

CORPORATE & BUSINESS SYSTEMS

ATTACHMENT A

**LATE REPORT - ADDENDUM TO MCC
DELIVERY PROGRAM-OPERATIONAL PLAN
TO INCLUDE SRV SCENARIO**

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING

31 MAY 2017



MidCoast Council community survey: Proposed Special Rate Variation and Environmental Levy



Results from a random and statistically valid telephone survey
Conducted by Jetty Research for **MidCoast Council**

Dated:
January 2017



Contact:

James Parker

e: James.Parker@jettyresearch.com.au

p: 02 6650 9175

Level 1, 30 Industrial Drive
Coffs Harbour NSW
PO Box 1555
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

w: www.jettyresearch.com.au

e: info@jettyresearch.com.au

Coffs Harbour Sydney

ACN 121 037 429

Prepared by	Christine Dening
Reviewed by	James Parker
Date	January 11 th 2017
Document Name	MidCoast Council SRV Survey
Version	Final



Table of Contents

DISCLAIMER	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
INTRODUCTION	8
BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES	8
METHODOLOGY	8
SAMPLING ERROR	10
<i>Graph i: How sampling error varies with sample and population size</i>	10
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS.....	11
<i>Graph i: Survey sample by age</i>	11
<i>Graph ii: Survey sample by gender</i>	11
<i>Graph iii: Survey sample by ratepayer</i>	12
<i>Graph iv: Survey sample by urban v rural setting</i>	12
<i>Graph v: Survey sample by children at home</i>	13
PART 1: SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE	14
<i>Graph 1.1: Which local government area did you live and/or work in prior to the recent Council merger?</i>	14
<i>Graph 1.2: Satisfaction with Council facilities and services</i>	15
<i>Table 1.1: Satisfaction with Council facilities and services, by region*</i>	16
<i>Graph 1.3: How satisfied are you with the quality of community assets currently provided by MidCoast Council?</i> 16	
<i>Graph 1.4: Can you briefly explain why you gave this answer?</i>	17
PART 2: AWARENESS OF, SUPPORT FOR AND ABILITY TO PAY THE SRV FOR ROADS AND BRIDGES	18
<i>Graph 2.1: Knowledge of the requirement for SRV for roads and bridges requirement</i>	18
<i>Graph 2.2: Where would you sit on a sliding scale of 0-10, where 0 means you only want the lowest possible rates, and 10 means you only want the best possible roads and bridges?</i>	19
<i>Graph 2.3: Were you aware of this proposed special rate variation prior to reading the background material for this survey?</i>	20
<i>Graph 2.4: Which of the following statements most closely aligns with your views on the proposed special rate variation of 5%?</i>	20
<i>Graph 2.5: Ability to pay the additional cost, Manning residents</i>	21
<i>Graph 2.6: Ability to pay the additional cost, Great Lakes residents</i>	22
<i>Graph 2.7: Ability to pay the additional cost, Gloucester residents</i>	22
<i>Graph 2.8: Ability to pay the additional cost, by region</i>	23
PART 3: AWARENESS OF, SUPPORT FOR AND ABILITY TO PAY THE ENVIRONMENTAL LEVY	24
<i>Graph 3.1: Knowledge of a requirements for an Environmental Levy</i>	24
<i>Table 3.1: Agreement that the environmental program should be extended to Gloucester, by region</i>	25
<i>Table 3.2: Agreement that the health of the environment might deteriorate without funding, by region</i>	25
<i>Graph 3.2: Were you aware of the issues prior to reading the background material?</i>	26
<i>Graph 3.3: Where would you sit on a sliding scale of 0-10, where 0 means you only want the lowest possible rates, and 10 means you only want the best possible environment?</i>	26
<i>Graph 3.4: Were you aware of the proposed Environmental Levy prior to reading the background material for this survey?</i>	27
<i>Graph 3.5: Which of the following statements most closely aligns with your views on the proposed Environmental Levy?</i>	28



<i>Graph 3.6: Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional cost? Gloucester residents.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Graph 3.7: Ability to pay the additional cost, Manning residents.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Graph 3.8: Ability to pay the additional cost, Great Lakes residents</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Graph 3.9: Ability to pay the additional cost, by region.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Graph 3.10: Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion regarding applying a 6% Environmental Levy across the whole MidCoast area</i>	<i>32</i>
PART 4: WILLINGNESS TO PAY BOTH THE SRV AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL LEVY	33
<i>Graph 4.1: Ability to pay the additional cost of both the SRV and Environmental Levy, Gloucester residents</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Graph 4.2: Ability to pay the additional cost of both the SRV and Environmental Levy, Manning Residents.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Graph 4.3: Ability to pay the additional cost of both the SRV and Environmental Levy, Great Lakes Residents</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Graph 4.4: Ability to pay the additional cost of both the SRV and Environmental Levy, by region</i>	<i>36</i>
APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION PACK	37
APPENDIX 2: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE.....	46
APPENDIX 3: REASON FOR RATING OF SATISFACTION WITH LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE	54
APPENDIX 4: ONLINE VS CATI SURVEY RESULTS.....	66

Front cover credit: MidCoast Council



Disclaimer

While all care and diligence has been exercised in the preparation of this report, Jetty Research Pty. Ltd. does not warrant the accuracy of the information contained within and accepts no liability for any loss or damage that may be suffered as a result of reliance on this information, whether or not there has been any error, omission or negligence on the part of Jetty Research Pty. Ltd. or its employees.



Executive summary

MidCoast Council was formed in 2016, as an amalgamation of the Great Lakes, Greater Taree and Gloucester local government areas (LGAs).

In November 2016, MidCoast Council commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random and representative telephone survey of 400 local residents to measure current knowledge of, support for and ability to pay a proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV) and, where applicable, Environmental Levy.

MidCoast Council residents were contacted and recruited to participate in a telephone survey at a later date. Initial recruitment was conducted from November 14th to 17th as a random telephone survey of 570 adult residents living within the MidCoast LGA. Quotas were applied by region, with 225 in each of the former Great Lakes and Greater Taree Councils and 100 in the former Gloucester Council recruited to reflect differences in population size¹ while still maintaining an adequate sample size for cross-analysis. No other formal quotas were applied, although we did attempt to ensure an adequate mix of respondents across age group, genders and sub-regions.

Individuals were sent an information pack (Appendix 1) outlining the reasoning and details regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation and Environmental Levy. Residents were then contacted (from November 23rd to 30th) to undertake the survey. In total, 407 surveys were conducted.

Based on the number of households within the nominated LGAs, a random sample of 407 adult residents implies a margin for error of approximately +/- 4.9% at the 95% confidence level. This essentially means that if we conducted a similar poll 20 times, results should reflect the views and behaviour of the overall survey population – in this case “all adult residents excluding council employees and councillors” - to within a +/- 4.8% margin in 19 of those 20 surveys.

In addition to the random and representative telephone survey, an opt-in online survey was run in parallel. The online survey was promoted via a prominent link on the MidCoast Council homepage to all SRV information (including the information pack and survey.) Council also promoted it at public meetings and in media releases. In total, 61 completed the online survey.

For more information on survey methodology, sampling error and sample characteristics, see pages 8-10. For more detailed information on the demographic breakdown of survey respondents, see pages 11-13.

Among the survey's major conclusions:

1. Satisfaction with community assets highlighted the need to repair and maintain roads and bridges:
 - a. Satisfaction was highest with *libraries, waste collection and disposal, parks, reserves and playgrounds* and *protection of waterways* but lowest with *maintenance of sealed roads* and *maintenance of unsealed roads* (over half were dissatisfied with the *maintenance of sealed roads* and almost half were dissatisfied with *maintenance of unsealed roads*).

¹ Great Lakes Council in 2011 Census was 34,427, Greater Taree was 46,541 and Gloucester was 5,064.



2. Awareness of Council's current position with regard to the poor condition of roads and lack of funding to bring them up to standard was high:
 - a. Knowledge of the poor state of the roads, backlog of unfunded renewal works and requirements for additional funding to fund repairs was high – 84%, 78% and 89% awareness respectively.
 - b. While some confusion existed around Council's current level funding, the need for additional funding to stop the continued deterioration of bridges and roads was clearly the main take-out of the information pack, with almost nine in ten understanding (89%).
 - c. Over half of residents (53%) suggested they would prefer better roads over lowest rates (just 12% were willing to sacrifice roads for the sake of lower rates and 35% were neutral.)
3. Three-quarters of those polled supported the SRV to some degree (with 32% supporting it outright and a further 44% supporting it but believing the rate to be too high).
4. Almost three quarters (74%) said they could afford to pay the 5% increase (28% comfortably and 46% if need be). Approximately one quarter of MidCoast Council residents (24%) would struggle to pay it , while the balance preferred not to answer.
5. Residents agreed that the environment is an important asset to the area (95%) and that maintaining the environment should remain a priority (87%).
 - a. Over half of all residents (53%) suggested they would prefer more focus on the environment over lowest rates (while just 18% were willing to sacrifice the environment for the sake of lower rates).
6. Support for the Environmental Levy was high, as was the ability to pay it:
 - a. Some 38% supported the proposed levy at the rate proposed, while 45% supported it in principle but felt the rate is too high. A further 15% did not see a need for any levy for the environment.
 - b. Four in five (80%) could afford to pay the associated increase to fund the Environmental Levy (40% comfortably and 40% if need be) while 18% said they would struggle to pay it.
7. Almost three in five (60%) said they could afford to pay the combined 11% SRV and Environmental Levy (20% comfortably and 40% if need be), while 38% felt they would struggle to pay it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James D. Parker'.

James Parker, QPMR, B. Ec, Grad Cert Applied Science (Statistics), AMSRS
Managing Director
January 11th 2017



Introduction

Background and Objectives

MidCoast Council was formed in 2016, as an amalgamation of the Great Lakes, Greater Taree and Gloucester local government areas (LGAs).

In November 2016, MidCoast Council commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random and representative telephone survey of 400 local residents to determine attitudes towards and ability to pay a proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV) and Environmental Levy. The SRV is targeted towards upgrading and/or maintaining the LGA's aging roads and bridges.

Specifically, the research sought to:

- ⇒ Understand current levels of satisfaction with sealed roads and bridges;
- ⇒ Understand knowledge regarding future plans for maintenance and renewal of Council assets ;
- ⇒ Test understanding of the financial position of Council with regards to funding the asset program;
- ⇒ Test concept of a SRV to fund improvements to Council assets;
- ⇒ Understand awareness of the Environmental Levy and its purpose;
- ⇒ (Gloucester residents) Test proposal to implement the Environmental Levy, and;
- ⇒ Gauge the willingness and capacity of residents to pay for a proposed SRV.

Methodology

The survey was conducted using a random fixed line telephone poll of MidCoast adult residents aged 18+. Respondents were initially selected at random from a verified random sample residential telephone database of 4,130 residential telephone numbers within the three former LGA's which now make up the MidCoast Council area².

Residents were initially contacted and recruited to participate in a telephone survey at a later date. This random recruitment was conducted from November 14th to 17th, with 570 people agreeing at that stage to complete a survey.

Quotas were applied by region, with a designated minimum of 225 in each of the Great Lakes and Greater Taree Councils. and 100 in the former Gloucester Council recruited. This was designed to reflect differences in population size³ while still maintaining an adequate sample size for cross analysis. No other formal quotas were applied, although attempts were made to ensure an adequate mix of respondents across age groups and sub-regions.

².Records were supplied by SamplePages, a respected provider of verified random residential numbers to the market and social research industry.

³ Great Lakes Council in 2011 Census was 34,427, Greater Taree was 46,541 and Gloucester was 5,064.



Respondents were screened to ensure they were aged 18 or over, had lived within the region for at least 12 months, and were not permanent Council employees.

The 570 residents agreeing to complete a survey were sent an information pack (Appendix 1) outlining the reasoning and details regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation and Environmental Levy.

A survey form was constructed collaboratively between MidCoast Council and Jetty Research (see Appendix 2), based on satisfying the above objectives. The final survey instrument was constructed in parallel CATI and online formats.

Telephone polling was conducted between November 23rd and 30th from Jetty Research's Coffs Harbour CATI⁴ call centre. A team of 12 researchers called residents on weekday evenings (excluding Friday) from 3.30 to 8pm. Where phones went unanswered, were engaged or diverted to answering machines, researchers phoned on up to five occasions at different times of the afternoon or evening.

All those recruited were contacted at least once and, where successfully reached, given the opportunity to complete a survey. In all, 407 of the original 570 people recruited followed through and completed a telephone interview. Final sample size is hence n=407.

Telephone survey time varied from 9 to 26 minutes, with an average of 14.2 minutes.

Results of the telephone survey have been post-weighted to reflect the age and gender breakdown of the combined MidCoast Council adult population, as per 2011 ABS Census data.

In addition to the random and representative telephone survey, an opt-in online survey was run in parallel. The online survey was promoted via a prominent link on the homepage to all SRV information (including the information pack and survey.) Council also promoted it at public meetings and in media releases.

The online survey went live on November 23rd and closed on December 8th. It was completed by a total of 61 residents. Average completion time was 9.3 minutes.

Please note that due to the nature of the survey, not all respondents answered every question. The number of respondents answering each question is marked as "n = XXX" in the graph accompanying that question. Caution should be taken in analysing some questions due to the small sample size.

Cleaned data was entered into statistical database SPSS for analysis. Where differences in this report are classed as significant, this implies they are statistically significant based on independent sample t-scores, Chi-square or other analysis of variation (ANOVA) calculations. In statistical terms, significant differences are unlikely to have been caused by chance alone. Unless indicated otherwise, significant differences are typically highlighted in blue (above mean) and pink (below mean). Cross analysis was undertaken by key demographics within the telephone sample only.

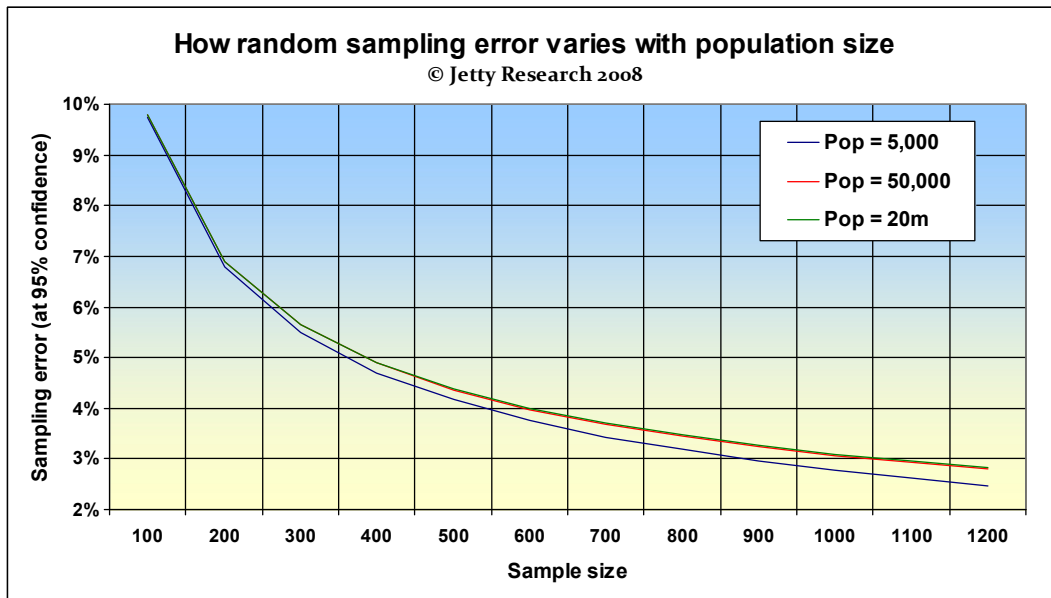
⁴ Computer-aided telephone interviewing

Sampling error

According to the 2011 ABS Census (Usual Resident profile) the total adult population of the merged Council area is 67,714. Hence the sampling error of an n=407 sample is +/- 4.9%. (This means in effect that if we conducted a similar poll twenty times, results should reflect the views and behaviour of the overall survey population to within a +/- 4.0% margin in 19 of those 20 surveys.)

As Graph I, over page, shows, margin for error falls as sample size rises. Hence cross-tabulations or sub-groups within the overall sample will typically create much higher margins for error than the overall sample. For example using the above population sizes, a sample size of 100 exhibits a margin for error of +/- 9.8% (again at the 95% confidence level).

Graph i: How sampling error varies with sample and population size



In addition to the random sampling error, above, there may also be some forms of non-random sampling error which may have affected results. These include respondents without fixed line phones, the proportion of non-respondents (refusals, no answers etc.) and/or imperfections in the survey database. However there is no evidence (at least in terms of significant variances between demographic groups within the survey sample) to suggest that such non-random error has affected the integrity of the following data.

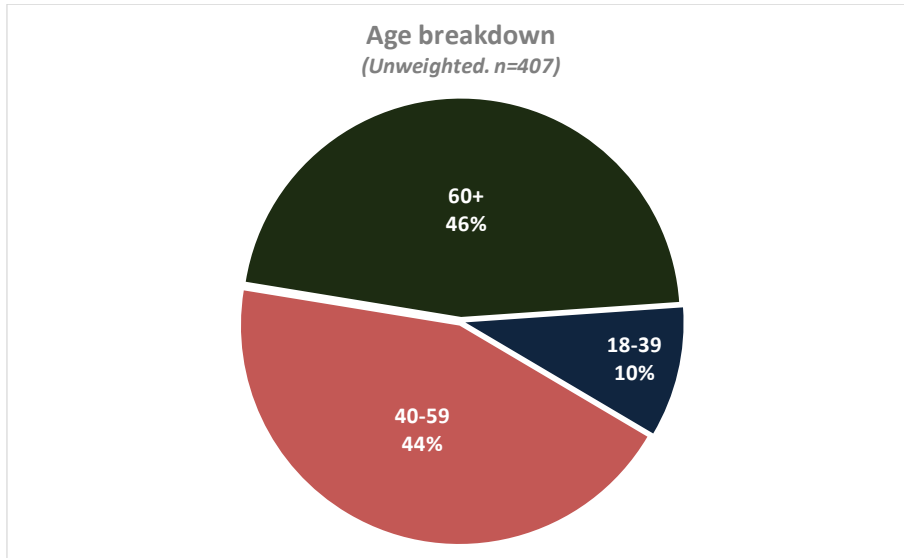
The online survey was opt-in and therefore not statistically representative of the community. Rather the online survey was designed to allow those who wished to express an opinion the opportunity to do so.

Results of the online survey are outlined in Appendix 4.

Sample characteristics

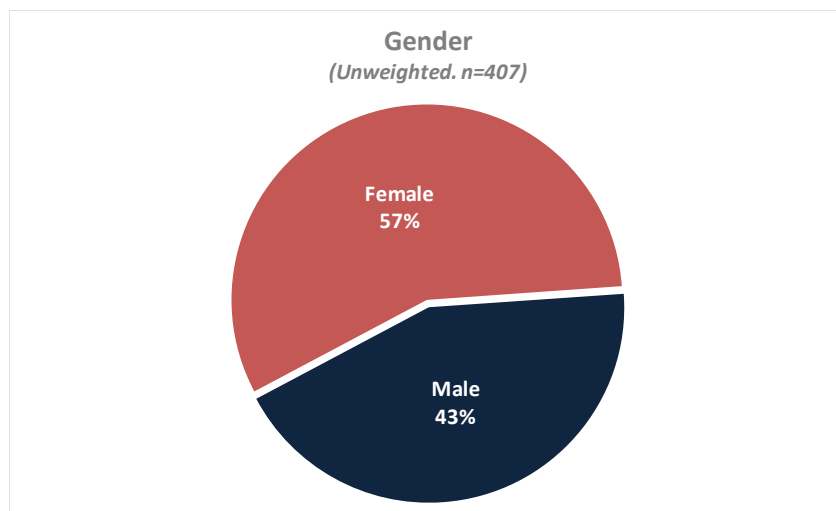
The following breaks down the CATI (telephone) survey sample by demographic characteristics:

Graph i: Survey sample by age



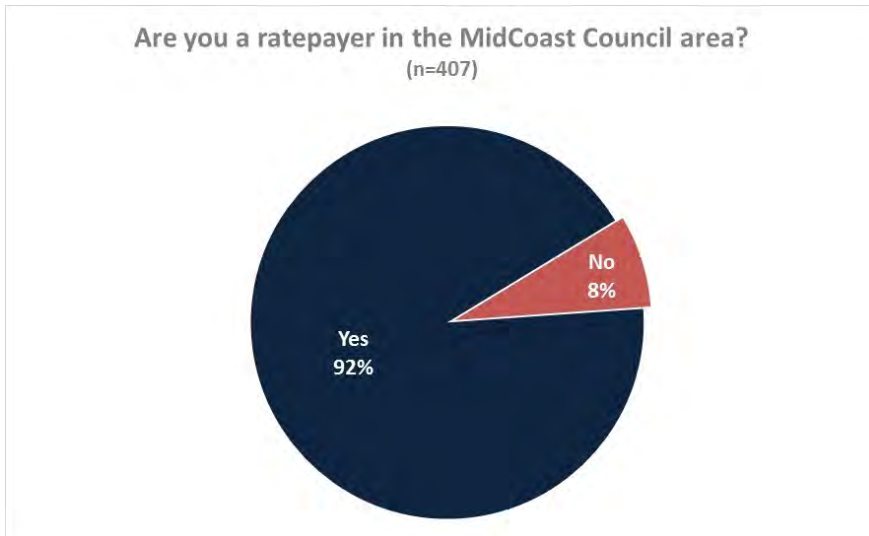
As is standard in random phone polling, the sample was skewed to older residents. (Actual proportions for the combined LGA are 43% for 60+, 34% for 40-59 and 23% aged 18-39). However this was corrected by post-weighting results back to match the profile of the combined region based on 2011 ABS Census data.

Graph ii: Survey sample by gender



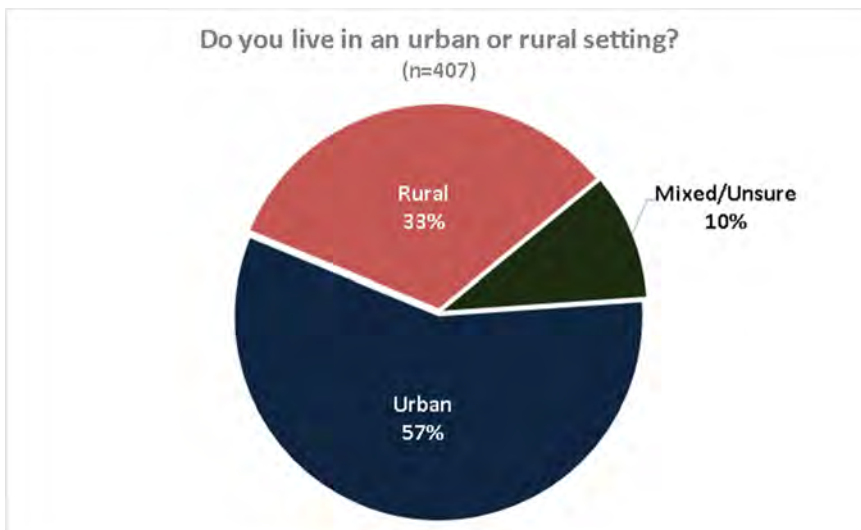
There was also a slight skew to females (52% of the sample was evenly distributed by gender).

Graph iii: Survey sample by ratepayer



More than nine in ten respondents sampled were ratepayers. Gloucester had a significantly higher proportion of ratepayers than Great Lakes (99% vs. 88%).

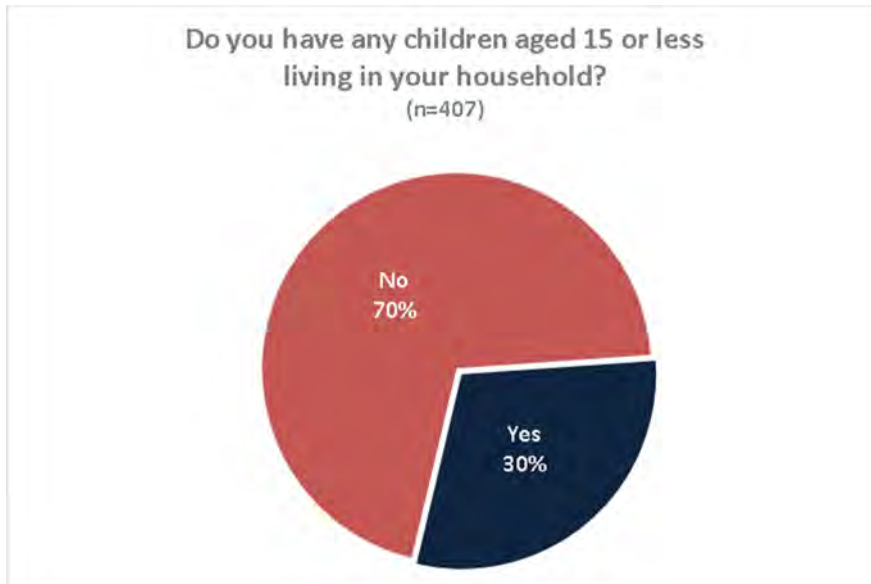
Graph iv: Survey sample by urban v rural setting



Over half of the sample (57%) resided in urban areas, with 33% being rurally-based.

Great Lakes had a higher proportion of urban residents than Gloucester (63% vs. 46%).

Graph v: Survey sample by children at home



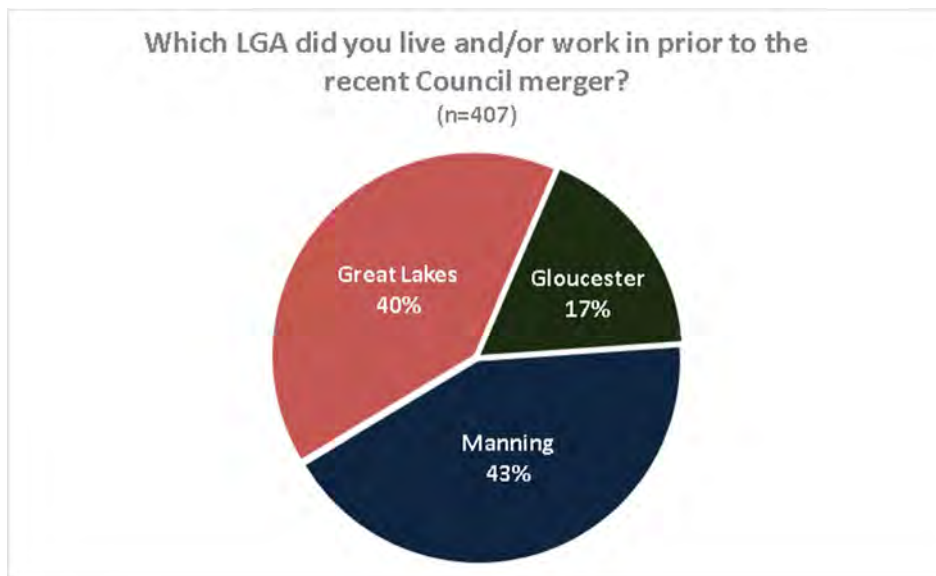
One third of the residents sampled had children living at home (unsurprisingly higher among those aged 18-39 years, at 87%, and lower among those aged 60 years and older, at just 2%).

Part 1: Satisfaction with local services and infrastructure

The survey commenced with a series of questions designed to understand current satisfaction with the local infrastructure.

This section commenced by asking residents which local government area they lived or worked in prior to the recent Council merger:

Graph 1.1: Which local government area did you live and/or work in prior to the recent Council merger?

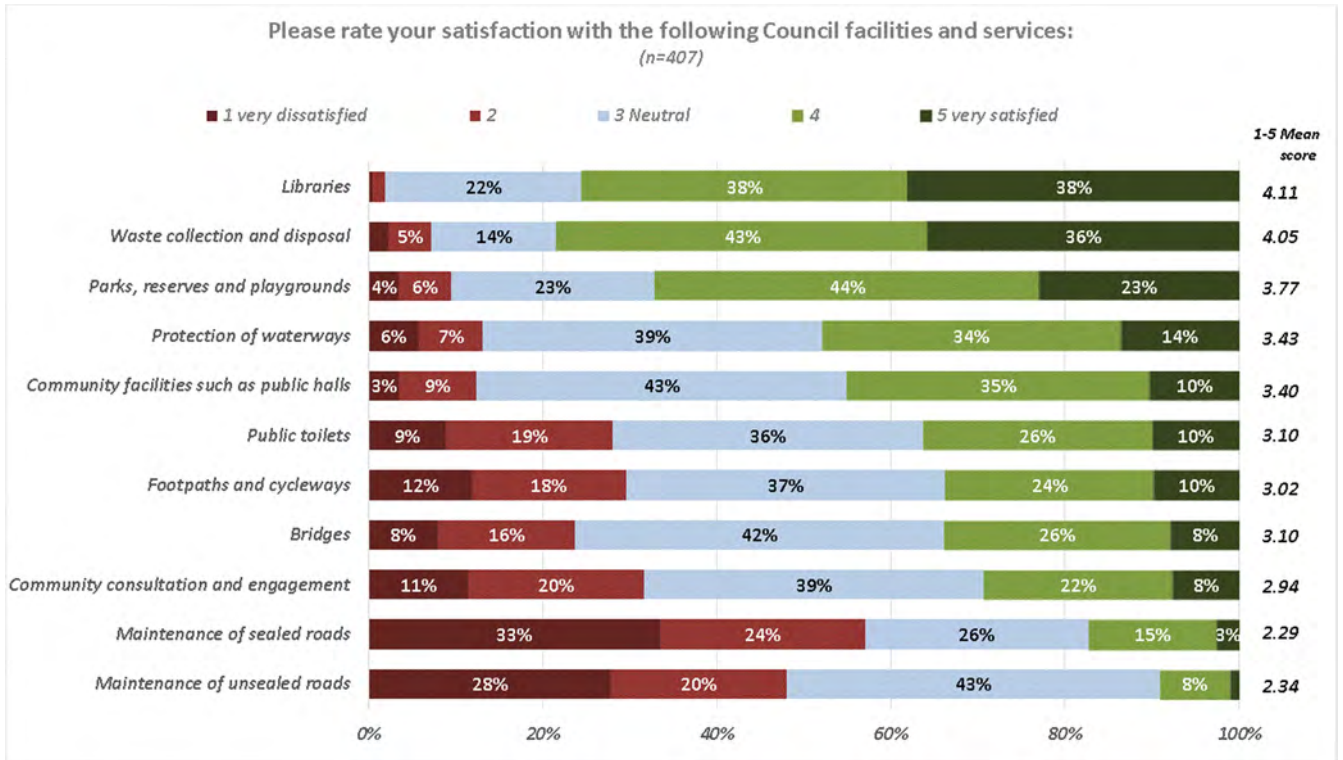


Approximately four in ten residents lived in Manning (43%) prior to the amalgamation of MidCoast Council. A further four in ten (40%) resided in Great Lakes and 17% resided in Gloucester.

Residents were then asked to rate their level of satisfaction with a number of Council provided services and facilities on a 1 to 5 scale where 1 = very dissatisfied, 3 = neutral and 5 = very satisfied:

(Continued over page...)

Graph 1.2: Satisfaction with Council facilities and services



Satisfaction was highest with *libraries* (with a mean satisfaction rating of 4.11 out of 5), followed by *waste collection and disposal* (4.05), *parks, reserves and playgrounds* (3.77) and *protection of waterways* (3.43).

Maintenance of sealed roads and *maintenance of unsealed roads* scored poorly, with mean satisfaction ratings of just 2.29 and 2.34 respectively. Over half (57%) were dissatisfied with the *maintenance of sealed roads* (only 18% satisfied) and almost half (48%) were dissatisfied with *maintenance of unsealed roads* (with only 9% satisfied).

Roads scored particularly poorly among Manning residents (mean satisfaction with sealed roads was 1.88, compared with 2.67 among Great Lakes residents, while mean satisfaction with unsealed roads was 2.16, compared with 2.55 among Great Lakes residents). Additional differences in satisfaction existed between regions and are outlined in Table 1.1:

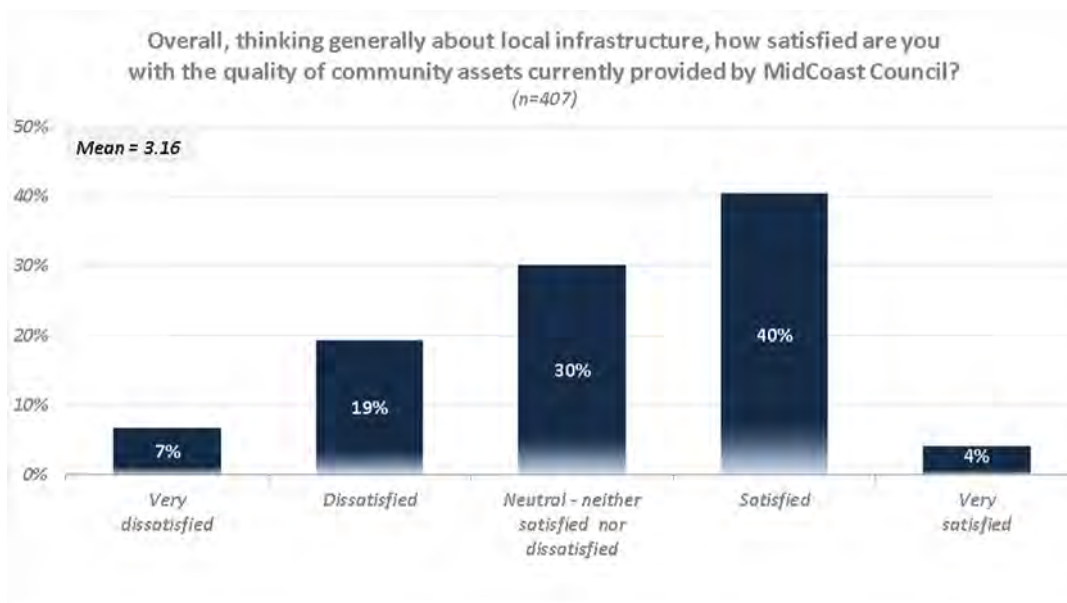
Table 1.1: Satisfaction with Council facilities and services, by region*

Region		Maintenance of sealed roads	Maintenance of unsealed roads	Bridges	Public toilets	Waste collection and disposal	Community facilities such as public halls
Manning	Mean	1.88	2.16	2.86	2.89	4.08	3.27
Great Lakes	Mean	2.67	2.55	3.41	3.08	4.17	3.44
Gloucester	Mean	2.45	2.34	2.98	3.63	3.70	3.60
Total	Mean	2.29	2.34	3.10	3.10	4.05	3.40

*Only those services where differences exist are displayed in Table 1.1.

Next, residents were asked to consider their *overall* level of satisfaction with the quality of community assets currently provided by MidCoast Council:

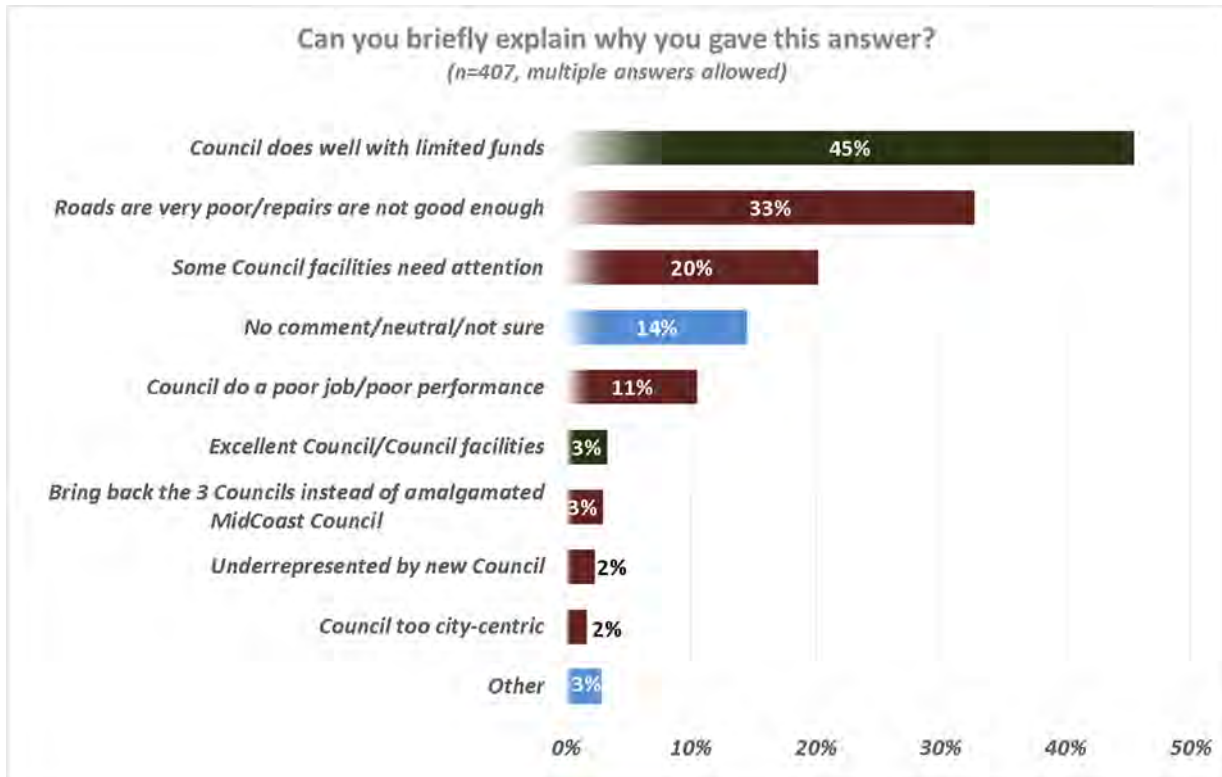
Graph 1.3: How satisfied are you with the quality of community assets currently provided by MidCoast Council?



Overall satisfaction with the quality of community assets provided by MidCoast Council was reasonable, with 44% satisfied against 26% dissatisfied – a net satisfaction of +18%.

In an open-ended follow-up questions, residents were asked why they rated their satisfaction as they did. Their responses have been coded, with the main themes shown in Graph 1.4, below.

Graph 1.4: Can you briefly explain why you gave this answer?



Main reasons for satisfaction with Council’s community assets centred around Council’s ability to provide these community assets with limited funds (45%). Reasons for dissatisfaction principally centred on the poor state of the roads (33%) and other Council facilities requiring attention (20%).

The full list of comments are available in Appendix 3.

Part 2: Awareness of, support for and ability to pay the SRV for roads and bridges

Residents were next asked a series of questions designed to determine their understanding of the requirement for the SRV, support for the SRV and ability to pay it.

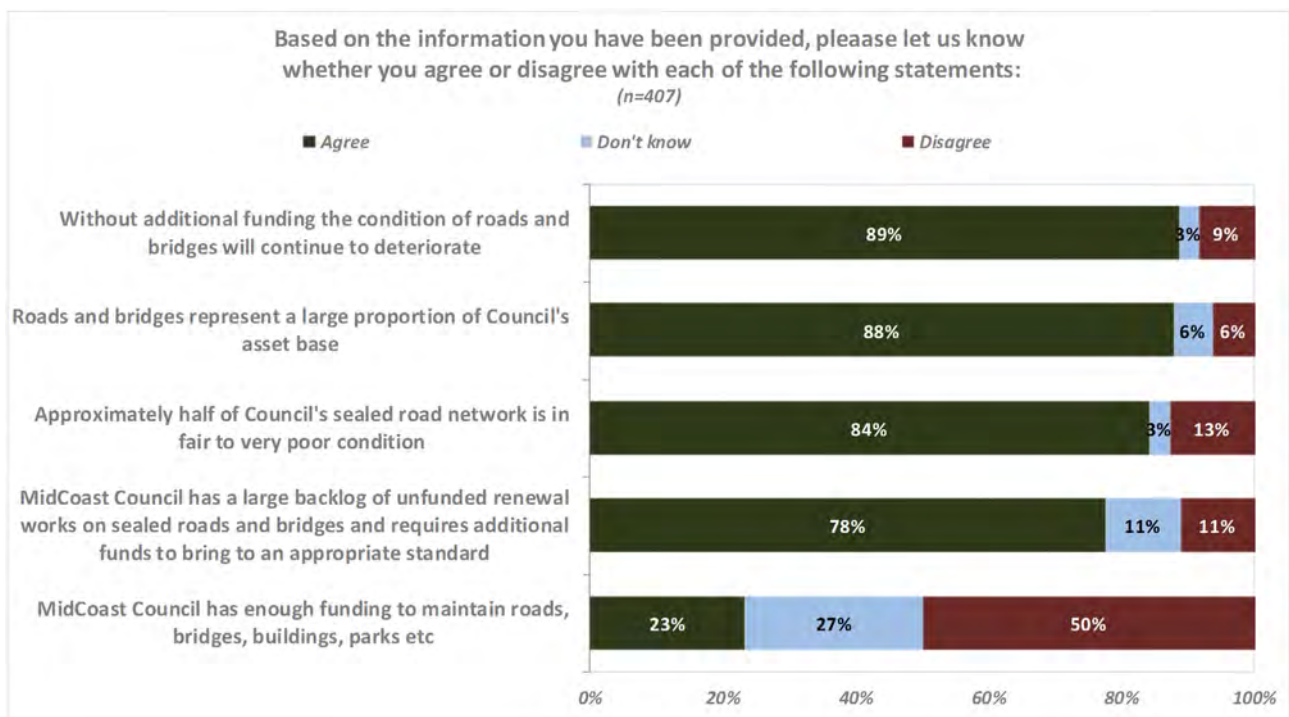
A few days prior to undertaking the survey, residents were sent an information pack, either online or by mail depending on their preference (see Appendix 1). This information provided information regarding:

- the current state of roads and bridges;
- the need for maintenance and repair of roads and bridges;
- MidCoast Council's backlog of required works; and
- The requirements for additional funding to address this backlog.

The information also outlined the details of the proposed SRV which would be used to manage the backlog of works and begin to get the level of roads and bridges back to an acceptable standard of repair.

Respondents were first offered a number of statements designed to evaluate their knowledge regarding the need for the SRV, and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each one:

Graph 2.1: Knowledge of the requirement for SRV for roads and bridges requirement



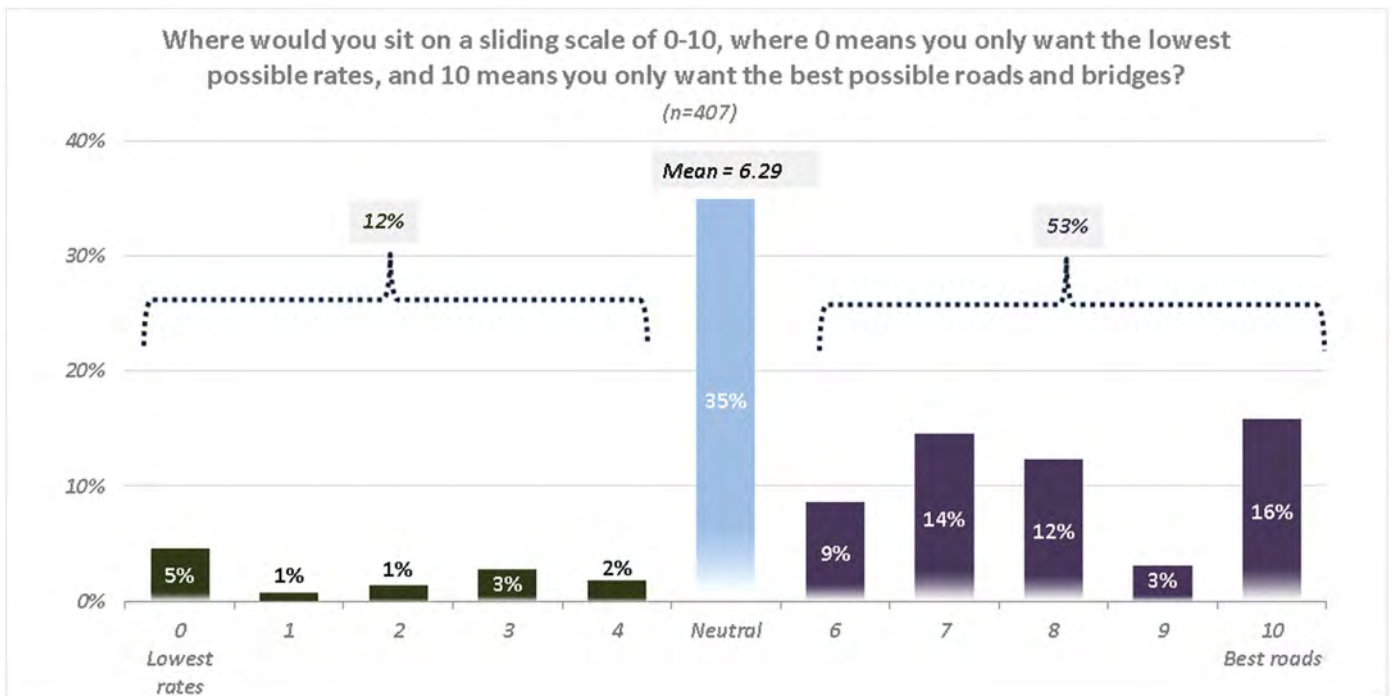
Knowledge of the poor state of the roads, backlog of unfunded renewal works and requirements for additional funding to fund repairs was high – 84%, 78% and 89% awareness respectively with only a small minority disagreeing.

While some confusion existed around Council’s current level funding (50% disagreed that Council has enough funding to maintain roads, bridges, buildings, parks etc., while 23% agreed and 27% were unsure), the need for additional funding to stop the continued deterioration of bridges and roads was clearly the main take-out of the information pack with almost nine in ten (89%) understanding.

Agreement was consistent by demographic group with one exception – Manning residents were more likely than Great Lakes residents to agree that Council’s sealed road network was in fair to poor condition (91% vs. 77%).

Residents were then asked to consider how important it was to have the best possible roads and bridges, in comparison to having the lowest possible rates:

Graph 2.2: Where would you sit on a sliding scale of 0-10, where 0 means you only want the lowest possible rates, and 10 means you only want the best possible roads and bridges?

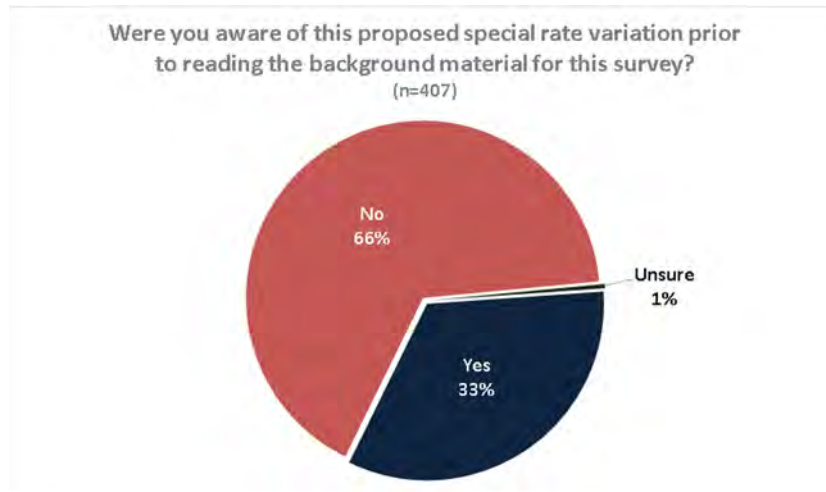


Over half of the respondents suggested they would prefer better roads over lower rates, with 53% placing themselves between 6 and 10 on the scale. Just 12% were willing to sacrifice roads for the sake of lower rates, while 35% maintained a neutral view.

Overall the mean rating was 6.29 out of 10 suggesting that residents want a good standard of roads but don’t necessarily require *the best roads* if it means a large increase on rates.

Those groups who appeared more willing to accept a larger impact on rates to ensure better roads included those residing in urban areas (6.43 compared to those in rural, 6.10), those with children at home (6.8 vs. 6.1 without children) and those aged 18-39 years compared with those aged 40 to 59 years (6.8 vs. 6.0).

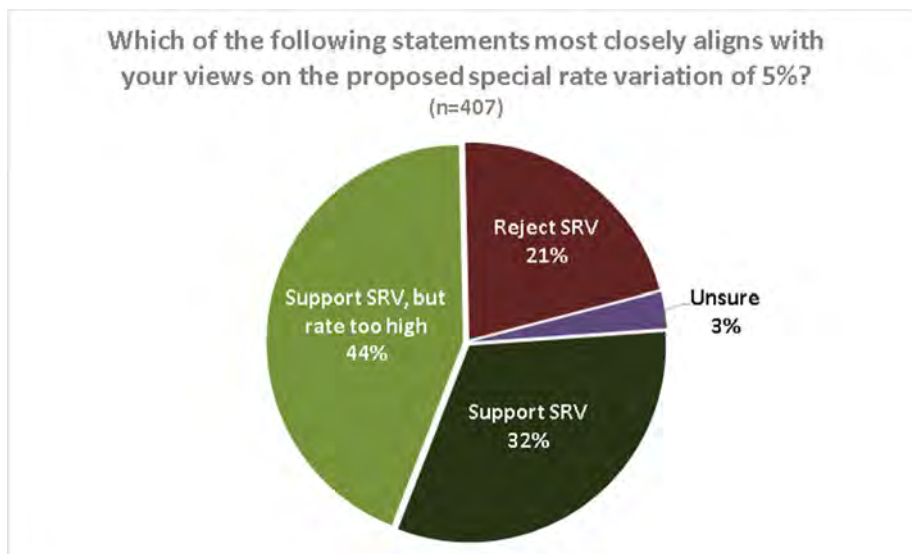
Graph 2.3: Were you aware of this proposed special rate variation prior to reading the background material for this survey?



Just one third (33%) were aware of the SRV prior to reading the background material – higher in Gloucester (55% compared with 24% in Manning), and among those aged 60 years and older (at 38%, vs. 20% among those aged 18-39 years).

Respondents were then asked about their level of support for the proposed SRV:

Graph 2.4: Which of the following statements most closely aligns with your views on the proposed special rate variation of 5%?



In principle, three-quarters of those surveyed supported a SRV (with 32% supporting it outright, and a further 44% supporting it but believing the rate to be too high). A further 21% rejected the need for a SRV while 3% were unsure.

Outright support was highest in Manning (41%) compared with Great Lakes (25%), while feeling that the rate was too high was highest among females (51% vs. 36% among males).

Respondents were next asked to consider their ability to pay the 5% SRV. Specifically, residents were asked to state which of three statements best reflected their ability to pay the additional 5%:

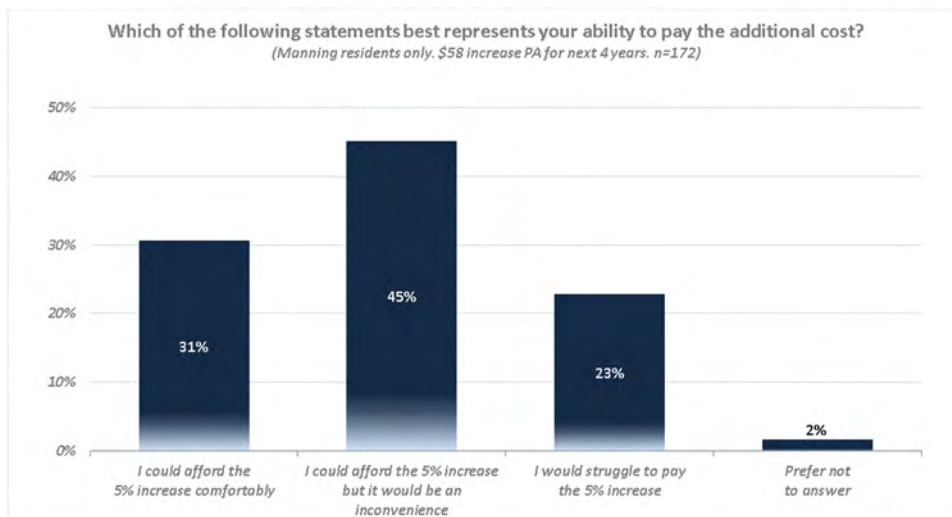
- *I could afford the 5% increase comfortably,*
- *I could afford the 5% increase but it would be an inconvenience OR*
- *I would struggle to pay the 5% increase.*

The average 5% increase was calculated by each region to add context when considering whether they could afford the increase. For example, Manning residents were asked:

If Council were to implement the proposed special rate variation of 5% (including the 2.5% rate peg) each year for roads and bridges, this would mean your Council rates would increase. The increase is different in each region based on the current average residential rates. For the Manning region the average increase each year for 4 years is \$58. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional cost:

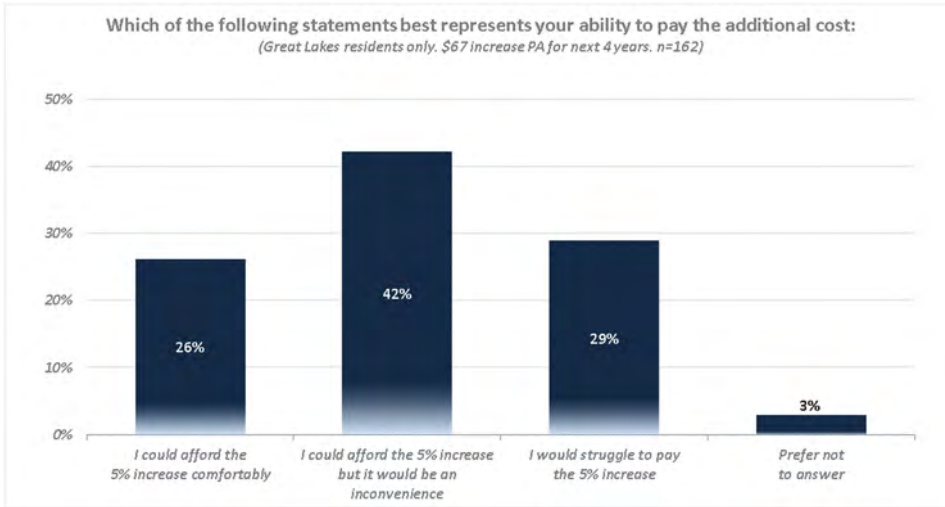
Results are first presented by region:

Graph 2.5: Ability to pay the additional cost, Manning residents



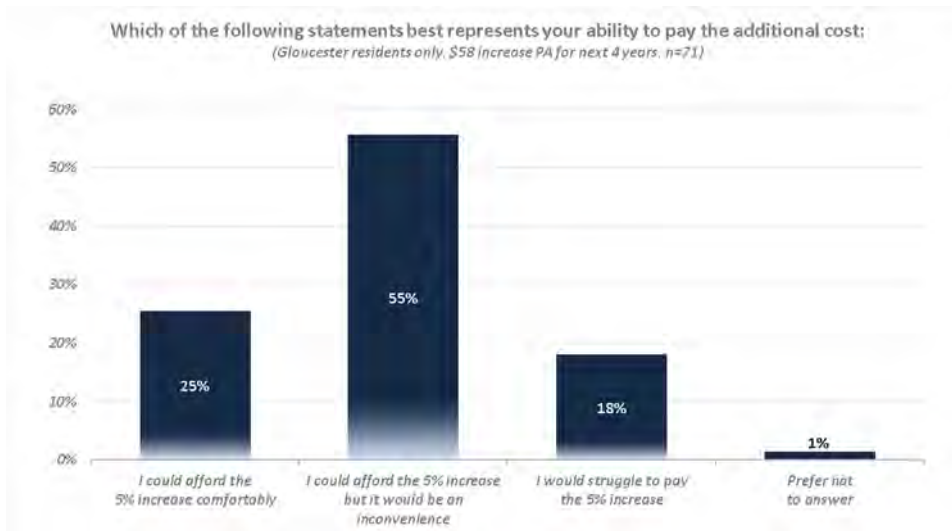
Three in ten Manning residents could afford the 5% increase comfortably, 45% considered the 5% increase an inconvenience and 23% said they would struggle to pay it.

Graph 2.6: Ability to pay the additional cost, Great Lakes residents



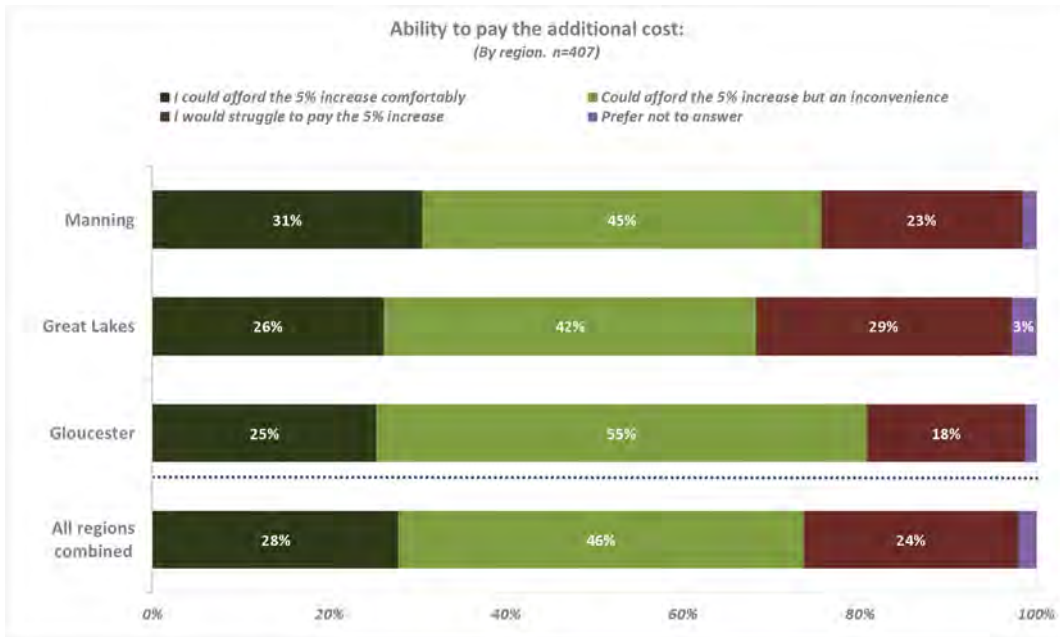
One in four Great Lakes residents said they could afford the 5% increase comfortably, while 42% considered the average of \$67 per year increase an inconvenience and 29% felt they would struggle to pay it.

Graph 2.7: Ability to pay the additional cost, Gloucester residents



One in four Gloucester residents said they could afford the 5% increase comfortably (25%), 55% considered the average of \$58 per year increase an inconvenience and 18% would struggle to pay it.

Graph 2.8: Ability to pay the additional cost, by region



Overall, almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents said they could afford to pay the 5% increase (28% comfortably and 46% if need be) while 24% would struggle to pay it (higher in Great Lakes at 29% vs 18% in Gloucester).

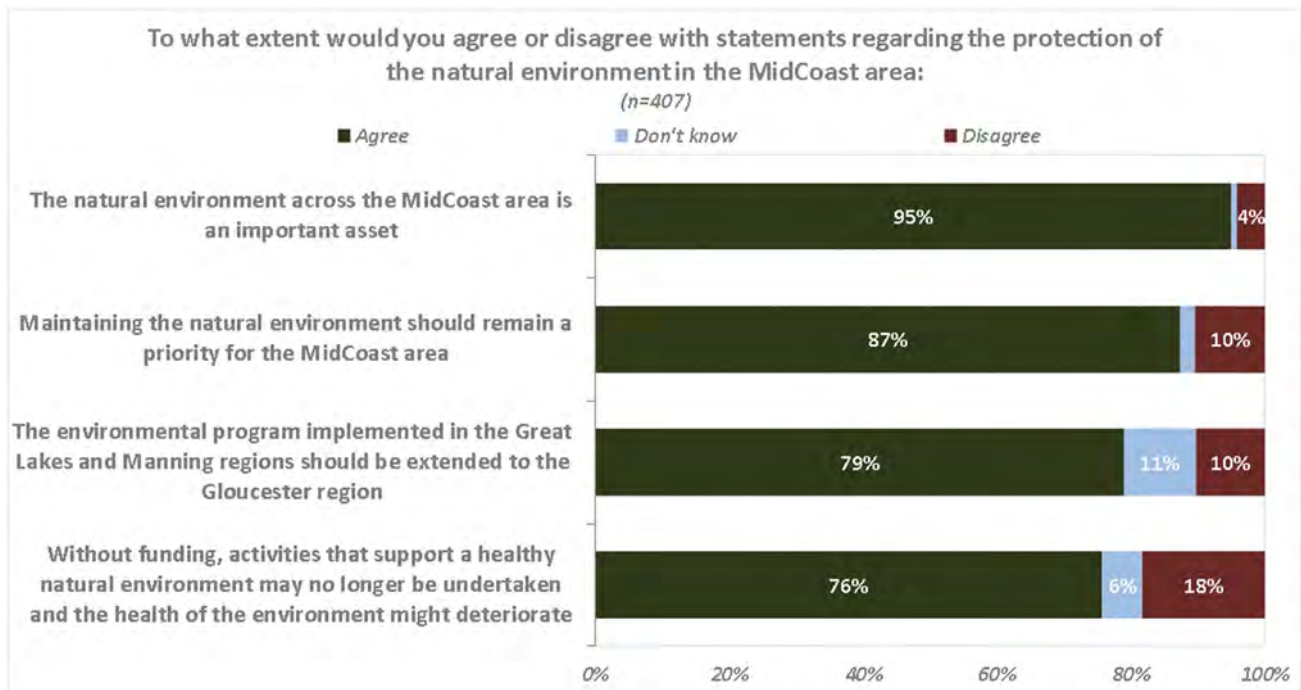
Part 3: Awareness of, support for and ability to pay the Environmental Levy

Residents were next asked a series of questions designed to determine their understanding of the requirement for an Environmental Levy, support for the levy, and ability to pay it.

As per the SRV, residents were sent an information pack outlining detailed information regarding the proposed Environmental Levy and its purpose.

Respondents were first offered a number of statements designed to evaluate their knowledge regarding the need for an Environmental Levy and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each one:

Graph 3.1: Knowledge of a requirements for an Environmental Levy



There was a high level of agreement that the environment is an important asset to the area (95%), maintaining the environment should remain a priority (87%), the environmental program should be extended to the Gloucester region (79%) and that additional funding is required to prevent environmental deterioration (76%).

As outlined in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below, Gloucester residents were less likely (than Manning residents) to agree that the environmental program should be extended to Gloucester, and to believe that additional funding is required to prevent environmental deterioration:

(Continued over page...)

Table 3.1: Agreement that the environmental program should be extended to Gloucester, by region

		Old region			Total
		Manning	Great Lakes	Gloucester	
<i>The environmental program implemented in the Great Lakes and Manning regions should be extended to the Gloucester region</i>	Agree	152 87.9%	132 81.0%	38 53.5%	322 79.1%
	Disagree	14 8.1%	11 6.7%	17 23.9%	42 10.3%
	Don't know	7 4.0%	20 12.3%	16 22.5%	43 10.6%
Total		173 100.0%	163 100.0%	71 100.0%	407 100.0%

This shows that 88% of Manning residents agreed that the environmental program should be extended to Gloucester residents, compared with just 53% of those living in the former Gloucester LGA.

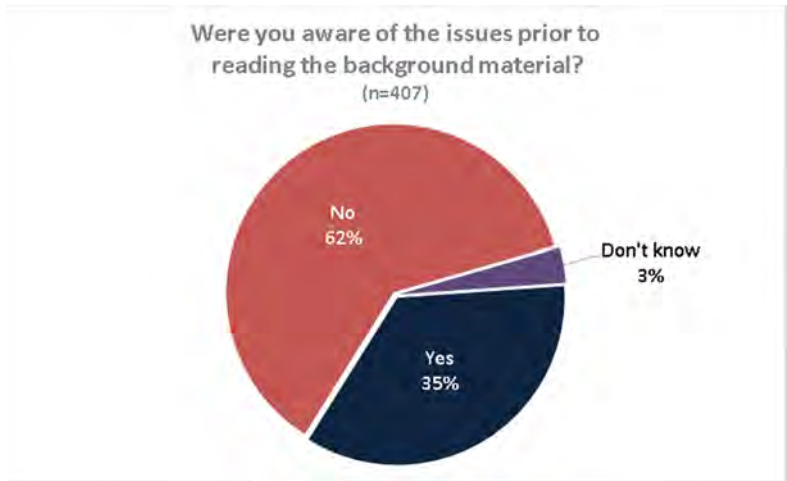
Table 3.2: Agreement that the health of the environment might deteriorate without funding, by region

		Old region			Total
		Manning	Great Lakes	Gloucester	
<i>Without funding, activities that support a healthy natural environment may no longer be undertaken and the health of the environment might deteriorate</i>	Agree	138 79.8%	128 78.5%	42 59.2%	308 75.7%
	Disagree	27 15.6%	23 14.1%	24 33.8%	74 18.2%
	Don't know	8 4.6%	12 7.4%	5 7.0%	25 6.1%
Total		173 100.0%	163 100.0%	71 100.0%	407 100.0%

Likewise 80% of Manning residents agreed that *without funding, activities that support a healthy natural environment may no longer be undertaken and the health of the environment might deteriorate*, against 59% of those in Gloucester.

Residents were then asked whether they were aware of the issues prior to reading the background material:

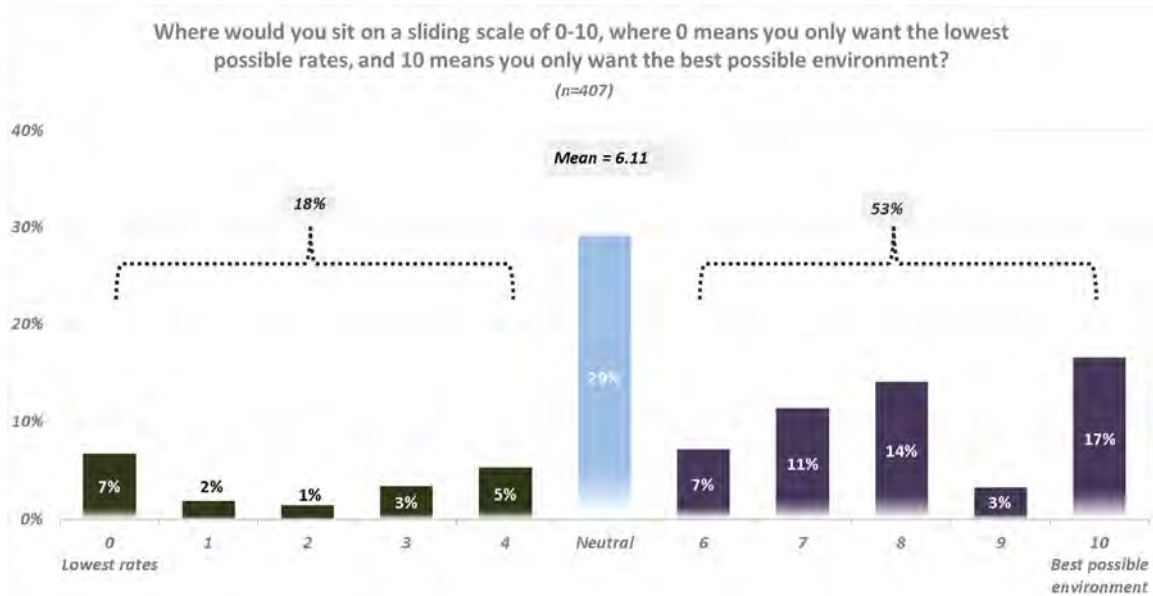
Graph 3.2: Were you aware of the issues prior to reading the background material?



Just over a third (35%) were aware of the issues associated with funding the Environmental Program prior to reading the material (higher among those without children at home, 42%, and those aged 60 years and older, 49%, compared with those with children at home and aged 18 to 39 years – 22% and 16% respectively).

Residents were then asked to consider how important the environment was to them, vis-à-vis lower rates:

Graph 3.3: Where would you sit on a sliding scale of 0-10, where 0 means you only want the lowest possible rates, and 10 means you only want the best possible environment?



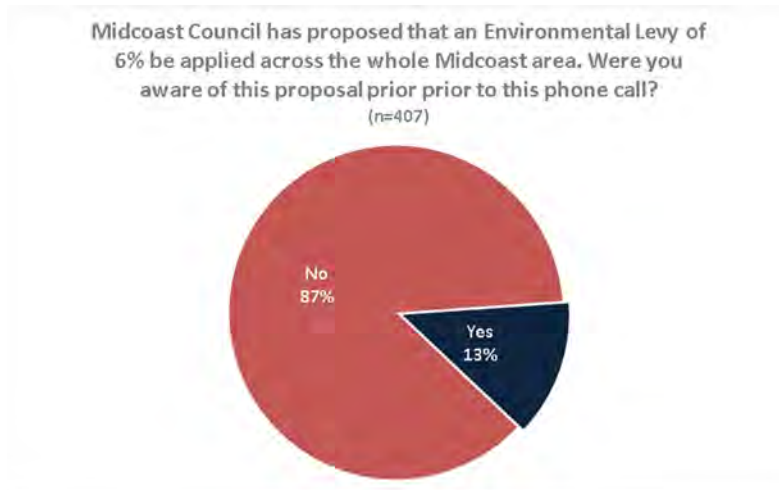
Over half of residents (53%) suggested they would prefer more focus on the environment over lowest rates, with 53% placing themselves between 6 and 10 on the scale. Just 18% were willing to sacrifice the environment for the sake of lower rates, while 29% were neutral.

Overall the mean rating was 6.11 out of 10 suggesting that residents want an adequate focus on the environment, but without too much impact on rates.

Females (mean score of 6.28), those with children at home (6.60) and those aged 18 to 39 years (6.81) were more willing to sacrifice rate dollars for a better environment than males (5.93), those aged 40 to 59 years (5.69) and those without children at home (5.90).

Residents were then asked if they were aware of the proposed Environmental Levy of 6% to be applied across the whole MidCoast area prior to the survey:

Graph 3.4: Were you aware of the proposed Environmental Levy prior to reading the background material for this survey?



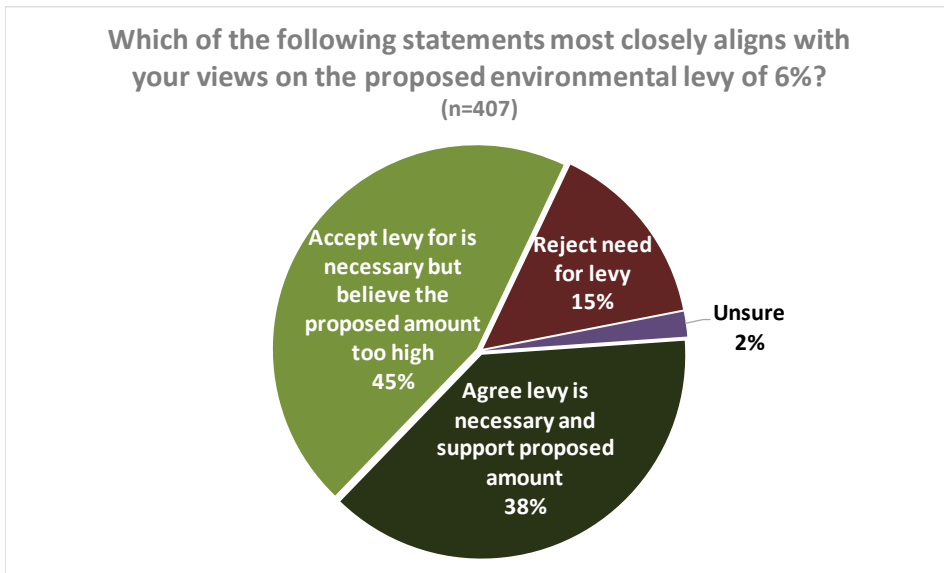
Only 13% were aware of the proposed Environmental Levy prior to being involved in the survey.

Awareness was higher:

- In Gloucester than in Manning (27% vs. 9%)
- Among those without children living at home than among those with children at home (16% vs. 7%)
- Among those aged 60 years or older (18%) than among those aged 18 to 39 years (4%)

Residents were then asked whether they support the proposed Environmental Levy:

Graph 3.5: Which of the following statements most closely aligns with your views on the proposed Environmental Levy?



Some 38% supported both the proposed levy and amount, while 45% supported the levy in principle but felt the rate is too high. Just 15% did not see a need for any levy for the environment.

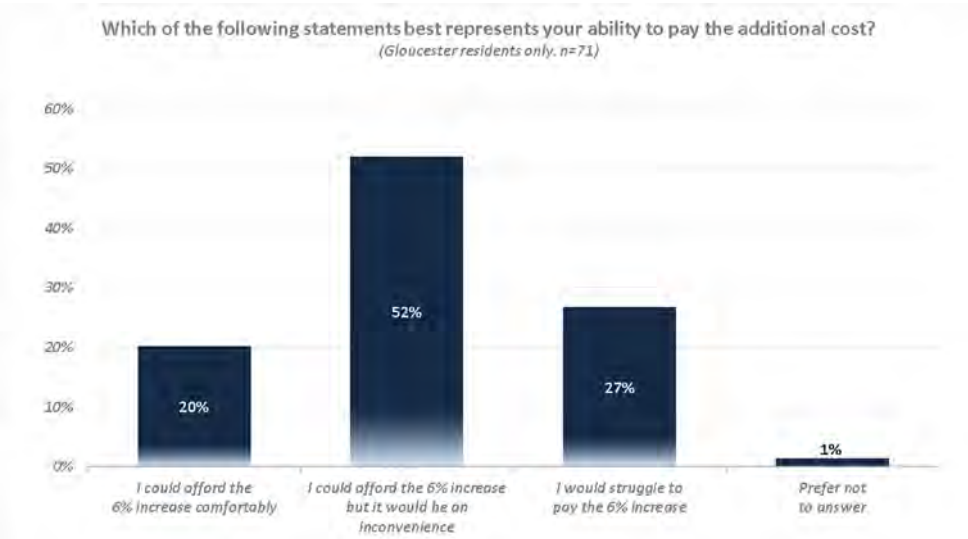
Support for the current proposed levy was highest in Great Lakes (45%) and lowest in Gloucester (28%). Those aged 40 to 59 years were more likely to be unable to see the need for a levy for the environment (21% compared with 4% of those aged 18 to 39 years).

Residents were next asked to consider their ability to pay the Environmental Levy. This question was asked differently across the three regions due to the differences in application.

Those in Gloucester were asked:

"As mentioned previously, the Great Lakes and Manning regions currently fund an environmental program through an Environmental Levy (6% in Great Lakes and 5% in Manning region). Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion regarding applying a 6% Environmental Levy across the whole MidCoast area:"

Graph 3.6: Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional cost? Gloucester residents

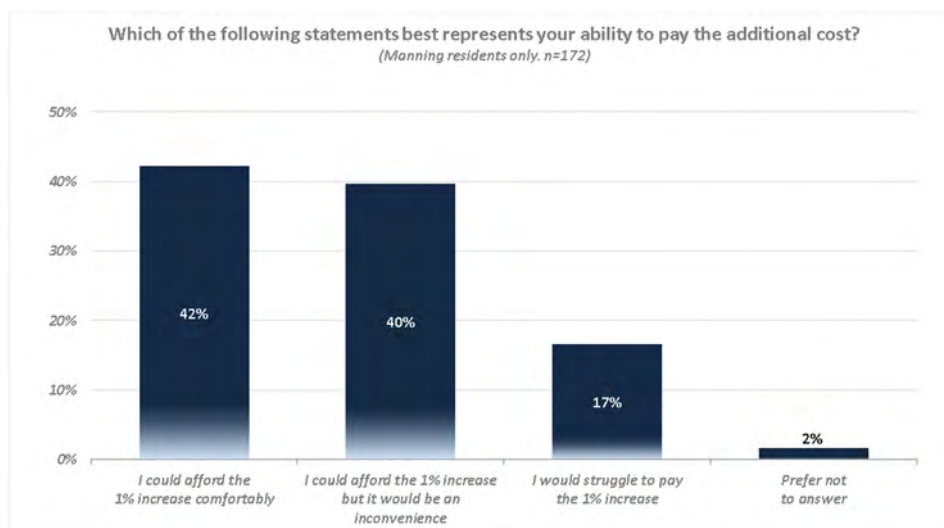


One in five Gloucester residents said they could afford the 6% increase comfortably (20%), 52% considered the increase an inconvenience and 27% would struggle to pay it.

Those in Manning were asked:

If Council were to implement the proposed Environmental Levy of 6% to fund the environmental program, this would mean your Council rates would increase by 1% as you already pay an Environmental Levy of 5%. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional 1%?

Graph 3.7: Ability to pay the additional cost, Manning residents

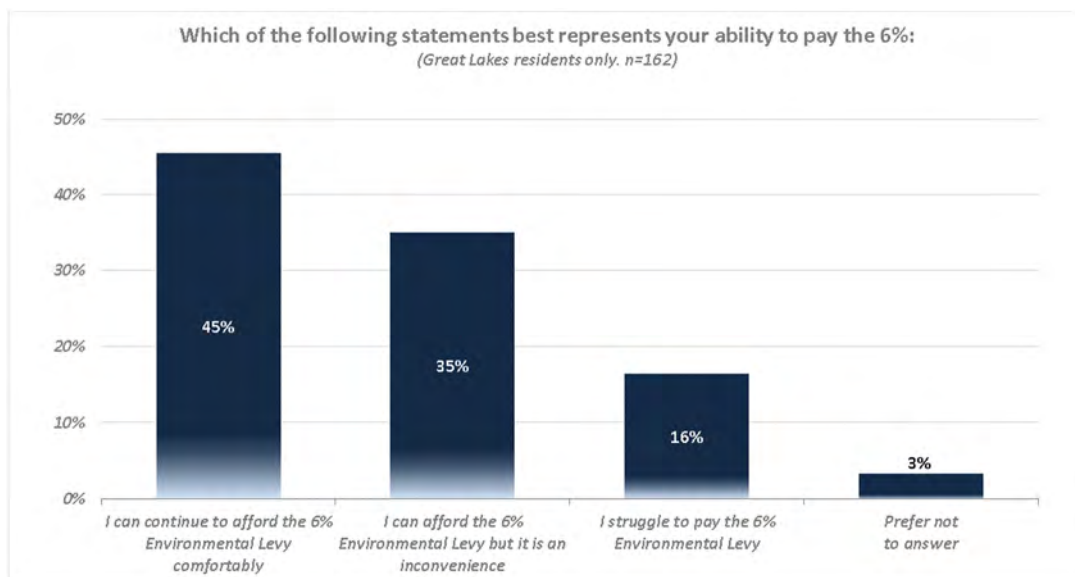


Approximately two in five Manning residents said they could afford the 1% increase comfortably (42%), 40% considered the increase an inconvenience and 17% would struggle to pay it.

Those in Great Lakes were asked:

As mentioned, you already fund an environmental program through an Environmental Levy of 6%. This means that your Council rates would not change with the Environmental Levy being applied to the MidCoast region but 6% would continue to be applied as it is now. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the 6%?

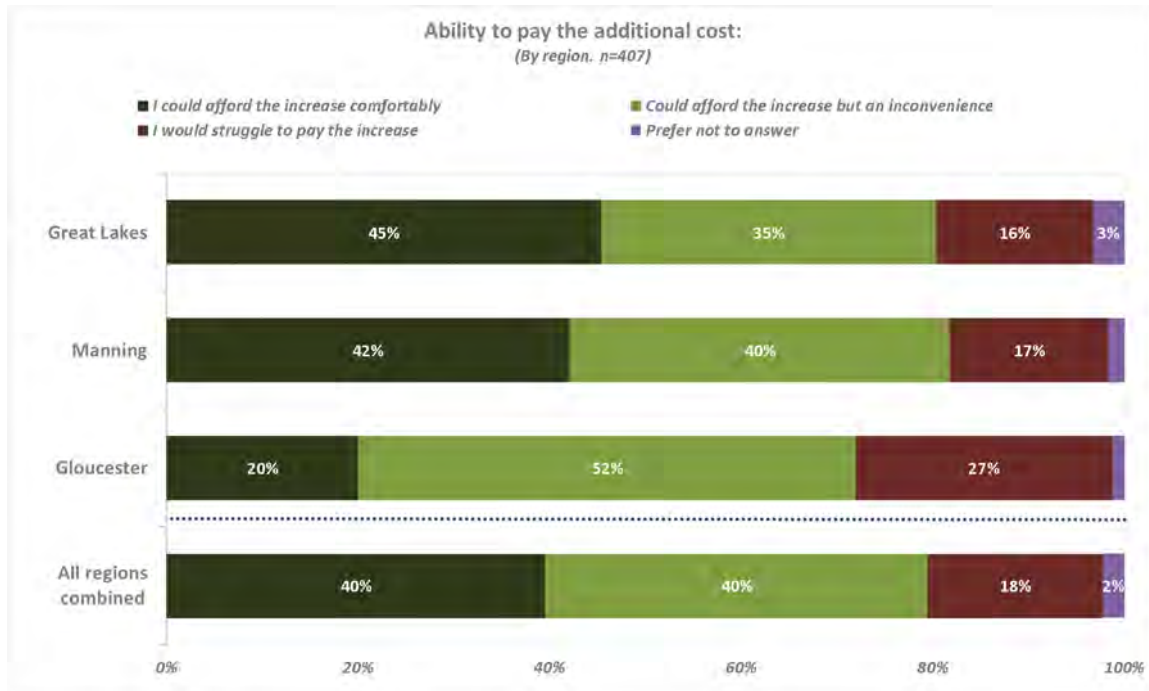
Graph 3.8: Ability to pay the additional cost, Great Lakes residents



Almost half of Great Lakes residents felt they could afford to continue to fund the 6% Environmental Levy (45%). A further 35% said they could afford it but considered it an inconvenience, and 16% admitted that they currently struggle to pay it.

Over page, in Graph 3.9, results for ability to pay the Environmental Levy are compared. Note that Great Lakes result codes are in the current tense (rather than future tense), as they currently pay the 6% Environmental Levy so would not see any change to their rates:

Graph 3.9: Ability to pay the additional cost, by region



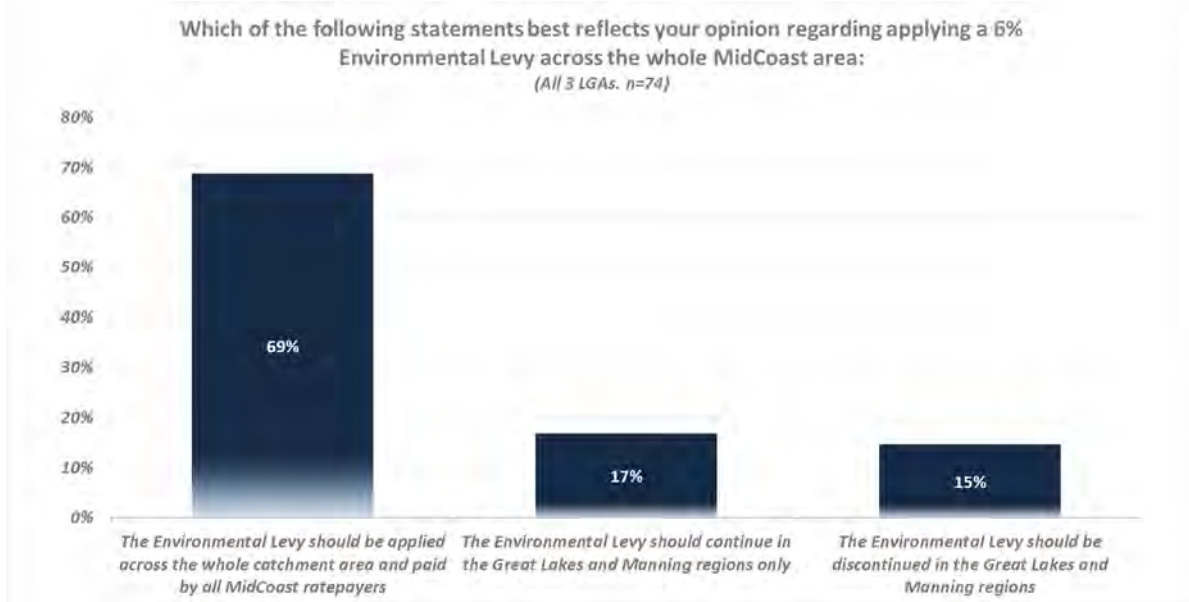
In all, four in five (80%) residents believed they could afford to pay the associated increase to fund the Environmental Levy (40% comfortably and 40% if need be) while 18% felt they would struggle to pay it (higher in Great Lakes at 45% vs 20% in Gloucester).

At the combined level, 18 to 39 year olds were more likely to indicate that that they could afford the increase comfortably (50% vs. 35% of those aged 40 to 59 years).

Finally, residents were asked whether they felt the Environmental Levy should be applied across the whole catchment area and paid by all MidCoast ratepayers, should continue in the Great Lakes and Manning regions only or should be discontinued in the Great Lakes and Manning regions⁵:

⁵ Note sample size of n=74, due to time constraints in survey instrument

Graph 3.10: Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion regarding applying a 6% Environmental Levy across the whole MidCoast area⁶



Over two-thirds felt that the *Environmental Levy should be applied across the whole catchment area and paid by all MidCoast ratepayers*, 17% felt it should continue in the Great Lakes and Manning regions only and 15% felt it should be discontinued in the Great Lakes and Manning regions.

⁶ Note this question was discontinued due to the survey running longer than anticipated. Hence the sample size for this question is only n=74. Results should be treated with caution due to the small sample size.

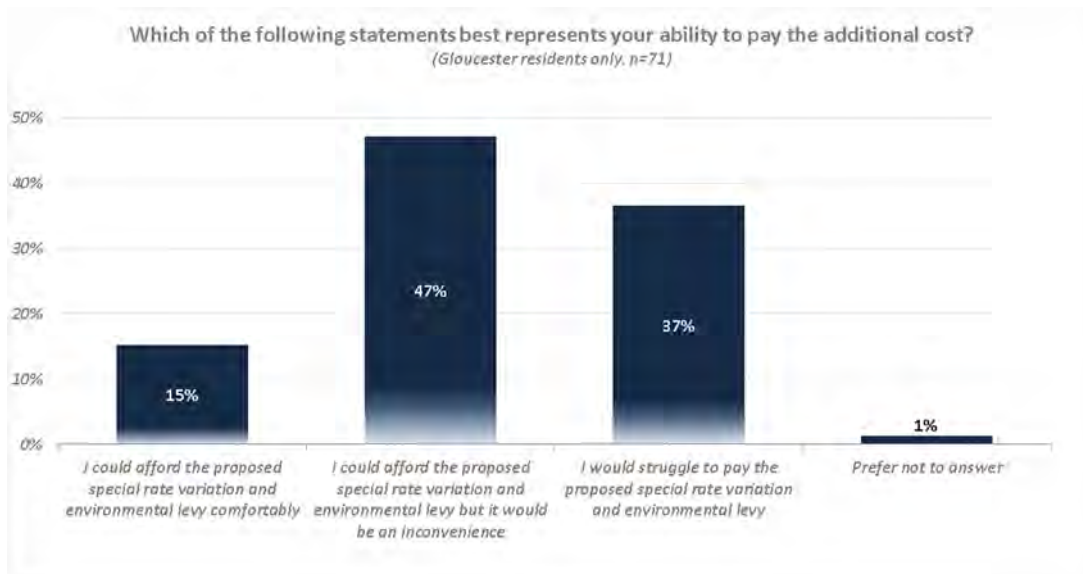
Part 4: Willingness to pay both the SRV and the Environmental Levy

The final section asked residents to indicate their willingness to pay both the new SRV and the Environmental Levy (according to how it impacted them in their region).

Gloucester residents were asked:

I'm now going to ask you about your ability or willingness to pay for the combined proposal by Council to address both a shortfall in funding for sealed roads and bridges as well as the funding for a program that supports a healthy environment. If Council were to implement both the proposed special rate variation and the Environmental Levy, this would mean your Council rates would increase by 11% in the first year followed by 3 years of 5%. This includes removing the existing 13% rate increase in the first year, which is already approved, and replacing it with 11% in the first year followed by 3 years of 5%. The 11% includes 2.5% for roads and bridges and the 2.5% rate peg and 6% for the environment. The 3 years of 5% includes 2.5% for roads and bridges and the 2.5% rate peg. . Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional cost?

Graph 4.1: Ability to pay the additional cost of both the SRV and Environmental Levy, Gloucester residents



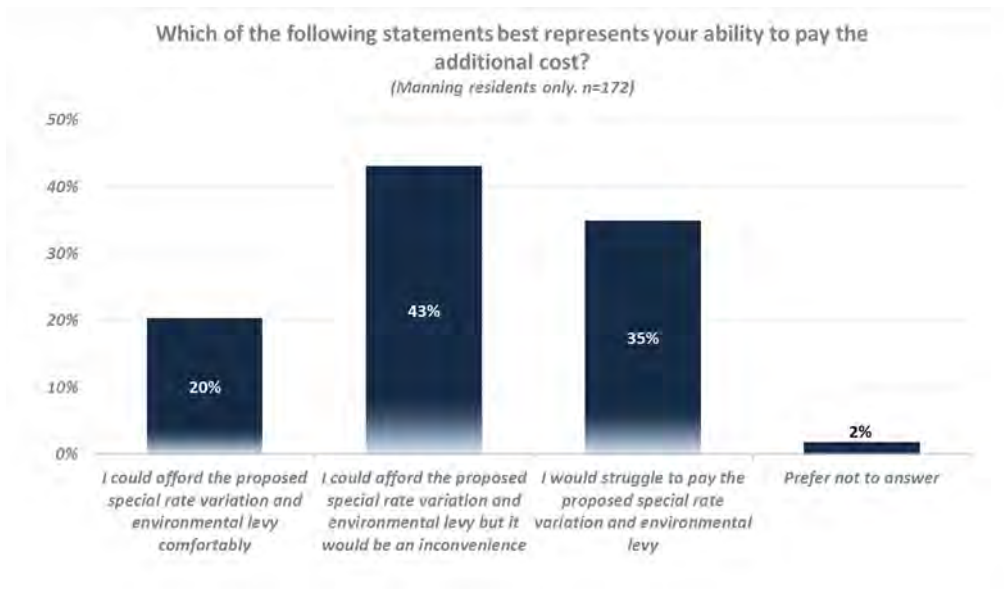
Over three in five (62%) could afford to pay the combined SRV and Environmental Levy 11% increase (15% comfortably and 47% if need be), while 37% said they would struggle to pay it.

(Continued over page...)

Manning and Great Lakes residents were asked:

I'm now going to ask you about your ability or willingness to pay for the combined proposal by Council to address both a shortfall in funding for sealed roads and bridges as well as the funding for a program that supports a healthy environment. If Council were to implement both the proposed special rate variation and the Environmental Levy, this would mean your Council rates would increase by 11% in the first year followed by 3 years of 5%. The 11% includes the existing environmental levies (6% in the Great Lakes and 5% in the Manning) and the 5% includes 2.5% for roads and bridges and the rate peg. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional cost:

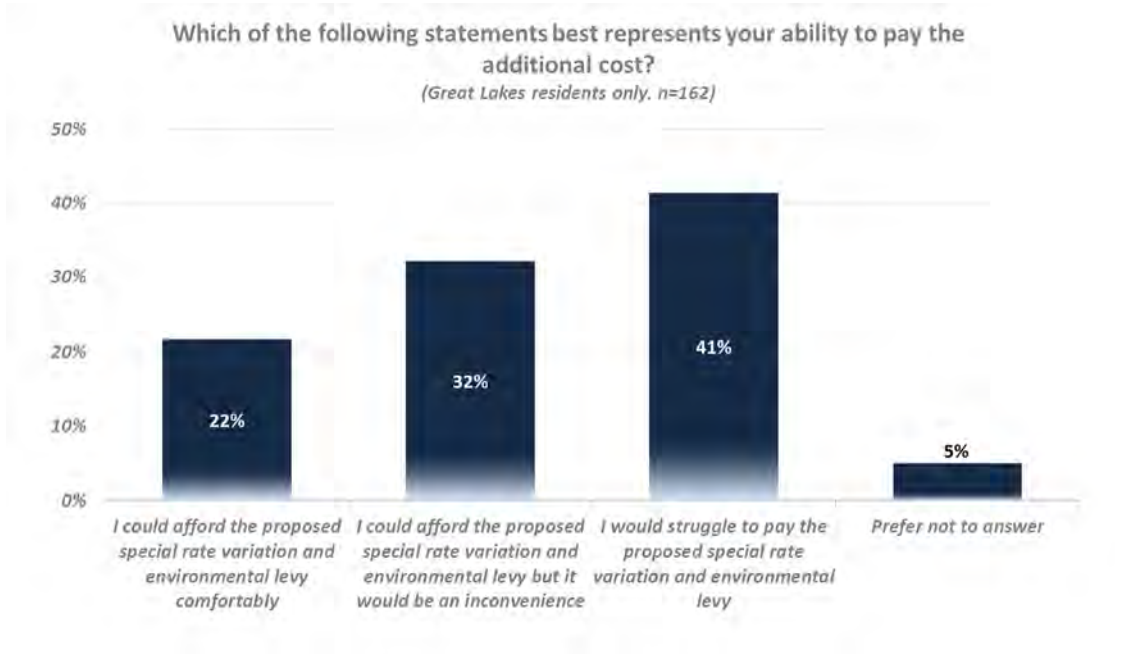
Graph 4.2: Ability to pay the additional cost of both the SRV and Environmental Levy, Manning Residents



Over three in five (63%) Manning residents said they could afford to pay the combined SRV and Environmental Levy 11% increase (20% comfortably and 43% if need be) while 35% believed they would struggle to pay it.

(Continued over page...)

Graph 4.3: Ability to pay the additional cost of both the SRV and Environmental Levy, Great Lakes Residents

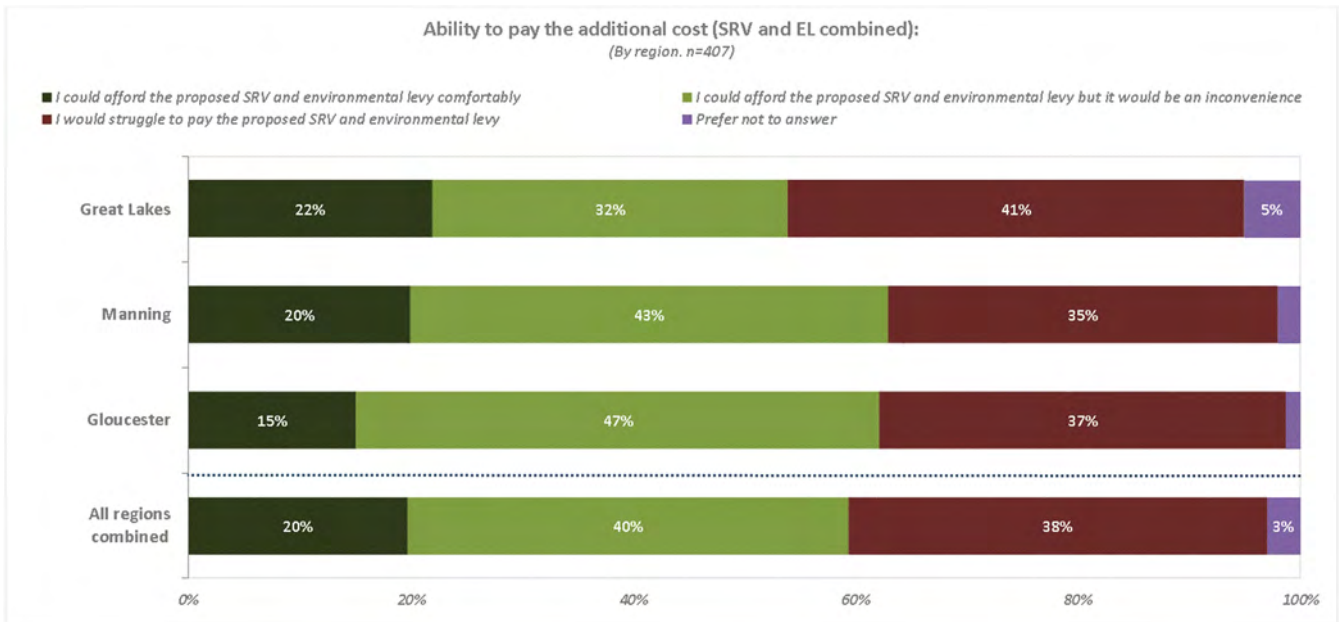


Over half of those in the Great Lakes region (54%) said they could afford to pay the combined SRV and Environmental Levy 11% increase (22% comfortably and 32% if need be) while 41% believed they would struggle to pay it.

Comparing results across the three regions:

(Continued over page...)

Graph 4.4: Ability to pay the additional cost of both the SRV and Environmental Levy, by region



In total, almost three in five (60%) said they could afford to pay the combined 11% SRV and Environmental Levy increase (20% comfortably and 40% if need be), while 38% felt they would struggle to pay it.



Appendix 1: Information Pack

Note that all respondents were sent the Community Survey information, plus the rate variation sheet that applied to their previous LGA.

Special Rate Variation (SRV) proposal

We believe that by working in partnership we can find a constructive and fair way to deliver community priorities and a strong regional Council. Since May we've been working at achieving savings and efficiencies, and have already identified \$18 million in savings over 4 years, a great result that can be put towards community priorities like roads. Our proposal includes investment from Council through these savings, from the State Government, and from our community through a proposed special rate variation.

All three former Councils highlighted the need for a SRV to address asset renewal and backlog issues. As MidCoast Council, the need remains and we are proposing a modest SRV which encompasses:

- 5% each year for roads and bridges (including the 2.5% rate peg) for four years; and
- a 6% environmental levy across all three regions

This equates to a total SRV of 11% in year 1, then 5% (inclusive of the rate peg) for the following three years. The 11% includes the 2.5% rate peg, 2.5% for roads and bridges and a 6% environmental levy for the region. The 6% environmental levy would impact rates as follows:

- Great Lakes - replace the existing levy (no net increase in rates from environmental levy)
- Manning - replace the existing levy (1% net increase in rates from environmental levy)
- Gloucester - introduce the levy at 6%

What the SRV will fund

The income available from a successful SRV application would be used to address the condition of our roads and bridges. Specifically it will:

- Fund the \$5 million annual renewal gap
- Prevent the backlog of works on the sealed road and bridge network from increasing
- Assist in beginning to reduce our backlog
- Improve community satisfaction with the road network
- Continue/extend our environmental program

In addition to SRV funding, savings made through efficiencies we're already seeing will be captured and applied to areas of high community priority, the immediate need being for roads and bridges.

How your rates will be impacted

The rating structure in the 3 former Council areas varies. This means average rates for various categories (eg. residential, business, and farmland) are different depending on where your property is located.

Once a new Council is elected, they will review the rating structure for the MidCoast area and adopt a new harmonised model. Until that occurs, the rates between the 3 former areas will reflect the pre-merger structure.

The current variance between areas means the impact of a SRV on rates will also vary by area.

Refer to the attachment to see how the average residential rate will be impacted in your region.

Q: Do you support the special rate variation proposal?

Affordability and impact on our ratepayers is key to our proposal

We've worked hard to balance the impact on our ratepayers while also responsibly addressing our key challenges.

To assist with this, we are proposing to freeze the waste charge for 3 years, providing rate-payers with a cumulative saving of \$120 over 3 years.

We have also worked hard to ensure the cumulative impact of the proposed SRV is similar to, or in some cases, significantly less than what was planned by each of the three former councils.



Thanks again for agreeing to take part in our survey.

A representative from Jetty Research will call you approximately one week from the day you received this brochure. If you're not home or the time they call doesn't suit you, they will be happy to phone back later.

If you have any questions about this information or the proposed SRV in the meantime, please contact us by emailing council@midcoast.nsw.gov.au or calling 6391 7222.



Community survey information

November 2016

MidCoast Council

Learn about the new MidCoast region, the condition of the sealed road network, gaps in funding for sealed roads and bridges, and our environmental program.

Help us understand your current levels of satisfaction with sealed roads and bridges, your views about funding maintenance and renewal of sealed roads and bridges, and your awareness of the Great Lakes and Manning regions' environmental levies and their purpose.

Have your say on a proposed special rate variation (SRV) to fund improvements to roads and bridges, whether you support the environmental levy, and your willingness and capacity to pay for a proposed SRV.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our survey on assets and a proposed special rate variation.

Jetty Research will contact you in the next week or so to undertake the survey, and their questions will be based on the information in this brochure. We anticipate the phone survey will take around 15 minutes to complete.

Please review the enclosed information carefully, discuss your views with others, and consider the questions highlighted in the red panels under each section.

Since the merger we have integrated and reviewed asset data for sealed roads and bridges from the 3 former councils, with assistance of asset experts Morrison Low. This has helped us develop a proposed way forward which will be the focus of our survey.

With roads and bridges representing 76% of the total value of our \$3.3 billion asset base, they are our greatest challenge. As a road user we want your perspective on how the MidCoast roads and bridges are being maintained, renewed and funded.

Our communities have also highlighted the environment as another key priority for the MidCoast region. Through the survey we'll also ask for your perspective on continued support for an environmental levy to fund programs that are currently in place in both Great Lakes and Manning regions. We'll also explore your views on including the Gloucester region in this environmental work, to support a healthy catchment across the entire region.

The information in this brochure provides a snapshot of our current position and a proposed way forward. Your views will be sought in the survey, which will help guide our future planning for the MidCoast area.

MidCoast Council was formed in May 2016 through the merger of the former Great Lakes, Greater Taree City and Gloucester Shire Councils.

Our new region has a population of over 90,000, covers more than 10,000 km², and includes 190 kms of coastline, 3,574 kms of roads and 542 bridges, 195 of which are timber.



Before you get started...

Become familiar with the following terms that will be used throughout the brochure and in the survey

Assets: Things like public buildings, roads, footpaths and bridges that are managed and maintained by Council on behalf of the community.

Renewals: Replacing a failed structure with a new structure that serves the same purpose - but not upgrading it. For example, taking a poor road back to a new condition, or placing a new surface over a worn surface to preserve the underlying pavement.

Maintenance: A temporary measure to prolong use. For example, filling potholes, or light patching of a road.

Enhancements: Replacing a structure with a new upgraded one. For example, replacing a single lane bridge with dual lanes. Enhancements are not backlog.

Backlog: The total amount of renewal works to bring a group of assets (eg. sealed roads) to an acceptable standard.



Sealed roads and bridges

Road conditions






We assess sealed roads on a scale of 1 (very good) to 5 (very poor).

The condition ratings of our region's sealed road network are shown in the graph (see right), which indicates almost 50% are currently categorised as condition 3 (fair) to condition 5 (very poor).

Once roads slip into condition 4 and 5, the cost to bring them back to standard increases significantly. They become a renewal issue, as regular maintenance such as filling potholes becomes inadequate. If funding is not available for these renewal works, the backlog of works and community dissatisfaction with the road network increases.

Previous community research undertaken by the former councils indicates general satisfaction with condition 3 roads, and condition 4 for lesser used roads.

MidCoast Council road condition

1: very good		383km 21.5% \$201.6M
2: good		565km 31.7% \$297.2M
3: fair		510km 28.6% \$268.2M
4: poor		273km 15.3% \$143.8M
5: very poor		50km 2.8% \$26.1M

Around half of our 3,500km of roads are sealed. The graph above shows the proportion of our sealed road network by condition, indicating the length (km), percentage of total network, and value of roads in the current condition (\$M).

Q: Do you agree with our aim to maintain the majority of roads at condition 3?

Renewal and backlog



Our roads:

Recent assessment by asset experts Morrison Low found we currently have an annual shortfall in renewal funding for roads of \$5 million. We need an additional \$5 million per year to allow us to stop the decline of our road network by preventing roads falling from condition 3 to 4, and condition 4 to 5.



Our bridges:

At the time of the merger, the combined bridge backlog was estimated to be about \$4 million, however further assessment now indicates this will be significantly higher. Investigations continue and are expected to impact the total asset backlog figure.



Our total backlog:

The current asset backlog for roads and bridges is expected to be between \$150 million and \$180 million. We recognise that addressing the backlog is a generational issue, and funding this fully in the short term is not possible. However, if we can fund our required renewal works the backlog will not increase, and with efficiencies and savings, over time we will start to address the backlog.



Our strategy to address renewals and backlog

Our immediate goal is to increase funding to:

- Maximise the asset life of our roads, through an increase in our renewal program of \$5 million per year
- Prevent condition 3 roads slipping into condition 4, and condition 4 to 5, which is unacceptable from an asset management perspective
- Start to reduce the backlog



Without an increase in funding the condition of sealed roads will continue to deteriorate and our backlog of works will continue to increase.

Q: Do you support the above strategy?

The environment

Protecting our environment

A critical component of the community strategic plans of each former Council region is the protection of our natural environment. This was reinforced recently when we engaged the community in defining our new region's identity. The unique natural assets that make up our area - the natural landscapes, bushland, rivers, lakes and coastline - were highlighted as key to setting MidCoast apart.

A significant environmental program aimed at protecting and improving our natural assets has been well-supported in both the Great Lakes and Manning regions. The program is funded through a long-standing environmental levy of 6% in Great Lakes, and more recently a 5% levy in the Manning region.

MidCoast Council is now seeking to continue the levy in the Great Lakes and Manning regions, and extend it to the Gloucester region at a consistent level of 6% across the entire local government area.

The levy funds a program of initiatives that benefits us all, as residents and business-owners, and to visitors to the area. The viability of many of our industries and the lifestyle we enjoy is impacted directly by the health of our natural environment. Our oysters need clean water, our farmlands benefit from a healthy catchment and sustainable farming practices, and our tourism industry thrives on our pristine water, coastline and valleys.



Aligning the environmental levy across the MidCoast region will:

- Deliver on community priorities of a healthy environment
- Allow for integration of strategic environmental protection across the region
- Attract additional environmental grant funding to deliver community outcomes

Examples of the types of projects that might be funded through the environmental levy include:

- Wallis Lake, Karuah and Manning catchment water quality improvement works
- Wallis Lake, Karuah and Manning estuary health assessment and reporting
- Biodiversity corridors, from tops to lakes
- Erosion management such as sealing creek crossings on gravel roads
- River management including weed control and bank stabilisation
- Fish passage (barrier removal)
- Urban stormwater improvement

If the existing environmental levies are allowed to expire and a new levy is not introduced in their place, the programs and services they provide may no longer be delivered. The alternative is that the funding for these programs would have to be taken from the general revenue of Council and away from other key priority areas like roads and bridges.

Without an environmental levy our proposal for extra renewal works on our roads would be impacted.

Q: Do you think maintaining our natural environment should remain a priority for the MidCoast region?

Case Study: Riverbank Restoration

A severely eroded section of riverbank along the foreshore at Harrington was targeted for restoration in February this year.

Through a NSW Department of Primary Industries Recreational Fishing Trust Habitat Action Grant, combined with the Manning region's environmental levy, rock filets were installed, along with 1.2km of cattle exclusion fencing and planting of 1,000 trees.

The recolonisation of mangroves in spring is an early indication of success, and will assist in protecting the riverbank from further erosion.

Over time the rock filets will also contribute to improved water quality and a healthier habitat for local fish and marine life.



Funding success

One of the benefits of the environmental levy is that it enables us to attract additional funding from the State and Federal Governments, as most grant programs require matching funding.

Impact on residential rates

November 2016

Below you will find the impact on residential rates of a 508(A) special variation and an expiring special variation.

Great Lakes Region based on average residential rate of \$1,235 pa

Option 1: Current rate path Rate peg only, expiring Environmental Levy	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Cumulative increase
Average residential rate with assumed rate peg of 2.5%	\$1,235*	\$1,266*	\$1,297	\$1,250 <small>(environmental levy removed)</small>	\$1,281	
Annual Increase		2.5%*	2.5%*	-3.62%	2.5%	3.88%

Note: *These figures include an existing 6% Environmental Levy which expires in 2019-20. Option 2 below proposes that this is continued across the MCC region.

Option 2: Special Rate Variation proposal 1 x 11% plus 3 x 5% (inclusive of rate peg and Environmental Levy)	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Cumulative increase
Average residential rate with: • 6% environmental levy <i>dropping out</i> • 6% environmental levy <i>coming in</i> • 2.5% special rate variation <i>coming in</i> • 2.5% rate peg <i>coming in</i> Commencing in 2017-18	\$1,235	\$1,296	\$1,360	\$1,428	\$1,499	27.5% <small>[21.5% + environmental levy of 6%]</small>
Annual Increase	-	5%	5%	5%	5%	

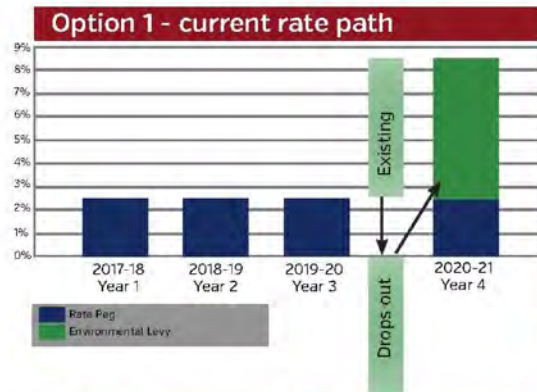
Note: In 2017-18 the increase includes the 2.5% rate peg and 2.5% for roads and bridges. It includes replacing the existing 6% Environmental Levy with a new 6% Environmental Levy. The 6% drops out and then comes back in at the same level. From 2018-19 the 5% represents the 2.5% rate peg and 2.5% for roads and bridges.

Impact of a special rate variation on residential rates: Great Lakes Region

The information overleaf has been prepared in accordance with IPART requirements. To help you interpret this information, we have summarised the impact of a SRV on residential rates into simpler language and included a graph that may help in explaining the two options - the current rate path, and the special variation proposal.

When applying for a SRV, IPART requires us to express the proposed variation as a total figure, inclusive of the rate peg and any other special variations and levies, for example, the environmental levy.

Notes



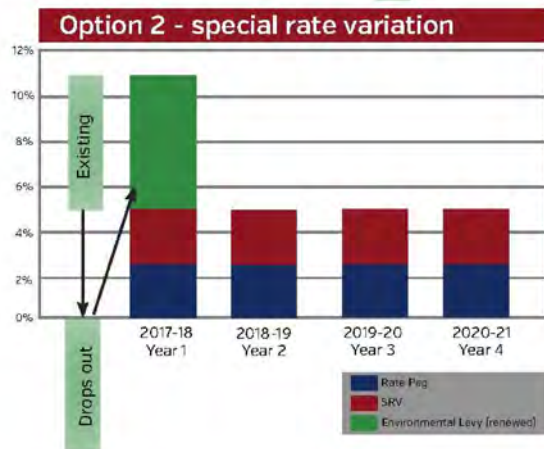
Under the current rate path your rates:

- Will increase by 2.5% per year [the assumed rate peg set by IPART]
- Include an existing 6% environmental levy which expires 30 June 2020

If this levy expires, the environmental program will no longer be funded. Under this option, MidCoast's plan would be to apply to renew the levy at a consistent level of 6% across the MidCoast region.

The graph shows the impact of this - with the environmental levy dropping out and then coming back in at 6% in 2020-21.

Other than that, the only increase would be the 2.5% rate peg, with no additional funds for roads and bridges.



Under the special variation proposal your rates:

- Will increase a total of 11% in year 1 followed by 5% for 3 years.
- Year 1 - the 11% includes 2.5% rate peg, 2.5% SRV for roads and bridges and 6% environmental levy.
- Year 1 - the actual increase is 5% as you already have a 6% environmental levy in your rates. This drops out and is replaced by a 6% levy.
- Years 2, 3 & 4 - rates will increase 5% per year. This includes the 2.5% rate peg plus 2.5% SRV for roads and bridges.

We have provided information on the average residential rate as this impacts the broadest number of ratepayers. The percentage will be the same across the rating categories, however the average rate as shown overleaf will be different.

To calculate the impact on your rates, apply the percentages above to the total shown on your annual rates notice [not including the waste charges as the SRV does not impact that component of your rates].

Impact on residential rates

November 2016

Below you will find the impact on residential rates of a 508(A) special variation and an expiring special variation.

Manning Region based on average residential rate of \$1,068 pa

Option 1: Current rate path Rate peg only, expiring Environmental Levy	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Cumulative increase
Average residential rate with assumed rate peg of 2.5%	\$1,068*	\$1,094*	\$1,065 <small>(environmental levy removed)</small>	\$1,092	\$1,120	
Annual Increase		2.5%*	-2.65%	2.5%	2.5%	4.85%

Note: * These figures include an existing 5% Environmental Levy which expires in 2018-19. Option 2 below proposes that this is harmonised at 6% across the MCC region.

Option 2: Special Rate Variation proposal 1 x 11% plus 3 x 5% (inclusive of rate peg and Environmental Levy)	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Cumulative increase
Average residential rate with: • 5% environmental levy <i>dropping out</i> • 6% environmental levy <i>coming in</i> • 2.5% special rate variation <i>coming in</i> • 2.5% rate peg <i>coming in</i> Commencing in 2017-18	\$1,068	\$1,132	\$1,188	\$1,247	\$1,309	28.5% <small>[22.5% + environmental levy of 6%]</small>
Annual Increase	-	6%	5%	5%	5%	

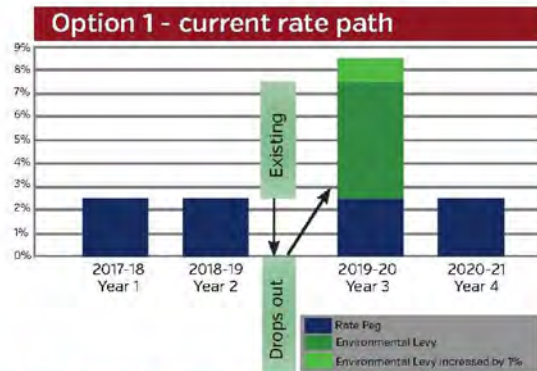
Note: In 2017-18 the increase includes the 2.5% rate peg and 2.5% for roads and bridges. It includes replacing the existing 5% Environmental Levy with a 6% Environmental Levy. The 5% drops out and then comes back in at 6%. From 2018-19 the 5% represents the 2.5% rate peg and 2.5% for roads and bridges.

Impact of a special rate variation on residential rates: Manning Region

The information overleaf has been prepared in accordance with IPART requirements. To help you interpret this information, we have summarised the impact of a SRV on residential rates into simpler language and included a graph that may help in explaining the two options - the current rate path, and the special variation proposal.

When applying for a SRV, IPART requires us to express the proposed variation as a total figure, inclusive of the rate peg and any other special variations and levies, for example, the environmental levy.

Notes



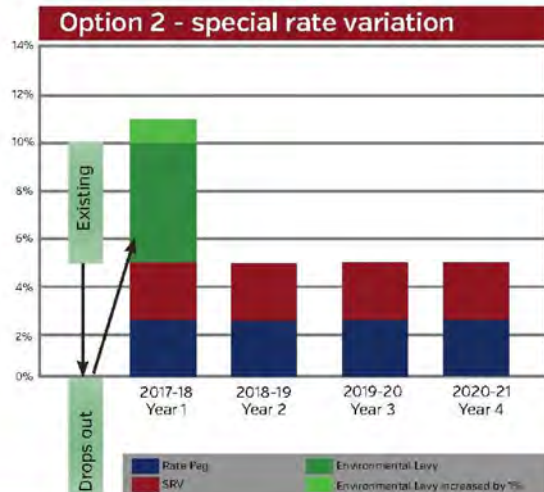
Under the current rate path your rates:

- Will increase by 2.5% per year (the assumed rate peg set by IPART)
- Include an existing 5% environmental levy which expires 30 June 2019

If this levy expires, the environmental program will no longer be funded. Under this option, MidCoast's plan would be to apply to renew the levy at a consistent level of 6% across the MidCoast region.

The graph shows the impact of this - with the environmental levy dropping out and then coming back in at 6% in 2019-20.

Other than that, the only increase would be the 2.5% rate peg, with no additional funds for roads and bridges.



Under the special variation proposal your rates will increase a total of 11% in year 1 followed by 5% for 3 years.

- Year 1 - the 11% includes 2.5% rate peg, 2.5% SRV for roads and bridges and 6% environmental levy.
- Year 1 - the actual increase is 6% as you already have a 5% environmental levy in your rates. This drops out and is replaced by a 6% levy.
- Years 2, 3 & 4 - rates will increase 5% per year. This includes the 2.5% rate peg plus 2.5% SRV for roads and bridges.

We have provided information on the average residential rate as this impacts the broadest number of ratepayers. The percentage will be the same across the rating categories, however the average rate as shown overleaf will be different.

To calculate the impact on your rates, apply the percentages above to the total shown on your annual rates notice (not including the waste charges as the SRV does not impact that component of your rates).

Impact on residential rates

November 2016

Below you will find the impact on residential rates of a 508(A) special variation and an expiring special variation.

Gloucester Region based on average residential rate of \$1,081 pa

Option 1: Current rate path Existing approved rate increase and rate peg	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Cumulative increase
Average residential rate with assumed rate peg of 2.5%	\$1,081	\$1,222*	\$1,252	\$1,284	\$1,316	
Annual Increase		13%*	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	21.7%

Note: * These figures include an existing overall approved rate increase of 13%, approved by IPART before the merger

Option 2: Special Rate Variation proposal 1 x 11% plus 3 x 5% [inclusive of rate peg and Environmental Levy]	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Cumulative increase
Average residential rate with: • 13% special rate variation <i>dropping out</i> • 6% environmental levy <i>coming in</i> • 2.5% SRV and 2.5% rate peg <i>coming in</i> Commencing in 2017-18	\$1,081	\$1,200	\$1,260	\$1,323	\$1,389	28.5%
Annual Increase	-	11%	5%	5%	5%	

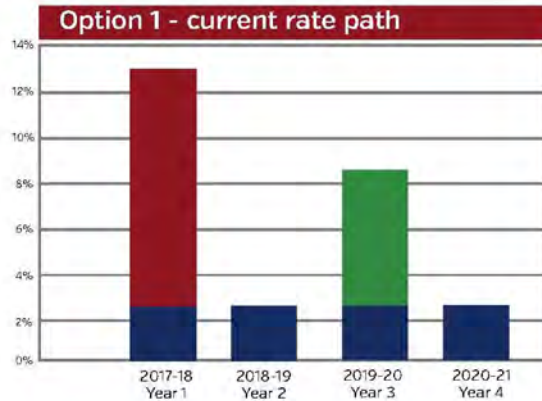
Note: In 2017-18 the increase includes the 2.5% rate peg and 2.5% for roads and bridges. It takes into account the existing 13% special rate variation approval dropping out, and includes the introduction a 6% Environmental Levy. From 2018-19 the 5% represents the 2.5% rate peg and 2.5% for roads and bridges.

Impact of a special rate variation on residential rates: Gloucester Region

The information overleaf has been prepared in accordance with IPART requirements. To help you interpret this information, we have summarised the impact of a SRV on residential rates into simpler language and included a graph that may help in explaining the two options - the current rate path, and the special variation proposal.

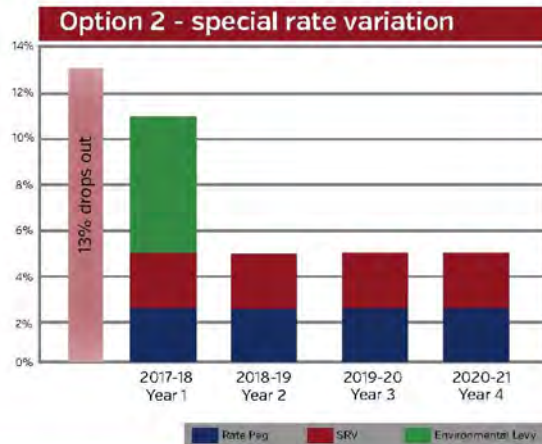
When applying for a SRV, IPART requires us to express the proposed variation as a total figure, inclusive of the rate peg and any other special variations and levies, for example, the environmental levy.

Notes



Under the current rate path your rates:

- Year 1 - will increase by 13% in year 1. [the assumed rate peg set by IPART plus an existing special rate variation]
- Year 2, 3, 4 - will increase by 2.5% per year. [the assumed rate peg set by IPART]
- Year 3 - may include a 6% environmental levy. Under this option, MidCoast's plan would be to apply for an environmental levy at a consistent level of 6% across the MidCoast region [the Great Lakes and Manning regions have existing environmental levies].



Under the special variation proposal your rates:

- Will increase a total of 11% in year 1 followed by 5% for 3 years.
- Year 1 - this is 2% less than the already approved 13% SRV increase. The 13% drops out and is replaced by the 11%.
- Year 1 - the 11% includes 2.5% rate peg, 2.5% SRV for roads and bridges and 6% environmental levy.
- Years 2, 3 & 4 - rates will increase 5% per year. This includes the 2.5% rate peg plus 2.5% SRV for roads and bridges.

We have provided information on the average residential rate as this impacts the broadest number of ratepayers. The percentage will be the same across the rating categories, however the average rate as shown overleaf will be different.

To calculate the impact on your rates, apply the percentages above to the total shown on your annual rates notice [not including the waste charges as the SRV does not impact that component of your rates].



Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire

Version 1 MidCoast_Council_Nov_2016
Last modified:22/11/2016 2:39:36 PM

Q1. Hi my name is (name) and I'm calling from Jetty Research on behalf of MidCoast Council. We are following up on the information you received from Council regarding roads and bridges, the natural environment and the associated proposed special rate variation. .Have you had a chance to review the material?

YES - is now a good time to complete the survey? It should only take 10-12 minutes.

RESEARCHER: if not received by email - confirm email, write ID and name on sheet, set up call back for next day. If not received by post - confirm postal address - write ID and name on sheet. Set up call back for 3 days time.

If material not read arrange a CALL BACK for convenient time. Try for same night if possible

Table with 2 columns: Response, Count. Rows: Yes (1), Refused (888)

Answer If Attribute "Refused" from Q1 is SELECTED

Q1

Q2. Thank you for your time. Have a great afternoon/evening

End

Q3. RESEARCHER: Enter first name.

Use details option if necessary

Q3

Q4. RESEARCHER: Select the region.

Table with 2 columns: Region, Count. Rows: Manning (1), Great Lakes (2), Gloucester (3)

Q4

Q5. Thanks [Q3]. Firstly, I would like to ask you some questions regarding your perception of the facilities provided by MidCoast Council. I'd like to start by asking you to rate your satisfaction with a range of Council facilities and services. We'll use a scale of 1-5, where 1 is very dissatisfied, 3 is neutral and 5 is very satisfied. First, how satisfied are you with:

PROMPTED read out and rate each option

	1 very dissatisfied	2	3 Neutral	4	5 very satisfied
Maintenance of sealed roads	1	2	3	4	5
Maintenance of unsealed roads	1	2	3	4	5
Bridges	1	2	3	4	5
Protection of waterways	1	2	3	4	5
Footpaths and cycleways	1	2	3	4	5
Parks, reserves and playgrounds	1	2	3	4	5
Public toilets	1	2	3	4	5
Libraries	1	2	3	4	5
Waste collection and disposal	1	2	3	4	5
Community facilities such as public halls	1	2	3	4	5
Community consultation and engagement	1	2	3	4	5

Q5_1
Q5_2
Q5_3
Q5_4
Q5_5
Q5_6
Q5_7
Q5_8
Q5_9
Q5_10
Q5_11

Q6. Overall, thinking generally about local infrastructure (for example roads, bridges, buildings, parks etc), how satisfied are you with the quality of community assets currently provided by MidCoast Council?

PROMPTED

Very satisfied	1
Satisfied	2
Neutral - neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	5

Q6

Q7. Can you briefly explain why you gave this answer?

Record response

Q7

Q8. I am now going to read out a number of statements regarding sealed roads and bridges in the MidCoast area. Based on the information you have been provided, I would like I would like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with each one. (If you don't know. Firstly:

PROMPTED

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Roads and bridges represent a large proportion of Council's asset base	1	2	999
Approximately half of Council's sealed road network is in fair to very poor condition	1	2	999
MidCoast Council has enough funding to maintain roads, bridges, buildings, parks etc	1	2	999
MidCoast Council has a large backlog of unfunded renewal works on sealed roads and bridges and requires additional funds to bring to an appropriate standard	1	2	999
Without additional funding the condition of roads and bridges will continue to deteriorate	1	2	999

Q8_1
Q8_2
Q8_3
Q8_4
Q8_5



Q9. Were you aware of the issues with sealed roads and bridges prior to reading the material sent to you?

Do not answer If Attribute "Approximately half of Council's sealed road network is in fair to very poor condition" from Q8 is Disagree OR
Do not answer If Attribute "MidCoast Council has enough funding to maintain roads, bridges, buildings, parks etc" from Q8 is Disagree OR
Do not answer If Attribute "MidCoast Council has a large backlog of unfunded renewal works on sealed roads and bridges and requires additional funds to bring to an appropriate standard" from Q8 is Disagree OR
Do not answer If Attribute "Without additional funding the condition of roads and bridges will continue to deteriorate" from Q8 is Disagree OR
Do not answer If Attribute "Roads and bridges represent a large proportion of Council's asset base" from Q8 is Don't know OR
Do not answer If Attribute "Approximately half of Council's sealed road network is in fair to very poor condition" from Q8 is Don't know OR
Do not answer If Attribute "MidCoast Council has enough funding to maintain roads, bridges, buildings, parks etc" from Q8 is Don't know OR
Do not answer If Attribute "MidCoast Council has a large backlog of unfunded renewal works on sealed roads and bridges and requires additional funds to bring to an appropriate standard" from Q8 is Don't know OR
Do not answer If Attribute "Without additional funding the condition of roads and bridges will continue to deteriorate" from Q8 is Don't know

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1
No	555
Don't know	999

Q9

Q10. Without an increase in funding the condition of the sealed roads and bridges will continue to deteriorate. Where would you sit on a sliding scale of 0-10, where 0 means you only want the lowest possible rates, and 10 means you only want the best possible roads and bridges?

0 Lowest rates	0
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5 Neutral	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10 Best roads	10

Q10

Q11. I am now going to ask you about the special rate variation for roads and bridges. I will then ask you about the Environmental Levy, and lastly I will ask you about your overall support for Council's proposal and capacity to pay.

MidCoast Council has proposed a special rate variation of 5% (including the 2.5% rate peg) for four years. The variation is designed to fund the maintenance of existing sealed roads and to start addressing the backlog of works required to bring roads and bridges in poor condition back to standard. Were you aware of this proposed special rate variation prior to our initial call?

Yes	1
No	555
Unsure	666

Q11



Q12. Which of the following statements most closely aligns with your views on the proposed special rate variation of 5% (including the 2.5% rate peg) for four years to address renewal and backlog works on sealed roads and bridges?

PROMPTED except for unsure option

- I agree that the special rate variation is necessary for roads and bridges and support the rate variation proposed 1
- I accept that a special rate variation for roads and bridges is necessary but believe the proposed rate increase is too high 2
- I reject the need for any special rate variation for roads and bridges 3
- Unsure 4

Q12

Q13. If Council were to implement the proposed special rate variation of 5% (including the 2.5% rate peg) each year for roads and bridges, this would mean your Council rates would increase. The increase is different in each region based on the current average residential rates. For the Manning region the average increase each year for 4 years is \$58. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional cost:

Answer If Attribute "Manning" from Q4 is SELECTED

PROMPTED

- I could afford the 5% increase comfortably 1
- I could afford the 5% increase but it would be an inconvenience 2
- I would struggle to pay the 5% increase 3

Q13

Q14. If Council were to implement the proposed special rate variation of 5% (including the 2.5% rate peg) each year for roads and bridges, this would mean your Council rates would increase. The increase is different in each region based on the current average residential rates. For the Great Lakes region the average increase each year for 4 years is \$67. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional cost:

Answer If Attribute "Great Lakes" from Q4 is SELECTED

PROMPTED

- I could afford the 5% increase comfortably 1
- I could afford the 5% increase but it would be an inconvenience 2
- I would struggle to pay the 5% increase 3

Q14

Q15. If Council were to implement the proposed special rate variation of 5% (including the 2.5% rate peg) each year for roads and bridges, this would mean your Council rates would increase. The increase is different in each region based on the current average residential rates. For the Gloucester region the average increase each year for 4 years is \$58. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional cost:

Answer If Attribute "Gloucester" from Q4 is SELECTED

PROMPTED

- I could afford the 5% increase comfortably 1
- I could afford the 5% increase but it would be an inconvenience 2
- I would struggle to pay the 5% increase 3

Q15



Q16. I am now going to read out a number of statements regarding the protection of the natural environment in the MidCoast area and I would like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with each one. Firstly:

PROMPTED

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	
The natural environment across the MidCoast area is an important asset	1	2	999	Q16_1
Maintaining the natural environment should remain a priority for the MidCoast area	1	2	999	Q16_2
The environmental program implemented in the Great Lakes and Manning regions should be extended to the Gloucester region	1	2	999	Q16_3
Without funding, activities that support a healthy natural environment may no longer be undertaken and the health of the environment might deteriorate	1	2	999	Q16_4

Q17. Were you aware of the issues prior to reading the material sent to you?

Do not answer If Attribute "The natural environment across the MidCoast area is an important asset" from Q16 is Disagree OR
Do not answer If Attribute "Maintaining the natural environment should remain a priority for the MidCoast area" from Q16 is Disagree OR
Do not answer If Attribute "The environmental program implemented in the Great Lakes and Manning regions should be extended to the Gloucester region" from Q16 is Disagree OR
Do not answer If Attribute "Without funding, activities that support a healthy natural environment may no longer be undertaken and the health of the environment might deteriorate" from Q16 is Disagree OR
Do not answer If Attribute "The natural environment across the MidCoast area is an important asset" from Q16 is Don't know OR
Do not answer If Attribute "Maintaining the natural environment should remain a priority for the MidCoast area" from Q16 is Don't know OR
Do not answer If Attribute "The environmental program implemented in the Great Lakes and Manning regions should be extended to the Gloucester region" from Q16 is Don't know OR
Do not answer If Attribute "Without funding, activities that support a healthy natural environment may no longer be undertaken and the health of the environment might deteriorate" from Q16 is Don't know

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1		
No	555		Q17
Don't know	999		

Q18. Where would you sit on a sliding scale of 0-10, where 0 means you only want the lowest possible rates, and 10 means you only want the best possible environment?

0 Lowest rates	0		
1	1		
2	2		
3	3		
4	4		
5 Neutral	5		Q18
6	6		
7	7		
8	8		
9	9		
10 Best possible environment	10		



Q19. [Q3], the Great lakes and Manning regions currently fund an environmental program through an Environmental Levy (6% in Great Lakes and 5% in Manning region). Midcoast Council has proposed that an Environmental Levy of 6% be applied across the whole Midcoast area. Were you aware of this proposal prior to our initial call?

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1
No	555
Unsure	666

Q19

Q20. Which of the following statements most closely aligns with your views on the proposed Environmental Levy of 6% ongoing to fund environmental activities?

PROMPTED except for unsure

I agree that the levy is necessary for the environment and support the proposed amount	1
I accept that the levy for the environment is necessary but believe the proposed amount is too high	2
I don't see the need for any levy for the environment	3
Unsure	4

Q20

Q21. If Council were to implement the proposed Environmental Levy of 6% to fund environmental activities, this would mean your Council rates would increase. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional cost?

Answer If Attribute "Gloucester" from Q4 is SELECTED

PROMPTED

I could afford the 6% increase comfortably	1
I could afford the 6% increase but it would be an inconvenience	2
I would struggle to pay the 6% increase	3

Q21

Q22. If Council were to implement the proposed Environmental Levy of 6% to fund the environmental program, this would mean your Council rates would increase by 1% as you already pay an Environmental Levy of 5%. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional 1%?

Answer If Attribute "Manning" from Q4 is SELECTED

PROMPTED

I could afford the 1% increase comfortably	1
I could afford the 1% increase but it would be an inconvenience	2
I would struggle to pay the 1% increase	3

Q22

Q23. As mentioned, you already fund an environmental program through an Environmental Levy of 6%. This means that your Council rates would not change with the Environmental Levy being applied to the MidCoast region but 6% would continue to be applied as it is now. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the 6%?

Answer If Attribute "Great Lakes" from Q4 is SELECTED

PROMPTED

I can continue to afford the 6% Environmental Levy comfortably	1
I can afford the 6% Environmental Levy but it is an inconvenience	2
I struggle to pay the 6% Environmental Levy	3

Q23



Q24. As mentioned previously, the Great Lakes and Manning regions currently fund an environmental program through an Environmental Levy (6% in Great Lakes and 5% in Manning region). Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion regarding applying a 6% Environmental Levy across the whole MidCoast area:

PROMPTED

- The Environmental Levy should be applied across the whole catchment area and paid by all MidCoast ratepayers 1
- The Environmental Levy should continue in the Great Lakes and Manning regions only 2
- The Environmental Levy should be discontinued in the Great Lakes and Manning regions 3

Q24

Q25. I'm now going to ask you about your ability or willingness to pay for the combined proposal by Council to address both a shortfall in funding for sealed roads and bridges as well as the funding for a program that supports a healthy environment. If Council were to implement both the proposed special rate variation and the Environmental Levy, this would mean your Council rates would increase by 11% in the first year followed by 3 years of 5%. The 11% includes the existing environmental levies (6% in the Great Lakes and 5% in the Manning) and the 5% includes 2.5% for roads and bridges and the rate peg. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional cost:

*Answer If Attribute "Great Lakes" from Q4 is SELECTED OR
Answer If Attribute "Manning" from Q4 is SELECTED*

PROMPTED

- I could afford the proposed special rate variation and Environmental Levy comfortably 1
- I could afford the proposed special rate variation and Environmental Levy but it would be an inconvenience 2
- I would struggle to pay the proposed special rate variation and Environmental Levy 3

Q25

Q26. I'm now going to ask you about your ability or willingness to pay for the combined proposal by Council to address both a shortfall in funding for sealed roads and bridges as well as the funding for a program that supports a healthy environment. If Council were to implement both the proposed special rate variation and the Environmental Levy, this would mean your Council rates would increase by 11% in the first year followed by 3 years of 5%. This includes removing the existing 13% rate increase in the first year, which is already approved, and replacing it with 11% in the first year followed by 3 years of 5%. The 11% includes 2.5% for roads and bridges and the 2.5% rate peg and 6% for the environment. The 3 years of 5% includes 2.5% for roads and bridges and the 2.5% rate peg. Which of the following statements best represents your ability to pay the additional cost

Answer If Attribute "Gloucester" from Q4 is SELECTED

PROMPTED

- I could afford the proposed special rate variation and Environmental Levy comfortably 1
- I could afford the proposed special rate variation and Environmental Levy but it would be an inconvenience 2
- I would struggle to pay the proposed special rate variation and Environmental Levy 3

Q26



Q27. Now just a few questions about you to finish off. Firstly are you a ratepayer in the MidCoast Council area?

Yes	1
No	555

Q27

Q28. And do you live in an urban or rural setting?

UNPROMPTED

Urban	1
Rural	2
Mixed/Unsure	3

Q28

Q29. And do you have any children aged 15 or less living in your household?

UNPROMPTED

Yes	1
No	555
Prefer not to say	2

Q29

Q31. That brings us to the end of the survey [Q3]. MidCoast Council greatly appreciates your time and feedback. Thank you for your time and have a great afternoon/evening.

End

Appendix 3: Reason for rating of satisfaction with local infrastructure

Sat Score (1-5)	Reason
1	Whenever I want to use them the facilities are well maintained, the boat ramp needs repair in Tuncurry
1	We don't have a lot of facilities mentioned in Coma Park
1	The shops are empty and many businesses have closed, there does not seem to be much incentive to support business.
1	The roads are crap as well as bridges, some tourist parks are well looked after, but others are neglected
1	The road surface is very bad between Gloucester and the main highway.
1	The council is doing a good job with the funds they have
1	Roads are terrible and rates are ridiculous. Public transport is terrible, street lighting could be improved.
1	Roads are not good, but as a motorcyclist it is dangerous. More economic development to bring people to the town and businesses to the town and support local business as well
1	Road maintenance is needed in particular back road but I am satisfied to some extent and have seen some improvements to road maintenance, however the wooden bridge on main road is in need of repair.
1	Overall when getting around nothing seems in bad disrepair, always room for improvement.
1	Most services are pretty good.
1	Local roads are bad, toilet locked in parks
1	In general, all the facilities are of average quality.
1	I'm not really interested
1	I would like to see more footpaths especially in Tuncurry. Local roads are not good they just patch them and they don't last long.
1	I think they maintain the park very well they mow the lawn and trim the plants but they don't maintain the toilets very well.
1	I know that funds are stretched but I do think there is a lot more they can do.
1	I am happy with the roads in our area and public toilets are a disgrace particularly the showers at old barr which should be knocked down and rebuilt. We would like to see more walking tracks and the beach cleaned up a little bit.
1	Everything is beautiful at the moment I just hope it doesn't go downhill its wonderful so long as they don't take away from us
1	Doing a pretty good job but I think they waste a bit of money and should be more business-like in spending (e.g. as if they were spending their own money). Having worked with figures all my life I cannot see how the rate increases balance out. It's well known fact that Forster area is a richer income area and Taree residents cannot afford to pay same amount as Forster residents.
1	Come from Sydney noticed the roads are shocking and when it rains some are impassable
1	Cause we were in Greater Taree until three years ago and the roads are shocking parks weren't maintained, we moved to Forster I was generally happy with parks and roads and overall happy with council so now that they have merged throws you into turmoil

- 1** Because of the poor conditions of the previous local govt areas I am scoring an average of neutral. Whilst Gloucester is good, the rest are poor
- 1** Anything that we need seems to be there
- 2** Would not be easy to keep up maintenance.
- 2** With former council was very satisfied, with this change I think our rate money may be funding other council areas with no benefit to us.
- 2** We have reasonable facilities where we live, whether this stays the same we have no idea.
- 2** We have been taken over by MidCoast council and feel like we are being overlooked, and bigger centres will get more funding
- 2** We are a family of 3 and our recycling bin overflows every fortnight, Council should provide weekly services.
- 2** They haven't been in long enough for me to comment
- 2** They do what they can with the money available.
- 2** There ok they seem to be pretty much ok
- 2** There is not enough community assets where I live, and is getting worse so we need to be recognised.
- 2** There are no facilities and assets for our children and the young adults. Our young people move away and there will not be any people here to look after older people. Also need QLD model for play activities. We need a Board walk around the lake. We need fishing walls for the elderly.
- 2** There are areas that still need improving, e.g., the riverbank could be utilised better to attract tourists and community use.
- 2** There are a lot of assets that are in bad condition, however the council has not had the money to fix it. Still a lot of causeways where bridges are needed.
- 2** The roads need to improve at Green Point. They are too narrow and no lines. Also we have several dangerous bends which are not visible due to vegetation and bush
- 2** The roads leading to major towns are a disgrace. They haven't been properly sealed for years so the playground are very poor broken swings sail are ripped so sun protection
- 2** The roads around here are terrible, particularly my road, which makes me very dissatisfied.
- 2** The roads are very bad, they have damaged cars
- 2** The roads are very bad in this region and the bridges are poor.
- 2** The roads are still not good and the parks are a disgrace.
- 2** The roads are really bad here. Other than that, I am satisfied.
- 2** The roads are not up to standard.
- 2** The roads are improving all round us and becoming of a very good standard as is with the bridges.
- 2** The roads and bridges, problems are with the council management. Workers are lazy. Gloucester is missing out on receiving public works projects through bad management
- 2** The road where I live needs work, it's not wide enough, too much traffic. Patch up jobs are not good enough
- 2** The parks are very good but I think they could have better facilities the facilities are not well maintained
- 2** The only road that is problem is the Buckets way
- 2** The facilities in Gloucester are very good. For example the big park here.
- 2** The council generally keeps things looking good- like the parks.
- 2** The Council does the best they can but the community assets are still not good enough
- 2** The condition of the roads are awful swimming pool good parks all good landscaping is great all is well looked after it's mainly the roads

- 2 The community facilities are immaculate. However, the roads are poor.
- 2 Such a big area it's almost impossible to comment
- 2 Some things like the roads are atrocious but other things are fine not fair to mark down for one section
- 2 Some parks aren't up to standard. They aren't well kept or clean.
- 2 Some are great but some areas are quite bad
- 2 Some are good and some not so good.
- 2 Satisfied with some things, but the roads are letting us down
- 2 Roads, bridges and footpaths are in need of repair maintenance and upgrading.
- 2 Roads, are particularly bad, people are cynical, and so most spending is done around election time.
- 2 Roads need maintenance
- 2 Roads are terrible, I've been on forestry tracks are better maintained. They start things and don't complete they tend to patch things up but redo rather than just fill
- 2 Roads are disgusting. Not maintained. Road maintenance and repairs take too long and are never 100%.
- 2 Roads are an issue, but I believe that the deterioration of our roads are caused by the waste removal trucks and the weight of the trucks. Our roads are the main concern in our area
- 2 Quite a few good facilities in Harrington but generally up in the residential area not looked after or no playground in the new estate
- 2 Not sure.
- 2 Not sure.
- 2 Most of the parks are well maintained. Concerned regarding possible sale of local parks.
- 2 More work to be done. Roads need special priority
- 2 More work needs to be done
- 2 More public toilets are needed, the ones we have are a disgrace and always dirty, more community consultation is needed since the amalgamation, road maintenance on sealed roads is needed.
- 2 MidCoast council have so far not provided anything for Gloucester region
- 2 It's a slow process but they have made some major improvements, concerned how progress with continue in this new council
- 2 I'm very involved the Tea Gardens Hawkes Nest SLSC.
- 2 I'm on a scooter and I have to go out on to the road, we need more no parking signs.
- 2 I'm not satisfied with the roads and the bridges but other things are good like the hall and parks.
- 2 If you don't live in Forster you get no services
- 2 I think the things that they do are good just that nothing gets done.
- 2 I think the sporting facilities are good and the roads in our district are terrible (Wingham). The facilities in Taree are good but the further west you move from Taree the worse they become.
- 2 I think the council is quite backward.
- 2 I think roads around Gloucester area aren't to the same standard as they are around the coast.
- 2 I think as time goes on a lot of things changed, we need more employment opportunities.
- 2 I suppose I think some of the things are being maintained quite well but I that is negated by the fact that there are some big infrastructure problems that have been neglected.
- 2 I love in Manning Point and the roads are terrible and they have closed the beach track and don't want to fix it, it stops visitors and locals coming to the area
- 2 I don't utilise many of the services so I'm in the middle.

- 2 I don't use too many facilities but we could do with some improvement to encourage families to use them more, look at ways to discourage vandals
- 2 I can't see anything that needs to be improved in a hurry.
- 2 I am very dissatisfied with the roads here. I'm unsure which roads are looked after by the federal government though.
- 2 I am pretty happy
- 2 I am not too familiar with the things that have been asked.
- 2 I am not much of a user in that sense of an area so don't have much of an opinion.
- 2 I am not happy with the condition of the roads.
- 2 Hard to get anything done with Council
- 2 Done the end of my street they have put a gym outside which is great but happy
- 2 Could do better
- 2 Because they have acquired a number of bridges and roads, in other words our rates are going to other areas, when our money was spent in our area previously
- 2 Because the roads are atrocious, the basic community assets are shocking, the only good thing is the library
- 2 Because of roads and bridges and garbage collection
- 2 Barrington River Bridge is a hazard, it needs to be 2 lanes and to be replaced, it is dangerous and there have been fatalities on this bridge. Disabled access is needed at all community buildings and facilities. Major dirt roads need maintenance. Special consideration should be given to farmers who are struggling to pay the current rates and cannot afford an increase.
- 3 With the restriction on finances they are doing a good job, particularly when taking on board two financially disadvantaged council areas.
- 3 When roads are repaired it's not done properly...
- 3 We only use the roads and we live on a road which is graded once in two years and the bridge should be better
- 3 We live on a dirt road very little maintenance very rough road
- 3 We have had an amalgamation and they have not had enough time to get themselves sorted.
- 3 We have a very good report between the Men's shed and the Council support.
- 3 We have a range of good sporting facilities and parks. However, things like the roads and the environment are concerning.
- 3 Towns pretty tidy quite happy with things
- 3 Think we are lucky all the things we need for the roads and parks , roads really should be government maintained not council should be state government funding
- 3 Things under Gloucester are fine
- 3 They take a long time to fix things.
- 3 They maintained the roads very well.
- 3 They have done football fields and everything else put metal seats in although near our place where the garbage truck comes there is a drop where the gutter is and the tar and it is really dangerous especially if someone is stepping up from the road onto the footpath. The weight of the garbage truck has put an indentation between the roadside and the kerb and I think someone is going to get hurt.
- 3 They are working on them all the time, when a problem they will fix it.
- 3 They are doing well enough but the roads still need a lot more work.
- 3 There seems to be a back log of things needing to be done but I am somewhat satisfied. I would like council to ensure roads that are fixed or maintained with ratepayer's money are monitored to ensure quality and value for money.

- 3 There is not a lot of foot paths. We need walkways from Hawkes Nest to Windawoppa. The roads are pretty average.
- 3 There has been bad planning, therefore the focus has been on larger towns and small towns such Stroud have missed out on funding and care, e.g. lack of halls for community activities
- 3 There are still different aspects of council areas that need improving, particularly the protection of waterways during the holiday seasons when we have many tourists. There seems to be a lot of money wasted if we worked on roads more efficiently and quickly.
- 3 There are some good things here like the playgrounds.
- 3 There are a lot of things they could do better the roads are atrocious, rain damage very dangerous not repaired yet when they do they do a good job which is why I said neutral
- 3 There are a lot of roads that are very patchy, and we have no gutters where we are here.
- 3 The work council has done around waterways is tremendous and has improved the quality of the water, and the road maintenance is excellent
- 3 The roads around here are terrible. However, everything else is alright.
- 3 The roads are very bad, we have had to buy new wheels as the roads cracked the rim.
- 3 The roads are terrible.
- 3 The roads are needing work, some of them are nothing better than a goat track.
- 3 The roads and bridges around Taree and Old Barr are shocking
- 3 The MidCoast Council has a large area to cover, I see that in Forster and Taree they are trying to do good works, but the bridges need looking at.
- 3 The council mainly supports Forster. We have no footpaths, no curb and guttering. We have open drains running throughout our town at Bulahdelah
- 3 The council is doing a reasonable job. It is a larger area they deal with now.
- 3 The council caters well for Forster but at Tuncurry the rock pool is needing attention, there needs to be warning signs and clearing. This is a well-used by tourists, dressing sheds need an upgrade, we need an entertainment centre also.
- 3 The allocation of funds has always been harshly dealt out, and I don't see it changing.
- 3 Still work to be done...feeder roads onto Bucketts Way need attention
- 3 Still some improvements that can be made.
- 3 Still more to be done, Gloucester is doing OK
- 3 Standard of roads and bridges is poor, and money is wasted in poor standards of repair.
- 3 Some things are good some bad.
- 3 Some roads are okay, but a lot of roads aren't good for example.
- 3 Some places are good and then some places get neglected regarding funds and maintenance.
- 3 Some of our sporting grounds are needing urgent attention, e.g., Taree Recreational Grounds along with other recreational facilities. Also the roads continue to be a problem.
- 3 Some of its good and some not so good.
- 3 Room for improvement in the way they provide their services.
- 3 Roads need more work across the area.
- 3 Roads need a lot of work
- 3 Roads are disgraceful
- 3 Roads and bridges are not well maintained, they need upgrading, they are not many parks and they are poor quality.
- 3 Road maintenance is needed and cycle lanes on roads to improve safety and avoid hazards and footpaths need upgrading but overall I am satisfied
- 3 Really happy with Great Lakes but not sure about the new council.

- 3 Overall its good the roads room for improvement no footpaths around behind the high school they walk on the road or get wet feet
- 3 Nothing seems to have changed since it became MidCoast Council and Gloucester was always pretty good
- 3 Nothing in particular that needs attention
- 3 Nothing can be done overnight, a far way behind as far as maintenance is concerned.
- 3 Not sure.
- 3 Not satisfied with the parks, should have shade cloths for the kids.
- 3 No complaints other than I don't think I should have to pay to go to the tip seeing as I already pay a waste levy.
- 3 No complaints, except there are 6 speed humps at the creek bridge but they need to just put in a new bridge
- 3 No comment
- 3 No
- 3 Neutral
- 3 Most things are good.
- 3 Most services I use that belong to the Council seem in pretty good condition.
- 3 Libraries halls are all very good to me
- 3 It's a very wide area, and there are a lot of things that are badly managed around the shire- such as the roads, parks and public toilets.
- 3 It is a pretty good little community, we haven't been here that long but they seem to be active. Roads are average though.
- 3 In some aspects a good job is done but sometimes not so in the middle,
- 3 In general things are really good
- 3 I'm unsure about the council's assets.
- 3 I'm mainly talking about parks and roads
- 3 I think what we have is okay and it will so the job but it could be better.
- 3 I think things have improved over the years and they are all pretty well established.
- 3 I think things could be better in the local towns. There could be bigger parks and better roads and cycleway.
- 3 I think they just need to look after our roads a little better and we should have some more footpaths.
- 3 I think they could do more, like footpath & cycleway, sealed roads.
- 3 I think they are doing a pretty good job.
- 3 I think there is room for improvement but I guess they are doing the best job they can with the funding they have
- 3 I think there is nothing wrong with the buildings and things.
- 3 I think some of these roads are in terrible condition they have potholes everywhere.
- 3 I think overall the council does well.
- 3 I think our main roads are just shocking.
- 3 I think old bar road is terrible condition.
- 3 I think just the quality of bridges and roads the upkeep is very disappointing especially the roads and facilities in Wingham.
- 3 I live in a beautiful town and I would like to see council think more of the outlying areas and not just the main city towns. We all count and we all pay rates, on the whole I am happy to live here. More drainage and kerbs and gutters would be great and hopefully with time this will improve.

- 3 I haven't had a lot of chance to distinguish between the old council and what has been provided by the MidCoast council.
- 3 I haven't found any reasons not to be.
- 3 I have lived in 15 different areas and this council area do many things other councils do not. We are kept very up to date with what is happening with regular letter drops and public council meetings where our voices are heard.
- 3 I find some of the facilities are okay but some need to be more maintained. I think they do more work in the town area, rather than the rural parts.
- 3 I felt that council lacked initiative regarding the flood we had, we have only one sporting ground, council was not proactive regarding restoration of what was lost
- 3 I don't use the council's assists much.
- 3 I don't think they are doing the best job they can in the area.
- 3 I don't think that anything is ever fixed properly by the council, particularly the roads.
- 3 I don't know much about them
- 3 I can only speak for my area. Plenty of parks and walking areas, and bbqs
- 3 I am very happy with most local infrastructure, however the roads are disgraceful.
- 3 I am not happy that the roads and parks are not up to scratch there are a lot of things that need improving.
- 3 I am generally satisfied with the services, but Harrington road needs an upgrade and the bridges need to be widened as they are getting old
- 3 I am generally quite happy.
- 3 Have some doubt about the amalgamation, now a big area and worried the resources being spread over that area.
- 3 Haven't had a chance to get to know the new council.
- 3 Have changed a bit recently but not a huge amount happening.
- 3 Happy with the services and make use of them
- 3 Gloucester is a very well kept town the council is very agreeable and MidCoast appears to be the same so far, the town is beautiful and council services are good it is the commercial services that on the whole stink, for example shopping facilities Gloucester suffers from a monopoly of supply and service
- 3 From what I have seen things are pretty good
- 3 Everything seems okay to me.
- 3 Due to the terrible maintenance of the roads. Councils do not check on the roads, even when we complained.
- 3 Creek road is terrible and roads need maintenance
- 3 Cowper Street damaged by trucks, 3-lane highway in the main street which isn't used, road needs repair, road under railway bridge needs repair badly. No curb and gutter which is why it floods. Infrastructure is non-existent, council is focused mainly on Gloucester and Forster.
- 3 Council has stepped up
- 3 Because we do have beautiful parks, I am impressed with sealed roads, but neutral responses as the council hasn't been in long enough for me to make an educated decision
- 3 All good the sporting facilities and ovals are great.
- 4 Would like a council kerbside clean up maybe 2 per year in the Gloucester area. Otherwise I'm happy.
- 4 Where I live there are many things that need to be looked at and cared for.
- 4 When you need services they are available and of a high standard
- 4 When we need things done the work is done satisfactorily

- 4 What I utilise is satisfactory
- 4 We spend lots of time at the local pool and the library and the river are all in great shape
- 4 We have plenty of services provided by Council. Could improve cycleways
- 4 We have been complaining about roads for so long and they are getting worse and the repairs are just a waste of money don't last very long. And generally they waste money
- 4 We had some of council buildings in the caravan park and they don't look after them.
- 4 We don't know because all of a sudden we have been lumbered with Mid Coast Council.
- 4 We do not have any issues
- 4 We can see things are improving since they merged
- 4 We asked for a little traffic island the police and council approved it but they have got no money since then there has been a dozen other unnecessary ones put in and we are still waiting on ours they are wasting their money putting the other ones in as they don't slow the traffic down.
- 4 We are relating to the parks in Foster area non have shade protection at all no fenced and enclosed children with disabilities makes it difficult
- 4 We are lacking in a community hall for seniors and community groups, but I am quite happy overall.
- 4 Visibility on roundabouts is not good due to gardens planted too high which is a hazard but otherwise I am happy.
- 4 Very satisfied with Council.
- 4 Total lack of maintenance in all infrastructure areas
- 4 Things like the local swimming pool we have no life guards
- 4 They patch up the roads and they seem to fall apart the next day again.
- 4 They need more money to do roads, etc.
- 4 They have had no time to build new infrastructure at all
- 4 They don't look after anything in Forster, even though community fund raises and council is slow to contribute. Our community will suffer when funds are funnelled to other areas
- 4 They aren't bad
- 4 They are not doing too badly it is great that they have the facilities there but they could be better.
- 4 They are not doing their job. Council has no interest.
- 4 They are improving all the time have done a lot around the lakes and it's all very pleasant
- 4 There is still room for improvement maintenance of roads and bridges mostly, also widening bridges to accommodate growing population.
- 4 There is room for improvement
- 4 There is more work to be done
- 4 There is more to be done
- 4 There are some things good, the roads bring the score down....potential change in rates...
- 4 There are a lot of bumps in the road , they are doing better than they have
- 4 The roads are shocking
- 4 The roads and bridges need a lot more work. The council was allocated for bridges but the council took a long time and the job was poor.
- 4 The positive works the Council does outweighs the negative.
- 4 The parks and playgrounds need maintenance and to be made for toddlers
- 4 The MidCoast Council has not yet had time to make an impact on these areas.
- 4 The Great Lakes Council - I think they are doing a great job.
- 4 The general construction and maintenance of roads are not carried out correctly.

- 4 The gardens are amazing parks are great do a great job
- 4 The funding has to come from somewhere.
- 4 The facilities are well maintained
- 4 The Council, fixed a road we needed, they were fast in fixing, but slow to respond to our original email.
- 4 The Council tries to keep assets to a high standard.
- 4 The council doesn't really do enough in the community and the roads are really bad.
- 4 The Buckets Way is very dangerous to travel at night especially with trucks travelling on it.
- 4 The amount of sealed roads that are in need of upgrading. We need a significant injection of funding to upgrade the old sealed roads and quality and width.
- 4 Swimming pool needs urgent repairs, and many other items need repairs.
- 4 Surf club is good
- 4 Some good things and some bad things.
- 4 Some areas not maintained well. Public facilities such as toilets, seating areas, shaded seating areas, and bins are not well maintained, and in some places, not even available.
- 4 Roads desperately need maintenance. Many people have damaged their cars from potholes and council should compensate people for this.
- 4 Roads are very bad.
- 4 Roads are quite good, could be a slight improvement on some of them. Bridges are good in the main areas.
- 4 Roads are better going north.
- 4 Roads are atrocious, the time frame it takes for council to fix or maintain roads is ridiculous. The library needs more parking.
- 4 Road maintenance is desperately needed, council should be encouraging and supporting local small businesses without all the red tape
- 4 Requests for Council to put in a footpath has been knocked back again by Council.
- 4 Regarding the roads.
- 4 Regarding the library - Great Lakes proposed moving it. The new plan really retracted from what a library should be. It shouldn't be hidden, and would have been much better by the water and would have been much more representative of what a public library should be.
- 4 Realistic expectations of what council can provide with the resources they have
- 4 Pretty happy in general, maintenance on roads are very poor condition.
- 4 Pretty good.
- 4 Playgrounds and parks need protection from sun such as shade cloth, and more community consultation is needed, and Foster is in need of a public hospital, but I am satisfied.
- 4 Planning for local assets has little regard for the environment and infrastructure of the town. Roads aren't properly maintained or repaired. The environment is in jeopardy from dredging of river. Council favours certain builders in terms of getting things approved.
- 4 Parks are excellent, bridges need upgrading which have load limits.
- 4 Overall the MidCoast Council has responded to community concerns and the condition of the assets in the Great Lakes area are very good
- 4 Overall
- 4 Our roads are disgusting and the bridges are awful , I travel a lot on the roads appalling
- 4 Not sure.
- 4 Not happy with the roads.
- 4 Not fully satisfied but OK

- 4 No matter when you go out to town the workers are waiting for time to finish. Parks for older children & skate park is really needed.
- 4 Neutral
- 4 Neutral
- 4 Need shelters for the park areas, roads are terrible
- 4 Moved from great lakes to Taree now and not sure how facilities will be maintained as well as their longevity
- 4 Maintenance on roads, and general parks and swings, they fence them off and kids can't use them at all.
- 4 Live on a dirt road and it's not maintained enough, nothing for long term. Local Sealed roads, the maintenance is not good deteriorate pretty quickly
- 4 Just satisfied credit where credit is due not a winger they do a good job
- 4 Its Government cutting funding to everything and it is putting pressure on us as rate payers. To be too efficient you become inefficient which this is what council has done.
- 4 It depends on what we're talking about. For example - roads are terrible but parks are good. In town is good, out of town is neglected.
- 4 Includes roads which are horrible.
- 4 In my immediate area it is quite satisfactory but the road condition outside of town such as our main highways are in pretty poor condition.
- 4 In my area the services are quite good and have no complaints.
- 4 In my area all facilities are OK
- 4 In general the services are quite adequate.
- 4 I'm not happy with a few things, like the council trying to sell off the big park. The creek at old bar is disgusting too.
- 4 If you take Avalon road that has been a total mess for years they have repaired part of it and the part that really needed it they didn't do it and the Jetty down at Tuncurry boat ramp has been collapsed for a while and they have just put a barricade around it and made no attempt to fix it.
- 4 I drive 150 ks a day on the roads and they are like a patchwork of potholes
- 4 I think too much has changed in this area.
- 4 I think things have been allowed to deteriorate over a long period of time.
- 4 I think they try and all depends on funds.
- 4 I think they need to do a lot of research on the facilities and the roads to improve them.
- 4 I think they need improvements but they are not too bad.
- 4 I think they have done pretty good with the services in the area.
- 4 I think they have done a pretty good job on all our parks and other facilities.
- 4 I think they have catered very adequately for the older people who live here.
- 4 I think there could be more done,
- 4 I think the roads need to be improved
- 4 I think the roads in our area are terrible.
- 4 I think I'd give a five but there isn't enough toilets around I think there trying but quite up to scratch
- 4 I think everything seems to be going along I suppose they still have a lot to do.
- 4 I only venture within the town I don't go anywhere else so I am quite satisfied with what they do in this area.
- 4 I love living here always room for improvement. We need a decent hospital some things need improvement its growing a lot so I'm pretty happy

- 4 I have young children, the parks are not children friendly, and they cannot ride their bikes on paths or roads because they are bad.
- 4 I feel that they do need to do a bit more work with some of infrastructure.
- 4 I don't like the way they are doing the infrastructure like in shopping centres putting in 15min time limits on parking and also at the medical centre.
- 4 I don't know enough about it.
- 4 I don't have the need to use a lot of the facilities yet my rates are going up constantly. There is no consultation about what they are doing and I think it is more for the tourists.
- 4 I don't have much of an opinion, I just pay my rates and think they are doing ok with what they've got.
- 4 I don't have any experience with the MidCoast Council yet.
- 4 I don't have a lot to do with community things but other people I know do and they seem to be quite happy with the services.
- 4 I don't go out much, but when I do, I notice that everything seems fine to me.
- 4 I can't really think of anything to complain about and there is nothing that stands out either.
- 4 I am not lacking in anything.
- 4 I am not happy with the state of the roads.
- 4 I am happy with what they are doing in the area the community halls that I have been too I am happy the way they help you there.
- 4 I am happy with what council is providing at the moment.
- 4 Here at Manning point our beach access is our main income in this village and they don't particularly care about it
- 4 Have not had enough time to judge the new council.
- 4 Happy with things but always room for improvement
- 4 Had a few run ins , they rub you the wrong way. Some things are great, some aren't
- 4 Great Lakes council was very prosperous, but now the Council will have to prop up Taree and Gloucester. The former Great lakes council is low socioeconomic due to the many aged pensioners and therefore it will be a great burden on us.
- 4 Give the Council a chance to improve things
- 4 Generally the assets are quite good.
- 4 Generally speaking, the council are good. However, we need a new large library and community hall.
- 4 Generally I don't have anything to do with these facilities.
- 4 Generally Council is doing OK
- 4 From what I see in my travels I don't have much to complain about
- 4 From what I see around doesn't seem that bad
- 4 From Sydney originally and can see the difference
- 4 Footpaths are unsafe and need repairing and maintaining.
- 4 Feel like Smiths Lake is the forgotten area, we see everything better in Forster
- 4 Fantastic new parks walkways and cycleways but the road is terrible
- 4 Facilities in old Gloucester are great
- 4 Everything works well
- 4 Everything seems to be ok.
- 4 Everything is fine
- 4 Everything is aged and needs improving. There have been some improvements but there is a long way to go as it is a big area.
- 4 Everything but the roads are fairly good.



- 4 Easy access to services
- 4 Don't really have to use them but from what I can see they are quite good
- 4 Doing a good job.
- 4 Council does a good job
- 4 Because the amalgamation hasn't really been a good thing
- 4 Because in our area you can walk and I have noticed if some concrete start to move they are dealt with very effectively
- 4 Because funding is not equal in distribution
- 4 Basically underpopulated area with large catchment and council do the best they can with the limited funds they have.
- 4 All the roads around are bugged, even though ones they are trying to repair.
- 5 We don't really know what's happening, there not informative round about went ahead we didn't know
- 5 They were all for themselves and not for the ratepayers, I am glad that they merged. Hopefully something will be done now.
- 5 They exist in the town not where I live
- 5 The overall qualities of the assets are terrible.
- 5 Not happy
- 5 Neutral
- 5 Mainly because of the bad roads, repairs are not good enough.
- 5 I live on a private road which we maintain.. not happy with the arrangement
- 5 I just think their maintenance of roads is poor.
- 5 Generally assets in a fairly decent order
- 5 From my knowledge of various areas of the entire region ,I know that other areas are ok but they were before council amalgamated so it is hard to say, priority of town roads needs to improve rather than focusing on through roads that locals don't use like Buckets Way and Thunderbolts Way which are no longer state roads
- 5 Everything is quite good
- 5 Don't see any big issues
- 5 Cycling facilities not as good as they could be. Road surfaces are sometimes unsafe.
- 5 Because of the condition of roads
- 5 Bad question
- 5 Anything I use I available and am happy

Appendix 4: Online vs CATI Survey results

In addition to the random CATI survey of 400 adult residents, a parallel online survey was promoted via Councils' web home page. By survey deadline, a total of 60 responses had been received.

The tables below compare the results of the online and CATI results, and also highlight any significant differences between the two. However care should be taken in interpreting the online survey results due to (a) respondents being self-selecting rather than random; and (b) the small sample size.

Table A4.1: Demographics

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>CATI (n=407)</i>	<i>Online (n=60)</i>	<i>% Difference</i>
% Location	Manning	42%	32%	11%
	Great Lakes	40%	62%	-22%
	Gloucester	17%	7%	11%
% Yes	Ratepayer	92%	97%	-5%
% Urban v rural	Urban	57%	63%	-6%
	Rural	43%	37%	6%
% Children	Children aged 15 or less living in your household?	30%	22%	8%

The online sample was over represented by Great Lakes residents (by 22%), ratepayers and urban residents (although only slightly).

Table A4.2: Satisfaction with Council provided services and facilities

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>CATI (n=407)</i>	<i>Online (n=60)</i>	<i>% Difference</i>
% Satisfied	Maintenance of unsealed roads	9%	35%	-26%
	Maintenance of sealed roads	17%	43%	-26%
	Community consultation and engagement	29%	62%	-33%
	Bridges	34%	52%	-18%
	Footpaths and cycleways	34%	52%	-18%
	Public toilets	36%	47%	-11%
	Community facilities such as public halls	45%	62%	-17%
	Protection of waterways	48%	58%	-10%
	Parks, reserves and playgrounds	67%	63%	4%
	Waste collection and disposal	78%	87%	-9%
	Libraries	76%	77%	-1%
	Overall		44%	42%

While the online and CATI samples rated their overall satisfaction with Council similarly (44% CATI and 42% online), online respondents were more favourable than CATI respondents towards all Council services and facilities with the exception of parks, reserves and playgrounds.

Table A4.3: Awareness of the need for the SRV

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>CATI (n=407)</i>	<i>Online (n=60)</i>	<i>% Difference</i>
% Agree	MidCoast Council has enough funding to maintain roads, bridges, buildings, parks etc	23%	15%	8%
	MidCoast Council has a large backlog of unfunded renewal works on sealed roads and bridges and requires additional funds to bring to an appropriate standard	78%	68%	10%
	Approximately half of Council's sealed road network is in fair to very poor condition	84%	72%	12%
	Roads and bridges represent a large proportion of Council's asset base	88%	87%	1%
	Without additional funding the condition of roads and bridges will continue to deteriorate	89%	70%	19%
% Yes	Were you aware of the issues with sealed roads and bridges prior to reading the background material?	77%	N/A*	
% Preferring	Lowest rates	12%	28%	-16%
	Neutral	35%	22%	13%
	Best roads	53%	50%	3%

* Only answered by 3 online respondents

While awareness that roads and bridges represent a large proportion of Council's asset base was similar by methodology, online respondents had much lower awareness than CATI of Council's current asset maintenance and funding quandary (suggesting that a smaller proportion reviewed the information provided).

Furthermore, online respondents were more likely to "pick a side" with regard to the continuum between lowest rates and best possible roads than CATI respondents - while CATI and online samples' proportion preferring the best roads was similar (50% among online and 53% among CATI), online respondents were more likely than CATI respondents to choose "lower rates" (28% vs. 12%), CATI respondents were more likely to be on the fence (with 35% neutral vs. 22% of online respondents).

Table A4.4: Support for and affordability of the SRV

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>CATI (n=407)</i>	<i>Online (n=60)</i>	<i>% Difference</i>
% Yes	Were you aware of this proposed special rate variation prior to reading the background material for this survey?	33%	33%	0%
% Agree	Support SRV	32%	42%	-10%
	Support SRV, but rate too high	44%	17%	27%
	Reject SRV	21%	38%	-17%
	Unsure	3%	3%	0%
% Afford	I could afford the 5% increase comfortably	28%	22%	6%
	Could afford the 5% increase but an inconvenience	46%	33%	12%
	I would struggle to pay the 5% increase	24%	40%	-16%
	Prefer not to answer	2%	5%	-3%

As is often the case in online, opt-in samples, support vs rejection of the SRV was extremely polarised (with a higher proportion supporting the SRV - 10% - AND a higher proportion rejecting it - 17%). The random and representative CATI sample showed a higher proportion supporting the SRV but feeling the rate is too high (44% vs. 17%).

Furthermore, a higher proportion of online respondents indicated that they would struggle to pay the 5% increase (40% vs. 24%).

Table A4.5: Awareness of the need for the Environmental Levy

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>CATI (n=407)</i>	<i>Online (n=60)</i>	<i>% Difference</i>
% Agree	Without funding, activities that support a healthy natural environment may no longer be undertaken and the health of the environment might deteriorate	76%	58%	18%
	The environmental program implemented in the Great Lakes and Manning regions should be extended to the Gloucester region	79%	63%	16%
	Maintaining the natural environment should remain a priority for the MidCoast area	87%	82%	5%
	The natural environment across the MidCoast area is an important asset	95%	90%	5%
% Yes	Were you aware of the issues prior to reading the background material?	35%	79%	-44%
% Preferring	Lowest rates	18%	28%	-10%
	Best possible environment	53%	53%	0%

Online respondents had a much higher awareness of the proposed Environmental Levy than did the CATI respondents (79% vs. 35%).

Table A4.6: Support for and affordability of the Environmental Levy

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>CATI (n=407)</i>	<i>Online (n=60)</i>	<i>% Difference</i>
% Yes	Midcoast Council has proposed that an Environmental Levy of 6% be applied across the whole Midcoast area. Were you aware of this proposal prior prior to this phone call?	13%	52%	-39%
% Yes	Agree levy is necessary and support proposed amount	38%	47%	-8%
	Accept levy for is necessary but believe the proposed amount too high	45%	22%	23%
	Reject need for levy	15%	30%	-15%
	Unsure	2%	2%	0%
% Afford	I could afford the increase comfortably	40%	25%	15%
	I could afford the increase but it would be an inconvenience	40%	33%	7%
	I would struggle to pay the increase	18%	37%	-18%
	Prefer not to answer	2%	5%	-3%
% Agree	The Environmental Levy should be applied across the whole catchment area and paid by all MidCoast ratepayers	69%	73%	-5%
	The Environmental Levy should continue in the Great Lakes and Manning regions only	17%	5%	12%
	The Environmental Levy should be discontinued in the Great Lakes and Manning regions	15%	22%	-7%

Again, the online sample had a polarised opinion towards the Environmental Levy with these respondents having higher levels of both support and rejection (Support: CATI 38% vs online 47% and reject: CATI 15% vs. online 30%).

As per the SRV results, online respondents indicated a higher inability to afford the associated rate increase than CATI respondents (37% would *struggle to pay the 5% increase* compared with 18% of CATI).

Online respondents were more likely to agree that the Environmental Levy should be applied across the whole area (73% vs. 69%) and also that it should be discontinued (22% vs. 15%), but less likely to agree it should continue in the Great Lakes and Manning regions only (5% vs. 17%).

Table A4.7: Affordability of the combined SRV and Environmental Levy

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>CATI (n=407)</i>	<i>Online (n=60)</i>	<i>% Difference</i>
% Afford	I could afford the proposed SRV and environmental levy comfortably	20%	17%	3%
	I could afford the proposed SRV and environmental levy but it would be an inconvenience	40%	30%	10%
	I would struggle to pay the proposed SRV and environmental levy	38%	47%	-9%
	Prefer not to answer	3%	7%	-4%

As was expected, given the previous results, online respondents were more likely to indicate that they would struggle to pay the proposed combined SRV and Environmental Levy when compared with CATI respondents (47% vs. 38%).