

## **COMMUNITY FEEDBACK**

Extracts from 2013 Community Satisfaction Survey – Parts 4 and 5

A copy of the 2007, 2010 and 2013 surveys can be accessed on council's website

[www.nambucca.nsw.gov.au](http://www.nambucca.nsw.gov.au)

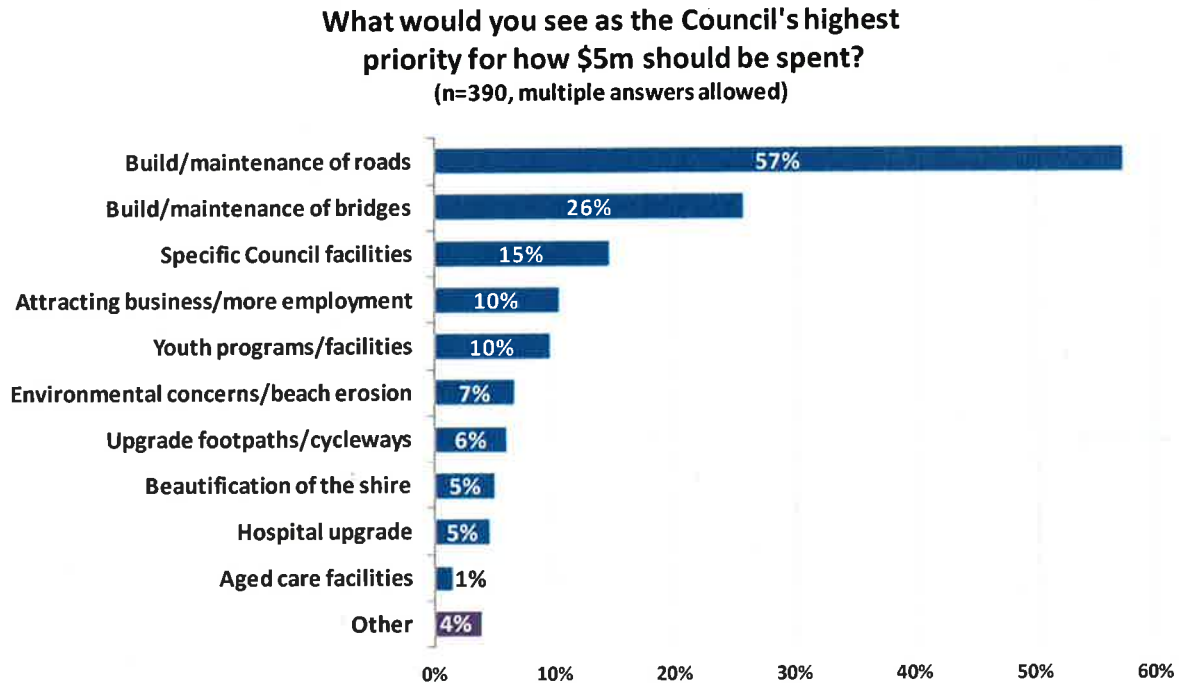
Go to Quick Links – About Council and then click on Community Engagement



## Part 4: The hypothetical \$5 million grant

As in previous surveys, respondents were asked how they would spend a hypothetical \$5 million general use grant. The open-ended responses were coded, and the resulting themes are shown in Graph 4.1, below:

**Graph 4.1: If Council were to hypothetically receive \$5m in a general use grant, what would you see as the highest priority for how that money should be spent?**



Results were similar to 2010, with some 57% of respondents in this year's survey nominating road building and/or maintenance as their number one priority (against 45% in 2010). Repairing bridges was again second on the wish list, at 26%<sup>7</sup> - against 21% last time around.

After a range of specific council facilities<sup>8</sup>, attracting business and jobs was the next highest priority – continuing a common theme through the survey. Likewise, youth programs and facilities were seen as an important target for any additional funding.

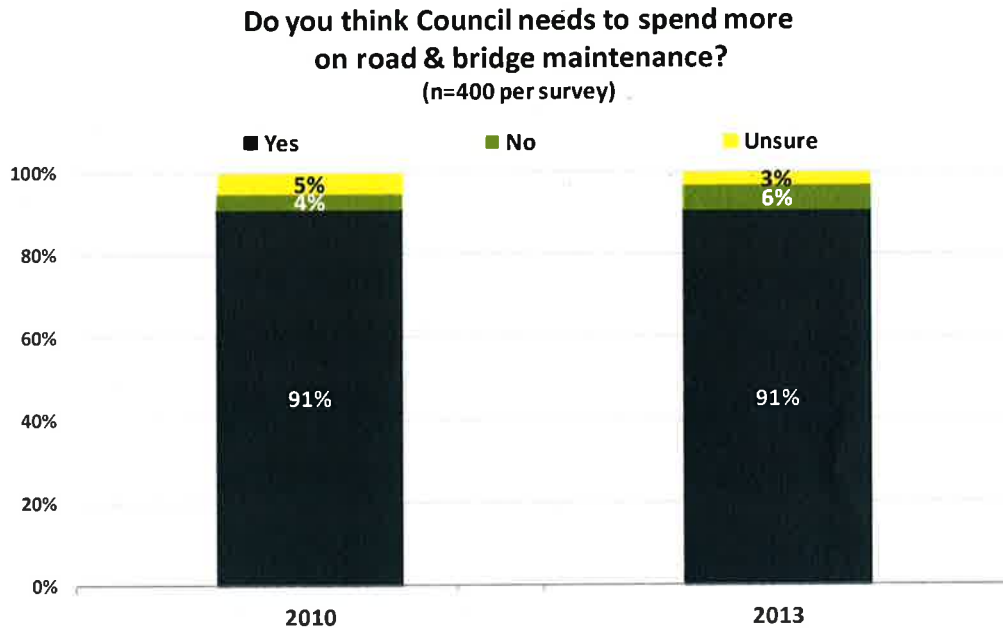
<sup>7</sup> Unsurprisingly, this included 35% of rural respondents against 18% of those living in urban areas.

<sup>8</sup> This included everything from street lighting and river dredging to a public pool in Nambucca, library upgrades and improved public toilets.

## Part 5: Roads, bridges and rate variations

As in 2010, residents were asked a range of questions about their attitude to: (a) spending on roads and bridges, and (b) rate variations designed to address the shortfall in road and bridge improvements.

**Graph 5.1: Do you think Council needs to spend more on road and bridge maintenance?**

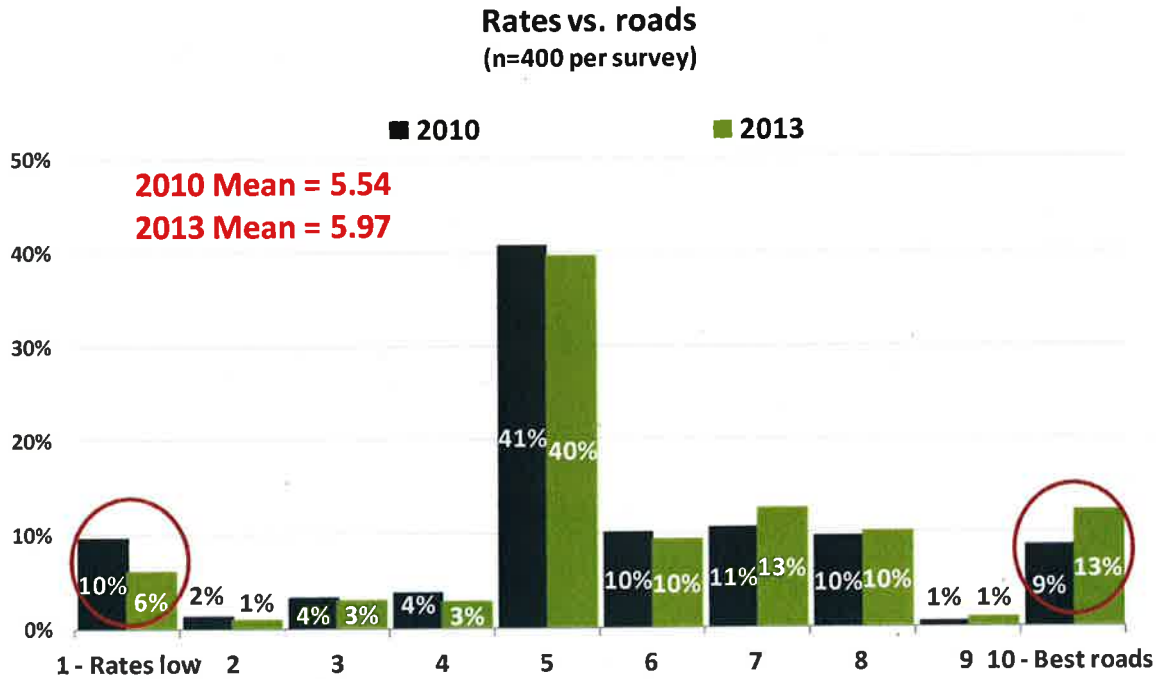


As might be expected, more than nine in ten residents agreed that Council should be spending more on local roads and bridges – consistent with the importance/satisfaction graphs shown earlier.

In order to tease this out, we asked (as in 2010) a “forced choice” questions inviting residents to choose between having the lowest possible rates on one hand, and the best possible roads on the other. The results are shown in Graph 5.2, next page:

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**Graph 5.2: Where would you sit on a sliding scale of 1-10, where 1 means you are only interested in keeping rates as low as possible, and 10 means you are only interested in having the best possible roads?**



Opinion appears to have shifted since 2010 away from lowest rates and towards better roads, with the mean score of 5.97 significantly higher than 5.54 recorded in the last survey. This has primarily been driven by a 4% fall in the “lowest possible rates” cohort, and a commensurate rise in proportion of residents calling for the “best roads”.

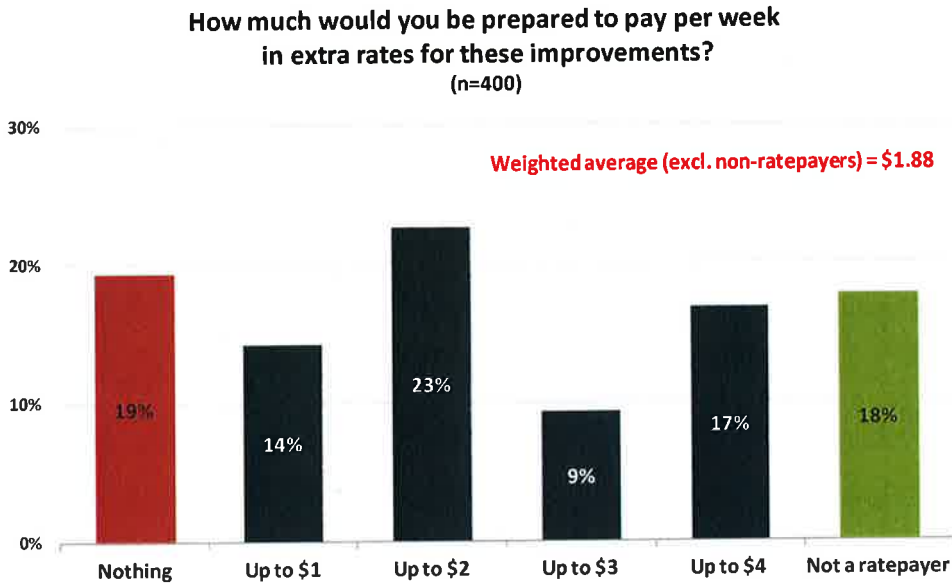
This appears to suggest that residents are increasingly willing to trade low rates for an improvement to road infrastructure.

Residents were then told that NSC may apply for a special rate variation in 2014/15 specifically to fund improvements to Council-controlled roads and bridges, and asked how much extra they would be prepared to pay each week in rates for this purpose. (Residents were offered the choices of “nothing”, “up to \$1”, “up to \$2”, “up to \$3” and “up to \$4”. They were excused from answering the question if they were not ratepayers.<sup>9</sup>)

Results are shown in Graph 5.3, next page:

<sup>9</sup> We double-checked this via the “Are you a ratepayer within the NSC?” question later in the survey. The results in Graph 5.3 hence exclude any responses from non-ratepayers.

**Graph 5.3: NSC may apply next year for a rate variation specifically to fund improvements to Council-controlled roads and bridges. How much would you be prepared to pay per week in extra rates for these improvements?**



The most common response was \$2 (offered by 23% of residents). This was also in line with the weighted average among all rate-paying respondents of \$1.88.

In all, more than three-quarters of NSC rate-payers (77% in fact) accepted the need for some form of rate variation to fund road improvements.