

**Community Telephone Survey 2013 –  
Questions and Results Relating to Infrastructure Renewal  
and Possible Special Rate Variation**

**DOCUMENTS INCLUDED:**

**1. Questionnaire relating to Special Rate Variation**

Questions asked in the Community Survey relating to Infrastructure Renewal including the option of a possible Special Rate Variation for this purpose.

**2. Results Reported by Micromex Research**

Presentation provided by Micromex Research summarising the results from this component of the Community Survey.

## **Document 1**

### **Questionnaire**

**(SRV-related section of Community Survey)**

## QUESTIONNAIRE

# Community Survey – Special Rate Variation Proposal

### Read statement:

Council is facing the challenge of balancing community expectations for services with future financial sustainability. Rates are Council's main source of income for delivering services and are capped by the State government.

Council has a growing gap between the cost of renewing the City's infrastructure – such as roads, footpaths, community buildings, parks and drainage and the funds available for those costs.

This is a result of the long term 'cap' on Council's rates by the State Government; costs rising more than CPI and the City's increasing growth.

Council needs to spend about \$10 million more per year to keep the City's infrastructure in a satisfactory condition. If this is not done now, the problem will grow worse and the cost will be greater in the future.

Council is looking for your help in determining community opinion regarding three options for financing local services and the maintenance and renewal of infrastructure. Along with these options, there will also need to be further efficiencies and savings found by Council.

The options are to:

1. Maintain Infrastructure but reduce other Services
  - rates increase by 3% per annum as allowed by the State Government
2. Maintain other Services but allow a decline in infrastructure
  - rates increase by 3% per annum as allowed by the State Government
3. Maintain existing Services and fund Infrastructure
  - rates increase by 6% next year including the 3% as allowed by the State Government, then rates stay at a higher level in future years;

Let's look at the options:

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### **OPTION 1 – Council could fund infrastructure renewal by reducing other services without a special rate rise.**

This would result in a reduction of the current level of other Council services and facilities – which might mean, for example:

- Reduced opening hours of facilities such as pools or libraries
- Less frequent mowing of sporting fields and parks
- Fewer community events

There would be an annual rate increase of around 3% as set each year by the State Government.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

This option would not allow for new facilities and services to be introduced such as more local parks, footpaths and community buildings, but it would allow Council to maintain and renew those facilities we already have.

**Q4a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with this option?**

Very supportive	Supportive	Somewhat supportive	Not very supportive	Not at all supportive
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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**OPTION 2 – Council could maintain its current services and limit any rate rises to the usual 3% annual rise set by the State Government – but allow the condition of infrastructure – like roads, footpaths, community buildings, parks and drainage to deteriorate over time.**

For example, local roads may have more potholes, park furniture which is damaged may not be able to be replaced, community buildings may not be refurbished when they need it.

**Q4b. How supportive are you with Council proceeding with this option?**

Very supportive	Supportive	Somewhat supportive	Not very supportive	Not at all supportive
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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**OPTION 3 – Council could keep services at current levels and increase rates enough to cover the funding needed for infrastructure renewal.**

This would mean a total rate increase of about 6% next year, including the usual 3% set by the State Government. This higher level of rates would apply every year thereafter.

This option would mean most ratepayers would pay slightly under \$50 more rates next year (and this higher level of rates would remain in future years).

This would mean Council could still provide existing levels of other services and facilities and have the funds to properly maintain and renew local infrastructure.

**Q4c. How supportive are you with Council proceeding with this option?**

Very supportive	Supportive	Somewhat supportive	Not very supportive	Not at all supportive
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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**QUESTIONNAIRE**

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**Q5a. Please rank the 3 options in order of preference:**

Option 1 (Reduce other services to fund infrastructure renewal)

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Option 2 (Allow a lower condition of infrastructure over time)

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Option 3 (Maintain other services, increase rates to fund infrastructure renewal)

.....

**Q5b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?**

.....

[ENDS]

## **Document 2**

### **Survey Results**

**(SRV-related section of Community Survey)**

**2013**  
**Blacktown City Council**  
**Community Survey**  
*Rate Increase-related Options and Results*

Prepared by: Micromex Research

Date: November 2013

- Oct 2011 Micromex carried out Council's first Community Satisfaction Survey. (presented to Council November 2012)  
*\* planned to be carried out every two years*
- Sep 2013 Micromex engaged for second Community Survey. Survey again covers all Council's external services.
- Oct 2013 Following Council report on Asset Renewal Funding Strategy, questions added relating to Special Rate Variation proposal.
- Nov 12-18 Telephone survey carried out.
- Dec 2013 Micromex provided initial findings on Rate Increase-related questions. Full results will be presented to Council early in 2014.
- This forms part of the evidence and consultations to be reported to Council in considering a Special Rate Variation application to IPART.

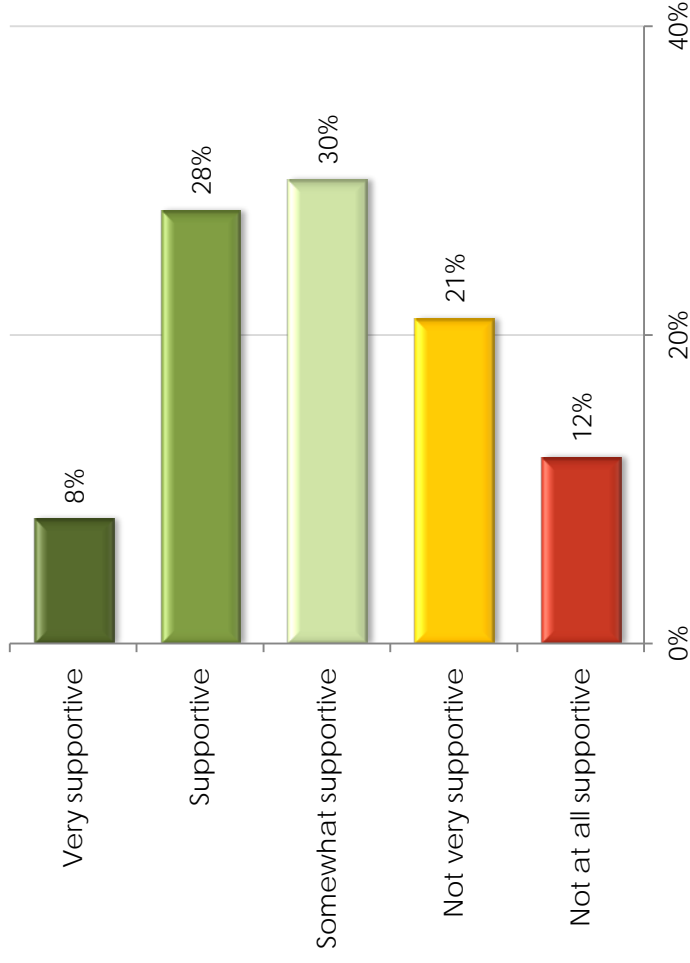


## *The 3 Special Rate Variation (SRV) related options provided in the survey were as follows:*

- OPTION 1 – Council could fund infrastructure renewal by reducing other services without a special rate rise.
- OPTION 2 – Council could maintain its current services and limit any rate rises to the usual 3% annual rise set by the State Government, but allow the condition of infrastructure – like roads, footpaths, community buildings, parks and drainage – to deteriorate over time.
- OPTION 3 – Council could keep services at current levels and increase rates enough to cover the funding needed for infrastructure renewal.

## Option 1 Reduce other services to fund infrastructure renewal

How supportive are you of Council proceeding with this option?

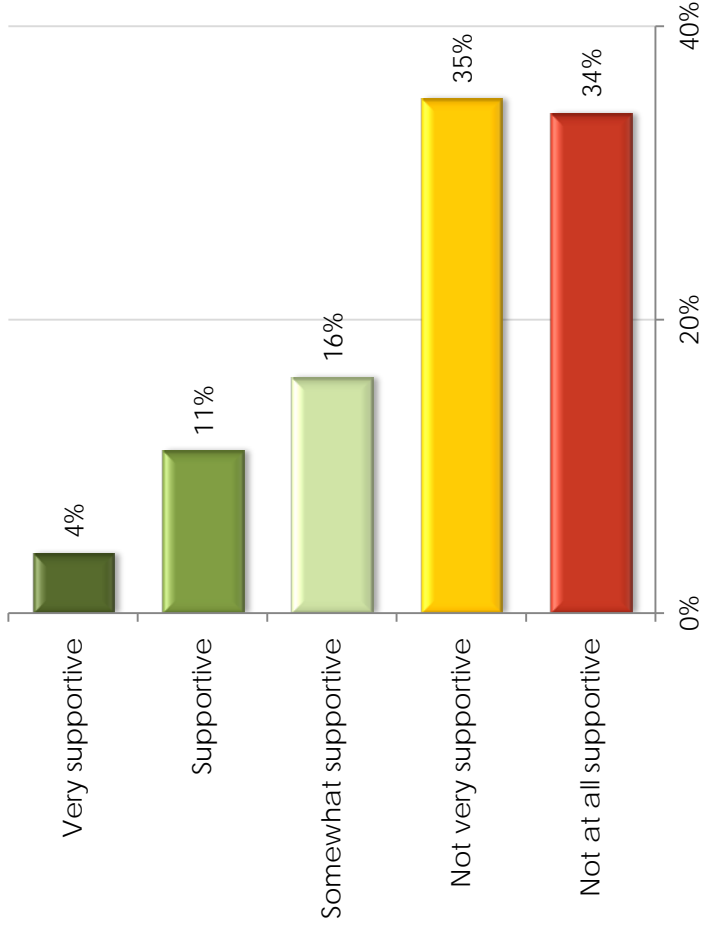


Option 1	Count	Column %
Very supportive	51	8%
Supportive	168	28%
Somewhat supportive	182	30%
Not very supportive	125	21%
Not at all supportive	75	12%
Total	600	100%

## Option 2 Allow a lower condition of infrastructure over time

How supportive are you of Council proceeding with this option?

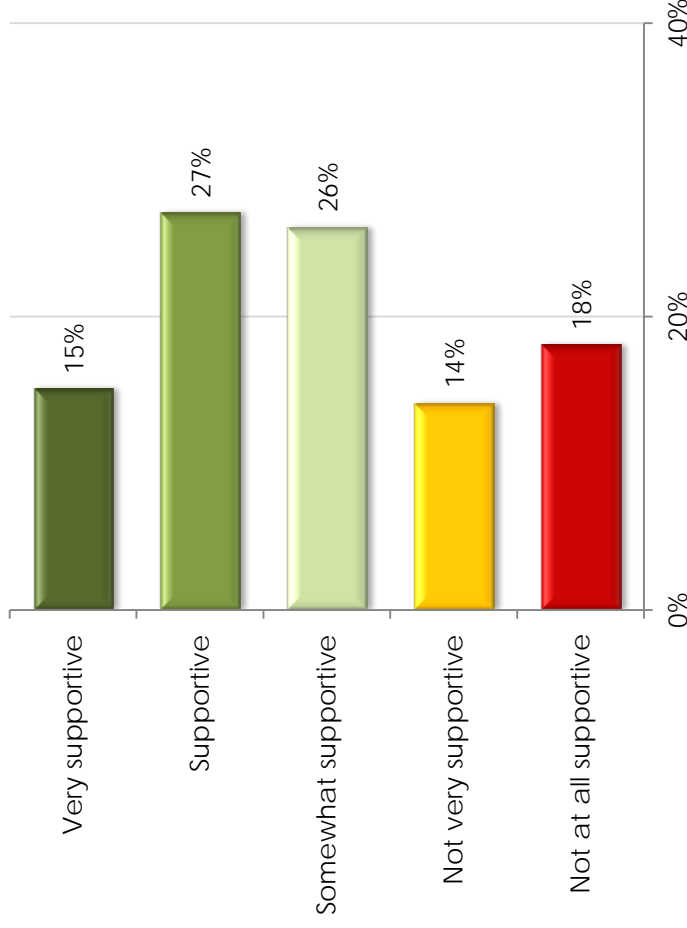
Option 2	Count	Column %
Very supportive	23	4%
Supportive	68	11%
Somewhat supportive	95	16%
Not very supportive	212	35%
Not at all supportive	202	34%
Total	600	100%



## Option 3 Maintain other services, increase rates to fund infrastructure renewal

How supportive are you of Council proceeding with this option?

Option 3	Count	Column %
Very supportive	91	15%
Supportive	165	27%
Somewhat supportive	157	26%
Not very supportive	81	14%
Not at all supportive	107	18%
Total	600	100%



# Ranking of Preferences

	Count	Column %
Option 1	233	39%
2	235	39%
3	133	22%
Total	600	100%

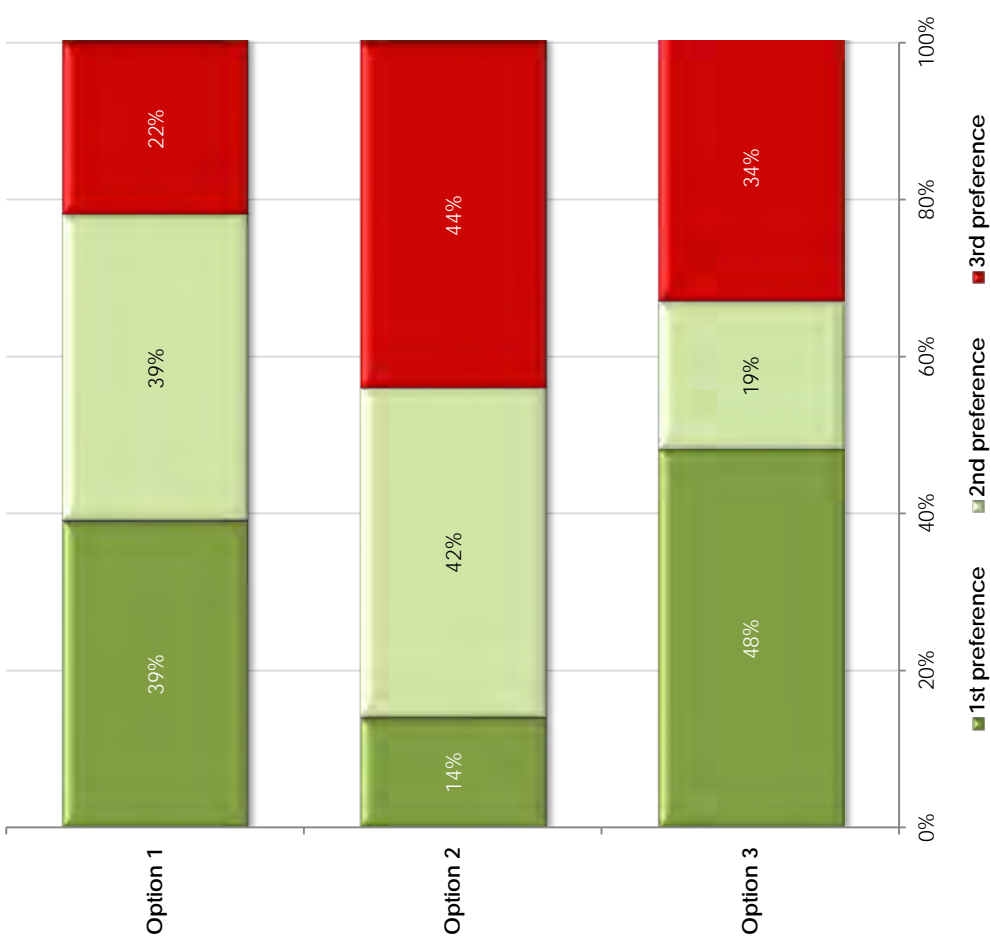
## Reduce other services to fund infrastructure renewal

	Count	Column %
Option 2	81	14%
2	253	42%
3	266	44%
Total	600	100%

## Allow a lower condition of infrastructure over time

	Count	Column %
Option 3	286	48%
2	112	19%
3	202	34%
Total	600	100%

## Maintain other services, increase rates to fund infrastructure renewal



# micromex research

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