

Criterion 2 Community Engagement Annexures

Attachment 2.e.iv

- **Phase three Micromex telephone survey**
- **Phase three Micromex telephone survey results report**

<p align="center">Maitland City Council Community Survey – Special Rates Variation (Random Telephone)</p>
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Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is _____ from Micromex Research and we are conducting a survey on behalf of Maitland Council. The survey will take about 10 minutes. It is a random sample survey; would you be able to assist us please?

Thank you for agreeing to assist us with this survey, which is being conducted for council and asks local residents their opinions about local infrastructure and Council services.

Q1 In which suburb do you live?

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Aberglasslyn | <input type="radio"/> | Luskintyre | <input type="radio"/> |
| Allandale | <input type="radio"/> | Maitland | <input type="radio"/> |
| Anambah | <input type="radio"/> | Maitland North | <input type="radio"/> |
| Ashtonfield | <input type="radio"/> | Maitland Vale | <input type="radio"/> |
| Berry Park | <input type="radio"/> | Melville | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bishops Bridge | <input type="radio"/> | Metford | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bolwarra | <input type="radio"/> | Metford Meadows | <input type="radio"/> |
| Bolwarra Heights | <input type="radio"/> | Millers Forest | <input type="radio"/> |
| Brisbanefield | <input type="radio"/> | Mindaribba | <input type="radio"/> |
| Buchanan | <input type="radio"/> | Morpeth | <input type="radio"/> |
| Campbell Hill | <input type="radio"/> | Mount Dee | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dagworth | <input type="radio"/> | Oakhampton | <input type="radio"/> |
| Dalwood | <input type="radio"/> | Oakhampton Heights | <input type="radio"/> |
| Duckenfield | <input type="radio"/> | Oswald | <input type="radio"/> |
| East Greta | <input type="radio"/> | Parkwood Village | <input type="radio"/> |
| East Maitland | <input type="radio"/> | Phoenix Park | <input type="radio"/> |
| Eastville | <input type="radio"/> | Pitnacree | <input type="radio"/> |
| Farley | <input type="radio"/> | Rathluba | <input type="radio"/> |
| Gillieston Heights | <input type="radio"/> | Raworth | <input type="radio"/> |
| Gosforth | <input type="radio"/> | Rosebrook | <input type="radio"/> |
| Greenhills | <input type="radio"/> | Rutherford | <input type="radio"/> |
| Greta | <input type="radio"/> | South Maitland | <input type="radio"/> |
| Harpers Hill | <input type="radio"/> | St Peters | <input type="radio"/> |
| Hillsborough | <input type="radio"/> | Telarah | <input type="radio"/> |
| Horseshoe Bend | <input type="radio"/> | Tenambit | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lambs Creek | <input type="radio"/> | Thornton | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lambs Valley | <input type="radio"/> | Tocal | <input type="radio"/> |
| Largs | <input type="radio"/> | Windella | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lochinvar | <input type="radio"/> | Windermere | <input type="radio"/> |
| Lorn | <input type="radio"/> | Woodberry | <input type="radio"/> |
| Louth Park | <input type="radio"/> | Woodville | <input type="radio"/> |

Q2. How long have you lived in the Maitland City Council area?

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 6 months – 2 years | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3 – 5 years | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6 – 10 years | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11 – 20 years | <input type="radio"/> |
| More than 20 years | <input type="radio"/> |

Q3. How satisfied are you with the level of service currently provided by Council in the local area?

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Very satisfied | <input type="radio"/> |
| Satisfied | <input type="radio"/> |
| Somewhat satisfied | <input type="radio"/> |
| Not very satisfied | <input type="radio"/> |
| Not at all satisfied | <input type="radio"/> |

Q4. How important do you believe it is for Council to continue to provide currently programmed and improved OR enhanced services to our growing population?

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Very important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Somewhat important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Not very important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Not at all important | <input type="radio"/> |

Q5. How important do you believe it is for Council to be financially sustainable (i.e. not in debt/deficit) into the future?

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Very important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Somewhat important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Not very important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Not at all important | <input type="radio"/> |

Read Concept

Maitland is one of the fastest growing inland cities in Australia. Our population is expected to grow by 30% over the next 10 years and almost double by 2030.

Currently council's rating revenue covers less than half the cost of providing services to these new and existing residents. As such council is facing the challenge of balancing community expectations for services within the rate cap increase allowed by the State Government. This 'cap' is usually set to increase at around 3% per annum.

Looking at growth and other factors Council has identified that there will be an operational shortfall of \$92 million over the next ten years, if current service levels are to be maintained. Consultation with the community have indicated that the majority of the community want services to be enhanced or maintained

To respond to this challenge, Council is proposing to increase total rating revenue by 8.35% per year for seven years (this includes the allowed rate cap of 3%) .This would be done as a 'special rate variation', submitted to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for determination. At the same time Council is proposing to shift the proportion of rating paid by each rating category, to ensure equitable distribution. Council's proposal would increase total rate revenue by 83%, over 7 years, with the special rate variation component being 53% of this amount.

The average rate increase of each rating category would be as follows:

- Residential urban would have an average increase of 8.94%, or \$116 per annum, for seven years
- Farmland high intensity would have an average increase of 6.52%, or \$235 per annum, for seven years
- Business would have an average increase of 7.03% or \$458 per annum, for seven years.

Under the proposal, all of Council's current services would be maintained as programmed, with enhancements in the following key areas:

- | | |
|---|---|
| · Roads, kerbs and gutters and drains \$11.5 million | · Bus shelters \$350,000 |
| · Footpaths \$2.1 million | · Sporting facilities, parks, playgrounds and picnic facilities \$2.5 million |
| · Community buildings, public toilets and amenities \$2.5 million | · Youth spaces (skate parks) and programs \$2 million |
| · Off road recreational cycleways, trails and shared pathways \$2 million | · Place activation in key sites across the CBD \$1 million |
| · Access to the Hunter river for recreation \$1 million | |

Council recognises the community is already facing increases in daily costs and is not taking this step lightly, however, Council believes the key projects will revitalise and improve the quality of life in the Maitland area.

Q6a. How supportive are you with Council proceeding with this application?

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

Q6b. Why do you say that? (Ask all participants)

.....

Q7a. Based on what you have been told, how important do you believe it is that Maitland City Council is allowed to introduce this special rate variation? (PROMPT)

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Very important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Somewhat important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Not very important | <input type="radio"/> |
| Not at all important | <input type="radio"/> |

Q7b. If you believe a special rate variation is 'not very important' or 'not important at all', can you see an alternative and what might this be?

.....

Q8. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council is potentially seeking to increase rates via an application for a special rate variation?

- | | |
|-----|-----------------------|
| Yes | <input type="radio"/> |
| No | <input type="radio"/> |

Q8b If you were aware, how did you hear about it?

- Council publication in my letterbox ('Funding our Future') ☐
- Advertisements in the paper ☐
- Facebook ☐
- Media coverage ☐
- Word-of-mouth ☐
- Council website/Maitland Your Say ☐
- Other _____ ☐

Q9. What is your age bracket?

- 18–34 ☐
- 35–49 ☐
- 50–64 ☐
- 65+ ☐

Q10. Which of the following best describes the house where you are currently living?

- I/We own/are currently buying this property ☐
- I/We currently rent this property ☐

Q11. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

- Work full time in the Maitland LGA ☐
- Work full time outside the Maitland LGA ☐
- Work part time in the Maitland LGA ☐
- Work part time outside the Maitland LGA ☐
- Home duties ☐
- Student ☐
- Self funded retiree ☐
- Pensioner ☐
- Unemployed ☐
- Not applicable ☐

Q13. Gender by voice: Male ☐ Female ☐

If you would like to know more about the proposal, go to www.maitlandyoursay.com.au You can also register to stay up to date via email.



Maitland City Council

Special Rate Variation Research

Prepared by: Micromex Research

Date: November 2013





Background

Background

Maitland City Council is facing the challenge of balancing community expectations with future financial sustainability, and as such has determined that it needs to apply for a special rate variation in order to fund future services, facilities, programs and initiatives for its residents.

Research Objectives

As part of the application process, Maitland City Council requested Micromex Research conduct a robust community research survey in order to:

1. Measure community support for the introduction of a special rate levy
2. Provide an avenue for feedback in order for residents to express their views on the proposed SRV

Interviewing

A random telephone survey of 400 residents was conducted between 18th and 21st November 2013.

Interviewing was conducted in accordance with IQCA (Interviewer Quality Control Australia) Standards and the Market Research Society Code of Professional Conduct. Where applicable, the issues in each question were systematically rearranged for each respondent.

Sampling Size Implication

A random community sample size of 400 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.9% at 95% confidence.

This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of n=400 Maitland residents, that 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.9%.

Therefore the research findings documented in this report should be interpreted by Maitland Council and IPART as not just the opinions of 400 residents, but as an accurate and robust measure of the entire Maitland community's attitudes.

- The questionnaire, of approximately 10 minutes in duration, was designed to establish current attitudes and explore community response to the proposed resource strategies

Questionnaire Structure

- | | |
|--|--|
| Q1. In which suburb do you live? | Q8. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council is potentially seeking to increase rates via an application for a special rate variation |
| Q2. How long have you lived in the Maitland City Council area? | Q8b. If you were aware, how did you hear about it? |
| Q3. How satisfied are you with the level of service currently provided by Council in the local area? | Q9. Age bracket? |
| Q4. How important do you believe it is for Council to continue to provide currently programmed and improved or enhanced services to our growing population | Q10. Which of the following best describes the house where you are currently living? |
| Q5. How important do you believe it is for Council to be financially sustainable into the future? | Q11. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? |
| READ CONCEPT | Q12. Gender |
| Q6a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with this application | |
| Q6b. Why do you say that? | |
| Q7a. Based on what you have been told, how important do you believe it is that Maitland City Council is allowed to introduce the special rate variation | |
| Q7b. If you believe a special rate variation is 'not very important' or 'not important at all', can you see an alternative and what might this be? | |

Ratings questions

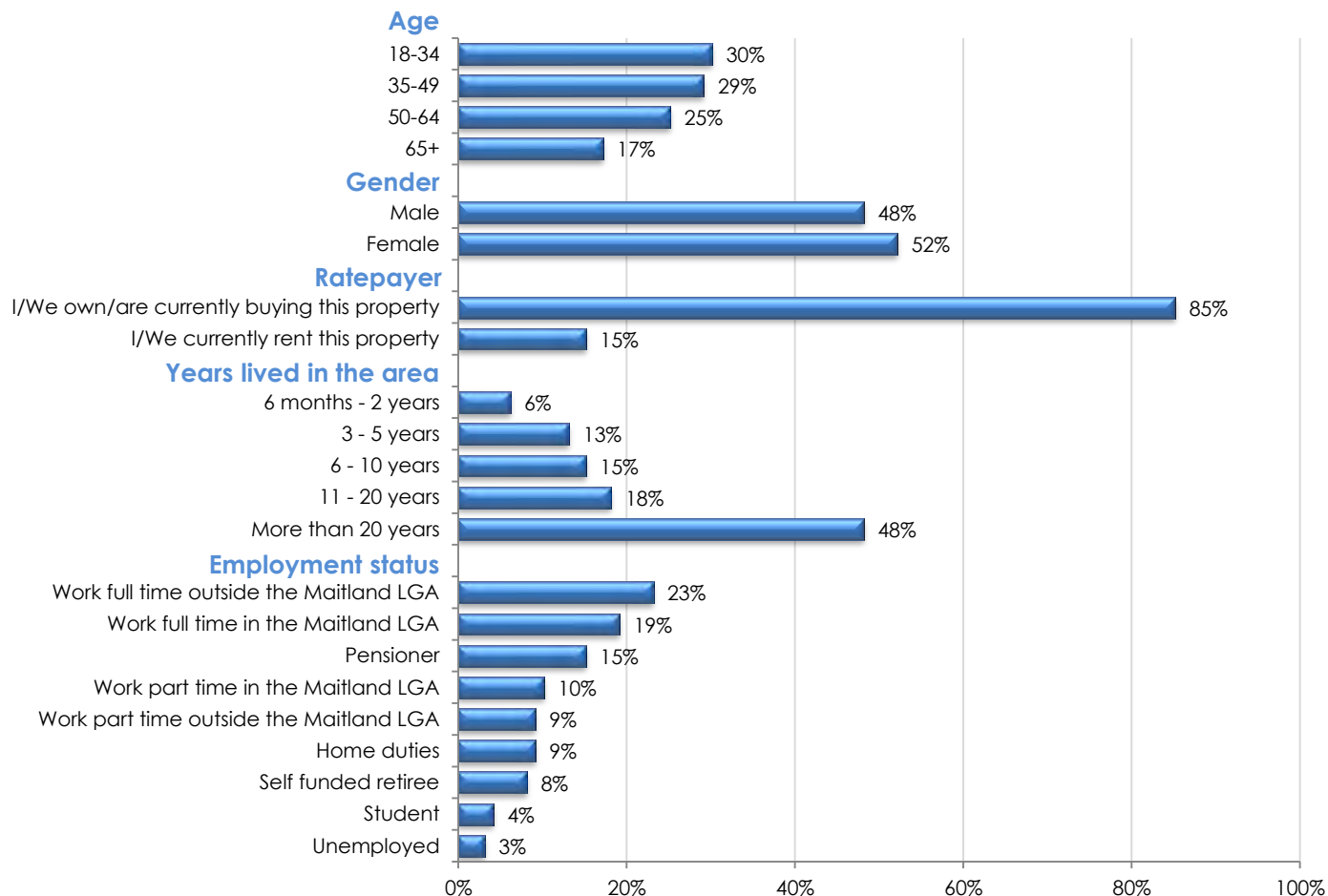
The Unipolar Scale of 1 to 5 was used in all rating questions, where 1 was the lowest importance, satisfaction or support and 5 the highest importance, satisfaction or support

This scale allowed for a mid range position for those who had a divided or neutral opinion.

1.99 or lower	'Very low' level of importance/satisfaction/support
2.00 – 2.49	'Low' level of importance/satisfaction/support
2.50 – 2.99	'Moderately low' level of importance/satisfaction/support
3.00 – 3.59	'Moderate' level of importance/satisfaction/support
3.60 – 3.89	'Moderately high' level of importance/satisfaction/support
3.90 – 4.19	'High' level of importance/satisfaction/support
4.20 – 4.49	'Very high' level of importance/satisfaction/support
4.50 +	'Extreme' level of importance/satisfaction/support



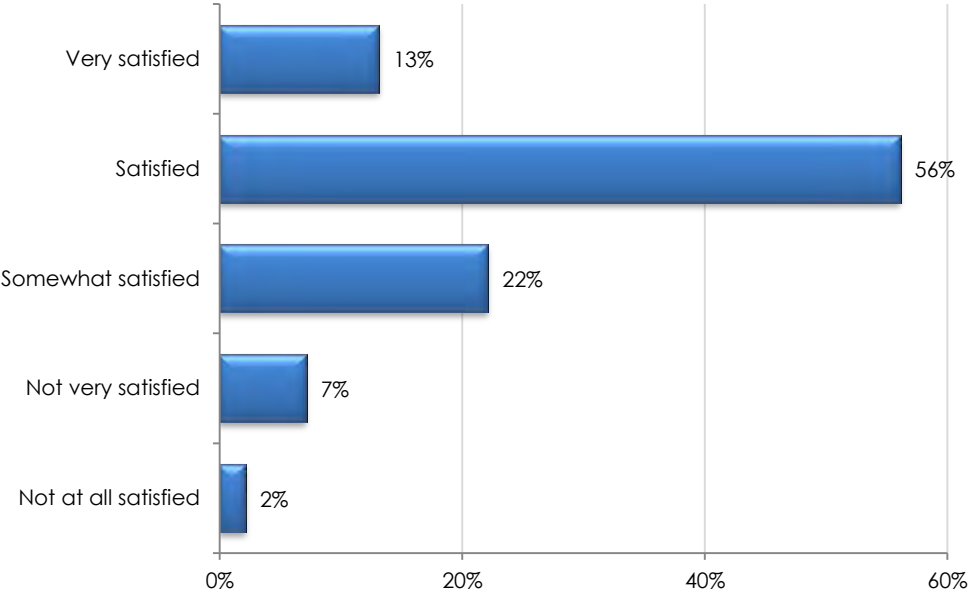
Sample Profile



Base: n=400

91% Of Residents Are At Least Somewhat Satisfied With Council's Current Level Of Service

Q. How satisfied are you with the level of service currently provided by Council in the local area?



Males more likely than females

Mean ratings	Male	Female	Own	Rent
	3.83▲	3.63▼	3.72	3.80
	Overall: 3.73			
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	3.74	3.62	3.76	3.84

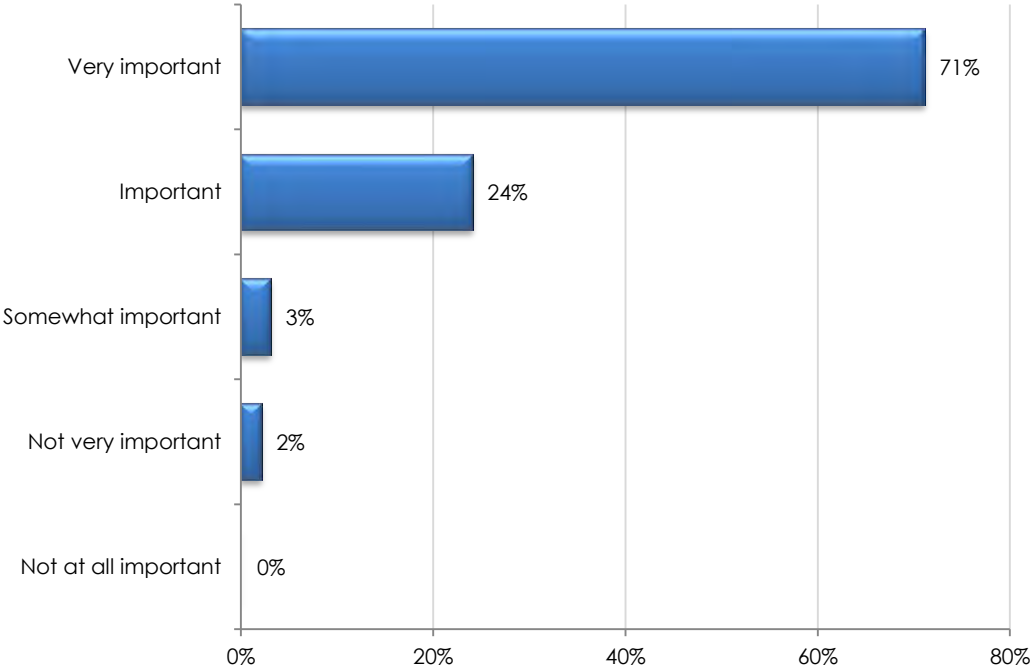
Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied
= significantly higher/lower level compared to overall rating

Base: n=400

No clear dissatisfaction with the current services

95% Of Residents Believe It Is Important – Very Important That Council Continues To Improve And Enhance Services

Q. How important do you believe it is for Council to continue to provide currently programmed and improved or enhanced services to our growing population?



Mean ratings	Male	Female	Own	Rent
	4.57	4.69	4.63	4.65
	Overall: 4.63			
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	4.53	4.74	4.65	4.62

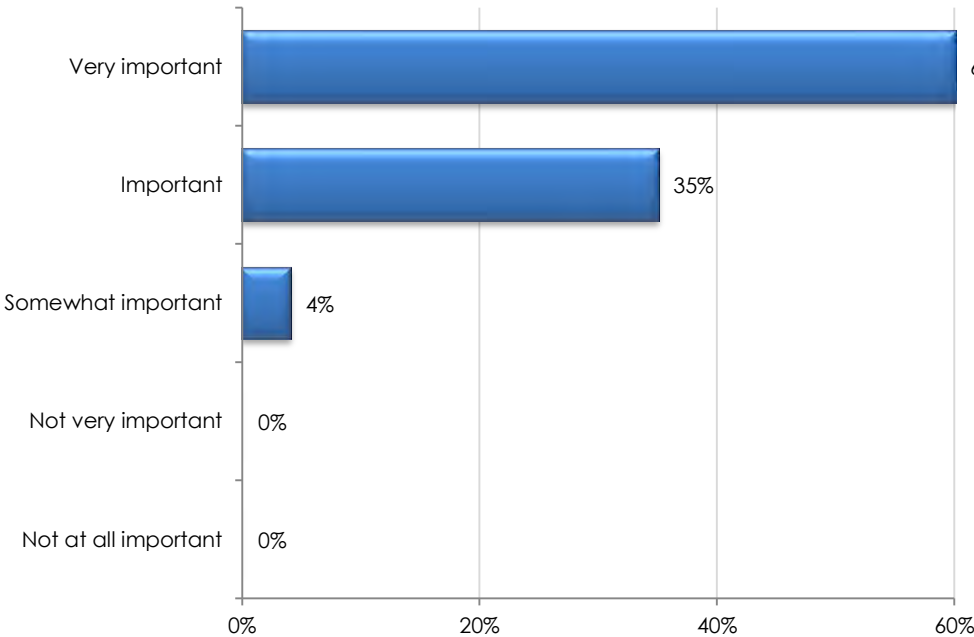
Scale: 1 = not at all important, 5 = very important

Base: n=400

Residents want the LGA to continue to improve

100% Of Residents Believe It Is At Least Somewhat Important For Council To Be Financially Sustainable

Q. How important do you believe it is for Council to be financially sustainable (i.e. Not in debt/deficit) into the future)



Mean ratings	Male	Female	Own	Rent
	4.50	4.58	4.52	4.67
	Overall: 4.54			
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	4.57	4.64	4.51	4.40

Scale: 1 = not at all important, 5 = very important

Base: n=400

Residents want the LGA to remain fiscally responsible



Funding Options

Read statement:

Maitland is one of the fastest growing inland cities in Australia. Our population is expected to grow by 30% over the next 10 years and almost double by 2030.

Currently, Councils rating revenue covers less than half the cost of providing services to these new and existing residents. As such, Council is facing the challenge of balancing community expectations for services within the rate cap increase allowed by the State Government. This 'cap' is usually set to increase at around 3% per annum.

Looking at growth and other factors, Council has identified that there will be an operational shortfall of \$92 million over the next ten years, if current service levels are to be maintained. Consultation with the community has indicated that the majority of the community want services to be enhanced or maintained.

To respond to the challenge, Council is proposing to increase total rating revenue by 8.35% per year for seven years (this includes the allowed rate cap of 3%). This would be done as a 'special rate variation', submitted to the independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for determination. At the same time Council is proposing to shift the proportion of rating paid by each rating category, to ensure equitable distribution. Council's proposal would increase total rate revenue by 83%, over 7 years, with the special rate variation component being 53% of this amount.

Read statement:

The average rate increase of each rating category would be as follows:

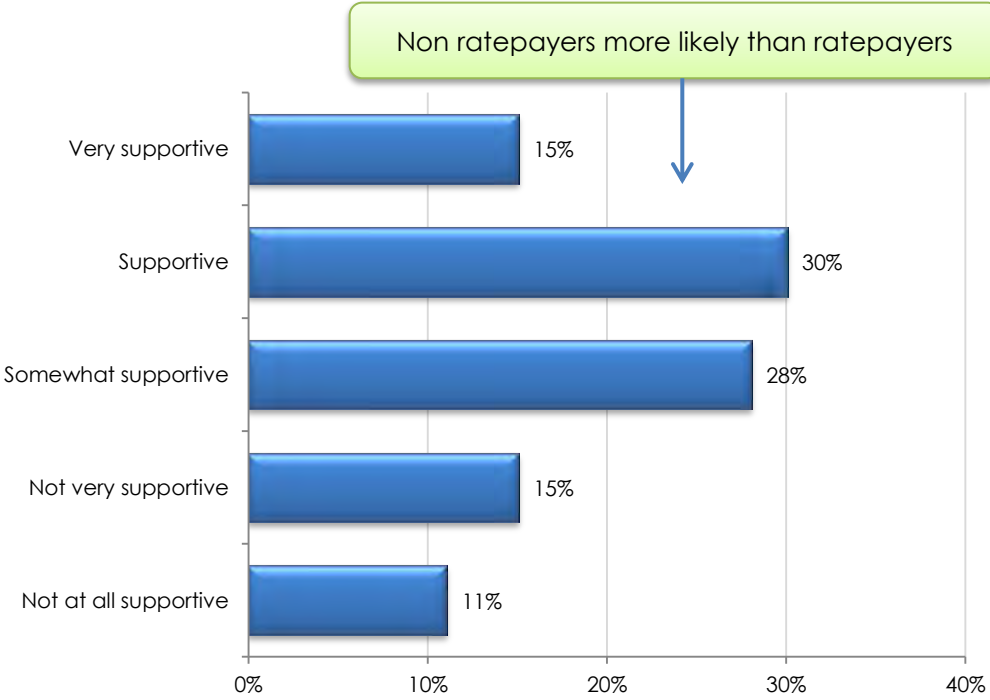
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- Community buildings, public toilets and amenities \$2.5 million
- Off road recreational cycleways, trails and shared pathways \$2 million
- Access to the Hunter River for recreation \$1 million
- Bus shelters \$350, 00
- Sporting facilities, parks, playgrounds and picnic facilities \$2.5 million
- Youth spaces (skate parks) and programs \$2 million
- Place activation in key sites across the CBD \$1 million

Nearly Three Quarters Of Residents Are At Least Somewhat Supportive Of Council Proceeding With The Proposed SRV

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



Supportive (45%)		
Rates need to be increased to accommodate for the growing population and improvements needed in the area	26%	
Maintaining services and facilities at current levels is a necessity especially the infrastructure	8%	
Somewhat supportive (28%)		
Apprehensive as it's a big rate increase but the enhancements are worthwhile	5%	
Could not afford a rate increase	5%	
Not supportive (26%)		
Could not afford a rate increase	12%	
Council needs to manage their finances more efficiently	7%	
Lack of services currently provided	6%	

Mean ratings	Male	Female	Own	Rent
	3.26	3.18	3.09▼	3.99▲
	Overall: 3.22			
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	3.60▲	3.00▼	3.09▼	3.12▼

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive
= significantly higher/lower level compared to overall rating

Base: n=400

Only 11% were completely opposed to the SRV

“As long as the increase is handled by responsible, experienced people, this increase could be used to our advantage to grow as a society”

“Council needs to raise revenue but I feel it’s going to be an uphill battle with other expenses going up”

"It is important to justify why Council should keep paying the Council staff rather than hiring out contractors to completed the work and maintenance in the area"

***"The increase is too much too fast
for the area to manage"***

“Developers need to be more responsible for infrastructure and maintenance in new areas”

"It is very important to look after the area and its services and facilities"

"Hard to make ends meet with everything rising at the moment and struggling with costs but I can see that things need to improve for a better quality of life for the area"

***“Council don't spend their money
equally over the council area”***

"I am wary of how Council would spend rates as I believe they are wasteful in their spending, would be more supportive if they were efficient with the funds they had"

Not Very/Not At All Supportive Of The SRV (26%)

Q. Why do you say that? – Not very supportive/not at all supportive

"There is a lot of money wasted by the Council on projects that are not necessary, especially the levy project"

"We are battling to pay rates as is, they will just become too unaffordable in the future"

"I do not believe Council will improve services even with the rate rise"

"I do not believe all the funds would go to these areas"

"Council need to live within their means"

"A further rise in rates is simply not realistic"

"Council should look at other ways to raise the funds, e.g. reducing Council staff"

"The number of new homes and residents should increase the revenue in the area so shouldn't need to increase the rates for the current residents"

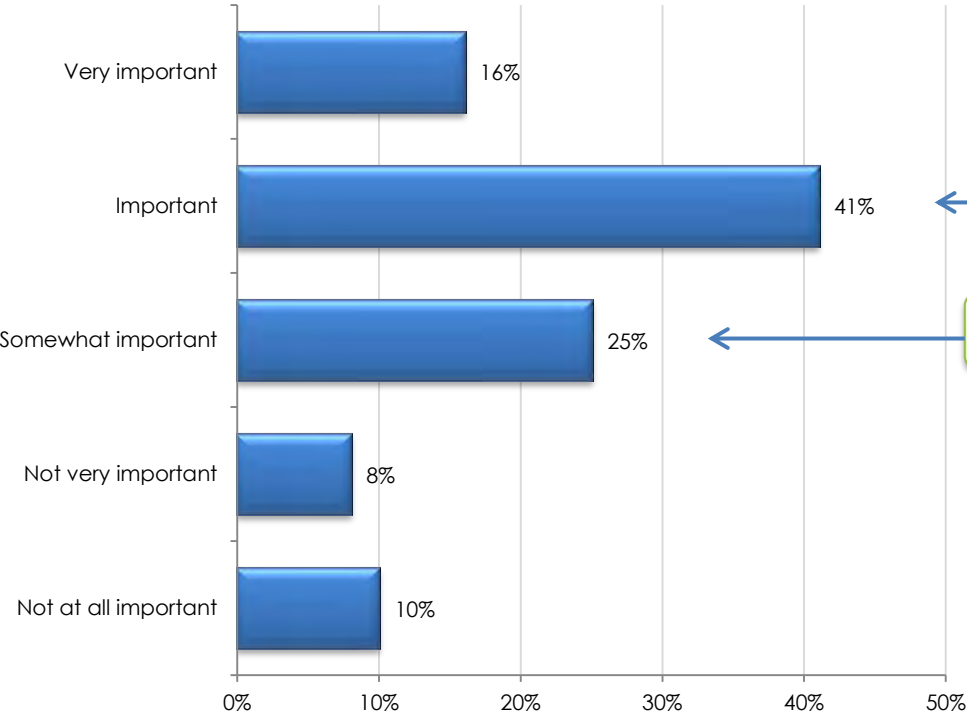
"Population growth creates rate increases therefore the revenue increases, so high rates are not necessary"



Those against the SRV tended to state issues of Council inefficiency or personal affordability

82% Consider The Introduction Of The SRV As At Least Somewhat Important

Q. Based on what you have been told, how important do you believe it is that Maitland City Council is allowed to introduce this special rate variation?



Non ratepayers more likely than ratepayers

18-34 year olds more likely than those 35+

Mean ratings	Male	Female	Own	Rent
	3.55	3.40	3.43 ▼	3.73 ▲
	Overall: 3.47			
	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
	3.82 ▲	3.26 ▼	3.31 ▼	3.45 ▼

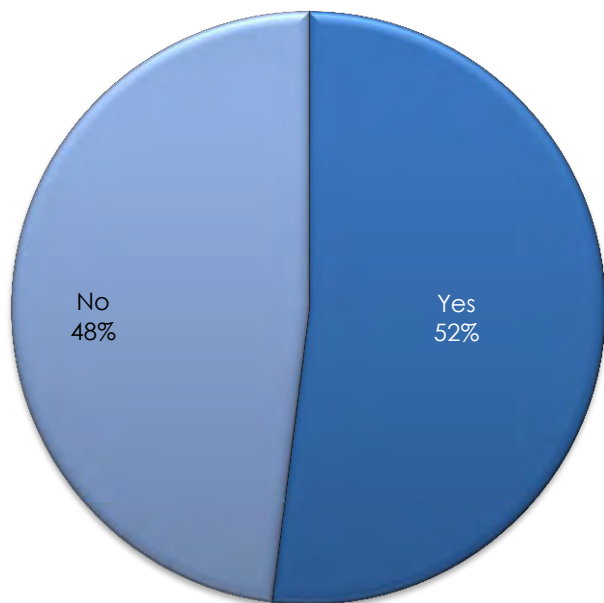
Scale: 1 = not at all important, 5 = very important
= significantly higher/lower level compared to overall rating

Base: n=400

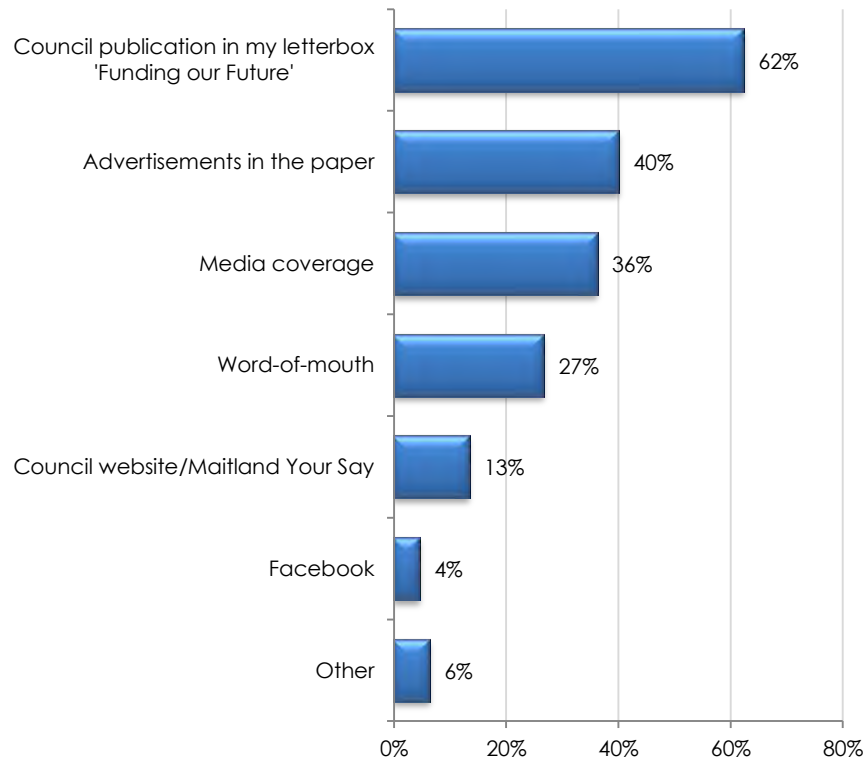
Over half of the community (57%) feels that it is at important to very important that IPART approves Council's application

Just Over Half Of The Residents Were Already Aware Of The Potential Application For The SRV

Q. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council is potentially seeking to increase rates via an application for a special rate variation?



Q. If you were aware, how did you hear about it?



Base: n=400

'Funding our Future' was the predominant method of becoming aware of the SRV



Conclusion

Residents had moderately high levels of satisfaction with the current levels of servicing provided by Council.

95% of residents believe it is important that Council continues to improve and enhance services.

Prior to contact over 50% of residents were aware of Council's intention to see a special rate variation

⇒ ***74% of residents were at least somewhat supportive of Council proceeding with the proposed Special Rate Variation***

⇒ ***82% of residents found it was at least somewhat important for Council to be allowed to introduce the Special Rate Variation***

There is clear community support for Council to receive permission from IPART for a rate increase



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Web: www.micromex.com.au Email: stu@micromex.com.au

Reasons For Believing The SRV Is Not At All/Not Very Important

Q. If you believe a special rate variation is 'not very important' or 'not important at all', can you see an alternative and what might this be?

"Other councils seem to provide the current services that we do not have and the residents are paying a similar rate payment, Council needs to look at the way they spend our money"

"No adequate information has been given on the proposal for the SRV. I am not opposed to the proposal but need to see the contrast of current circumstances to give my true thoughts on this"

"Addressing ratepayers directly to see how the community could get involved in enhancing the area, e.g. local tradesmen, volunteers, fundraising through local events and festivals"

"Developers should be paying fees for the land they develop because of the new residents they house which puts a strain on the services"

"If the population has doubled by 2030 the standard 3% rates increase should be enough funds to cover the costs because there are more ratepayers in the area, therefore Council shouldn't have to increase the rates at such a high amount"

"User pays system for those that actually use these services for example libraries and swimming pools"