication and research process that simplifies complex decision-making. The main steps in the Deliberative Polling process are:

1. Communicate sufficient information to a large random sample of the population
2. Permit time for the sample group to deliberate on the information and options
3. Conduct a random sample or census within the deliberation group

Initially Gunnedah Shire Council forwarded all ratepayers in the Gunnedah Shire an information package containing a letter and a brochure outlining Council's proposal and reasons for the special rate variation.

Residents on receipt of the package were given a period for deliberation before they were recalled and surveyed. The questionnaire was only administered to those ratepayers that had ***received and read*** the information package, so they could make an informed choice.

The questionnaire was administered using IRIS's CATI facility. CATI facilitates strategies to combat non-response using time shifted retries for non contacts and a callback facility for the convenience of respondents. Adult decision makers were randomly selected across the local government area in proportion to population densities ensuring a geographic spread, an approximate 50:50 sex split of decision makers was achieved and a spread of age groups together combine to deliver a representative sample.

1.4 ATTITUDE MEASUREMENT

For some questions within the questionnaire respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction, importance, value or support on 5 point scale.

The numeric values recorded for these questions have been converted into an *overall mean score* out of five. To derive the mean score for these questions, all respondents' answers are 'averaged' to produce an overall rating that conveniently expresses the result of scale items in a single numeric figure. The mean score excludes those respondents who could not give a valid rating (i.e. 'Can't Say').

Given that IRIS undertakes many surveys such as this; we are able to benchmark mean scores. As such, mean importance and satisfaction scores can be further classified as being a low, medium or high score based on this experience. Table 1.3.2 highlights the mean classifications.

Table 1.1 - Classification of mean scores

Mean importance scores	
0 – 2.99	Low
3.00 – 3.99	Medium
4.00 – 5.00	High

Mean satisfaction scores	
0 – 2.99	Low
3.00 – 3.74	Medium
3.75 – 5.00	High

1.5 SURVEY RESPONSE

Interviews were conducted over three evenings commencing the 20th of February 2013 between 4.00 and 8.30 p.m. An overall compliance rate of 66.7% was achieved which is considered a good result. Given the level of response to the survey and the fact that it represents a very good cross-section of the area the findings presented in this report provide a very good basis for gauging community opinion.

A final sample of 373 adult rate paying decision makers was achieved. The maximum error on proportion for the total sample is +/- 5.3%.

The following tables and figures indicate the key survey findings.

SURVEY RESULTS

2 GUNNEDAH SHIRE AND GUNNEDAH COUNCIL

Section 2 explores ratepayers' satisfaction with Gunnedah as a place to live, the range and quality of Council's services and facilities, Council's customer service, the importance ratepayers' place on maintaining and improving services and infrastructure and the importance of various Council infrastructure and services.

2.1 GUNNEDAH SHIRE AS A PLACE TO LIVE

Residents were asked to rate how much they like living in Gunnedah Shire.

How would you rate Gunnedah Shire as a place to live?

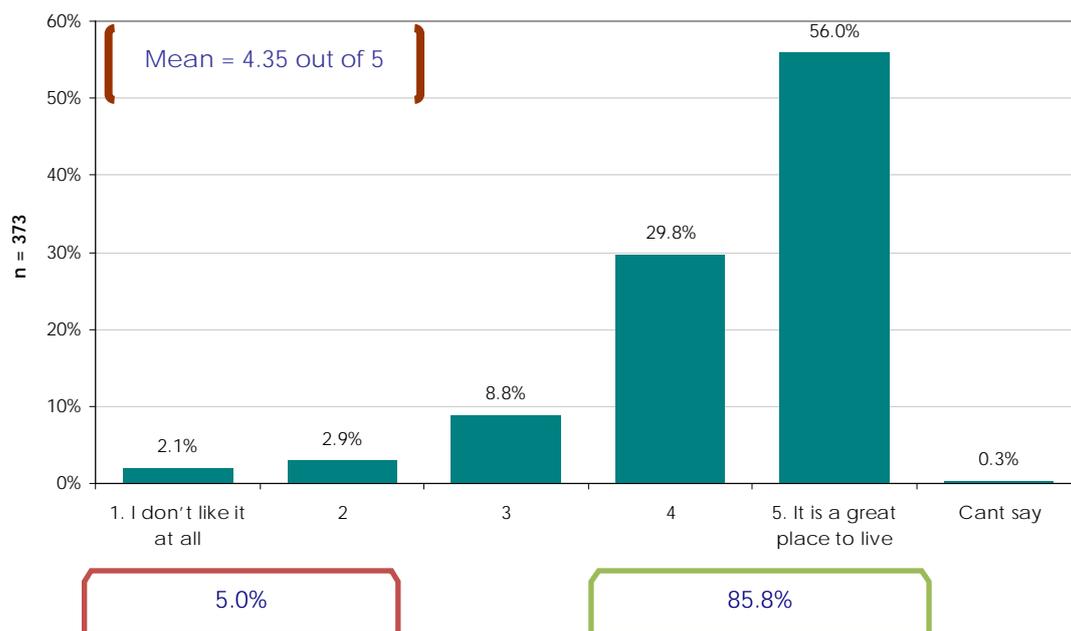


Figure 2.1 – Gunnedah Shire as a place to live

Key findings:

- The majority of Gunnedah residents (85.8%) like living in the area.
- One in twenty residents (5.0%) do not like living in Gunnedah Shire.

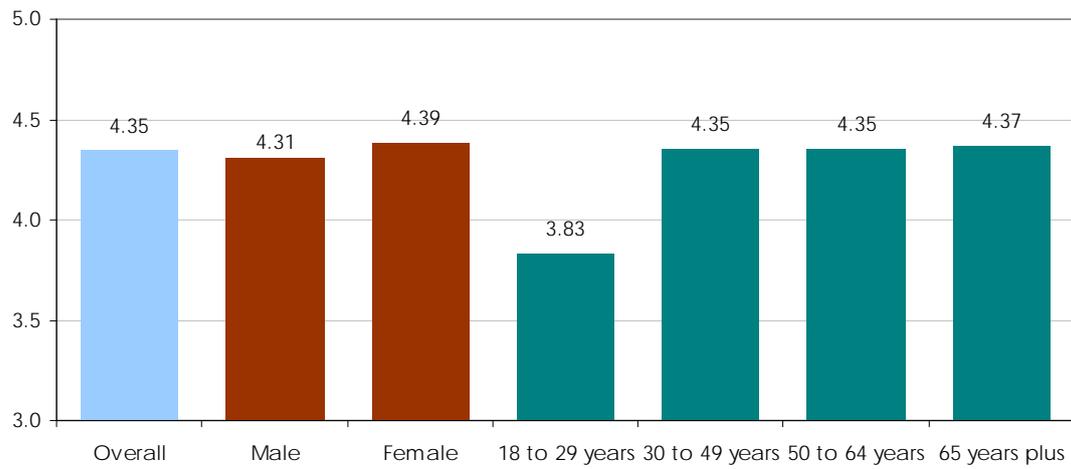


Figure 2.2 – Gunnedah Shire as a place to live: mean scores

Key findings:

- The average mean score was 4.35 out of 5.
- There were no significant differences in mean scores according to age or sex.

2.2 SATISFACTION WITH COUNCIL'S SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Residents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of infrastructure and the range of services currently provided by Council.

How satisfied are you with the range of services currently provided by Council in the local area?

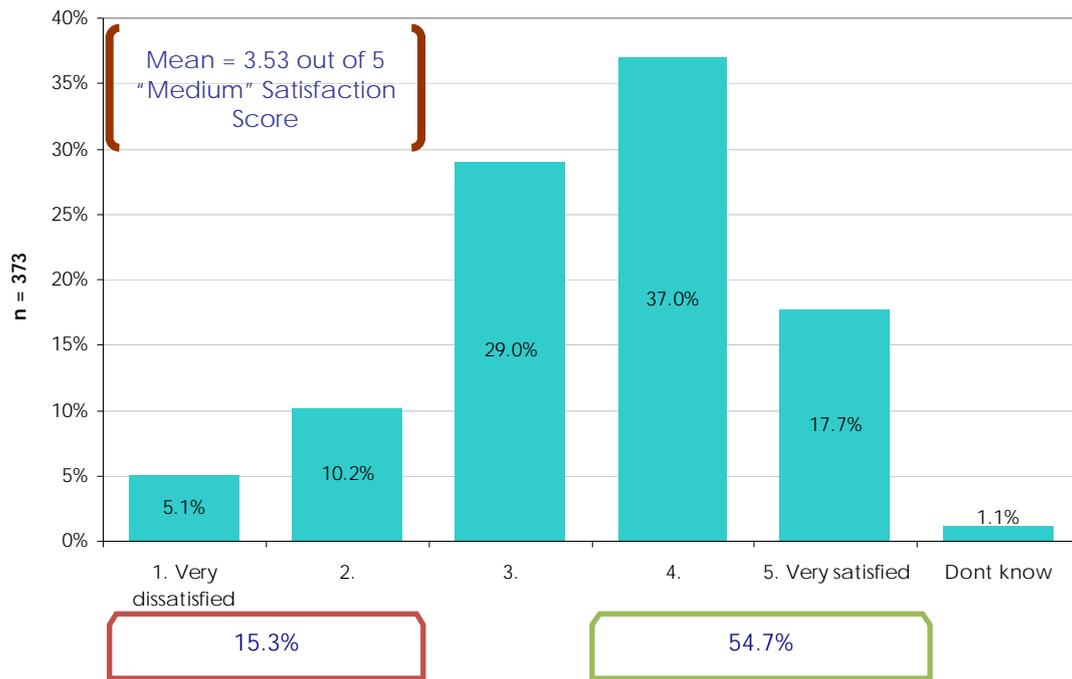


Figure 2.3 – Satisfaction with the range of services currently provided by Council

Key findings:

- 54.7% of ratepayers were satisfied with the range of services that the Council currently provides, while 15.3% were dissatisfied.
- 29.0% of ratepayers rated their satisfaction a '3' meaning they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the range of services available.

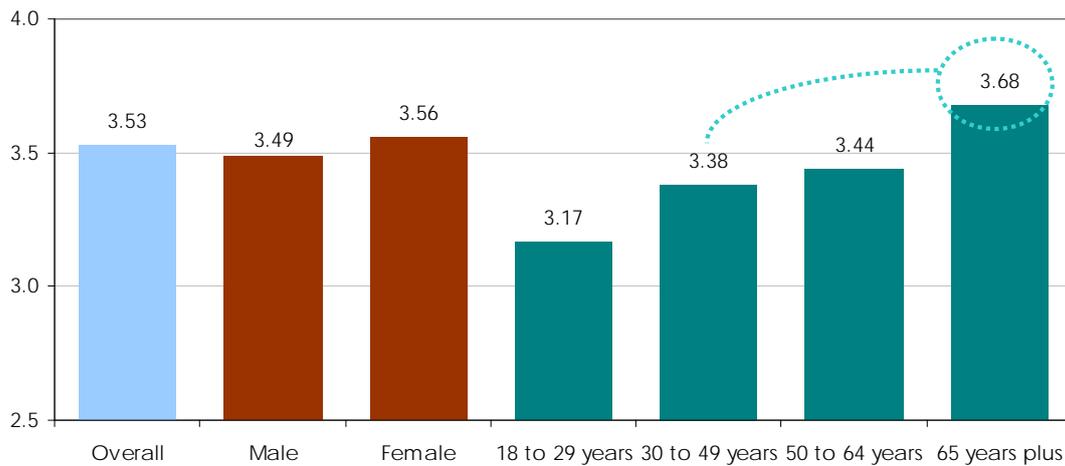


Figure 2.4 – Satisfaction with the range of services currently provided by Council: mean scores

Key findings:

- The satisfaction with the range of Council services received a ‘medium’ mean satisfaction score of 3.53 out of 5.
- Further statistical testing showed that ratepayers aged 30 to 49 years (3.38) were significantly less satisfied with the range of services than those aged 65 plus (3.68).

How satisfied are you with the quality of infrastructure currently provided by Council in the local area?



Figure 2.5 – Satisfaction with the quality of infrastructure provided by Council

Key findings:

- 46.1% of ratepayers expressed satisfaction with the quality of infrastructure provided by Gunnedah Council.
- 16.6% of ratepayers provided a rating of 1, very dissatisfied, (7.2%) or 2 (9.4%).

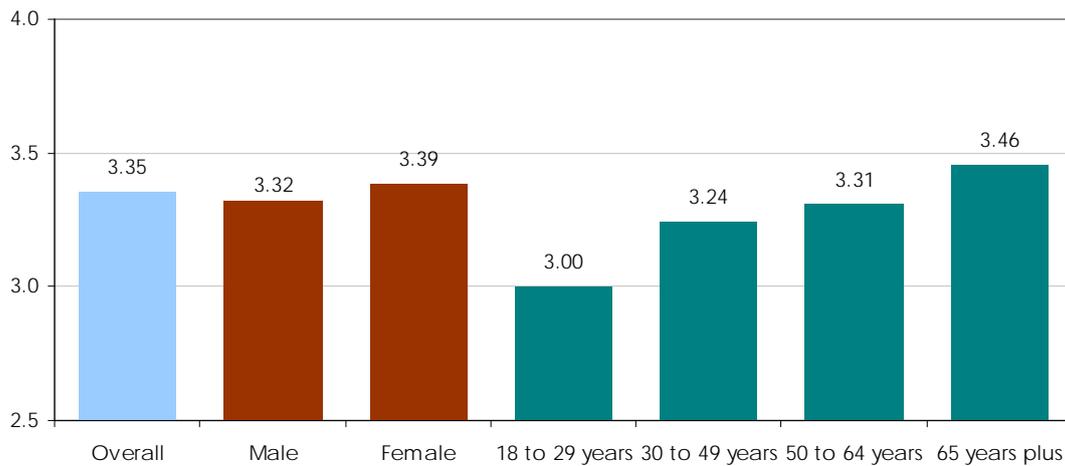


Figure 2.6 – Satisfaction with the quality of infrastructure provided by Council: mean scores

Key findings:

- Satisfaction with the quality of infrastructure currently provided by Council achieved a 'medium range' mean satisfaction score of 3.35 out of 5.
- The mean scores of the various demographic groups were statistically the same.

How satisfied are you with the level of customer service provided by Council?



Figure 2.7 – Satisfaction with the level of customer service provided by Council

Key findings:

- 57.4% of ratepayers expressed satisfaction with Council's customer service.
- At the other end of the scale, 13.9% expressed some dissatisfaction.

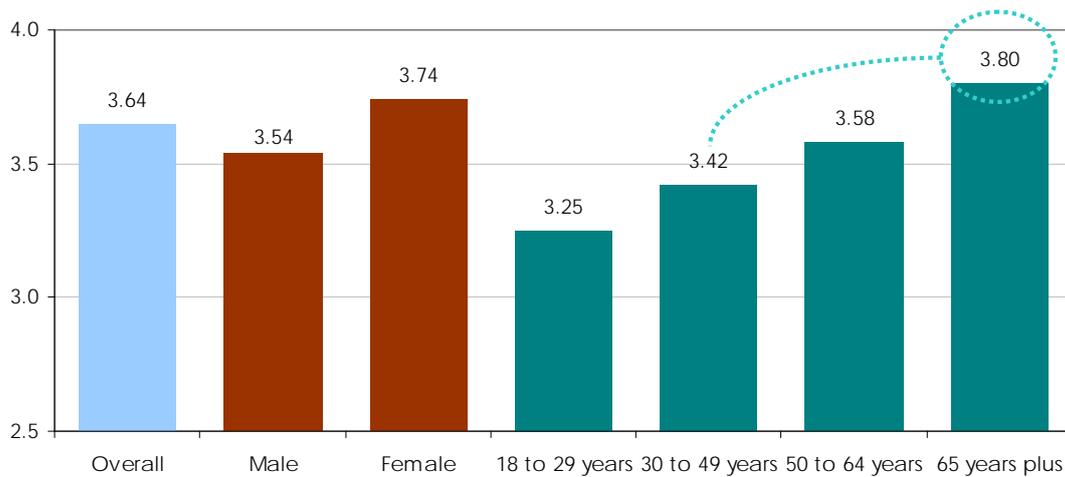


Figure 2.8 – Satisfaction with the level of customer service provided by Council: mean scores

Key findings:

- This achieved an average satisfaction score of 3.64 out of 5, which is a medium level score.
- Gunnedah residents aged 65 years or older were significantly more satisfied with Council's customer service than those aged 30 to 49 years.

2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING COUNCIL'S SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Ratepayer's perceived importance of infrastructure improvement programs is presented in this section.

How important do you believe it is for Gunnedah Shire Council to maintain services and infrastructure?

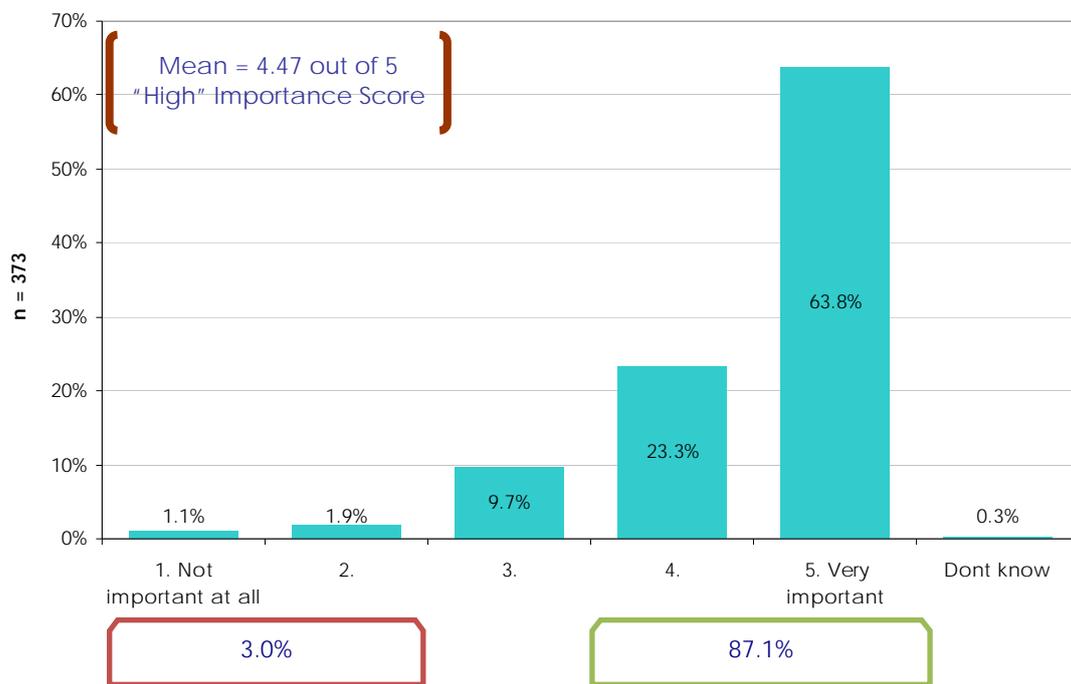


Figure 2.9 – Importance of maintaining services and infrastructure

Key findings:

- 87.1% of Gunnedah residents place high importance on Council's maintenance of services and infrastructure.
- In contrast, only 3.0% provided a low importance rating.

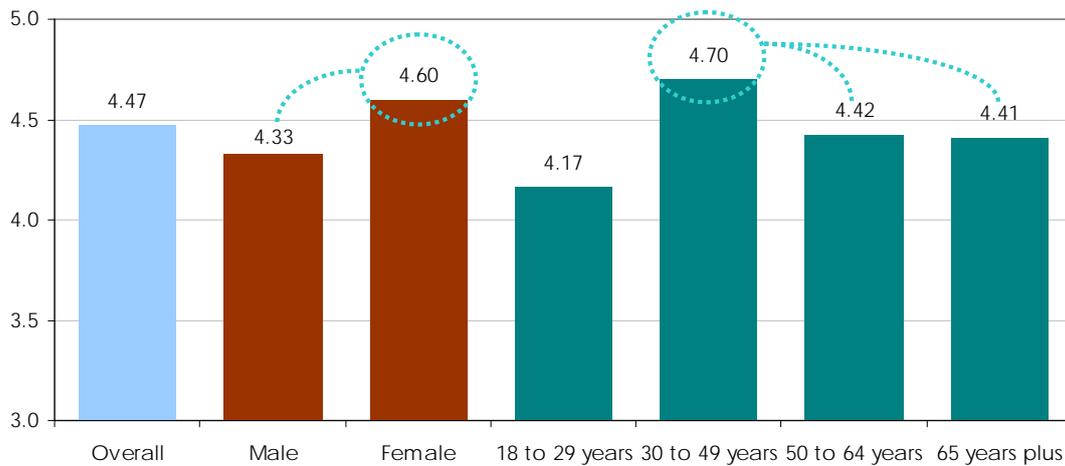


Figure 2.10 – Importance of maintaining services and infrastructure: mean scores

Key findings:

- The importance of Gunnedah Shire Council maintaining services and infrastructure achieved a ‘high’ mean importance rating of 4.47 out of 5.
- Gunnedah residents aged 30 to 49 years were significantly more likely to place high importance on maintaining services and infrastructure, compared to those aged 50 or older.
- Further testing also revealed that females placed greater importance on maintenance of services and facilities than males.

How important do you believe it is for Gunnedah Shire Council to undertake programs to provide improved services and infrastructure?

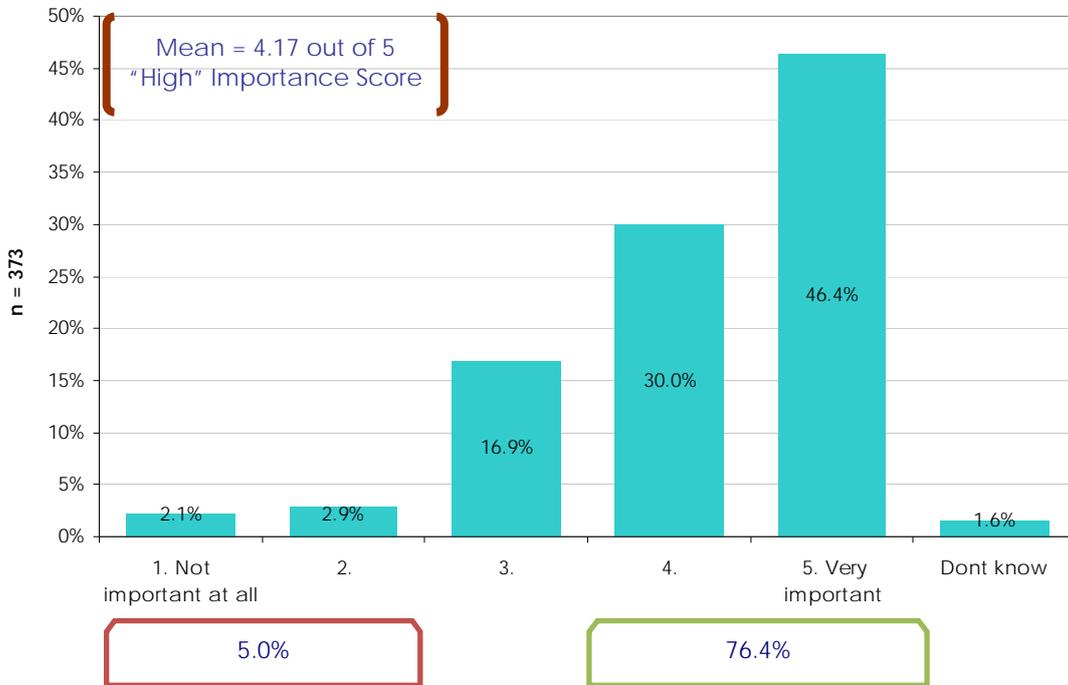


Figure 2.11 – Importance of undertaking programs to provide improved services and infrastructure

Key findings:

- Three in four ratepayers (76.4%) believed it was important for Gunnedah Shire Council to undertake programs to provide improved infrastructure and services.
- 5.0% of ratepayers believed it was not important to undertake infrastructure improvement programs.

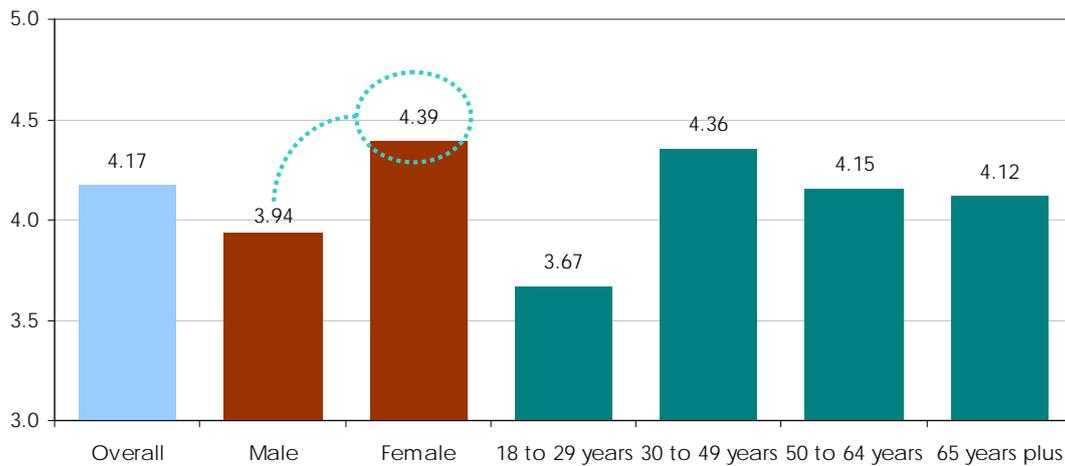


Figure 2.12 – Importance of undertaking programs to provide improved services and infrastructure: mean scores

Key findings:

- The importance for Council to undertake programs to provide improved infrastructure and services achieved a ‘high’ mean importance score of 4.17 out of 5.
- Female Gunnedah residents were significantly more likely to place high importance on undertaking programs to provide improved services and infrastructure compared to males.

2.4 IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS COUNCIL INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Residents asked how important various Gunnedah Shire Council infrastructure and services were to them. The results are displayed in Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.1 – Importance of Gunnedah infrastructure and services

Infrastructure / Service (rank order)	Importance rating (%)				Mean Score (out of 5)
	Can't say	Low (1-2)	Medium (3)	High (4-5)	
Maintenance of sealed rural roads	0.8	3.8	11.8	83.6	4.35
Maintenance of urban local roads	0.0	4.0	15.0	81.0	4.21
Maintenance of unsealed rural roads	0.8	7.0	13.9	78.3	4.18
Stormwater drainage	1.1	9.9	16.9	72.1	4.01
Community buildings such as the library, town hall and village halls	0.5	12.3	19.3	67.8	3.87
Maintenance and upkeep of sporting fields and parks	0.3	12.1	19.6	68.1	3.85
Maintenance and upkeep of swimming pools	0.8	15.5	15.3	68.4	3.84
Upkeep of the showground	0.5	14.5	33.5	51.5	3.52
Airport	0.8	50.7	16.4	32.2	2.66
Bicycle paths	0.0	50.7	21.2	28.2	2.52

Key findings:

- Four in five residents rated the importance of maintaining sealed rural roads (83.6%) and urban local roads (81.0%) as high (4 or 5).
- Around one in two Gunnedah residents (50.7%) provided a low importance rating of 1 or 2 for the airport and bicycle paths.
- When asked about the importance of maintenance of roads and stormwater drainage, Gunnedah residents placed high importance on these services and infrastructure, with mean scores ranging from 4.01 to 4.35 out of 5.
- The airport (2.66) and bicycle paths (2.52) received low range mean importance scores.

- o Gunnedah infrastructure and services such as the community buildings, maintenance and upkeep of sporting fields and parks, swimming pools, and the showground all attained medium level mean importance scores.

Table 2.2 – Importance of Gunnedah infrastructure and services: mean comparison

Characteristic Sub-group	Sex		Age				Overall
	Male	Female	18 to 29	30 to 49	50 to 64	65+	
Base	177	196	6	82	118	166	373
Infrastructure or Service							
Airport	2.54	2.77	1.20	2.39	2.79	2.76	2.66
Bicycle paths	2.23	2.78	2.00	2.88	2.40	2.45	2.52
Community buildings such as the library, town hall and village halls	3.65	4.06	3.33	3.96	3.82	3.87	3.87
Maintenance of sealed rural roads	4.25	4.45	4.00	4.31	4.41	4.36	4.35
Maintenance of unsealed rural roads	4.15	4.19	4.20	4.05	4.42	4.07	4.18
Maintenance of urban local roads	4.06	4.35	3.50	4.17	4.21	4.27	4.21
Upkeep of showground	3.28	3.74	2.83	3.51	3.49	3.58	3.52
Stormwater drainage	3.78	4.22	3.50	3.89	4.01	4.11	4.01
Maintenance and upkeep of swimming pools	3.61	4.04	3.50	3.94	3.81	3.83	3.84
Maintenance and upkeep of sporting fields and parks	3.69	3.98	3.67	3.94	3.92	3.77	3.85



Cells with sig. higher scores relative to yellow cells.
Cells with sig. lower scores relative to green cells.

According to further analysis:

- o Generally, females provided higher importance ratings for infrastructure and services compared to males, with the exceptions of the airport and maintenance of urban local roads, where there was no significant difference.
- o Gunnedah residents aged 18 to 29 years gave a statistically lower mean importance score for the airport, compared to those aged 50 years or older.
- o Bicycle paths were significantly more important to 30 to 49 year olds than to those aged 50 or older.
- o The maintenance of urban local roads was less important to those aged 18 to 29, than to those aged 65 or older.

- o Residents in the 50 to 64 age group believed the maintenance of unsealed rural roads was more important than those in aged 30 to 49 or 65 and older.

3 SPECIAL RATE VARIATION SUPPORT

In this section, Gunnedah residents were asked about their preferences for funding maintenance of infrastructure and services through a special rate variation.

3.1 ASSESSING PREFERENCES

Residents were given a summary of the background to Council's proposal, explaining the special rates variation and what it will be used for, and then asked the following;

Considering the proposal outlined in the brochure, would you prefer...

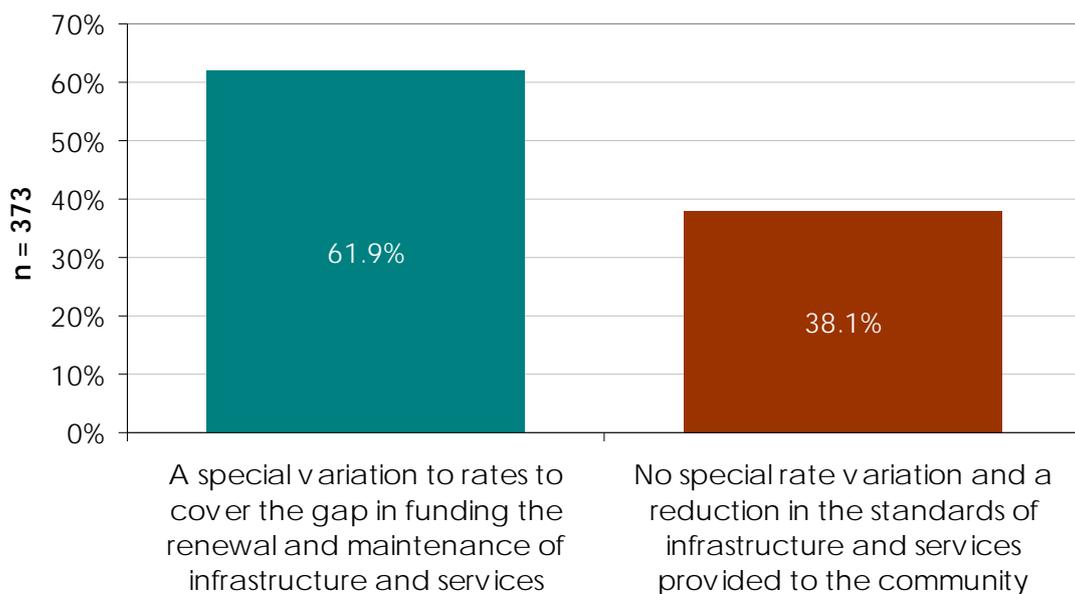


Figure 3.1 – Support for special variation to rates

Key findings:

- o 61.9% of ratepayers supported a special rate variation. We can be 95% confident the true population proportion lies between 56.7% and 67.1% in terms of preference for an increase in rates.

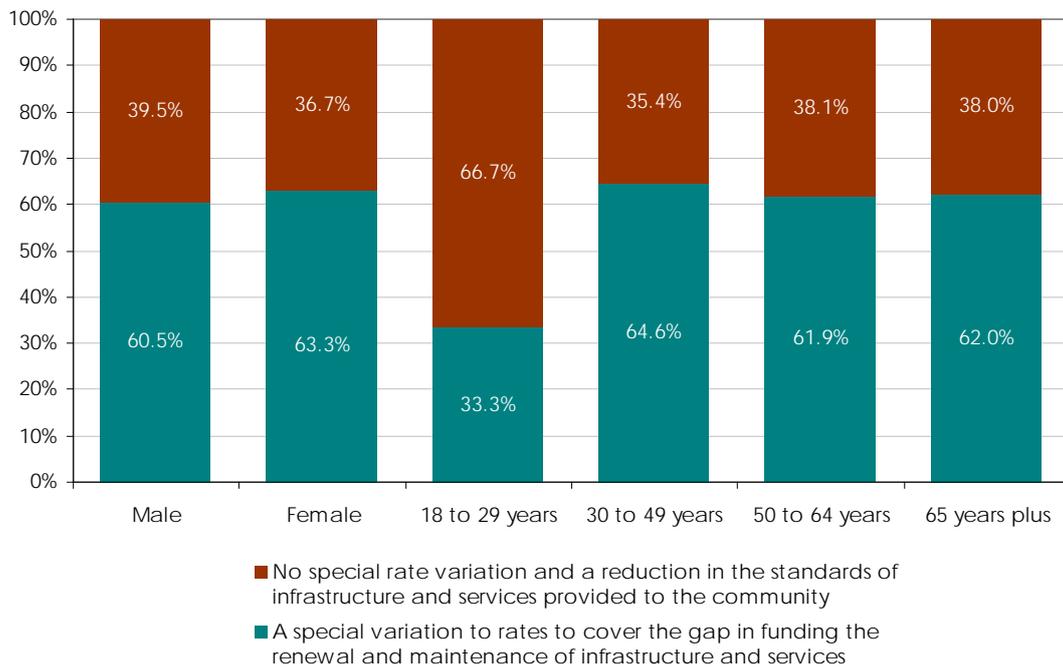


Figure 3.2 – Support for special variation to rates: demographic differences

Key findings:

- There were no significant differences according to demographic characteristics. The only age group that displayed lower support for a special rate variation was the 18 to 29 group, however due to the small sample size, the difference was not statistically significant.

3.2 LOW PRIORITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

This section presents the results to the set of questions which asked Gunnedah ratepayers who said that they would prefer no special rate variation why they prefer this and which infrastructure and facilities are low priority areas.

You said previously you would prefer a reduction in the standards of infrastructure, facilities and services over a special variation to rates, what is your main reason for preferring this?

Table 3.1 below shows the categorised reasons why these residents preferred a reduction in the standards of infrastructure, facilities and services than an increase in residential rates.

Table 3.1 – Reasons for preferring a reduction in infrastructure, facilities and services

Reason	% of those against a special rate variation n = 142
Council wastes too much money, they should cut back on spending	31.7%
Too expensive, can't afford an increase	29.6%
Too expensive, I get no value for money	15.5%
Alternate source of funding, e.g. government grants or mining	7.7%
Need more information about the rate variation	5.6%
Don't want more infrastructure or services	2.8%
Other	3.5%
No response	3.5%

- Counts less than 4 appear in other

Key findings:

- The most commonly cited reasons for preferring a decline in services rather than an increase in rates were that Gunnedah Shire Council wastes too much money and they should cut back on spending (31.7%) and that the rates are too expensive and the residents are unable to afford the increase (29.6%).

Residents were next asked a series of questions about the areas that are lowest on their priorities.

Which of the following infrastructure and facilities do you consider to be the lowest priority? Second lowest priority? Third lowest priority?

Table 3.2 below shows the low priority areas for the residents who would prefer a reduction in Gunnedah infrastructure, facilities and services rather than a special rate variation.

Table 3.2 – Areas of low priority

Infrastructure / Facility	% of those against a special rate variation n = 142		
	Lowest	Second lowest	Third lowest
Bicycle paths	38.7	24.6	11.3
Airport	36.6	16.2	8.5
Upkeep of showground	6.3	19.0	18.3
Maintenance and upkeep of sporting fields and parks	7.7	12.0	11.3
Maintenance and upkeep of swimming pools	2.8	7.0	9.2
Stormwater drainage	2.1	4.2	4.9
Community buildings, such as the library, town hall and village halls	1.4	5.6	9.2
Maintenance of unsealed rural roads	2.1	2.8	5.6
Maintenance of urban local roads	0.7	4.2	4.9
Maintenance of sealed rural roads	0.0	0.7	2.1
Other	1.4	2.1	10.6
No response	0.0	1.4	4.2

Key findings:

- Close to four in ten residents (38.7%) selected bicycle paths as their lowest priority, while a further 24.6% selected this as their second lowest priority.
- The airport was the lowest priority infrastructure or facility for 36.6% of Gunnedah residents.
- Maintenance of roads (sealed rural, urban local and unsealed rural) were least commonly cited as low priority areas.

3.2 SUPPORT FOR RATE INCREASE RATHER THAN SERVICE FEE INCREASE

This section presents the results to the set of questions which asked residents to rate their level of support towards increasing rates rather than increasing user charges on services.

Some parts of the community have suggested that to address the shortfall in Council funding it is better to increase residential and business rates than introduce significant increases in user charges on services as they will become unaffordable to many. To what extent do you support this view?

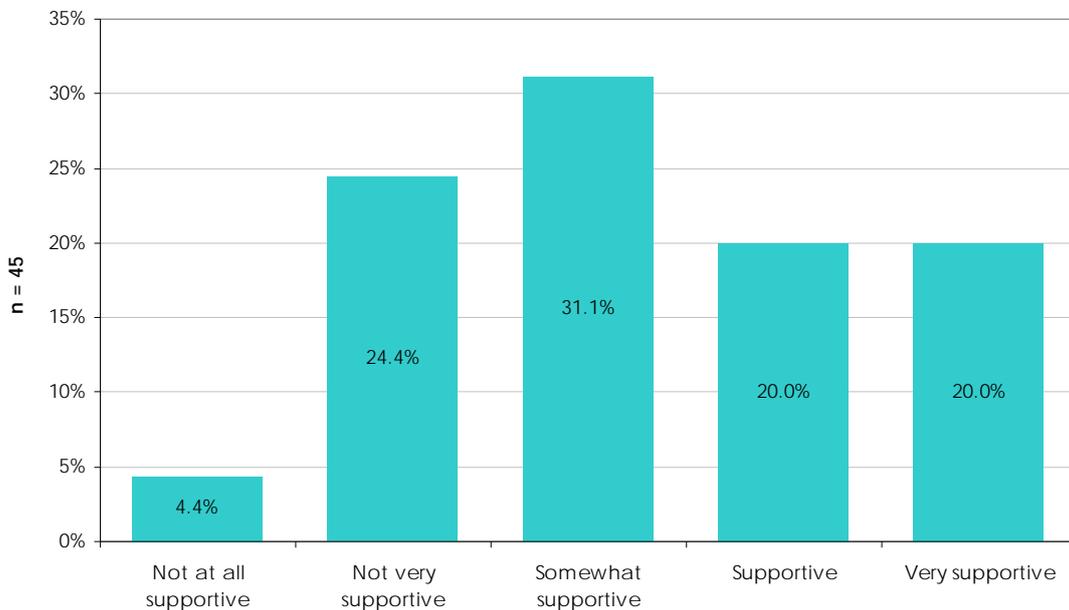
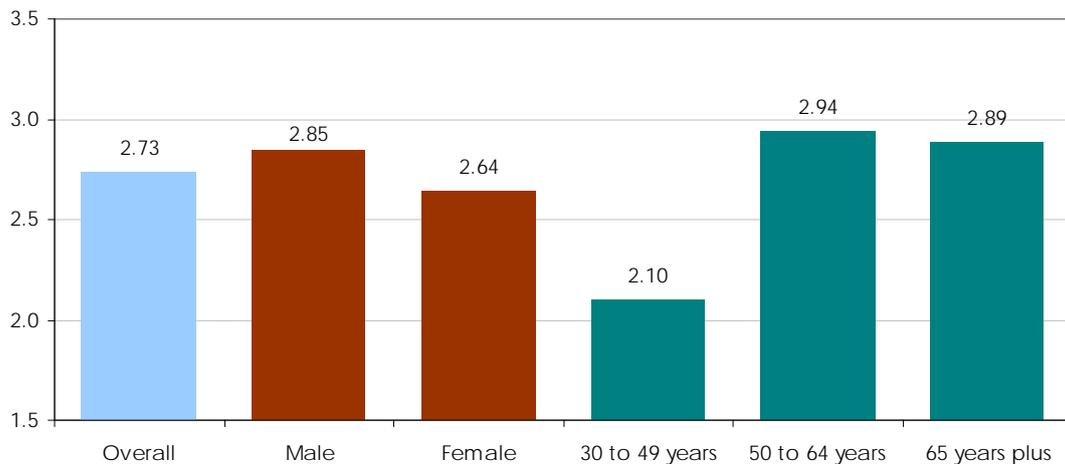


Figure 3.3 – Support for increasing rates rather than service fees

Key findings:

- Seven in ten Gunnedah ratepayers (71.1%) expressed a degree of support towards increasing rates rather than service user fees and charges. We can be 95% confident the true population proportion lies between 58.1% and 84.1%.
- In contrast, 28.8% of residents were either 'not very supportive' (24.4%) or 'not at all supportive' (4.4%) of this idea.



Note: There were no respondents from the 18 to 29 years age category for this question

Figure 3.4 – Support for increasing rates rather than service fees: mean scores

Key findings:

- This question achieved an average score of 2.73 out of 5, which is a low range score.
- There were no significant differences according to age or sex.

Gunnedah residents who said they were either 'not very supportive' or 'not at all supportive' of the idea that it is better to charge higher rates than increase user charges, were next asked:

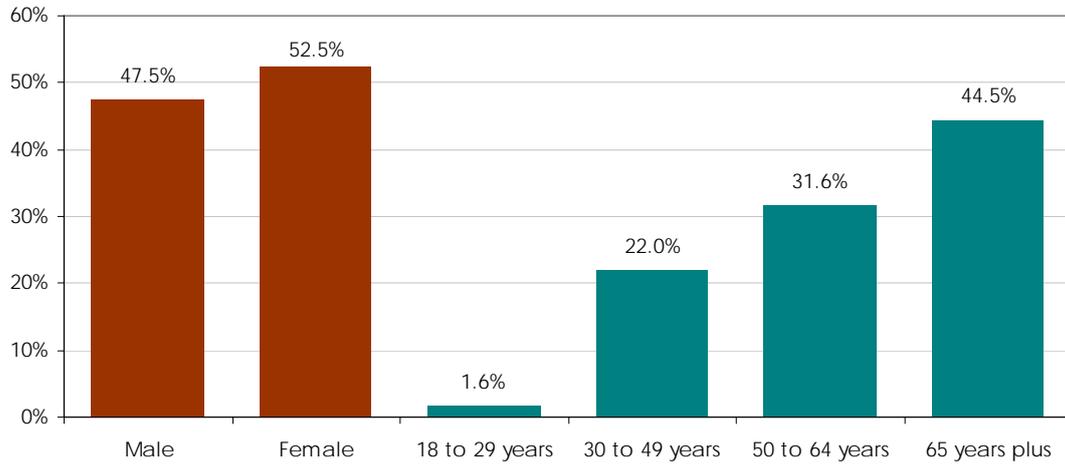
Can you identify any services where you believe fees and charges should be higher?

The verbatim responses were:

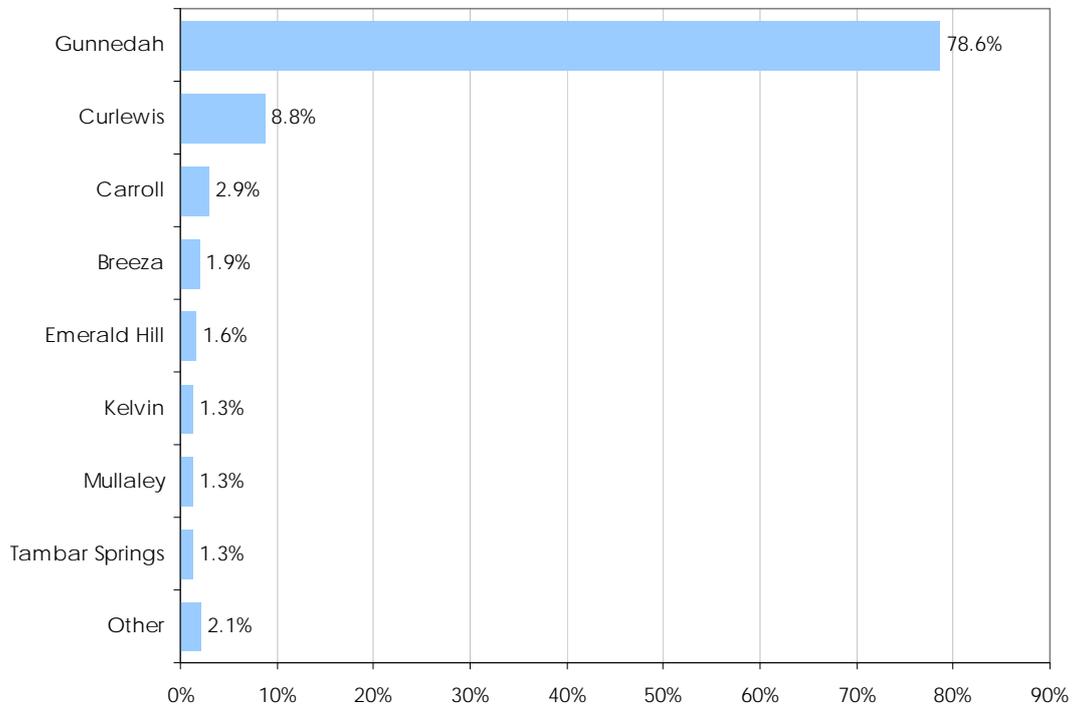
- Business rates should be higher
- Council should only do services not involved in any construction whatsoever, therefore no waste of money
- I can't [identify any]
- Maybe pay a little more for the water
- Sporting fields
- Users of the showground should be paying rather than people that never go there

4 APPENDIX I: RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

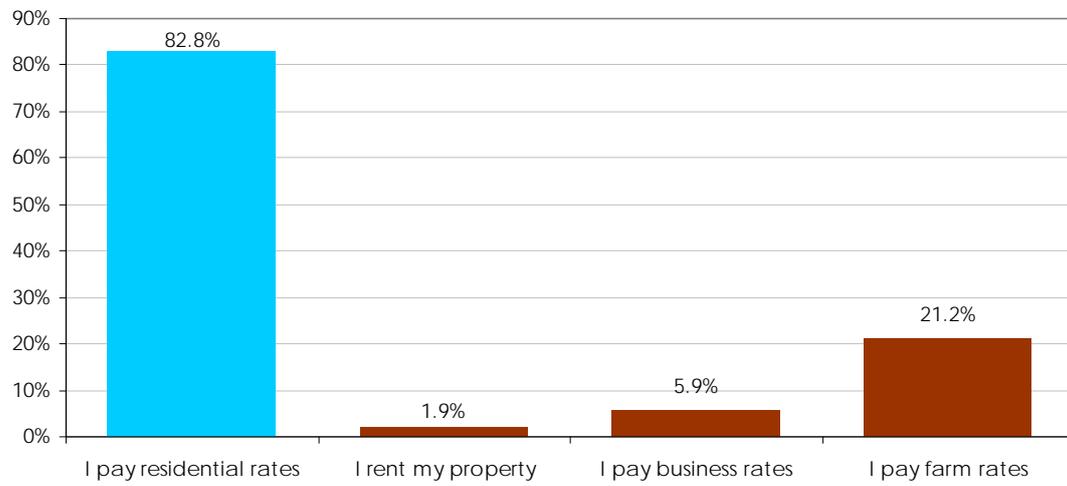
4.1 SEX



4.2 LOCATION



4.3 RATEPAYER STATUS



5 APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

Hello my name is ... from IRIS Research and I'm calling on behalf of Gunnedah Shire Council. Council is asking local residents about their support for a special rates variation. A letter explaining Council's rate proposal was recently forwarded to ratepayers.

If you received the letter I would like a few minutes of your time to answer some questions about Council's rates proposal.

Before we start I am required to tell you that the information you provide will only be used for research purposes and is completely confidential. I also have to inform you that my supervisor may monitor this call for quality control purposes.

SCREENING

S1. Are you currently an employee or elected representative of Gunnedah Shire Council.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

IF YES: I'm sorry you don't qualify to be interviewed. Thank respondent and terminate interview.

S2 Did you receive a letter and brochure from Gunnedah Shire Council explaining the special rate variation?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

IF NO: Indicate to the respondent that it is important that we interview people who have read the brochure. Tell the resident that they can view the information and participate in the survey online at www.yoursaygunnedah.com.au

Thank respondent and terminate interview.

S3. Have you read the information contained in the brochure?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

IF NO; Ask the respondent if we could contact them again after they have read the information, SUSPEND INTERVIEW IF RE-CONTACT POSSIBLE. TERMINATE INTERVIEW IF PERSON WILL NOT READ SUPPLIED INFORMATION.

I would like to start the survey by asking you how you feel about living in the Gunnedah Shire.

LIVE How would you rate Gunnedah Shire as a place to live?

1. I don't like it at all
2. .
3. .
4. .
5. It is a great place to live
6. Can't say

Next I would like to ask you some general questions about Gunnedah Shire Council's delivery of services and facilities.

Q1 On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied, how satisfied are you with the range of services currently provided by Council in the local area?

7. Very dissatisfied
8. .
9. .
10. .
11. Very satisfied
12. Don't know/can't say

Q2 Using the same scale, how satisfied are you with the quality of infrastructure currently provided by Council in the local area?

1. Very dissatisfied
2. .
3. .
4. .
5. Very satisfied
6. Don't know/can't say

Q2A And how satisfied are you with the level of customer service provided by Council?

1. Very dissatisfied
2. .
3. .
4. .
5. Very satisfied
6. Don't know/can't say

Q3 On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important, how important do you believe it is for Gunnedah Council to *maintain services and infrastructure*.

1. Not important at all
2. .
3. .
4. .
5. Very important
6. Don't know/can't say

Q4 Using the same scale, how important do you believe it is for Gunnedah Council to *undertake programs to provide improved services and infrastructure*.

1. Not important at all
2. .
3. .
4. .
5. Very important
6. Can't say/don't know

I would now like to ask you about the special rate variation proposed by Gunnedah Shire Council.

Gunnedah Shire Council has identified a gap in funding for infrastructure renewal.

This is primarily due to the fact that costs have been increasing faster than the ability of the Council to generate revenue, which has resulted in roads, stormwater infrastructure and other assets deteriorating at an unacceptable rate.

Council has agreed that an increase in rates, subject to the views of the community, was the preferred method of addressing this situation.

Q5 Considering the proposal outlined in the brochure would you prefer:

1. A special variation to rates to cover the gap in funding the renewal and maintenance of infrastructure and services or
2. No special rate variation and a reduction in the standards of infrastructure and services provided to the community

Q5_ I'm going to read out a list of infrastructure and services and I would like to rate how important is each to you. Please use a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important. (Randomise the presentation of items)

- a Airport
- b Bicycle paths
- c Community buildings such as the library, town hall and village halls
- d Maintenance of sealed rural roads
- e Maintenance of unsealed rural roads
- f Maintenance of urban local roads

- g Upkeep of the showground
- h Stormwater drainage
- i Maintenance and upkeep of swimming pools
- j Maintenance and upkeep of sporting fields and parks

Q6 FOR RESPONDENTS SELECTING OPTION 2

You said previously you would prefer a reduction in the standards of infrastructure, facilities and services over a special variation to rates, what is your main reason why you prefer this?

Q7A FOR RESPONDENTS SELECTING OPTION 2

Which of the following infrastructure and facilities do you consider to be the lowest priority?

- a Airport
- b Bicycle paths
- c Community buildings such as the library, town hall and village halls
- d Maintenance of sealed rural roads
- e Maintenance of unsealed rural roads
- f Maintenance of urban local roads
- g Upkeep of the showground
- h Stormwater drainage
- i Maintenance and upkeep of swimming pools
- j Maintenance and upkeep of sporting fields and parks
- k Other (please specify _____)

Q7B FOR RESPONDENTS SELECTING OPTION 2

Which of the following infrastructure and facilities do you consider to be the second lowest priority?

- a Airport
- b Bicycle paths
- c Community buildings such as the library, town hall and village halls
- d Maintenance of sealed rural roads
- e Maintenance of unsealed rural roads
- f Maintenance of urban local roads
- g Upkeep of the showground
- h Stormwater drainage
- i Maintenance and upkeep of swimming pools
- j Maintenance and upkeep of sporting fields and parks
- k Other (please specify _____)

Q7C FOR RESPONDENTS SELECTING OPTION 2

Which of the following infrastructure and facilities do you consider to be the third lowest priority?

- a Airport
- b Bicycle paths
- c Community buildings such as the library, town hall and village halls
- d Maintenance of sealed rural roads
- e Maintenance of unsealed rural roads

- f Maintenance of urban local roads
- g Upkeep of the showground
- h Stormwater drainage
- i Maintenance and upkeep of swimming pools
- j Maintenance and upkeep of sporting fields and parks
- k Other (please specify _____)

FOR ALL RESPONDENTS

Q9 Some parts of community have suggested that to address the shortfall in Council funding it is better to increase residential and business rates than introduce significant increases in user charges on services as they will become unaffordable to many.

To what extent do you support this view? Are you...

- 1. Very supportive
- 2. Supportive
- 3. Somewhat supportive
- 4. Not very supportive
- 5. Not at all supportive

Q9C If Q9 = 4 OR 5

Can you identify any services that you believe fees and charges should be higher?

CHARACTERISTICS

I just have a few brief questions relating to yourself to help classify your answers.

Q8 Which township or village do you live in?

- 1. Breeza
- 2. Carroll
- 3. Curlewis
- 4. Emerald Hill
- 5. Gunnedah
- 6. Kelvin
- 7. Mullaley
- 8. Tambar Springs
- 9. Other (please specify _____)

QD4 Which of the following describes you?

- 1. I pay residential rates
- 2. I rent my property
- 3. I pay business rates
- 4. I pay farm rates
- 5. Other

QF And you are a...

1. Male
2. Female
3. Other

Q13 To which age group do you belong...

1. 18 to 29
2. 30 to 49
3. 50 to 64
5. 65 plus

NAME Finally, could you tell me your first name. as my supervisor audits 1 in 10 of my calls as part of our quality control process.

That completes our interview. As this is social research, you can be assured that it is carried out in full compliance with the Privacy Act and the information you provided is only used for research purposes.

If you have any questions about this survey, you can call our office between 9am and 5pm weekdays on 4285 4446. Thank you for your time.

COUNCIL POLICY



Policy name	DEBT RECOVERY
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Abstract

The purpose of this policy is to establish the guidelines that Gunnedah Shire Council utilises in recovering outstanding accounts and also determining genuine hardship for the provision of relief.

Dates	<table> <tr> <td>Policy or amendment approved</td> <td>17 Oct 2012</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Policy or amendment takes effect</td> <td>17 Oct 2012</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Policy is due for review (up to 4 years)</td> <td>17 Oct 2013</td> </tr> </table>	Policy or amendment approved	17 Oct 2012	Policy or amendment takes effect	17 Oct 2012	Policy is due for review (up to 4 years)	17 Oct 2013
Policy or amendment approved	17 Oct 2012						
Policy or amendment takes effect	17 Oct 2012						
Policy is due for review (up to 4 years)	17 Oct 2013						
Endorsed by	Manager of Finance and Governance						
Approved by	Gunnedah Shire Council, at its Ordinary Meeting of Council held 17 Oct 2012 Resolution number: 80						
Policy Custodian	Manager of Finance and Governance						
Relevant to	The Community of the Gunnedah Shire Local Government Area together with all Councillors, Council Staff, General Debtors, Council's Debt Recovery Agents, Absentee Owners, Property Management Agents and those with permitted credit accounts.						
Superseded Policies	<p>Debt Recovery – Rates, Charges and Other Debtors Policy adopted Minute No. 138.5 of Ordinary Meeting held on 17 December 2008;</p> <p>Rates – Rate Relief Due to Hardship Policy adopted Minute No. 155.2 of Ordinary Meeting held on 19 December 2001; and</p> <p>Rates – Processing Pensioner Rebate Applications Policy adopted Minute No. 406 of Ordinary Meeting held on 20 March 1996.</p>						
Related documents	<p>Council's Instrument of Delegation to the General Manager</p> <p>Council's Operational Plan</p>						
Related legislation	The Local Government Act 1993 (NSW);						

	The Local Government (General) Regulations 2005; The Trade Practices Act 1974 (s.60); and the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
File number	648369

+ONTENTS

1. Purpose
2. Scope
3. Definitions
4. Policy principles
5. Policy statement
6. Accountability, roles and responsibilities
7. Acknowledgements
8. Version control and change history
9. Annexures

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines that Gunnedah Shire Council utilises in recovering outstanding accounts and also determining genuine hardship for the provision of relief.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy is to be adhered to by all Councillors, staff and Council's debt recovery agents.
- 2.2 This policy relates to all parties that owe monies to Council, including but not limited to ratepayers (including other charges linked to the property) and sundry debtors.
- 2.3 Those persons who are eligible for and/or receive pensioner rebates on their rates accounts are not exempt from this policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

Term	Defintion
Ratepayer	Includes the Crown in respect of rateable land owned by the Crown and means: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) an owner in any case where the Local Government Act 1993, provides that a rate is to be paid to the council by the owner; and (b) a holder of a lease in any case where the Local Government Act 1993, provides that a rate is to be paid to the council by the holder of the lease.
Pensioner	An eligible pensioner as defined in Regulation 134 of the

	Local Government (General) Regulations 2005 (NSW).
Notice of Demand	Demand Letter from Council's Debt Recovery Agent.
Statement of Liquidated Claim	Is a legal document which outlines to the ratepayer the following: (a) that a claim has been made to the Court for the recovery of monies; (b) who has initiated the claim; (c) who the claim is against; (d) the monetary value of the claim; and (e) time period available to relinquish the debt.
Judgment	A finding by a Court that monies are owed by a debtor to a creditor.
Writ of Execution	A method of judgment enforcement whereby the Sheriff attends the debtor's premises on behalf of the creditor to seize goods of value for sale at public auction (the proceeds of which are given to the creditor up to the amount of the judgment).
Garnishee	A method of judgment enforcement by which monies owing to the debtor can be seized by the creditor. The most common funds seized are monies in bank accounts or wages.
Bankruptcy	A method of judgment enforcement whereby a trustee is appointed to oversee the debtor's financial affairs. Any funds raised are distributed to creditors in accordance with the Bankruptcy Act.
Winding Up	Same as bankruptcy but for companies (as opposed to individuals).
Examination	A method of judgment enforcement whereby debtors can be examined regarding their financial affairs. If they fail to appear at an examination hearing they can be arrested.
Rent for Rates	Section 569 of the Local Government Act 1993 allows Councils to order tenants of properties with overdue rates to pay rent to Councils in lieu of unpaid rates under specific circumstances.
Costs	Amounts incurred by Council in recovering overdue debts (eg. Court professional costs) which can be legally recovered from the debtor.
Sale of Land	In accordance with section 713 of the Local Government Act 1993, Council has the authority to sell land which has any unpaid rates or charges for more than 5 years.

4. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 Council acknowledges that it has a responsibility to ensure that the collection of monies owing to it is carried out in an efficient, effective and transparent manner. In setting out to achieve same Council will commit to ensuring that all persons are treated fairly and consistently and will give due consideration and compassion to those who are suffering genuine financial hardship.

- 4.2 Council's objectives in adopting this policy are to:
- 4.2.1 ensure the collection of rates and charges, water and sewer charges and sundry debtors is carried out in an efficient, effective and transparent manner;
 - 4.2.2 minimise the value of outstanding accounts payable for rates and charges, water and sewer charges and sundry debtors;
 - 4.2.3 maximise the amount of cash-flow available to Council for the funding of operations and providing additional income through investment returns; and
 - 4.2.4 to ensure Council undertakes the recovery of outstanding accounts in compliance with relevant legislation, including the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW).
- 4.3 Council recognises that its officers have a duty to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all ratepayers and/or customers' personal circumstances. Any personal information collected as a result of this Policy will be dealt with in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5A. RECOVERY MEASURES

Recovery action may commence when rates and/or charges are not paid by the due date for each quarterly instalment unless arrangements have been entered into (in writing) to make satisfactory periodical payments under Section 564 of the Local Government Act 1993.

Recovery action will commence if sundry debts (other than amounts due from Government Departments) are not paid within thirty (30) days unless arrangements have been entered into (in writing).

5.1 Rates and Charges

- 5.1.1 If rates and/or charges remain unpaid for seven (7) days after the due date of quarterly instalments, Council will issue a Reminder Letter for the outstanding amount.
- 5.1.2 If rates and/or charges continue to remain unpaid after thirty (30) days following the due date of quarterly instalments and/or a suitable arrangement has not been made to pay the debt, a Letter of Demand will be issued by Council's Debt Recovery or other appointed Agent advising that legal proceedings and costs will be incurred if full payment or a suitable payment arrangement is not actioned within fourteen (14) days.
- 5.1.3 Following the expiration of the said fourteen (14) days, if the rates and/or charges continue to remain unpaid and/or a suitable arrangement has not been made to pay the debt, Council may, under the Act, exercise its right to recover the outstanding amounts through the commencement of legal action and/or through a Sale of Land for Unpaid Rates.

5.2 Water and Sewer Usage Charges

- 5.2.1 If water and/or sewer charges remain unpaid for seven (7) days after the due date of the account, Council will issue a Reminder Letter for the outstanding amount.
- 5.2.2 If water and/or sewer charges continue to remain unpaid after thirty (30) days following the due date of the account and/or a suitable arrangement has not been made to pay the debt, a Letter of Demand will be issued by Council's Debt Recovery or other appointed Agent advising that legal proceedings and costs will be incurred if full payment or a suitable payment arrangement is not actioned within fourteen (14) days.
- 5.2.3 Following the expiration of the said fourteen (14) days, if the water and/or sewer charges continue to remain unpaid and/or a suitable arrangement has not been made to pay the debt, Council may, under the Act, exercise its right to recover the outstanding amounts through the commencement of legal action and/or pursuant to the Regulations, proceed with the restriction of water supply.
- 5.2.4 As a last resort, where water and/or sewer charges remain unpaid and/or a suitable arrangement has not been made to pay the debt, Council may begin proceedings to recover the outstanding amounts through the restriction of water supply due to non payment in accordance with the Local Government (General) Regulations 2005.

5.3 Sundry Debts

- 5.3.1 If a sundry debtor remains unpaid for seven (7) days after the due date of the account, Council will issue a Reminder Letter for the outstanding amount.
- 5.3.2 If a sundry debtor continues to remain unpaid after thirty (30) days following the due date of the account and/or a suitable arrangement has not been made to pay the debt, a Letter of Demand will be issued by Council's Debt Recovery or other appointed Agent advising that legal proceedings and costs will be incurred if full payment or a suitable payment arrangement is not actioned within fourteen (14) days.
- 5.3.3 Following the expiration of the said fourteen (14) days, if a sundry debtor continues to remain unpaid and/or a suitable arrangement has not been made to pay the debt, Council may, under the Act, exercise its right to recover the outstanding amounts through the commencement of legal action and/or refuse further credit to debtors who have credit accounts in place.

5.4 Legal Recovery Action and Costs

- 5.4.1 Council officers will exhaust reasonable avenues of recovery before initiating legal action.
- 5.4.2 If full payment or an arrangement for payment has not been put in place by the due date as stated on the Letter of Demand, then Council's Debt Recovery Agent may issue and serve a Statement of Liquidated Claim.

- 5.4.3 If the debtor does not respond to the Statement of Liquidated Claim within 28 days, Council's Debt Recovery Agent may apply for default Judgment which would be recorded against the debtor's credit file by a credit reporting agency.
- 5.4.4 Following Judgment, Council's Debt Recovery Agents may then employ one or more of the following options in order to recover the outstanding debt:
- (a) Writ against the property;
 - (b) Examination;
 - (c) Garnishee of bank accounts;
 - (d) Garnishee of wages or other income;
 - (e) Bankruptcy;
 - (f) Winding up of companies;
 - (g) Rent for Rates under s569 of the Local Government Act 1993;
 - (h) Or any other such action as advised to Council.
- 5.4.5 All legal costs and expenses incurred in recovering outstanding rates and charges and water and sewer charges will be charged against the property in accordance with Section 605 of the Local Government Act 1993.
- 5.4.6 Legal costs incurred in recovering outstanding sundry debtor accounts will be charged against the relevant sundry debtor account to which the debt is owed.

5.5 Sale of Land for Unpaid Rates

- 5.5.1 As a last resort, where rates and/or charges remain unpaid for greater than five (5) years, or one (1) year in the case of vacant land, Council will begin proceedings to recover the outstanding amounts through a Sale of Land for Unpaid Rates in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.

5.6 Interest

- 5.6.1 Interest will accrue on all outstanding amounts at the interest rate stipulated annually in the Fees and Charges section of Council's Operational Plan.

5B. ASSISTANCE

Council recognises that due to exceptional circumstances, its customers may at times experience genuine hardship in paying rates, annual charges and fees. The Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 allow Council to provide the following assistance to ratepayers and customers:

5.7 Pensioner Concessions

- 5.7.1 Division 1 of Part 8 of Chapter 15 of the Local Government Act 1993 provides for concessions for eligible pensioners.

- 5.7.2 Under Section 575 of the Act, eligible pensioners are entitled to a rebate equivalent to half the combined rates and annual charges up to a maximum amount of \$250.00 per annum. In addition, a maximum of \$87.50 is available as a rebate for water rates and charges and a maximum of \$87.50 for sewerage rates and charges.
- 5.7.3 Pensioners requesting a rebate are required to submit a 'Pensioner Concession Application Form' (Annexure 'A') which includes production of a current Pension Concession Card issued by Centrelink or the Department of Veteran Affairs. Validity of continued entitlement will be confirmed with the relevant Department on an annual basis.
- 5.7.4 Pensioners can only claim the concession on a property if it is their sole or principle place of living.
- 5.7.5 Under Section 577 of the Local Government Act 1993, Council may, if considered appropriate, also extend the pensioner concession to ratepayers who jointly occupy a dwelling and are jointly liable for the rates and charges with an eligible pensioner.
- 5.7.6 The date of grant of pension will be taken as the relevant date for the purpose of processing an application providing it is within the same financial year as the actual date of the application.
- 5.7.7 Pensioner rates rebates for previous years will not be allowed unless the applicant satisfies Council that extenuating circumstances beyond control of the applicant were in existence. In this instance the rebate will only be applied to the previous twelve (12) months at a maximum.

5.8 Periodical Payments

- 5.8.1 In accordance with the provisions of Section 564 of the Local Government Act, customers who are unable to pay rates and charges by the due date, either because of reasons beyond their control or because payment would cause hardship, may apply to enter into an agreement with Council to make periodical payments ("The Agreement").
- 5.8.2 Council may also approve a periodical payment agreement with debtors experiencing genuine difficult circumstances.
- 5.8.3 Payments made under such an Agreement should adequately repay the outstanding debt within a twelve (12) month period, excluding exceptional circumstances under which the period may be extended to a two (2) year period.
- 5.8.4 In order for such an Agreement to be considered, a 'Payment Arrangement Form' needs to be completed subject to mutual agreement of payment amounts (Annexure 'B'). The customer is to specify the dates and amounts that are to be paid, the payment type, an appropriate contact telephone number and details of any authorised parties with whom Council or a collector can communicate with.
- 5.8.5 Verbal agreements shall not provide a reprieve from the debt recovery process.
- 5.8.6 Section 564(2) of the Local Government Act enables Council to write off or reduce interest accrued on rates or charges if the person complies with all of the requirements of an Agreement made with Council as to periodical payments of those rates and charges.

5.8.7 If a customer fails to meet the terms of an Agreement without notice, the Agreement shall become void immediately and the full amount of the outstanding debt, including accrued interest shall be due and payable. Recovery action shall be instigated immediately for the recovery of the amount due.

5.9 Interest Write Off

5.9.1 Section 567 of the Local Government Act allows Council to write off accrued interest on rates and charges payable by a person, if, in its opinion, the person was unable to pay the rates and charges when they became due and payable and any accrued interest for reasons beyond the person's control or payment of the accrued interest would cause the person hardship.

5.10 Hardship from Land Valuation Changes

5.10.1 Section 601 of the Local Government Act provides that any ratepayer who incurs a rate increase in the first year following a revaluation of land values may apply to Council for rate relief if the increase in the amount of rates payable would cause them substantial hardship. In such circumstances, Council has the discretion to defer payment of the whole or any part of the increase in the amount of the rate payable for such period and subject to conditions seen fit.

5.11 Hardship Application

5.11.1 Customers who are unable to pay rates, annual charges and/or fees for reasons beyond their control or because payment would cause genuine hardship can apply to Council for assistance at any time. If Council is satisfied that it falls within a category of hardship, which is generally only in exceptional circumstances, it has the discretion to waive, reduce or defer the payment.

5.11.2 An application for hardship must be made in writing, must address and include supporting documentation which may include but is not limited to the following:

- (i) Statement of reason for hardship
- (ii) Ownership of property details
- (iii) Marital status/details of dependants
- (iv) Interest in other land/buildings
- (v) Estimated full annual income and living expenses of household
- (vi) Estimated full value of assets
- (vii) Current bank account balances
- (viii) Annual Income Statements issued by the Australian Taxation Office for the last two (2) financial years.

5.11.3 Applicants will also be requested to attend an interview to help Council better understand the issues causing hardship.

5.11.4 Applications will be assessed by Council's Hardship Committee, consisting of Council's Director of Community and Corporate Services, Manager of Finance and Governance and Revenue Co-ordinator.

5.11.5 Each application will be assessed on an individual basis and a determination made as to the extent of relief on the basis of whether or not the hardship criteria have been satisfied by the applicant and if a proper opinion can be formed.

5.11.6 Rates and charges (including accrued interest) will be waived, reduced or deferred only under delegated authority or by resolution of Council.

6. ACCOUNTABILITY, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Delegation – General Manager

In accordance with the Instrument of Delegation to the General Manager.

6.2 Policy Custodian – Manager of Finance and Governance

The Policy Custodian is the officer accountable for managing policy compliance and initiating the policy review process. They will also have the responsibility for all aspects of policy implementation, unless appropriately delegated to another officer.

6.3 Compliance – Revenue Co-ordinator

Council's Revenue Co-ordinator is the officer responsible for the implementation and compliance of recovery measures and assistance processes and procedures.

6.4 Debt Recovery Agency

The process of debt recovery requires a certain level of expertise and would in most cases, best be managed by a professional Debt Recovery Agent. Where utilised, any such Agent instructed to assist Council in their debt recovery processes will need to work in accordance with this Policy and Council's delegation structure.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

7.1 The following acknowledgements are made in recognition of institutions or documents that have provided a basis, instructive comment or template to assist in the development of this Policy:

- (a) Bankstown City Council and in particular, their Administrative Guidelines for Debt Recovery of Rates and Annual Charges and their Rates and Charges, Debt Recovery and Hardship Assistance Policy;
- (b) Richmond Valley Council and in particular, their policy on Debt Recovery and Provision of Credit;
- (c) Sutherland Shire Council and in particular, their policy on Rates Recovery and Hardship;
- (d) SR Law, Local Government Debt Recovery Specialists; and

- (e) Local Government Shires Association of NSW and in particular, their Guidelines for a Council Rates Hardship Policy.

8. VERSION CONTROL AND CHANGE HISTORY

Date	Version	Approved by & resolution no.	Amendment
20/09/2012	First Draft	[Council: Res No.]	To amalgamate Council's policies on Debt Recovery, Rate Relief Due to Hardship & Processing Pensioner Rebate Applications.

9. ANNEXURES

Annexure 'A' – Pensioner Concession Application Form

Annexure 'B' - Payment Arrangement Form

PENSIONER CONCESSION APPLICATION FORM

Approved by the Chief Executive of the Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet (delegate of the Director General, Department of Premier and Cabinet), in accordance with clause 135 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

APPLICATION FOR A PENSIONER CONCESSION FOR THE WHOLE OR PART OF THE YEAR COMMENCING 1 JULY 20__

Please answer all questions relevant to you using block letters and ticking appropriate boxes.

Property Assessment No. _____
(Please refer to the council rates and charges notice)

I, _____
(Full name in block letters)

of _____
(Address)

Telephone number _____ apply for a pensioner concession.

Property Description (Lot/ Plan) _____ (Office Use Only)

1 (a) I am the holder of a current Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) issued by the Commonwealth Government.

PCC No. _____ Date of Grant: ____/____/____

Please go to question 2.

OR

1 (b) I am NOT the holder of a Pensioner Concession Card. I am the holder of a Gold Card issued by the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) or *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA) and embossed with either:

- Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI)
or
 Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA)
or
 War Widow/er (WW)*

*War widow/ers/wholly dependent partners must be eligible for a PCC in order to claim the pensioner concession on their rates. DVA can assist in determining your eligibility; contact DVA on 133254 or visit www.factsheets.dva.gov.au for further information on the process.

Continued next page

All DVA Applicants are also required to complete the following details:

_____ Your File No.

_____/_____/_____ Date of Grant of TPI or WW pension under the VEA:

_____/_____/_____ Date of eligibility for Special Rate Disability Pension (SRDP)* or wholly dependent partner payment** under MRCA

* date of eligibility as notified in the letter from DVA.

** date of eligibility is the date of your partner's death.

MRCA applicants - if your council is not registered for online confirmation, you will need to provide a letter from DVA. Please check with your council.

(2) Have you claimed a pensioner concession on any other property this year?

No

Yes – please provide address of property below

(3) The property for which I am claiming has been my sole/principal place of living since ____/____/_____.

(4) I am the sole owner; OR

I am liable for the payment of rates and charges on this property, together with others as listed below.

ALL OTHER OWNERS including your spouse or de facto partner should be listed.

Name	PCC Holder (Y/N)	Pension No	Date of Grant	Relationship to Me (eg. Spouse, Father, Co-owner, etc)	Resident of Property (Y/N)	% of Ownership

Evidence of joint ownership is attached; or

Evidence of joint ownership has been provided to council previously

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the information provided is true and correct. **If you make a false statement in an application you may be guilty of an offence and fined up to \$2,200.**

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____.

Applicant Consent

This consent will be used for the sole purpose of authorising Centrelink to provide information to _____, (“the Council”)
[Council’s name]

to assess your eligibility in relation to concessions or services provided by Council.

Applicant Confirmation

I _____ authorise Centrelink to confirm with “the Council”
(Applicant’s name)

the current status of my Commonwealth Benefit and other details as they pertain to my concessional entitlement. This involves electronically matching details I have provided to the Council with Centrelink or Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) records to confirm whether or not I am currently receiving a Centrelink or DVA benefit.

I understand that this consent, once signed, is effective only for the period I am a customer of “the Council”.

I also understand that this consent, which is ongoing, can be revoked any time by giving notice to “the Council”.

I understand that if I withdraw my consent, I may not be eligible for the concession provided by “the Council”.

A brochure is available from Centrelink that provides more details about the Centrelink Confirmation eServices or on Centrelink’s website at www.centrelink.gov.au.

I agree that, unless I revoke my consent, this Applicant Consent record is a permanent consent, and may be relied on by the council until such time as I revoke it.

I acknowledge I have read and understood this Customer Consent record.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____.

PRIVACY AND PERSONAL INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT 1998

Compliance with Section 10

The information contained in this application form and any information requested for the purpose of assessing eligibility for a pensioner concession is required under the *Local Government Act 1993* and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005. This information is required before your application for a pensioner concession can be processed. The information is private and confidential and council must not disclose the information to any person or body if it is not directly related to the purpose for which the information was collected.

If you have a complaint about the use of your personal information, contact the council's Public Officer. The information contained or referred to in this application form may be corrected and updated by you, by contacting the council.

PURPOSE OF THIS FORM

This form is to be completed by ratepayers wishing to receive a pensioner concession on council rates and certain annual charges. Eligible ratepayers are entitled to receive up to:

- \$250.00 on ordinary rates and charges for domestic waste management services
- \$87.50 off their annual water rates and charges (where service is provided by council)
- \$87.50 off their annual sewerage rates and charges (where service is provided by council)

Generally, the concessions are available to eligible pensioners, however concessions may be granted to ratepayers suffering financial hardship in certain circumstances.

The information provided by completing this form will enable council to determine eligibility to receive a pensioner concession and the level of concession the ratepayer is entitled to.

ELIGIBILITY

- Holders of the PCC (Pensioner Concession Card);
- Holders of a gold card embossed with 'TPI' (Totally Permanently Incapacitated);
- Holders of a gold card embossed with 'EDA' (Extreme Disablement Adjustment)
- War widow or widower or wholly dependent partner entitled to the Pensioner Concession Card*

* If you are a war widow or widower or wholly dependent partner but do not have a PCC, you should contact the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) to test your eligibility for the DVA income support supplement. Eligibility is subject to an income and assets test.

Holders of cards other than those listed above are not eligible for the concession.

DVA Contact

For assistance from the DVA call 133 254.

Concession Provider

For more information contact your local council.

الغرض من هذا النموذج

يجب إكمال هذا النموذج بواسطة دافعي الرسوم البلدية، والراغبين في استلام تخفيض على رسوم المجلس البلدي. ويحق لدافعي الرسوم المؤهلين استلام مبالغ تصل إلى:

• \$ 250,00 على الرسوم العادية والتكاليف لخدمات إدارة النفايات المنزلية

• \$ 87,50 من الرسوم السنوية وتكاليف السماء

• \$ 87,50 من الرسوم السنوية وتكاليف تصريف مياه المحاري

بصفة عامة، فإن التخفيضات متاحة للمتقاعدين المؤهلين، ومع ذلك فقد تُمنح التخفيضات لدافعي الرسوم الذين يعانون متاعب مالية في حالات خاصة.

المعلومات المتوفرة بإكمال هذا النموذج سوف تجعل المجلس البلدي قادرا على تحديد الأهلية لاستلام تخفيض، ومستوى التخفيض الذي يستحقه دافع الرسوم.

此表格的用途

此表格供希望獲得市政稅優惠的納稅人填寫。符合資格的納稅人最高可獲得以下減價優惠：

普通市政稅及垃圾管理費減價250.00澳門

年度水費及管理費減價87.50澳門

年度廢水處理稅及管理費減價87.50澳門

符合資格的福利金領取者一般可獲得這些減價優惠。但是在某些情況下，有經濟困難的納稅人也可獲得這些優惠。

在此表格內填寫的訊息可協助市政會決定該納稅人是否有資格獲得減價優惠，以及優惠的等級。

A cosa serve questo modulo

Questo modulo deve essere riempito dai contribuenti che desiderano ricevere riduzioni sulle imposte comunali. I contribuenti che soddisfano i requisiti necessari possono ricevere le seguenti riduzioni:

- fino a \$250.00 sulle imposte comunali ordinarie e sulla bolletta per l'asporto dei rifiuti domestici;
- fino a \$87.50 sulla imposta annuale e bolletta dell'acqua;
- fino a \$87.50 sulla imposta annuale e bolletta delle fognature.

In linea generale le riduzioni vengono concesse solo ai pensionati aventine diritto ma, in alcune circostanze, possono essere estese anche ai contribuenti che si trovino in difficili situazioni economiche.

Le informazioni fornite riempiendo questo modulo consentiranno al Comune di determinare se il contribuente ha diritto alle riduzioni d'imposta e l'ammontare delle riduzioni stesse.

OBJETIVO DE ESTE FORMULARIO

Los contribuyentes que deseen recibir una rebaja en las contribuciones municipales deben responder a este formulario. Quienes reúnan los requisitos podrán recibir hasta:

- \$250,00 en contribuciones y tarifas ordinarias por servicios de administración de desechos domésticos.
- \$87,50 de rebaja anual en las contribuciones y tarifas por agua potable.
- \$87,50 de rebaja anual en las contribuciones y tarifas por alcantarillado.

En general, las rebajas están a disposición de los pensionados que reúnan los requisitos. Sin embargo, se podrán conceder rebajas a los contribuyentes que pasen por privaciones económicas en ciertas circunstancias.

La información que se proporcione respondiendo a este formulario permitirá al municipio determinar tanto si el contribuyente reúne los requisitos para recibir una rebaja como el monto de la rebaja a la cual tendrá derecho el contribuyente.

MỤC ĐÍCH CỦA ĐƠN NÀY

Đơn này cho những người đóng thuế địa phương muốn xin giảm thuế và lệ phí. Những người đóng thuế và lệ phí địa phương có thể được giảm đến:

- \$250 cho thuế địa phương thường và lệ phí cho dịch vụ đổ rác
- \$87.50 cho tiền nước và lệ phí hàng năm
- \$87.50 tiền cống rãnh và lệ phí hàng năm

Nói chung, những người hội đủ điều kiện để lãnh trợ cấp xã hội được giảm thuế và lệ phí địa phương, tuy nhiên trong một số trường hợp, những người gặp khó khăn về tiền bạc cũng có thể được giảm thuế và lệ phí.

Những chi tiết điền trong đơn này sẽ giúp hội đồng thành phố (council) ấn định xem quý vị có hội đủ điều kiện hay không và mức độ được giảm thuế và lệ phí.

GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL

PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT FORM

I _____ of _____

agree that as at _____ I owe Gunnedah Shire Council _____

for _____

I agree to pay to Gunnedah Shire Council _____ per _____

which will commence on _____ In order to repay the said debt within 12 months.

Further, I agree to pay current accounts issued by Gunnedah Shire Council as and when they fall due.

I acknowledge that interest is accruing at 10% pa calculated daily on the outstanding balance.

I understand that should I default on any agreed repayment without written notice and authority given for the default, that the full amount of the outstanding debt will become due and payable immediately and that Gunnedah Shire Council will take the necessary legal action to recover the same.

CUSTOMER
SIGNATURE _____ DATE ____ / ____ / ____

FULL NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

WITNESS
SIGNATURE _____ DATE ____ / ____ / ____

FULL NAME _____

AUTHORISED BY _____ DATE ____ / ____ / ____
SIGNATURE

NAME _____ POSITION/TITLE _____

Shire of
Gunnedah
Land of Opportunity

SCANNED

26 FEB 2013
-----**Gunnedah Shire Council****Special Rate Variation Application, Part B, Criterion 4: Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan assumptions****Statement by General Manager**

I certify that the assumptions underlying the Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan in relation to the sections under the General Manager are appropriate and realistic, and in particular, that:

- The proposed scope and level of service is appropriate given Council's financial outlook and based on professional assessment of staff and the expectations of the community as understood from an extensive engagement process in relation to Council's Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan, Resourcing Strategy and the Special Rate Variation application;
- The estimates of each service unit and specific projects as identified in the Operational Plan and incorporated into the Long Term Financial Plan are feasible and have been based on efficient allocation of resources;
- All projected cost components, including labour costs, as outlined in the Long Term Financial Plan are appropriate to the works and based on realistic assumptions;
- The expected base rate of growth assumptions are appropriate and have been consistently utilised in the projections for all services and projects.



Signature

Robert E Campbell

General Manager

Shire of
Gunnedah
Land of Opportunity

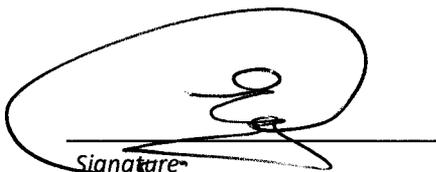
Gunnedah Shire Council

Special Rate Variation Application, Part B, Criterion 4: Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan assumptions

Statement by Director Community and Corporate Services

I certify that the assumptions underlying the Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan in relation to the Division of Community and Corporate Services are appropriate and realistic, and in particular, that:

- The proposed scope and level of service is appropriate given Council's financial outlook and based on professional assessment of staff and the expectations of the community as understood from an extensive engagement process in relation to Council's Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan, Resourcing Strategy and the Special Rate Variation application;
- The estimates of each service unit and specific projects as identified in the Operational Plan and incorporated into the Long Term Financial Plan are feasible and have been based on efficient allocation of resources;
- All projected cost components, including labour costs, as outlined in the Long Term Financial Plan are appropriate to the works and based on realistic assumptions;
- The expected base rate of growth assumptions are appropriate and have been consistently utilised in the projections for all services and projects.



Signature
Eric Groth
Director of Community and Corporate Services

Shire of
Gunnedah
Land of Opportunity

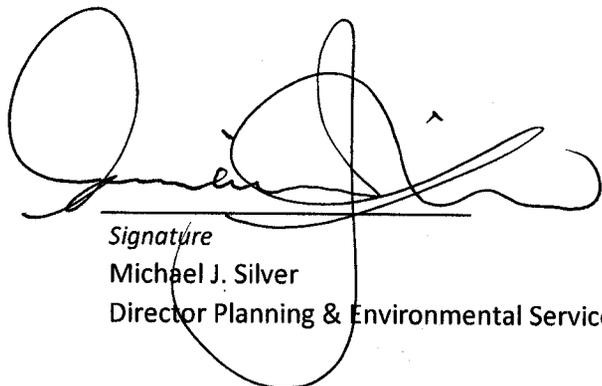
Gunnedah Shire Council

Special Rate Variation Application, Part B, Criterion 4: Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan assumptions

Statement by Director Planning & Environmental Services

I certify that the assumptions underlying the Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan in relation to the Division of Planning & Environmental Services are appropriate and realistic, and in particular, that:

- The proposed scope and level of service is appropriate given Council's financial outlook and based on professional assessment of staff and the expectations of the community as understood from an extensive engagement process in relation to Council's Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan, Resourcing Strategy and the Special Rate Variation application;
- The estimates of each service unit and specific projects as identified in the Operational Plan and incorporated into the Long Term Financial Plan are feasible and have been based on efficient allocation of resources;
- All projected cost components, including labour costs, as outlined in the Long Term Financial Plan are appropriate to the works and based on realistic assumptions;
- The expected base rate of growth assumptions are appropriate and have been consistently utilised in the projections for all services and projects.



Signature
Michael J. Silver
Director Planning & Environmental Services

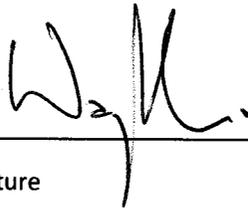
Gunnedah Shire Council

Special Rate Variation Application, Part B, Criterion 4: Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan assumptions

Statement by Director Infrastructure Services

I certify that the assumptions underlying the Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan in relation to the Division of Infrastructure Services are appropriate and realistic, and in particular, that:

- The proposed scope and level of service is appropriate given Council's financial outlook and based on professional assessment of staff and the expectations of the community as understood from an extensive engagement process in relation to Council's Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan, Resourcing Strategy and the Special Rate Variation application;
- The estimates of each service unit and specific projects as identified in the Operational Plan and incorporated into the Long Term Financial Plan are feasible and have been based on efficient allocation of resources;
- All projected cost components, including labour costs, as outlined in the Long Term Financial Plan are appropriate to the works and based on realistic assumptions;
- The expected base rate of growth assumptions are appropriate and have been consistently utilised in the projections for all services and projects.



Signature

Wayne Kerr

Director of Infrastructure Services

20-2-2013

MINUTES of the **Extraordinary Meeting** of Gunnedah Shire Council held on **Wednesday 6 March 2013** in the Council Chambers, Council Administration Building, 63 Elgin Street, Gunnedah commencing at 6:00pm.

1.	COUNCILLOR	PRESENT	LEAVE	APOLOGY	ABSENT
	OC Hasler	X			
	RG Swain	X			
	C Fuller	X			
	T Duddy			X	
	GA Griffen			X	
	H Allgayer	X			
	SJ Smith	X			
	R Ryan	X			
	D Quince	X			
	SENIOR STAFF				
	General Manager	X			
	Director Community and Corporate Services	X			
	Director Planning and Environmental Services	X			
	Director Infrastructure Services	X			

Council Resolution
Moved Councillor RG SWAIN
Seconded Councillor SJ SMITH

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

COUNCILLOR	ITEM	REPORT	P	SNP	NSNP	RC	REASON
Nil							
STAFF	ITEM	REPORT	P	SNP	NSNP	RC	REASON
Nil							

P – Pecuniary
 SNP – Significant Non Pecuniary
 NSNP – Not Significant Non Pecuniary
 RC – Remain in Chamber during consideration/discussion of item

COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE SERVICES

4. DELIVERY PROGRAM 2013/14 – 2016/17 AND OPERATIONAL PLAN 2013/14

Director Community and Corporate Services Report

COUNCIL RESOLUTION: That Council adopt the Delivery Program for 2013/14–2016/17 and the Operational Plan 2013/14.

Council Resolution
Moved Councillor RG SWAIN
Seconded Councillor R RYAN

5. SPECIAL RATE VARIATION APPLICATION

Director Community and Corporate Services Report

COUNCIL RESOLUTION: That Council apply for a Special Rate Variation under Section 508(A) of the Local Government Act 1993 as outlined in the report and specifically for the following amounts inclusive of rate pegging; 2013/14 – 9.4%, 2014/15 – 8.5%, 2015/16 – 9.5%, and 2016/17 – 7.5% .

Council Resolution
Moved Councillor H ALLGAYER
Seconded Councillor RG SWAIN

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 6:15 pm.

6 March 2013

Councillor OC Hasler
MAYOR