

Richmond  
Valley  
Council



# **AGENDA**

## **Extraordinary Council Meeting**

**I hereby give notice that an Extraordinary Meeting of Council will be held on:**

**Date: Thursday, 7 February 2019**

**Time: 5.00 pm**

**Location: Council Chambers  
10 Graham Place, Casino**

**Vaughan Macdonald  
General Manager**

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**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

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**1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The Mayor will provide an Acknowledgement of Country by reading the following statement on behalf of Council:

*"Richmond Valley Council recognises the people of the Bundjalung Nations as Custodians and Traditional Owners of this land and we value and appreciate the continuing cultural connection to lands, their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region in the past, present and future."*

**2 PRAYER****3 APOLOGIES****4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

## **5 GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORTS**

### **5.1 SPECIAL RATE VARIATION APPLICATION**

**Author:** Vaughan Macdonald, General Manager

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In 2013 Council resolved, and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) approved, a Special Rate Variation for five years for the financial periods 2014/2015 to 2018/2019. As a result of the current special rate variation period concluding this financial year, Council determined at its November 2018 meeting that it would be timely to go back to the community to discuss the need for a further special rate variation to fund the increased service levels that have been established and enjoyed by the community, and continue with the asset renewals and maintenance programs in a financially sustainable manner. To achieve this and continue to improve our financial performance indicators an increase above the rate peg amount of 2.7% is necessary.

Council staff have modelled three different increased rate revenue scenarios and the cost impact of these rate increases on ratepayers for a four-year period commencing from 2019/2020 to 2022/2023. A thorough community consultation process commenced in December 2018 and has just concluded to gauge the community's satisfaction with current service levels and to determine the preferred rating option for the next four-year period. In the event that Council resolves to submit an application for a Special Rate Variation, the community has a further opportunity to provide submissions to IPART before it finalises its determination.

Council's role is to decide which rate increase best balances the views and interests of the whole of the Richmond Valley community and ensuring that the Council business is managed in a financially sustainable manner.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council consider the community feedback and the financial implications of each option to determine if it wishes to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a Special Rate Variation to increase its general rate revenue higher than the rate peg amount for a four-year period 2019/20 – 2022/23 and if so decide which option to apply for

#### **COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN AND DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS**

##### **The Community Strategic Plan links are:**

Priority Area 1: Connecting People and Places

PP1: Providing and maintaining key amenities and open spaces which service the needs of the Richmond Valley's diverse Community

PP2: Council will promote, support and maintain the best possible transport networks

PP3: Council will engage with stakeholders to choose our common direction

##### **The Delivery Program links are:**

Priority Area 4: Making Council Great

CS1 Leading and Advocating for our Community

CS1.1 Improve decision making by engaging stakeholders and taking community input into account

CS2.11 Examine all revenue and expenditure reduction opportunities within legislative powers

## BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The budget implications of the three options are set out in detail in the Long Term Financial Plan that has been on public exhibition as part of the consultation process. Option one would require decisions to reduce levels of service and asset renewals would slow down. Option two will enable Council to continue on its current path of service delivery and asset stabilisation. Option three will enable Council to continue on its current path of service delivery and improve its asset renewals.

## REPORT

Council is currently in its last year of a five-year Special Rate Variation. Within the last five years Council has delivered many significant capital projects, increased service levels, added additional services, increased the renewals of our aging assets, and increased our capacity to deliver for the community.

The current variation was applied for under s508A on a permanent basis. This has allowed Council to invest an extra \$5,535,000 in our road network, approximately \$3,700,000 in capital upgrades including; Casino, Woodburn and Coraki riverfronts, and Casino, Evans Head and Woodburn skate parks, as well as various other projects. The current variation also allowed Council to increase the renewals of public toilets and other facilities in our parks with an extra \$700,000. There was also an extra \$400,000 of improved maintenance, namely playgrounds, road drainage and public toilet maintenance and cleaning, especially in our higher use areas.

Along with all the projects Council has delivered from the current special rate variation, Council has also been very successful in gaining additional grant funding from both the Federal and NSW Governments. Out of these grants Council is delivering a \$14,000,000 upgrade to the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange, constructed a \$1m cycleway from Broadwater to Broadwater Beach, planned and built a youth space at the Broadwater-Rileys Hill Hall, and has received extra funding for the Woodburn Riverfront Upgrade, the Casino Drill Hall and Amphitheatre project and improvements to the Coraki Boat ramp and new pontoons.

With the addition of new assets there is an ongoing maintenance and renewal expense, as well as increased depreciation to fund. Being the last year of the current special rate variation, it is both prudent and timely for Council to go back to the community to discuss what has been delivered from the past rate variation, what the cost is to continue to deliver our current service levels as well as keeping our assets in good shape, and test the community's appetite for a further special rate variation.

The first step in applying for a special rate variation is for Council to resolve to notify IPART of the intention of an application. At the November 2018 Ordinary Meeting Council resolved to notify IPART of its intention to apply for a Special Rate Variation for a four-year period from 2019/20 to 2022/23; and to start the consultation process with our community on the three scenarios outlined below, to test the community's acceptance of a new special rate variation.

- Scenario 1 – Rate Peg Only, 2.7% first year followed by three years at 2.5%
- Scenario 2 – Stabilise Assets, 5.5% for four years
- Scenario 3 – Improve Assets, 7% for four years

As well as the community consultation requirements, Council also needs to complete a detailed application form. The application form has five selection criteria. These are needed for the variation, community awareness and engagement, impact on ratepayers, public exhibition of relevant IP&R documents, productivity improvements and cost containment strategies. This application form along with proof of community consultation and various other attachments is required to be lodged with IPART on 11 February 2019. The community then has until 11 March 2019 to make submissions directly to IPART via email or post.

## CONSULTATION

Council's ordinary meeting of 20 November 2018 recommended that "Council notify the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of the intention to apply for a special rate variation for four years from 2019/20 to 2022/23, and that Council start the consultation process with its

community with the three scenarios outlined in the report to test the community's acceptance of a special rate variation."

The process leading up to the lodgement of this application has been extensive, dating back to a joint statement by the Mayor and General Manager in the foreword of the revised Community Strategic Plan, adopted by Council at its Ordinary Meeting on 27 June 2017.

Council has been consulting with the community since the November 2018 Ordinary meeting when Council resolved to notify IPART of its intention to apply for a new special rate variation.

Overall, Council has undertaken a wide variety of community consultation taking into account preferences of different demographic groups (e.g. online information for younger residents, face to face for older residents, and telephone polling covering all age groups). The full list of consultation methods is as follows:

- Community newsletter distributed to 9478 homes and businesses and published on Facebook. Reminder in second community newsletter with the same distribution just prior to Christmas 2018
- Micromex telephone survey of a representative sample of Richmond Valley residents
- Online survey (based on Micromex telephone poll)
- Request for submissions – Council's 'Have your Say' online submission portal
- Proposal discussed regularly on local radio COW (Casino's Own Wireless) FM and Richmond Valley Radio 88.9
- Newspaper articles and advertisements – Richmond River Express Examiner, Northern Star, Heartland Magazine
- Television interviews – Prime 7, NBN
- Standalone webpage on Council's website with information about special rate variation
- Facebook posts
- Two Community Meetings – Casino, Evans Head
- Paper survey (based on Micromex telephone poll)

Further detail on each item is included below:

#### Micromex telephone survey

A telephone poll was conducted by an external independent contracted company Micromex. The telephone survey process uses a representative sample of the entire Richmond Valley community, including age, sex, and location of residents, to get the full range of community opinions. Micromex's methodology includes:

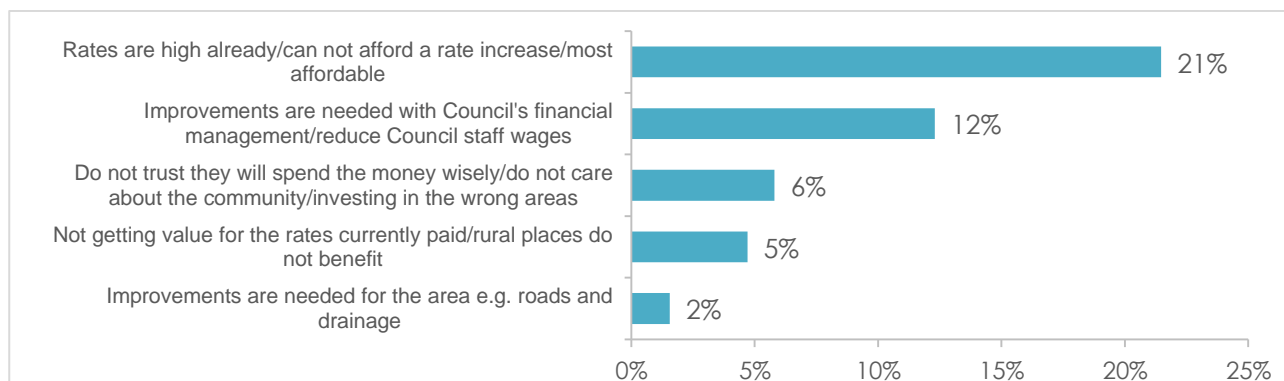
- calling a statistically significant number of residents according to best practice, until the desired number of responses is achieved, in this case around 400 (this means that more than 400 people are contacted as residents who are contacted may choose not to participate and must fall across the age, sex and location categories evenly) 'A sample size of 404 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.9% at 95% confidence. This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of N = 404 residents, that 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/-4.9%' – Micromex report p.34
- number harvesting, which is a process where Micromex staff approach residents in a public place with invitation to participate in the telephone poll via their mobile number. This allows for even numbers of older and younger residents, as younger residents are less likely to have landlines. Landline numbers are taken from the White Pages.

A final detailed report of the results has been prepared and is available on Council's website. There were 404 respondents to the telephone poll. Key findings were as follows:

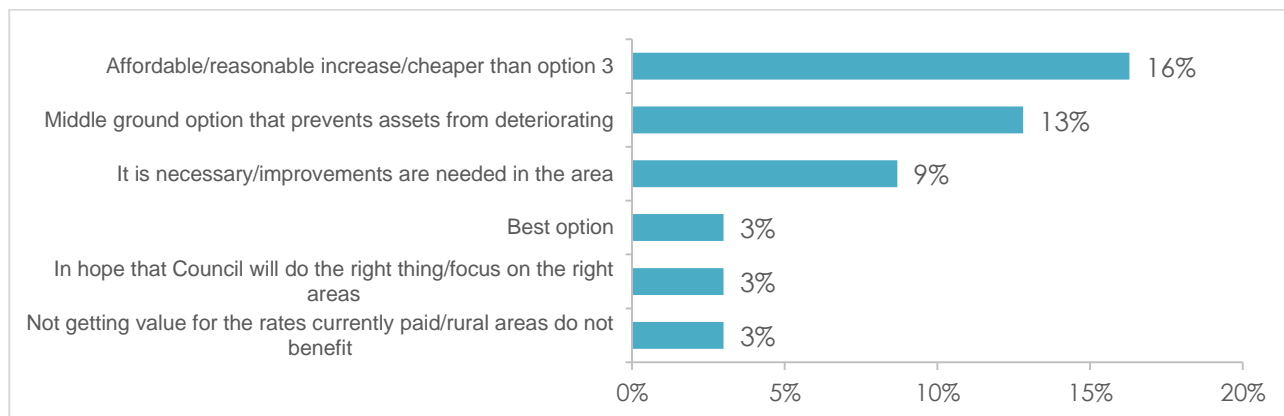
- **Option 2 (Stabilise Assets – 5.5% special rate variation) received the highest level of support, with 66% of residents indicating they were at least somewhat supportive**
- 53% of residents were at least somewhat supportive of Option 1 (Rate Peg Only) and 52% were at least somewhat supportive of Option 3 (Improve Assets – 7% special rate variation)
- **Community preference was towards Option 2/3 i.e. an SRV of some type to either stabilise/ improve the quality of local assets**
- 62% of residents selected a rate variation increase above rate peg indicating either **Option 2/3** as a preferred option
- 38% of residents nominated **Option 1** as a preferred outcome
- 88% of residents were at least somewhat satisfied with Council's performance and 83% were at least somewhat satisfied with the current quality of local infrastructure and facilities
- Prior to contact, 29% of residents were already aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a potential special rate variation
- 21% of resident respondents stated they prefer Option 1 (Rate Peg Only) as they believe this is the most affordable option and cannot afford to pay any more
- 12% of resident respondents also believe that Council must improve their financial management before increasing the rates.

Overall, this shows moderate support for a special variation above rate peg.

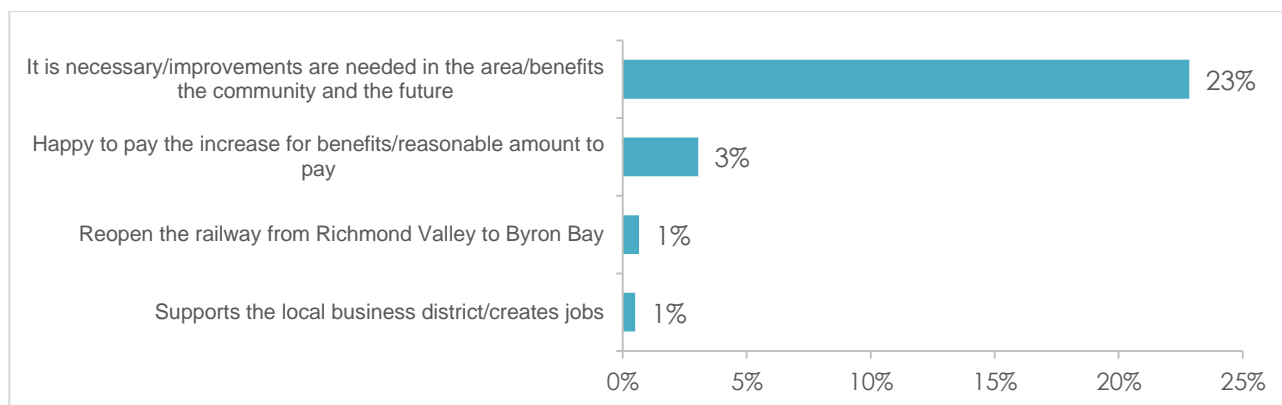
Additional free text responses were also given in the telephone poll which gives insight into residents' reasons for and against a special rate variation. These reasons are provided in the charts below;



**Reasons for preferring Option 1 (Rate Peg Only) included (as a percentage of all 404 respondents):**



**Reasons for preferring Option 2 (Stabilise Assets) included (as a percentage of all 404 respondents):**



***Reasons for preferring Option 3 (Improve Assets) included (as a percentage of all 404 respondents):***

It is useful to note that across all three options, finances and the ability to afford a special rate variation is a key factor in respondents' choices. At Option 1 – Rate Peg Only (2.7%), residents are concerned about being able to afford a special rate variation. However, it should also be noted here that there is a level of distrust about Council's ability to carry out services, and a perception that Council should be able to carry out services with current funds. This has been addressed many ways through Council's information and media campaign, with a clear message put out that Option 1 – Rate Peg Only means that some services may have to be reduced.

Comments on Option 2 – Stabilise Assets (5.5%) note that this was a preferred option as it is more affordable than Option 3, although some respondents commented similarly that they felt they were not getting 'value for money' from their rates at present. In contrast to comments on Option 1, respondents expressed more trust that Council will spend the funds wisely and an understanding that some improvements are needed.

Comments on Option 3 – Improve Assets (7%) also expressed understanding that a special rate variation was being proposed as a community benefit and that a reasonable increase in rates was necessary for an increase in services. Optimistic residents also expressed hopes for additional areas of improvement beyond services – this may be in response to Council's strong campaign over the past three years to create and fund signature projects in the Richmond Valley.

It should be noted that the Mid-term Report, adopted by Council at its November 2018 meeting, clearly highlights that Council has delivered services and projects for the community and residents who choose to be informed about Council's activities acknowledge that improvements have occurred and see that many projects have been completed and more are underway.

### Online survey

To enable additional opportunities for community feedback, a copy of the survey was also made available on Council's website as part of the submission period. The survey closed at midday on 6 February 2019, with 55 additional survey responses received. A separate analysis of these further survey results has been conducted by Council staff, outlined below. It should be noted that as respondents to the online survey were self-selected, responses were not evenly distributed among age, sex or location, as the telephone poll was. As such, responses should be taken as supporting material for the telephone poll.

The online survey shows 41% of 55 respondents chose Option 1 (Rate Peg Only) as their first preference, 37% of 55 respondents chose Option 2 (Stabilise Assets – 5.5% special rate variation) as their first preference, and 22% of 55 respondents chose Option 3 (Improve Assets – 7% special rate variation) as their first preference. This shows a similar level of support for a special rate variation of some sort, with 59% support for a special variation above rate peg. (Summary of survey results included as an annexure to this report).

### Community newsletter

A community newsletter fully dedicated to the special rate variation was developed. This newsletter was distributed to 9478 homes and businesses and published on Council's Facebook page. The community newsletter covered topics like how the special rate variation would be spent, impact on average rates, council spending and income, the challenges we face, how our rates compare to

other Northern Rivers Councils, information on IPART and rate pegging and other facts and figures in our local government area. The newsletter also supplied information on the community meeting Council was intending to hold and where the community could get more information on the special rate variation if they so desired. Council also put a reminder in a second community newsletter delivered to mailboxes just prior to Christmas 2018. (Special rate variation newsletter included as an annexure to this report).

### Community meetings

Council has hosted two community meetings on the Special Rate Variation, in Casino on Monday 4 February with six residents attending, and in Evans Head on Wednesday 6 February with twenty-seven residents attending. Eight attendees of the Evans Head meeting completed a short paper survey based on the Micromex telephone poll and survey. Seven of these chose Option 1 – Rate Peg Only (2.7%) as their preferred option, with one respondent declining to respond to this question. This should be balanced against respondents to the Micromex telephone poll and online survey above, which also included a proportionate number of respondents from Evans Head who also chose Options 2 – Stabilise Assets (5.5%) and 3 – Improve Assets (7%). Also, similarly to the Micromex telephone poll, respondents gave concerns about finances and being a pensioner as a reason for preferring the rate peg only option, while others expressed positive comments hoping that this would mean more expenditure and investment by Council in Evans Head.

No attendees completed the survey at the Casino meeting.

A detailed presentation (see attachment) was provided by the General Manager with copies of the presentation provided to all attendees. A lengthy 'have your say' session was provided at both sessions. A spreadsheet of the annual impact of all scenarios was also made available to all attendees.

A summary of the community meeting feedback is provided as an annexure to this report.

Council was disappointed with these attendance numbers as extensive efforts were made to ensure that community members knew these meetings were being held. However, given that Council meetings are generally attended by less than five people it is not an out of character response. The number of responses to the online survey, and of course telephone poll, is also usual; and more encouraging in terms of engagement. Council has worked hard to develop a positive and progressive approach to relations with the Richmond Valley community and has established strong working relationships with its neighbouring Councils and both the Federal and NSW Governments.

The Richmond Valley Mayor has attended in excess of 750 community events so far in this electoral term and since Council notified its intent to consult on an SRV he has been active in seeking the views of the community.

It is also worth noting that Council's efforts to improve two-way communication and community feedback stretch back much further than the current special rate variation community consultation process. The Community Strategic Plan and resultant four-year Delivery Plan were purposely created with the focus of good maintenance of current assets and careful selection of new assets and infrastructure to provide the best amenity for all areas of the Richmond Valley, in response to clear community feedback that this was the priority. Community meetings were held in six of our Towns/ villages on two occasions during the preparation of our Community Strategic Plan. Residents and ratepayers have been given numerous opportunities to have their say on Council's plans over the term of this elected Council.

Given all of these conditions and the survey results, Council is confident that the majority of the community are appreciating the increased service levels and improved public infrastructure and given Council's ongoing efforts at providing information on its delivery of services, a majority of our community is accepting of an increase to enable that to continue.

### Media

The media have closely followed the process and there has been considerable coverage of the process in all forms of the media. (Facebook posts are provided as an annexure to this report).

Community reaction was mainly voiced via Facebook, with Council also receiving eight written submissions.

**Media interviews – radio**

- Monday 3 December: GM – Richmond Valley Radio 88.9
- Tuesday 4 December: GM – ABC North Coast
- Tuesday 4 December: GM – NBN Television
- Wednesday 5 December: GM – ZZZ/2LM
- Monday 10 December: GM – Richmond Valley Radio 88.9
- Monday 17 December: GM – Richmond Valley Radio 88.9
- Monday 17 December: GM – Casino's Own Wireless 107.9
- Monday 14 January: Acting GM – Richmond Valley Radio 88.9
- Monday 21 January: Acting GM – Richmond Valley Radio 88.9
- Monday 14 January: Manager Communications – Casino's Own Wireless 107.9
- Monday 28 January: Acting GM – Richmond Valley Radio 88.9
- Monday 28 January: Manager Communications – Casino's Own Wireless 107.9
- Monday 4 February: GM – Richmond Valley Radio 88.9
- Monday 4 February: GM – Casino's Own Wireless 107.9

**Media interviews – TV**

- Tuesday 4 December – NBN interview with GM

**Publications**

- Monday 10 December 2018 Valley Views – Council's community newsletter. A special SRV newsletter was distributed to all households and businesses across the LGA.
- Monday 17 December 2018 - second community newsletter distributed across the LGA just before Christmas, with mention of SRV community meetings.
- Wednesday 19 December article included in Council's full-page public notices, published in the Richmond River Express Examiner (RREE).
- January 2019 – Mayor's column Issue 25 Heartland Magazine
- Wednesday 23 January article included in Council's full-page public notices, published in the RREE.
- Wednesday 16 January - SRV community meetings advertised front page of RREE.
- Wednesday 16 January - news article with graph Page 4 RREE.
- Wednesday 30 January - extraordinary meeting advertised in RREE's classified section
- Wednesday 30 January – extraordinary mentioned in brief Page 3 Northern Star
- Wednesday 6 February - Evans Head SRV community meeting mentioned in brief RREE

**Website**

A standalone page was created on Council's website - [http://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/page/Your\\_Council/Special\\_Rate\\_Variation/](http://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/page/Your_Council/Special_Rate_Variation/)

**Social Media**

- The special SRV newsletter was published to Council's Facebook page, along with a message calling for community submissions.
- Online survey details posted.
- Extraordinary meeting details posted.



## CONCLUSION

It should be noted that of all the consultation methods, the telephone poll of 404 residents should be regarded as the most rigorous and independent evaluation of community opinion regarding the Special Rate Variation, for the reasons mentioned above. The additional survey mechanisms including the online survey and survey papers completed at the Evans Head town meeting should be taken as supporting consultation to the telephone poll, i.e. supplementary and secondary to the main result.

Through all Councils media on the special rate variation community members have been encouraged to lodge submissions. To date only eight submissions have been received, out of these submissions, one submission showed support for scenario two, a 5.5% increase over four years, while the other submissions were against any increase on top of rate peg. Copies of these submissions have been supplied separately to Councillors. These submissions will form part of Council's application to IPART if Council resolve to apply.

Council held two community meetings, one in Casino and one in Evans Head. At the Casino meeting there were six attendees from the community, all Councillors and various Council staff. Out of the six community attendees, two showed support for an increase above rate peg. At the Evans Head meeting there were twenty-seven attendees from the community, all Councillors and various Council staff in attendance. The age-spread of the attendees were not representative of the whole Evans Head community. None of the community members showed support for a special variation above rate peg.

While Council had hoped for a larger selection of residents to attend the face to face meetings in Casino and Evans Head, the concerns raised by the attendees form an important part of consultation. It is important to balance concerns raised at these meetings and via comments in the telephone poll and online survey about potential financial difficulty and the distribution of expenditure in the towns, with the many positive responses showing that there is support for an increase above the rate peg.

Council appreciates the interest taken by residents who take time to come to meetings, fill out surveys, respond to polls or take in information regarding these matters, and takes concerns seriously. Council is committed to working with the community to ease the process for any community members who may have financial difficulties, as shown by Council's hardship policy, and welcomes further suggestions and feedback on how effective transition may be made, should a special rate variation be applied for and approved.

Council acknowledged the concerns of pensioners and the fact that the Pensioner Rebate has not increased for twenty-six years and that the NSW Government is the only State Government that doesn't fully fund the pensioner rebate. In NSW Council has to fund 45% of the pensioner rebate. Attendees were keen for Council to take an active advocacy role on this issue on their behalf and Council indicated it will do that.

A further concern was that an increase in rates, impact those people who have higher land valuations proportionally more than others. This was acknowledged, however examples of other cost differentials for the provision of services between areas of the Richmond Valley were provided including:

- in the Mid-Richmond (Evans Head, Woodburn, Broadwater, Rileys Hill) area there has been a \$27 million investment in Sewerage services since 2004/05 with \$16 million of borrowing still being serviced. This required sewerage annual charges to increase for all residents while the residents of Casino receive no benefit.
- The price of bulk water supply services in the Mid-Richmond (supplied by Rous County Council) is \$1.60kl, while in Casino the bulk water cost is \$0.60kl
- Waste Management services will cost more per pick up in the Mid-Richmond than in Casino due to the density of the residential areas and transport distances to landfill and recycling services.

These examples were provided to show that there are differences in costs across many services that are provided in a council area and it is important that a council looks after the entire area and focussing on just one source of revenue, being rates in this case, does not properly consider the

equitable allocation of the revenue burden on ratepayers. Councils are required to make decisions in the best interests of the whole local government area.

Given the current drought conditions being endured by some of the Richmond Valley farming community, concerns were raised about the impact an increase will have on farmers. Council will take this into consideration and should the drought continue, Council may have to consider some support for those farmers who are facing a period of hardship. The Federal and NSW Governments have also provided support for farmers facing financial hardship due to the drought. Council also has a financial hardship policy which it promotes and actively applies for those in definite need.

The case for the special rate variation has been discussed regularly by the General Manager or his nominee in weekly radio interviews on both COW FM and Radio 88.9. The General Manager also participated in a television interview with NBN Television on the subject of the special rate variation.

Council has included advertisements in the Richmond River Express Examiner, the Northern Star Newspaper and Heartland Magazine. These have detailed consultation methods available including Council's submission process, details of the three options for the special rate variation and the implications of each.

Council staff also developed a standalone web page on Council's website with all relevant information on the special rate variation. It included links to the special rate variation newsletter, Council's Annual Report, Council's Mid-term report and a link to the online survey. The page also included information on how Richmond Valley Council compares to other Northern Rivers Councils in relation to average rates, and copies to Council's Long Term Financial Plans under all three scenarios. The agenda for this extraordinary meeting has also been included on this page. Facebook posts advertising the two community meetings and providing links to Council's webpage with information about the special rate variation were also available on Council's Facebook page in December 2018, January 2019 and February 2019.

Overall, Richmond Valley Council's multi-modal information campaign and numerous consultation channels with the community have resulted in a response that shows a majority of residents are supportive of an increase above the rate peg. Council will also take on board the concerns of pensioners, farmers and residents with high land valuations and consider if there are equitable mechanisms to respond to their concerns. At all times Council is mindful of the community's wishes and is committed to putting in the work to ensure the best possible use of funds should a special rate variation be approved.

#### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

- 1. Summary of written submissions**
- 2. Community meetings summary**
- 3. Community meetings presentation**
- 4. Phone survey report**
- 5. Micromex online survey results summary**
- 6. Special Rate Variation Newsletter**
- 7. Facebook posts - online survey post, Extraordinary meeting post, submission post**

**Summary of SRV written submissions**  
**Closing date: 12 pm Wednesday 6 February 2019**

No	Name	For/ Against	Summary of Submission details / Reason for Decision
1	Wendy Thompson	Against	⌚ Financial pressure on the already stretched community in Casino
2	Shirley Scott	Against	⌚ Aged pensioner concerned about ability to continue to pay other bills ⌚ Have been receiving above rate peg for six of the last seven years
3	Michelle McCray	Against	⌚ Having to buy fresh water to drink yet still paying for water supply ⌚ Council is the only LGA that do not offer kerbside clean up or tip vouchers despite paying significant rates for garbage services ⌚ The town is tired and dirty – run a “work for the dole” program instead of raising rates ⌚ Need to see evidence of what benefits a rate rise will bring to the town
4	Elaine Saunders	Against	⌚ RVC is only one of seven regional and rural NSW local councils requesting rise above rate peg ⌚ SRV's are for special reasons over and above general running costs, not a yearly supplement ⌚ Evans Head ratepayer who relies on aged income pension to afford rates ⌚ Average rates comparison are misleading due to disparate land values in the LGA
5	Douglas Marsden	Against	⌚ Council should live within its means ⌚ Have a referendum or vote on the special rate variation.
6	Craig Firth	Against	⌚ Compounding effect on previous SRV rises along with the increase in Valuer General Land Valuations of 9% is unfair and will cause hardship ⌚ Wages/pensions and incomes haven't increased yet cost of living has ⌚ Council needs to stay within its budget or reduce costs
7	Lisa Russell and Mavis Mohammed	For	⌚ Would rather not have a special rate variation occur however understand the need for one and support a 5.5% variation
8	Dr Peter Ashley	Against	⌚ No special reasons provided by Council for a SRV ⌚ Council should live within its means ⌚ Tight timeline ⌚ Concerned that submissions close before final public meeting held ⌚ Community's capacity to pay not evidenced ⌚ Average RVC rate advertised is misleading, not representative of LGA ⌚ Survey administration methodology inadequate ⌚ Council is a serial IPART ⌚ Council did not advertise that submissions could be made direct to IPART by the community ⌚ Pensioner concessions have remained the same for 26 years despite ongoing rate increases
9	Trevor Mallett	Against	⌚ Will not benefit Evans Head ⌚ Time wasted by the Evans Head Council outdoor staff needs addressing ⌚ Lack of funds for maintenance of current assets

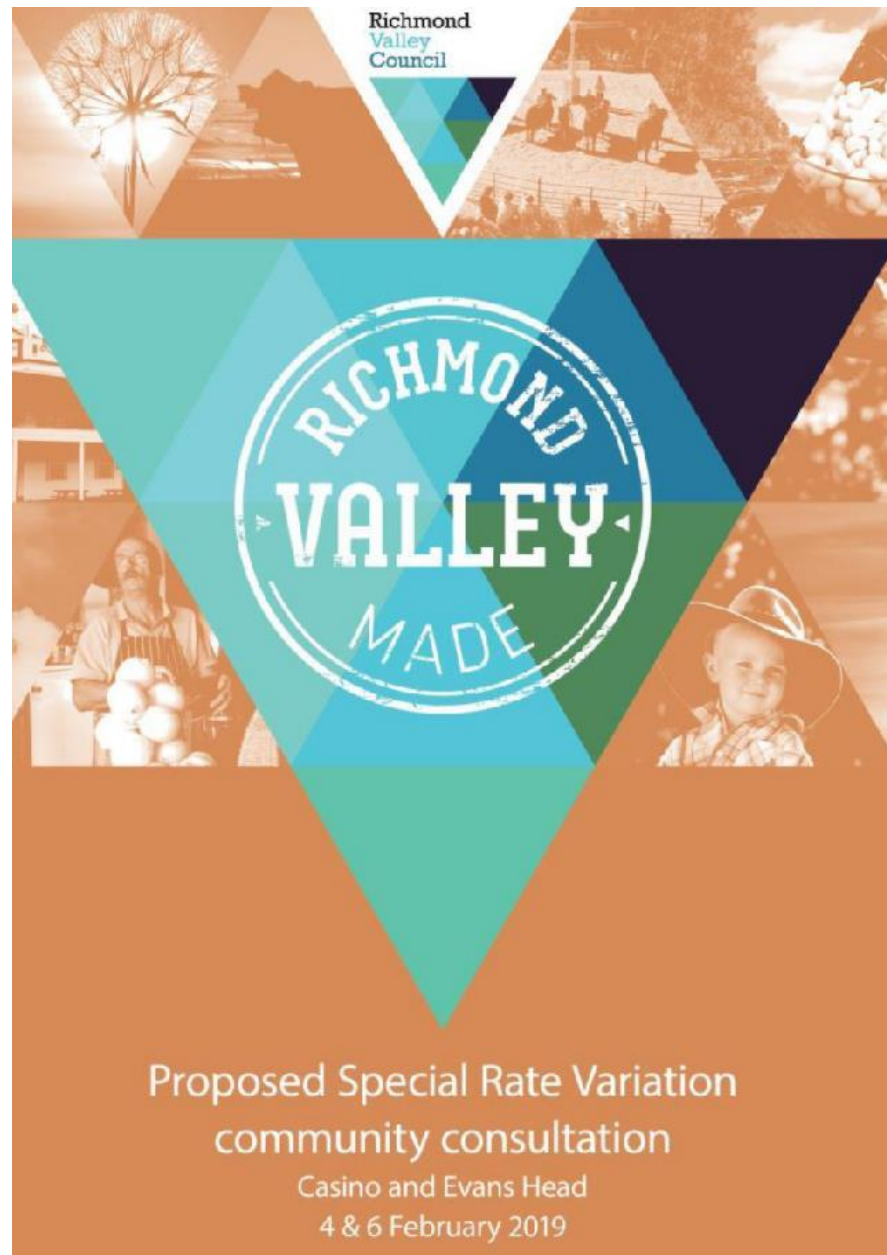
**Casino & Evans Head Public Meetings:****Monday 4 & Wednesday 6 February 2019**

The following is a list of statements/concerns that were raised at the Casino community meeting attended by six community members:

- Council should do a referendum
- Council would waste the amount we are asking for in one year
- Council has squandered every business opportunity in last 5 years
- Is the council aware if this council area is in drought? Bad time to be asking for extra rates.
- Council should cut their budgets the same as everyone else has too.
- Can Council look at doing this at another time?
- Is there commercial opportunities that council could look at instead of looking for more rates?

The following is a list of statements/concerns that were raised at the Evans Head community meeting attended by 27 community members:

- Will IPART take written submissions?
- Council has applied for SRV for 7 years now - is fear of amalgamation driving this?
- Rate increase, is it based on the land value x the base?
- It seems that the amount can be split up between the 4 categories but only three supplied on report
- Questions on specific ratepayer accounts
- Does council divide this across the 4 categories or does another party decide how it's divided?
- Difficult bill - takes 2 weeks pension - the average rate amount over the council is low compared to what this resident actually pays.
- 70% increase over the years from last variation to this one
- Byron council comparison - not realistic we are nothing like Byron, they have nice roads and infrastructure, no money spent in Evans Head
- Value in property surge and coastal towns hit harder
- Rate peg is going to be harder on all these people around here not so much for Casino
- Capacity of people to pay
- 4 rate categories only 3 on display
- Every rate payer in Evans head would not be happy if their land value went down
- Are the nice things added in the Community Strategic Plan essential or wanted, they are not needed, can we cut them out to save some money and not have an SRV?
- Pension rebate not increased but rates have
- Vision on projects up for funding - priorities of these projects - if they can't be funded they can't be funded
- Council does not make any money off the live stock exchange
- The last meeting 5 years ago didn't see Evans Head benefit
- Properties value has gone up and rent has gone up, Evans Head will be a ghost town when the highways done and stuck paying these big amounts
- Waste infrastructure charges increasing and continue to do but not getting any more waste services than we did before



# Welcome



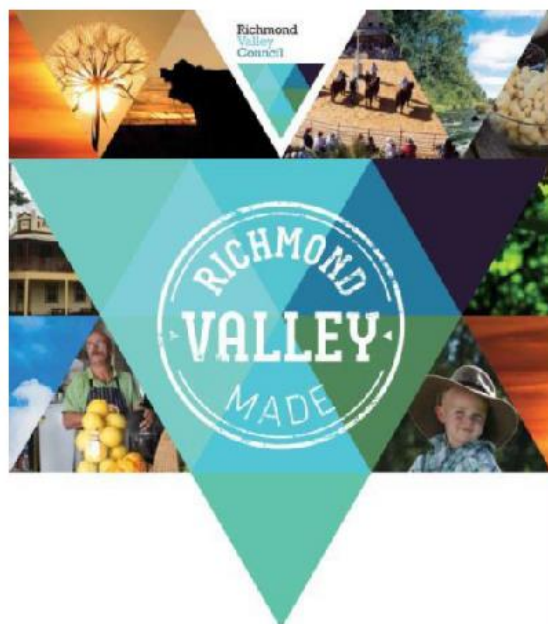
# Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Presentation of options
3. Have your say
4. Next steps
5. Thank you

Richmond  
Valley  
Council

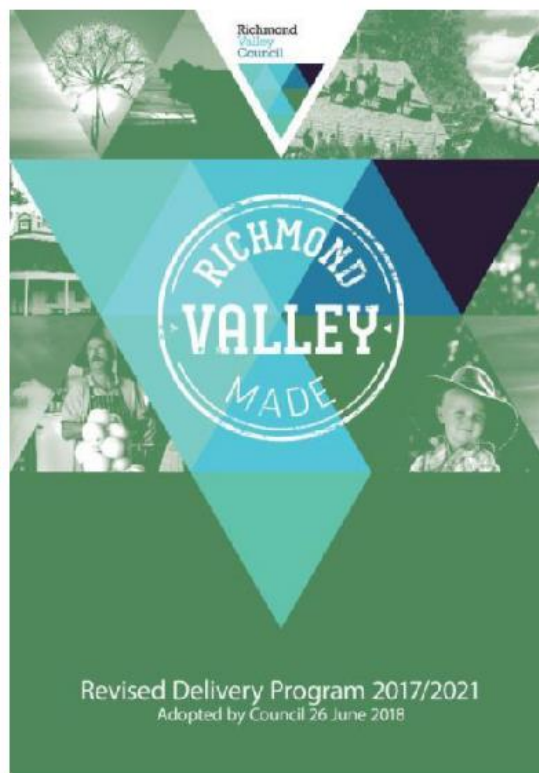


# Our plans for the future



Richmond Valley Made 2030  
Community Strategic Plan

Adopted 27 June 2017  
(Version 2 - 23 January 2018)



Revised Delivery Program 2017/2021  
Adopted by Council 26 June 2018



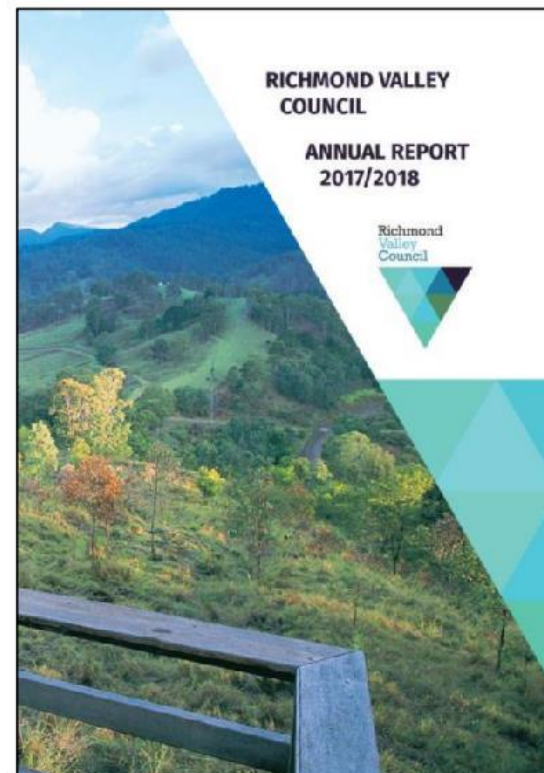
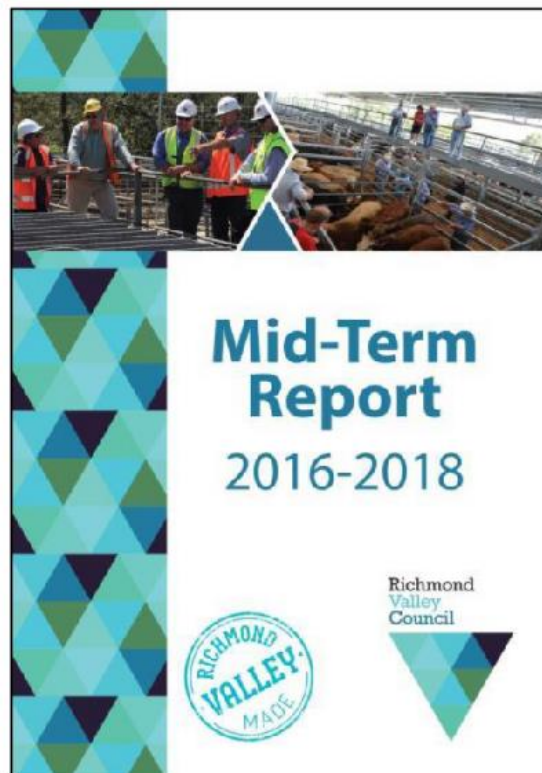
Operational Plan 2018/2019 (including  
Financial Estimates 2018/2022)  
Adopted by Council 26 June 2018



Richmond  
Valley  
Council



# Our progress reports







Community projects





# SCCF – government grants

Round 1 Stronger Country Community Fund (awarded in early 2018) yielded five successfully funded projects for Richmond Valley Council:

- \$101,990 to complete the fitout of the clubhouse for Evans Head Tennis Clubhouse
- \$267,833 for a modern catering and amenities block at Casino Showground
- \$201,926 for 'Fit for Parks' - outdoor gyms for Crawford Square, Casino, and Evans Head riverside
- \$152,028 for stage one for the revitalisation of Casino Civic Hall
- \$131,785 to upgrade the Broadwater outdoor youth space and park

**Total: \$855,562**



# SCCF – government grants

Round 2 Stronger Country Community Fund (awarded in late 2018) saw six successfully funded projects for Richmond Valley Council:

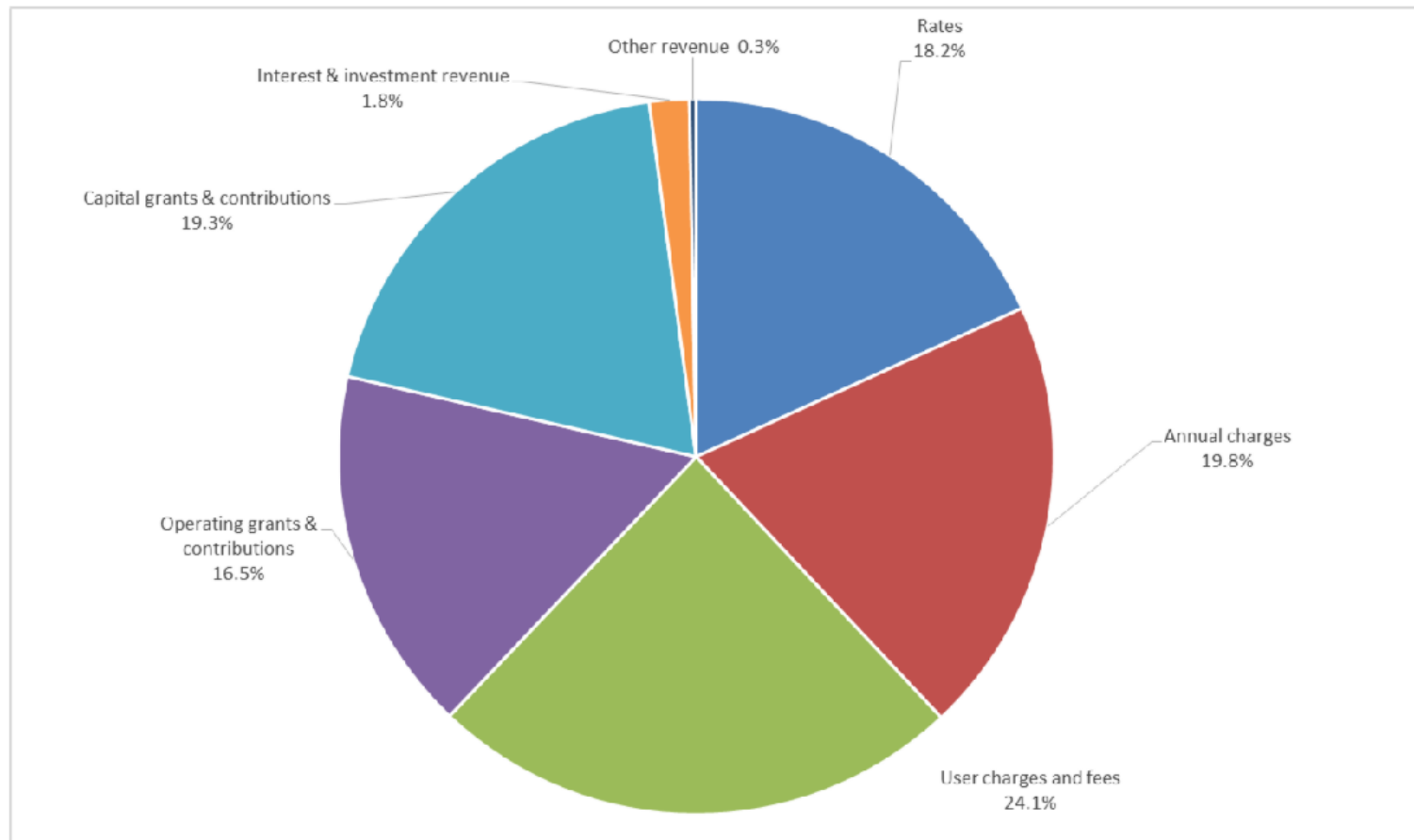
- \$551,776 for Woodburn Riverside Park playground and central hub Area
  - \$309,884 for Stan Payne Oval sporting facility enhancement with grandstand upgrade and security bollards
  - \$185,765 for Evans Head Main Beach access enhancement
  - \$479,717 for Queen Elizabeth Park sporting complex enhancement
  - \$95,053 for Coraki Hockey Club training facilities – Windsor Park revitalisation
  - \$98,714 for Woodburn Recreation Oval enhancement of sporting facilities
- Total: \$1,720,909**

# Where does our rates revenue come from?

- Total annual revenue in 2018/19 is \$55.5 million
- Total rates revenue in 2018/19 is \$12.4 million
  - Casino & surrounds 60%
  - Evans Head & surrounds 20%
  - Other towns/villages and rural areas 20%



# Council revenue sources







# Council spending per \$100





## 2014/15 – 2018/19 5 year SRV highlights

- In total it generated \$7.8 million (including rate peg) and rates increased over a five-year period by 37%
- An extra \$5.534 million spent on our road network
- An extra \$760,000 spent on infrastructure in our parks and gardens
- \$745,000 spent on additional services
- An extra \$3.685 million spent on new capital projects



# 2014-15/2018-19 SRV projects

Expenditure includes all CSP projects plus maintenance increases and organisation capacity	TOTAL Expenditure
<b>RENEWALS</b>	
Sealed road rehabilitation	\$5,000,000
Gravel road re-sheeting	\$534,988
Playground replacement - replace non complying equipment and replace softfall	\$60,000
Public toilet refurbishment	\$200,000
Renewal Council facilities and parks.	\$500,000
<b>TOTAL RENEWALS (LOAN FUNDED)</b>	<b>\$6,294,988</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL SERVICE</b>	
Casino riverbank presentation	\$250,000
Sealing of unsealed urban roads	\$375,000
Cultural and art facilities.	\$120,000
<b>TOTAL ADDITIONAL SERVICE</b>	<b>\$745,000</b>





# 2014-15/2018-19 SRV projects

Expenditure includes all CSP projects plus maintenance increases and organisation capacity	TOTAL Expenditure
<b>CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS</b>	
Casino Drill Hall and riverfront amphitheatre project	\$1,050,000
Evans Head public amenities upgrades 2018/19	\$470,000
Woodburn riverside park upgrade	\$500,000
Coraki riverfront upgrade	\$355,000
Casino Showground upgrades	\$100,000
Casino car parking	\$580,000
Evans Head skatepark	\$100,000
Crawford Square regional park	\$150,000
Woodburn skatepark	\$80,000
Casino skatepark	\$240,000
Town entrance signage	\$60,000
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS</b>	<b>\$3,685,000</b>



# 2014-15/2018-19 SRV projects

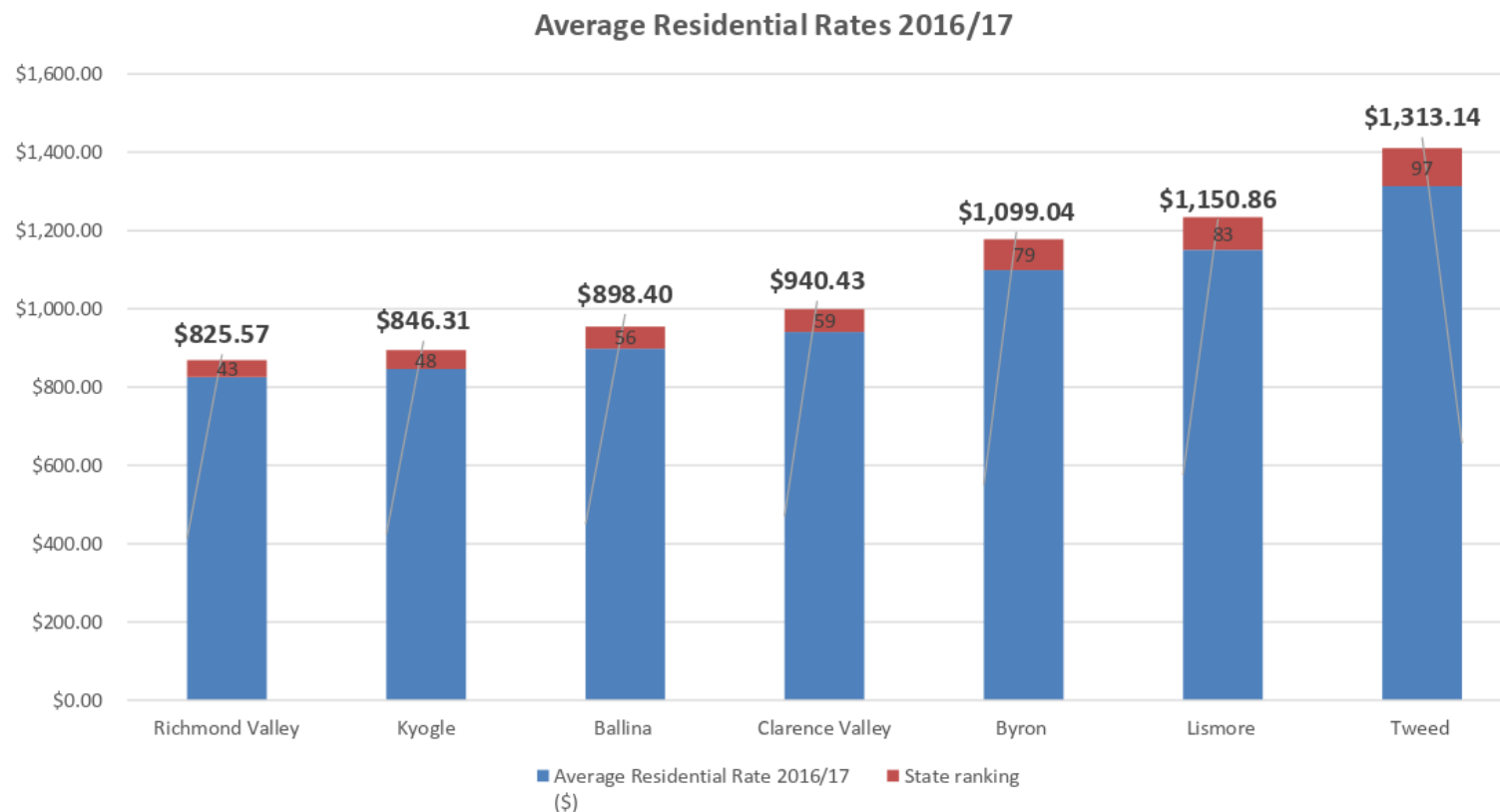
Expenditure includes all CSP projects plus maintenance increases and organisation capacity	TOTAL Expenditure
<b>IMPROVED MAINTENANCE</b>	
Playground maintenance	\$75,000
Toilet cleaning maintenance	\$75,000
Rural road drain maintenance	\$250,000
<b>TOTAL IMPROVED MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>
<b>INCREASED CAPACITY</b>	
IT innovation fund.	\$200,000
Public wifi in Casino, Woodburn, Evans Head CBDs and Coraki Riverfront	\$150,000
Economic development plans/projects to support growth	\$165,000
<b>TOTAL INCREASED CAPACITY</b>	<b>\$515,000</b>



# How does Richmond Valley Council compare to other Northern Rivers councils?

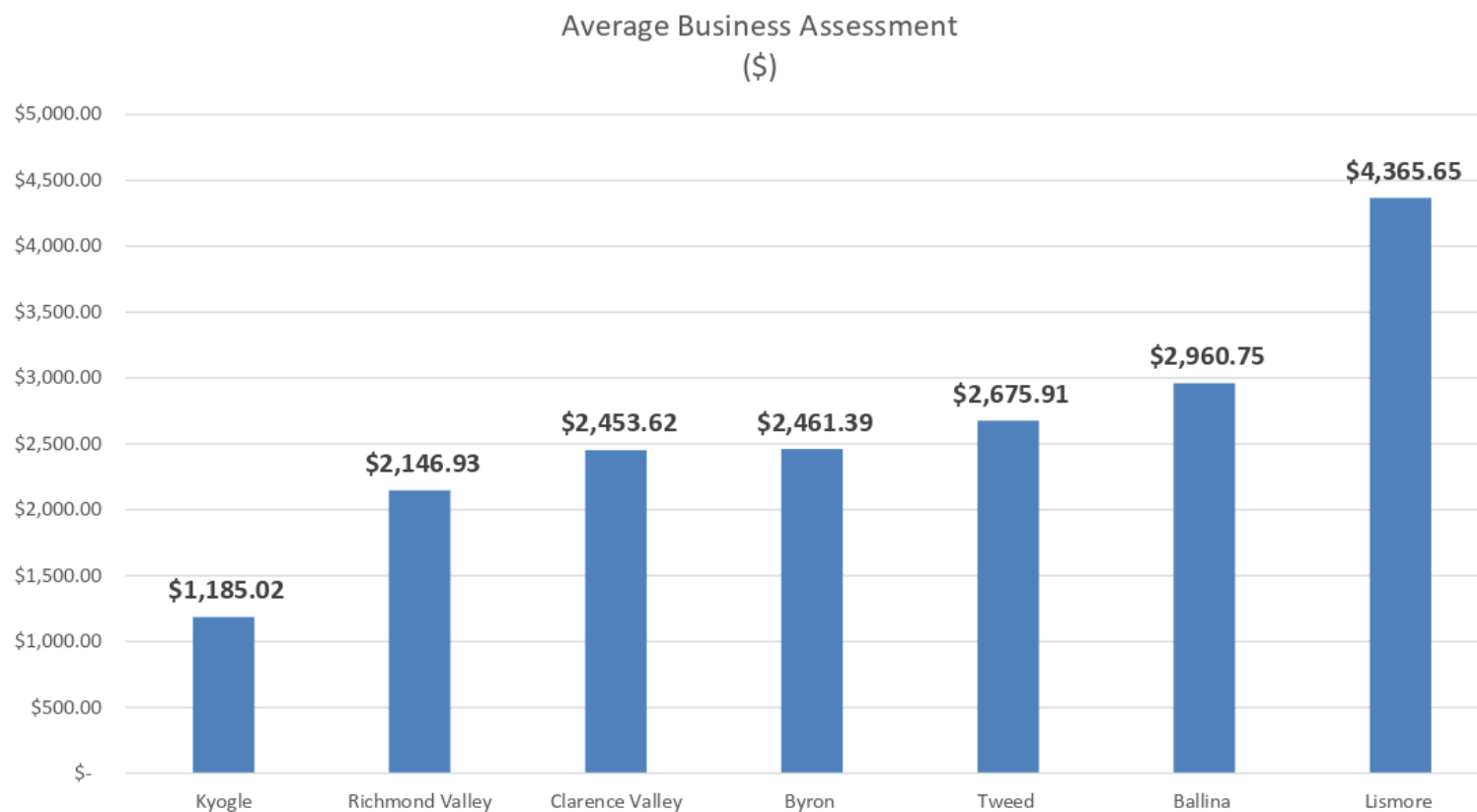


## Northern Rivers Councils Comparisons



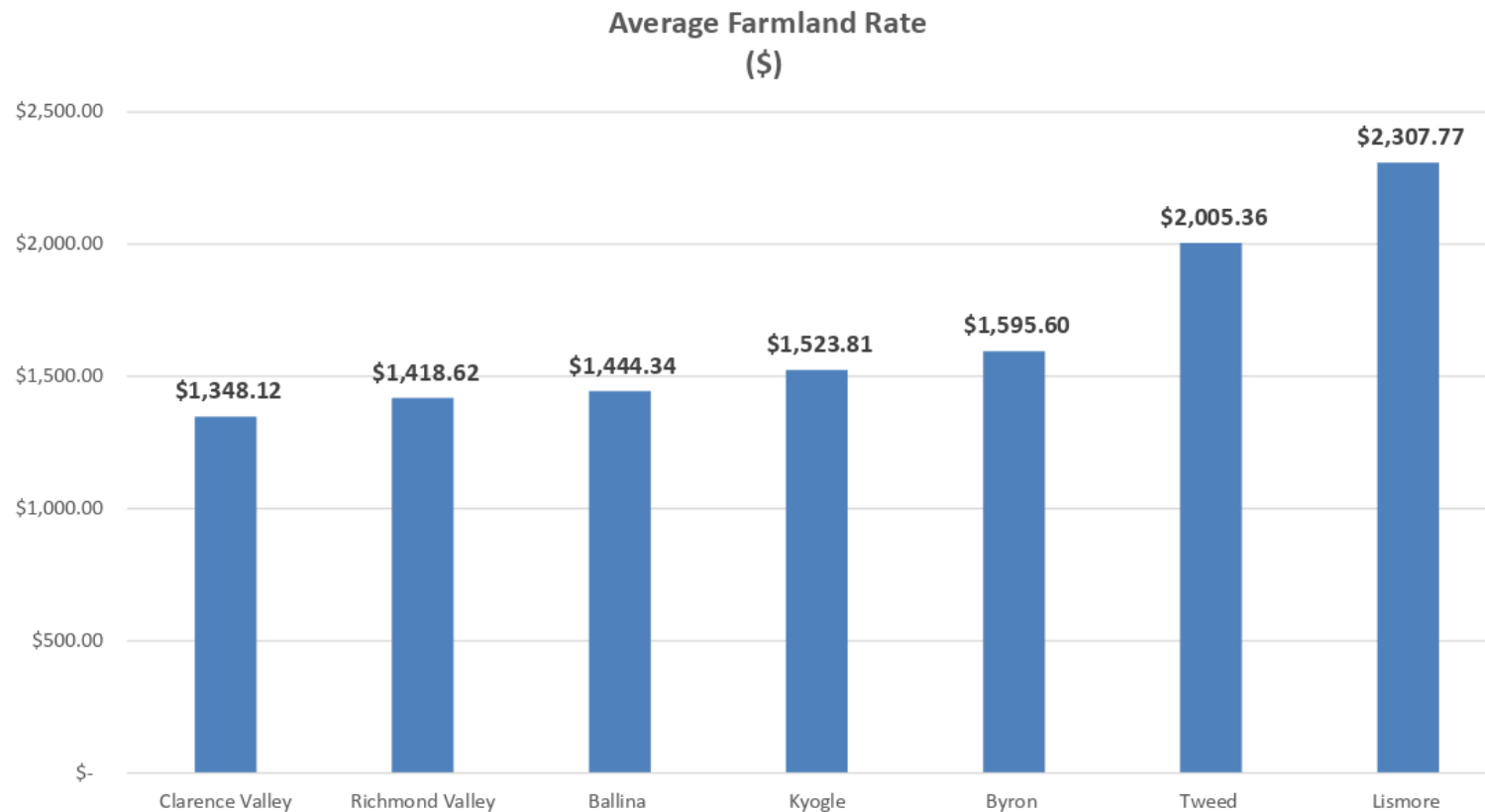


## Northern Rivers Councils Comparison





## Northern Rivers Councils Comparison





# What is the rate peg?

## **Rate peg 2019-2020**

IPART has set the 2019-20 rate peg for NSW councils at **2.7%**. It has calculated the rate peg for 2019-20 by:

- taking the increase in the Local Government Cost Index to June 2018 of 2.7%; and
- setting the productivity factor to 0.0%.

The rate peg is the maximum percentage amount by which a council may increase its general income for the year without going through the Special Variation process.

## **How the rate peg affects individual rates**

- The rate peg applies to general income in total, and not to individual ratepayers' rates. As long as its general income remains within the set maximum increase, councils may increase categories of rates by higher or lower than the rate peg.
- Individual rates are also affected by other factors, such as land valuations which can affect percentage changes to rates alongside the rate pegging process.



# Why we need another SRV

- Dispersed population and rates income of \$12.4 million, which is 21.76% of expenditure
- Government operating grants not keeping pace with expenditure needs
- Funding increasing asset renewal and depreciation expenses
- Combined rates and annual charges make up less than half of Council's revenue

	Benchmark	2016	2017	2018	Meets Benchmark
Operating Performance Ratio	> or = 0%	0%	8%	-7%	×
Own Source Revenue Ratio	> or = 60%	70%	68%	64%	✓
Building and Infrastructure Renewals Ratio	> or = 100%	99%	83%	86%	×
Asset Maintenance Ratio	> or = 100%	109%	114%	119%	✓
Infrastructure Backlog Ratio	< 2%	1.30%	3.80%	1.90%	✓





# Indicative annual impact 2019-2021

2.7% Rate Peg		Ave Rate @ 2.7%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase		Ave Rate @ 2.5%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase
Category	2018/19	2019/20				2020/21		
Residential	\$ 969.43	\$ 998.16	\$ 28.73	\$ 0.55		\$ 1,022.01	\$ 23.85	\$ 0.46
Rural Residential	\$ 846.29	\$ 870.12	\$ 23.83	\$ 0.46		\$ 895.54	\$ 25.42	\$ 0.49
Business	\$ 2,860.44	\$ 2,940.58	\$ 80.14	\$ 1.54		\$ 3,015.92	\$ 75.34	\$ 1.45
Farmland	\$ 1,606.77	\$ 1,647.39	\$ 40.62	\$ 0.78		\$ 1,691.90	\$ 44.51	\$ 0.86
5.5% SRV		Ave Rate @ 5.5%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase		Ave Rate @ 5.5%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase
Category	2018/19	2019/20				2020/21		
Residential	\$ 969.43	\$ 1,022.64	\$ 53.21	\$ 1.02		\$ 1,079.34	\$ 56.70	\$ 1.09
Rural Residential	\$ 846.29	\$ 895.54	\$ 49.25	\$ 0.95		\$ 943.21	\$ 47.67	\$ 0.92
Business	\$ 2,860.44	\$ 3,027.14	\$ 166.70	\$ 3.21		\$ 3,200.24	\$ 173.10	\$ 3.33
Farmland	\$ 1,606.77	\$ 1,701.43	\$ 94.66	\$ 1.82		\$ 1,790.44	\$ 89.01	\$ 1.71
7.0% SRV		Ave Rate @ 7.0%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase		Ave Rate @ 7.0%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase
Category	2018/19	2019/20				2020/21		
Residential	\$ 969.43	\$ 1,038.13	\$ 68.70	\$ 1.32		\$ 1,109.31	\$ 71.18	\$ 1.37
Rural Residential	\$ 846.29	\$ 908.25	\$ 61.96	\$ 1.19		\$ 974.98	\$ 66.73	\$ 1.28
Business	\$ 2,860.44	\$ 3,055.99	\$ 195.55	\$ 3.76		\$ 3,277.18	\$ 221.19	\$ 4.25
Farmland	\$ 1,606.77	\$ 1,726.86	\$ 120.09	\$ 2.31		\$ 1,850.83	\$ 123.97	\$ 2.38



# Indicative annual impact 2021-2023

2.7% Rate Peg	Ave Rate @ 2.5%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase		Ave Rate @ 2.5%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase	Cumulative Increase
Category	2021/22				2022/23			
Residential	\$ 1,046.87	\$ 24.86	\$ 0.48		\$ 1,071.85	\$ 24.98	\$ 0.48	10.56%
Rural Residential	\$ 919.37	\$ 23.83	\$ 0.46		\$ 943.21	\$ 23.84	\$ 0.46	11.45%
Business	\$ 3,100.87	\$ 84.95	\$ 1.63		\$ 3,181.01	\$ 80.14	\$ 1.54	11.21%
Farmland	\$ 1,733.22	\$ 41.32	\$ 0.79		\$ 1,780.90	\$ 47.68	\$ 0.92	10.84%
5.5% SRV	Ave Rate @ 5.5%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase		Ave Rate @ 5.5%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase	Cumulative Increase
Category	2021/22				2022/23			
Residential	\$ 1,138.40	\$ 59.06	\$ 1.14		\$ 1,201.36	\$ 62.96	\$ 1.21	23.92%
Rural Residential	\$ 997.23	\$ 54.02	\$ 1.04		\$ 1,054.43	\$ 57.20	\$ 1.10	24.59%
Business	\$ 3,389.38	\$ 189.14	\$ 3.64		\$ 3,581.72	\$ 192.34	\$ 3.70	25.22%
Farmland	\$ 1,885.80	\$ 95.36	\$ 1.83		\$ 1,982.12	\$ 96.32	\$ 1.85	23.36%
7.0% SRV	Ave Rate @ 7.0%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase		Ave Rate @ 7.0%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase	Cumulative Increase
Category	2021/22				2022/23			
Residential	\$ 1,184.25	\$ 74.94	\$ 1.44		\$ 1,269.18	\$ 84.93	\$ 1.63	30.92%
Rural Residential	\$ 1,054.43	\$ 79.45	\$ 1.53		\$ 1,130.69	\$ 76.26	\$ 1.47	33.61%
Business	\$ 3,533.64	\$ 256.46	\$ 4.93		\$ 3,774.06	\$ 240.42	\$ 4.62	31.94%
Farmland	\$ 1,977.98	\$ 127.15	\$ 2.45		\$ 2,108.31	\$ 130.33	\$ 2.51	31.21%

\*A3 handout covering all four years provided to attendees



# Cumulative totals 2019-2020 to 2022-2023

2.7% Rate Peg	Average Rate Cumulative Increase	Average Rate Cumulative Increase	Cumulative Increase Total
Category	\$	%	\$
Residential	\$ 102.42	10.56%	\$ 1.38 million over 4 years
Rural Residential	\$ 96.92	11.45%	
Business	\$ 320.57	11.21%	
Farmland	\$ 174.13	10.84%	
5.5% SRV	Average Rate Cumulative Increase	Average Rate Cumulative Increase	Cumulative Increase Total
Category	\$	%	\$
Residential	\$ 231.93	23.92%	\$ 2.98 million over 4 years
Rural Residential	\$ 208.14	24.59%	
Business	\$ 721.28	25.22%	
Farmland	\$ 375.35	23.36%	
7.0% SRV	Average Rate Cumulative Increase	Average Rate Cumulative Increase	Cumulative Increase Total
Category	\$	%	\$
Residential	\$ 299.75	30.92%	\$ 3.86 million over 4 years
Rural Residential	\$ 284.40	33.61%	
Business	\$ 913.62	31.94%	
Farmland	\$ 501.54	31.21%	



# How will the SRV be spent?

- Roadwork and renewal of urban streets
- Grading unsealed local roads to meet existing service levels
- Additional maintenance of the rural road network: bitumen maintenance; drainage; patching; roadside slashing; gravel maintenance; and vegetation management
- Increased funding to maintain existing services across Council operations including emergency services
- Additional bitumen resealing and gravel re-sheeting to keep our roads at a good standard and prevent them from deteriorating
- Culverts, causeways, drainage and footpath renewal
- Community assets renewal



# Community consultation

- Community newsletter distributed to 9478 homes and businesses, and published to Facebook. Reminder in second community newsletter issued just prior to Christmas
- Micromex telephone survey
- Face-to-face survey
- Online survey
- Request for submissions – have your say
- Proposal discussed regularly on local radio COW FM and Radio 88.9
- Newspaper articles and advertisements – RREE, NS, Heartland Magazine
- Television interviews – Prime7, NBN
- Standalone website page
- Facebook posts

## What happens next?

- 6 February - submissions to RVC close midday
- 7 February - extraordinary Council meeting
- 11 February - application due to IPART
- 11 February – IPART public submission period opens; closing 11 March
- 14 May – IPART’s determination released
- June Council meeting– Council resolves 2019/20 budget



# IPART contact details

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW

**<https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Local-Government/For-Councils/Apply-for-a-special-variation-or-minimum-rate-increase>**

Stakeholders can also provide a submission by email from 11 February 2019 at [localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au) or by post to:

Local Government Team

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW

PO Box K35

Haymarket Post Shop, NSW 1240

Any enquiries regarding special variation or minimum rate applications should be directed to John Madden by email to [John.Madden@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:John.Madden@ipart.nsw.gov.au) or by phone on (02) 9113 7780. For administrative enquiries contact [localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au).



## Having your say

- It is important to listen to each other
- All opinions are welcome
- One person speaks at a time (five minutes max)
- We commit to respecting each other
- We commit to meaningful engagement
- Stay focussed on the topic
- Thanks for coming and having a say





# Richmond Valley Council

SRV Community Research

Prepared by: Micromex Research

Date: February 2019



## Why Use Micromex?

- |                                  |                                 |                                   |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ✓ Albury City Council            | ✓ Gloucester Shire Council      | ✓ Northern Beaches Council        |
| ✓ Armidale Regional Council      | ✓ Gosford City Council          | ✓ Parkes Shire Council            |
| ✓ Ashfield Council               | ✓ Great Lakes Shire Council     | ✓ Parramatta City Council         |
| ✓ Auburn City Council            | ✓ Hawkesbury Council            | ✓ Penrith City Council            |
| ✓ Ballina Shire Council          | ✓ Holroyd City Council          | ✓ Pittwater Council               |
| ✓ Bankstown City Council         | ✓ Hunters Hill Council          | ✓ Playford Council (SA)           |
| ✓ Bayside City Council (VIC)     | ✓ Inner West Council            | ✓ Port Macquarie-Hastings Council |
| ✓ Bega Valley Shire Council      | ✓ Kempsey Shire Council         | ✓ Queanbeyan City Council         |
| ✓ Blacktown City Council         | ✓ Kingston City Council (VIC)   | ✓ Randwick City Council           |
| ✓ Bland Shire Council            | ✓ Kogarah City Council          | ✓ Richmond Valley Council         |
| ✓ Broken Hill Shire Council      | ✓ Ku-ring-gai Council           | ✓ Rockdale City Council           |
| ✓ Burwood Council                | ✓ Lachlan Shire Council         | ✓ Shoalhaven City Council         |
| ✓ Byron Shire Council            | ✓ Lake Macquarie City Council   | ✓ Singleton City Council          |
| ✓ Camden Council                 | ✓ Lane Cove Council             | ✓ Snowy Rivers Shire Council      |
| ✓ Campbelltown City Council      | ✓ Leichhardt Municipal Council  | ✓ Strathfield Council             |
| ✓ Campbelltown City Council (SA) | ✓ Lismore City Council          | ✓ Sutherland Shire Council        |
| ✓ Central Coast Council          | ✓ Lithgow City Council          | ✓ Tamworth Regional Council       |
| ✓ Cessnock Council               | ✓ Liverpool City Council        | ✓ Tenterfield Shire Council       |
| ✓ City of Canada Bay             | ✓ Liverpool Plains Council      | ✓ The Hills Shire Council         |
| ✓ City of Melbourne (VIC)        | ✓ Maitland Council              | ✓ Upper Hunter Shire Council      |
| ✓ City of Ryde                   | ✓ Marrickville City Council     | ✓ Wagga Wagga City Council        |
| ✓ City of Sydney                 | ✓ Mid-Western Regional Council  | ✓ Warringah Council               |
| ✓ Cumberland Council             | ✓ Moorabool Shire Council (VIC) | ✓ Waverley Municipal Council      |
| ✓ Devonport Council (TAS)        | ✓ Moree Shire Council           | ✓ Wingecarribee Council           |
| ✓ Dubbo City Council             | ✓ Mosman Council                | ✓ Wollondilly Shire Council       |
| ✓ Eurobodalla Shire Council      | ✓ Murray Shire Council          | ✓ Woollahra Municipal Council     |
| ✓ Fairfield City Council         | ✓ Murrumbidgee Shire Council    | ✓ Wyong Shire Council             |
| ✓ Forbes Shire Council           | ✓ Narrandera Shire Council      | ✓ Yass Valley Council             |
| ✓ Georges River Council          | ✓ Newcastle City Council        |                                   |



**Community research experience – 86 Councils since 2010.**  
**More than 40 SRV since 2010**

# Background



# Methodology & Sample - Summary

## Why?

- Measure awareness levels and sources of information about a Special Rate Variation
- Measure levels of support and preference for different SRV options
- Community attitude towards a number of key projects
- Measure community satisfaction with the performance of Council and the quality of local infrastructure

## How?

- Telephone survey (landline and mobile) to N=404 respondents
- 25 acquired through number harvesting
- We use a 5 point scale (1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied)
- Greatest margin of error +/- 4.9%

## When?

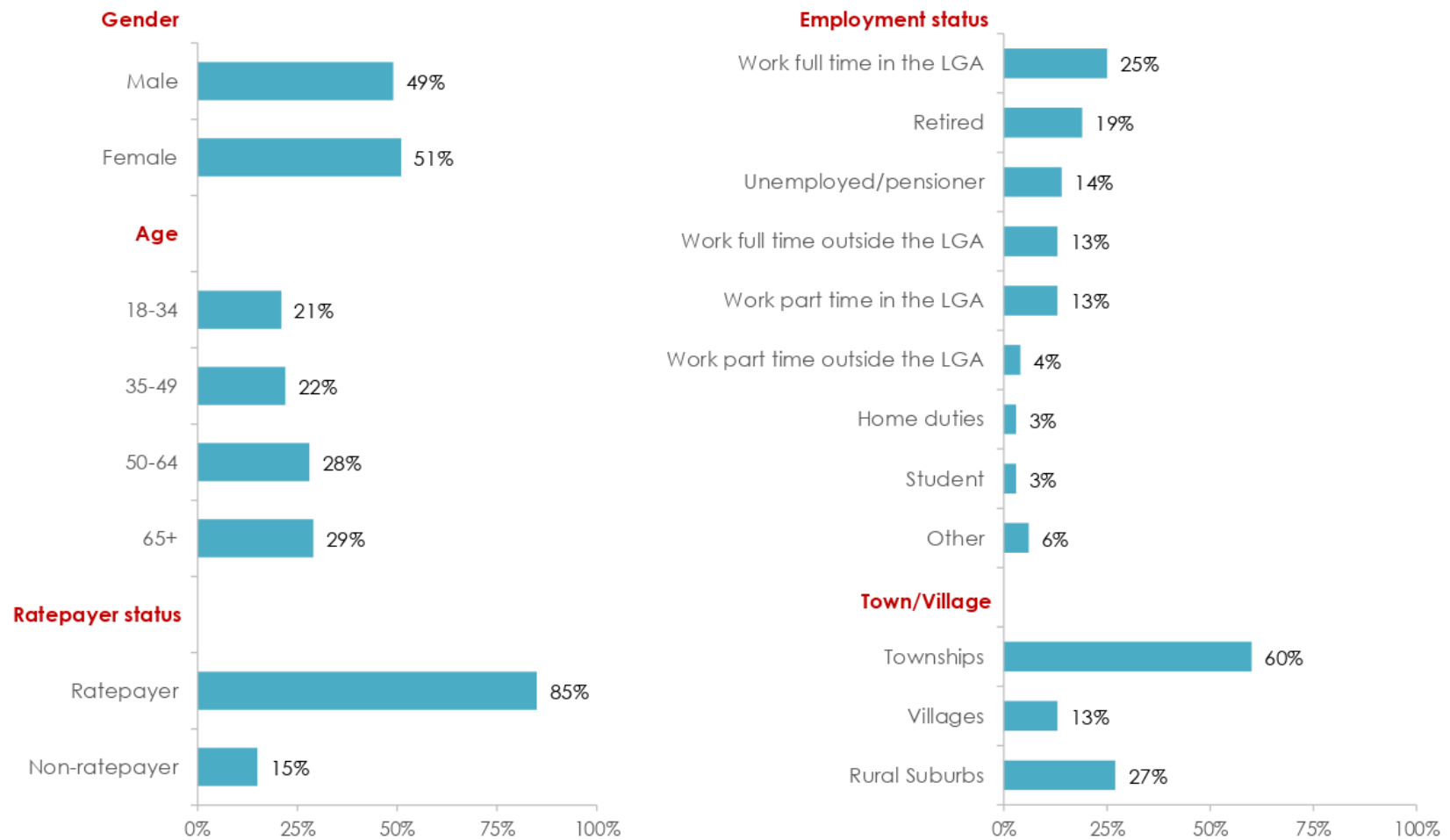
- Implementation 23<sup>rd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019



# Sample Profile



## Sample Profile



Base: N = 404

Please see the Appendix for 'other specified' and breakdown of 'town/village'

**The sample was weighted by age and gender to reflect the 2016 ABS community profile of Richmond Valley Council.**

# Key Findings



## Key Findings

- 88% of residents were at least somewhat satisfied with Council's performance and 83% were at least somewhat satisfied with the current quality of local infrastructure and facilities
- Prior to contact, 29% of residents were already aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a potential special rate variation
- Option 2 (Stabilise Assets) received the highest level of support, with 66% of residents indicating they were at least somewhat supportive
- 53% of residents were at least somewhat supportive of Option 1 (Rate Peg Only) and 52% were at least somewhat supportive of Option 3 (Improve Assets)
- Community preference was towards Option 2/3 i.e. an SRV of some type to either stabilise/improve the quality of local assets:
  - ⇒ 62% of residents selected a rate variation increase above rate peg indicating either **Option 2/3** as a preferred option
  - ⇒ 38% of residents nominated **Option 1** as a preferred outcome





# Results



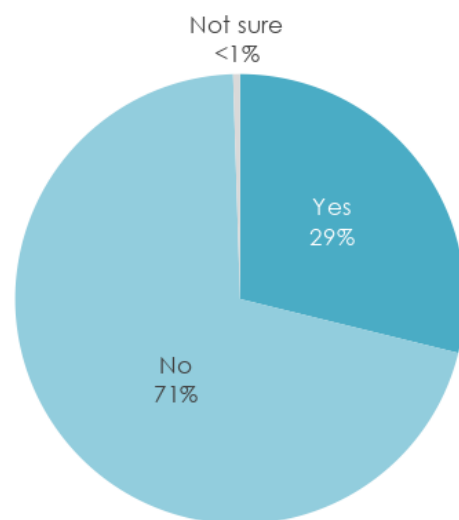
# Awareness of a Special Rate Variation



## Awareness of the Special Rate Variation

Q4a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Yes	29%	33%	24%	18%	30%	24%	39%▲	32%▲	9%
No/not sure	71%	67%	76%	82%	70%	76%	61%	68%	91%
Base	404	199	205	84	89	112	119	342	62



	Township	Village	Rural Suburb
Yes	35%▲	16%▼	21%
No/not sure	65%	84%	79%
Base	243	51	110

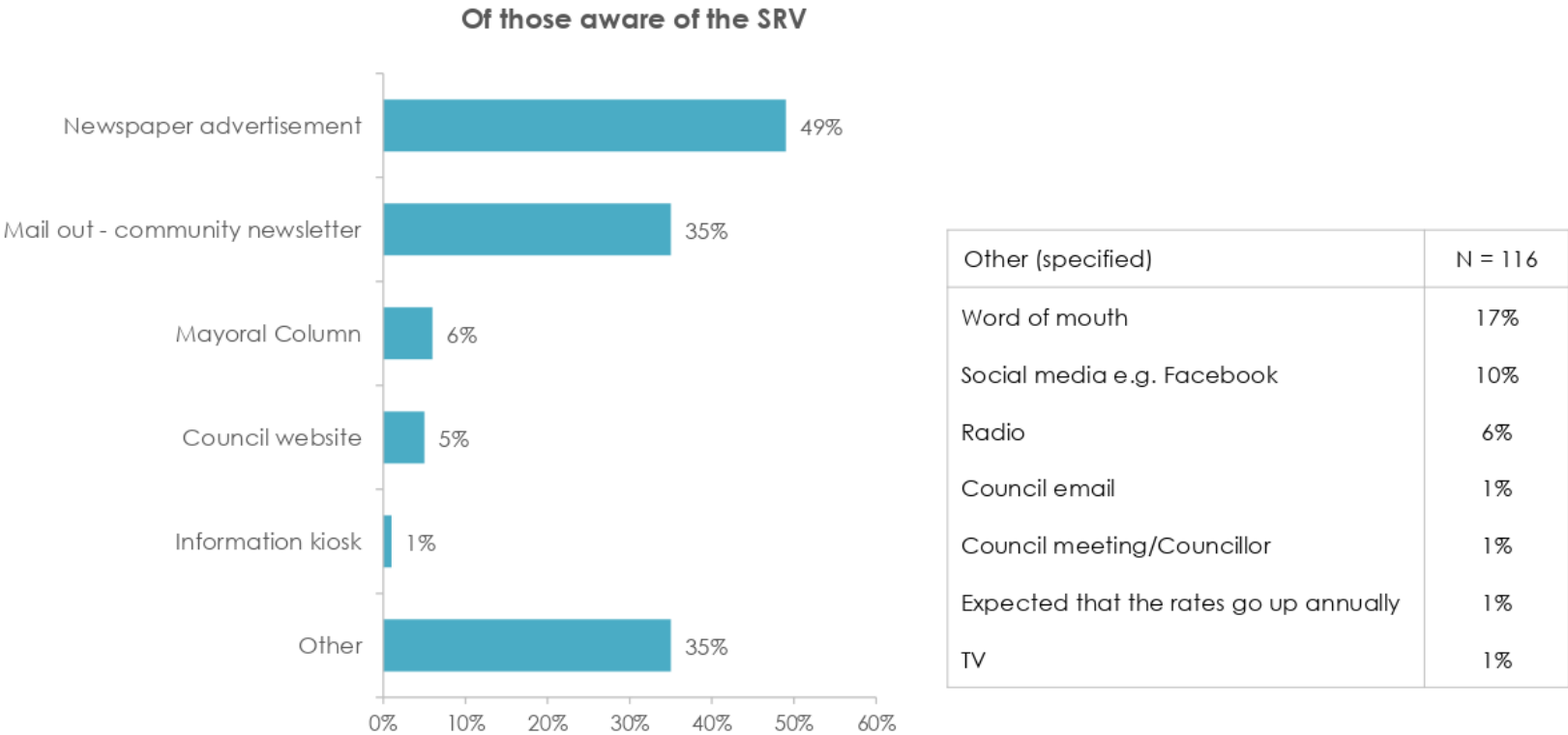
▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of awareness (by group)

**29% of residents stated they were aware of Council exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation prior to the call.**

**Residents aged 65+, ratepayers and those located in a township were significantly more likely to be aware, whilst those located in a village were significantly less likely.**

# Source of Information on a Special Rate Variation

Q4a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?  
Q4b. How were you informed of the Special Rate Variation?



Base: N = 116

See the Appendix for results by demographics



Of those that were aware of the SRV prior to the call, almost half (49%) became aware via a newspaper advertisement and 35% were informed via mail out.

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# Support for a Special Rate Variation



## Concept Statement

Residents were read the following concept statement prior to being asked to rate their support:

Richmond Valley residents have consistently told Council that assets such as roads, public spaces, parks and footpaths are important to them, and Council needs to improve their condition.

Council spends around \$15.7 million on the maintenance and renewal of local assets and infrastructure each year, however, it should be investing at least an additional \$1 million a year to keep them safe and functioning. This doesn't include extra money needed to fund the depreciation, maintenance and renewal of new assets.

Despite its best efforts, Council recognises available funding is not enough to keep community assets in an acceptable condition.

There is no easy solution to addressing this funding gap. Put simply, if the gap is not addressed now the community assets which Council manages will deteriorate and become unusable.

The NSW Government sets the amount that Councils can increase their rates by each year. At the moment, that amount, known as the rate peg, is an annual increase of 2.7%, however, the NSW Government can also approve additional rate increases to fund particular projects – these are known as Special Rate Variations. A proposed special rate variation will be necessary in our Shire to maintain and manage our assets to ensure Council delivers services in line with community expectations and remains financially sustainable into the future.



## Concept Statement (Continued)

Council acknowledges that any rate increase may adversely impact some community members. Council has a Hardship Policy and alternative payment options to assist ratepayers should they have difficulty keeping up with their rate payments. Please contact Council for further information regarding this.

There are three options which I would like you to consider. Each option will have varying impacts on local assets and service quality.

Option 1 – Rate Peg Only. Our assets would decline with more assets in poor condition. The focus would be on managing risk, including the possible closure and removal of unsafe assets and reduction of services.

Option 2 - Stabilise Assets. We would stabilise the decline of our community assets and be able to fund the required renewal and maintenance of our assets into the future.

Option 3 - Improve Assets. Council would improve the quality of our community assets and have a greater capacity to fund asset upgrades and new works.

Let's look at the options in more detail:



**The concept statement was read to participants.  
Option exposure was randomised to nullify order effect.**

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## Option 1: Rate peg – 2.7% Increase Only

No Special Rate Variation. Rates would increase by the annual projected rate peg amount of 2.7% next year and 2.5% per year for the following 3 years. Over the four-year period, this is a cumulative increase of just over 10.5%. Residential ratepayers who are currently paying around \$970 per year would pay, on average, just over \$1,070 by 2022/23.

This option would generate \$1.3 million over 4 years, which is simply the rate peg increase allowed for by the State Government.

Under this option the impact would be further deterioration of assets, including the worsening of:

- Roads
- Town centres and public spaces
- Community buildings
- Public toilets
- Footpaths
- Stormwater drainage; and
- Parks and open spaces, including playgrounds

Council would also have virtually no capacity for new capital works, meaning it would have difficulty funding new assets such as footpaths, shared pathways, and community facilities. It would also be unable to undertake works like upgrading the state of the gravel road network, or the progressive rehabilitation of the local sealed road network.

In order to meet the NSW Government's Fit for the Future financial benchmarks, Council would be required to reduce or close some services.



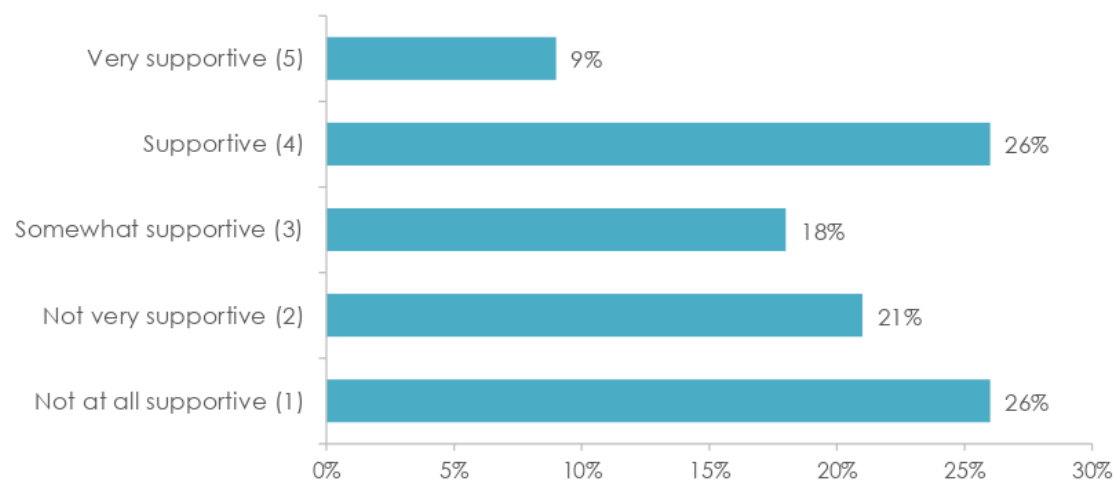


## Support for Option 1: Rate peg – 2.7% Increase Only

Q2a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 1?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean support rating	2.71	2.76	2.66	2.55	2.76	2.55	2.93▲	2.77	2.40
Base	404	199	205	84	89	112	119	342	62

	Township	Village	Rural Suburb	Aware of the SRV prior to call	Not aware/not sure
Mean support rating	2.76	3.22▲	2.36▼	2.97▲	2.61
Base	243	51	110	116	288



Base: N = 404

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive  
▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)

**53% of residents were at least somewhat supportive of Option 1, remaining with a rate peg only.**

**Residents aged 65+, those located in a village and those that were aware of the SRV were significantly more supportive, whilst those located in a rural suburb were significantly less supportive.**

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## Option 2: Stabilise Assets – 5.5% Increase

An annual increase of 5.5% for four years, consisting of the rate peg amount of 2.7% and an additional special rate variation amount of 2.8%. Over the four-year period this is a cumulative increase of just under 24%. At the end of the four-year period the Special Rate Variation increase would be built into the rate base. Residential ratepayers who are currently paying around \$970 per year would pay, just over \$1,200 by 2022/23. Based on what the average residential ratepayer will pay on top of the projected rate peg this equates to an extra \$0.47 per week next year, \$0.63 per week in year two, \$0.66 per week in year three and \$0.73 per week in year four.

This option would generate \$3 million over 4 years which is \$ 1.7 million more than under the rate peg.

Council would be able to continue with the its current preventative maintenance and renewal program to stabilise the condition of priority assets.

This would also help Council be able to meet the NSW Government's Fit for the Future financial benchmarks and maintain current service levels.

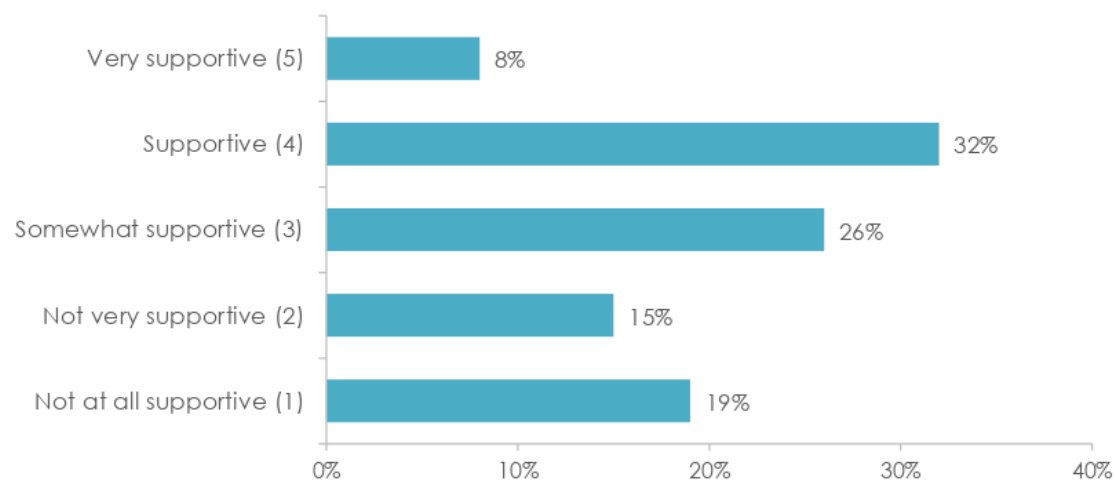


## Support for Option 2: Stabilise Assets – 5.5% Increase

Q2b. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 2?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean support rating	2.95	2.89	3.00	3.31▲	2.88	2.86	2.83	2.88	3.32▲
Base	404	199	205	84	89	112	119	342	62

	Township	Village	Rural Suburb	Aware of the SRV prior to call	Not aware/not sure
Mean support rating	2.95	2.71	3.06	2.88	2.98
Base	243	51	110	116	288



Base: N = 404

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive  
▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)



**66% of residents were at least somewhat supportive of option 2.**  
**Residents aged 18-34 and non-ratepayers were significantly more supportive of this option.**

19

## Option 3: Improve Assets – 7% Increase

An annual increase of 7% for four years, consisting of the annual 2.7% rate peg and an additional special rate variation amount of 4.3%. Over the four-year period this is a cumulative increase of 31%. At the end of the four-year period the Special Rate Variation increase would be built into the rate base. Residential ratepayers who are paying around \$970 per year would pay approximately \$1,270 by 2022/23. Based on what the average residential ratepayer will pay on top of the projected rate peg this equates to an extra \$0.77 per week next year, \$0.91 per week in year two, \$0.96 per week in year three and \$1.15 per week in year four.

This option would generate \$3.9 million over four years, which is \$2.6 million more than under the rate peg.

This option would stabilise the deterioration of our assets and gradually improve their condition over time.

It would enable Council to fund a more extensive program of gravel road upgrades, the rehabilitation of sealed roads and the renewal of town centres and public spaces.

It would be able to deliver these improvements sooner and bring forward much-needed maintenance.

Council would also be able to meet the NSW Government's Fit for the Future financial benchmarks a lot earlier and maintain current service levels with some capacity to invest in new or expanded services.

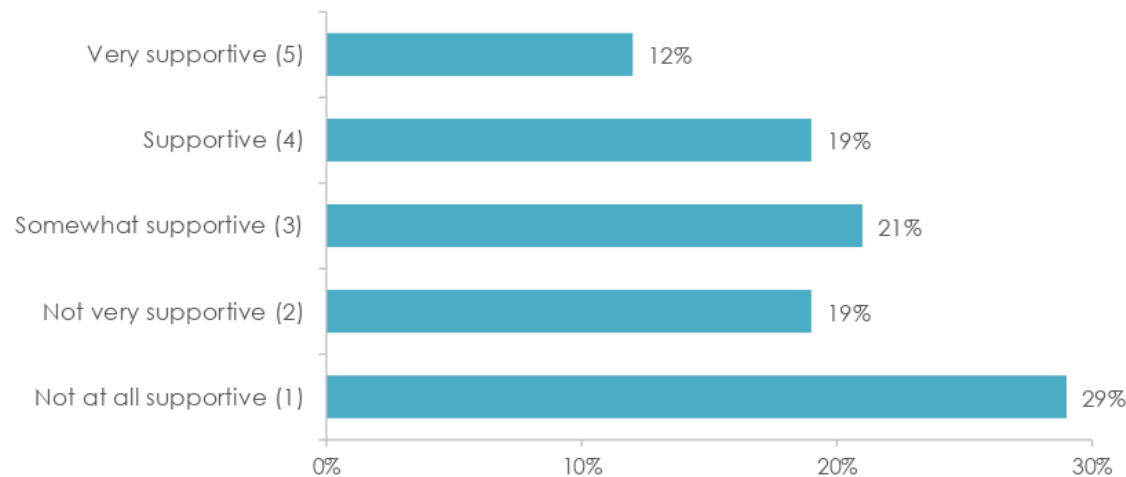


## Support for Option 3: Improve Assets – 7% Increase

Q2c. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 3?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean support rating	2.65	2.60	2.70	2.90	2.57	2.62	2.55	2.50	3.47▲
Base	404	199	205	84	89	112	119	342	62

	Townships	Villages	Rural Suburbs	Aware of the SRV prior to call	Not aware/not sure
Mean support rating	2.70	2.43	2.65	2.47	2.72
Base	243	51	110	116	288



Base: N = 404

Scale: 1 = not at all supportive, 5 = very supportive  
▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)

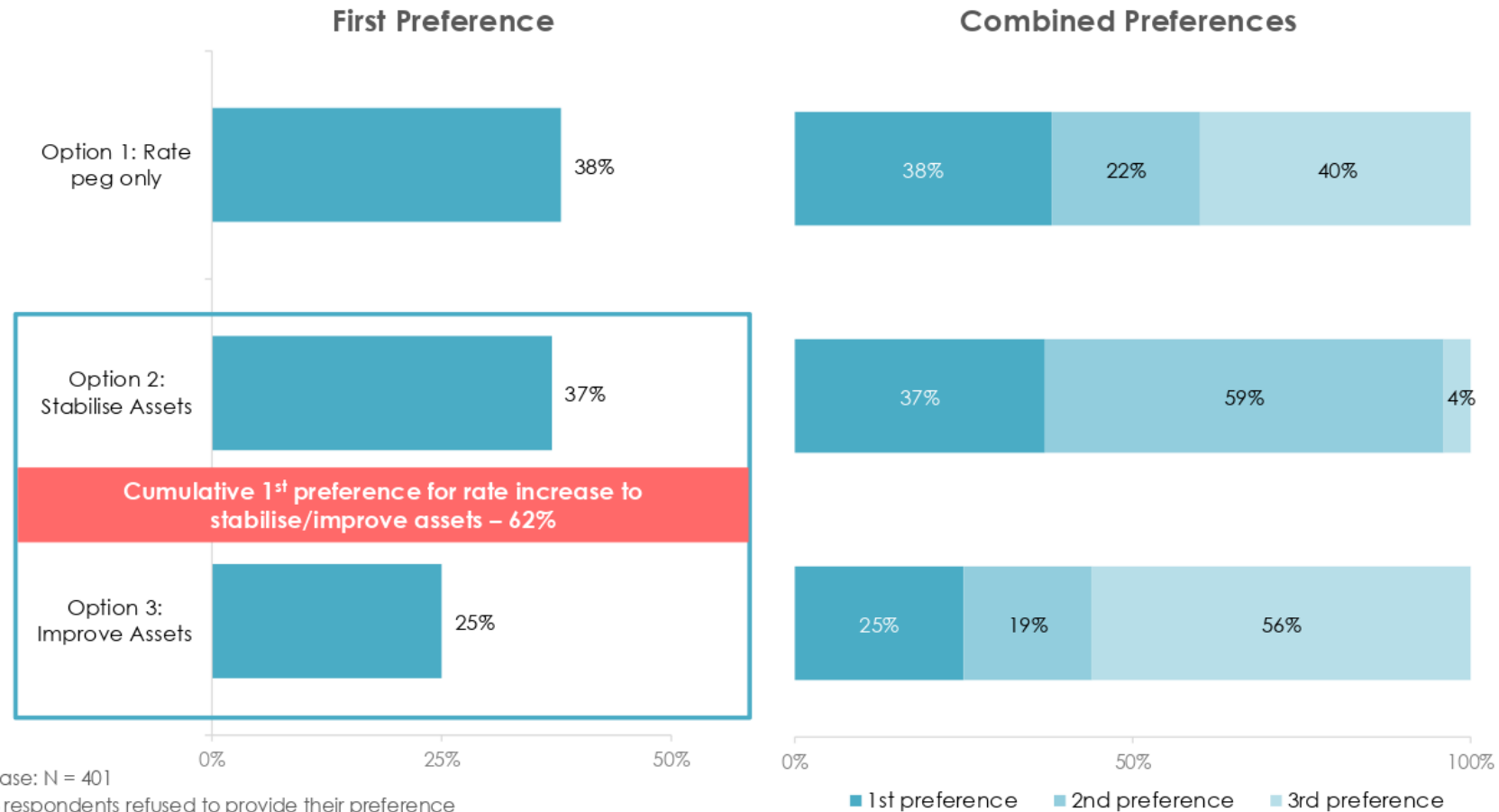
**Just over half (52%) of residents were at least somewhat supportive of Option 3 – Improve Assets.**

**Non-ratepayers were significantly more supportive of this option.**

21

# Preferences for Special Rate Variation Options

Q3a. Please rank the 3 options in order of preference:



Preference for option 1 (38%) and Option 2 (37%) were almost identical and a quarter (25%) of residents were in preference of Option 3. By combining Options 2 and 3, 62% see the need for an SRV of some sort.

Residents in preference of Option 1 (Rate Peg Only) were more likely to have a lower level of satisfaction with the performance of Council and with the quality of infrastructure and facilities.

22

## Reasons for Preferring Option 1: Rate Peg Only (38%)

Q3b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

*"A lot of farmers in our area are going to struggle to pay rates this year"*

*"We shouldn't have to pay more than what we are paying already"*

*"As a pensioner I would struggle to afford higher rates"*

*"Funding is not balanced out to the community where it is required"*

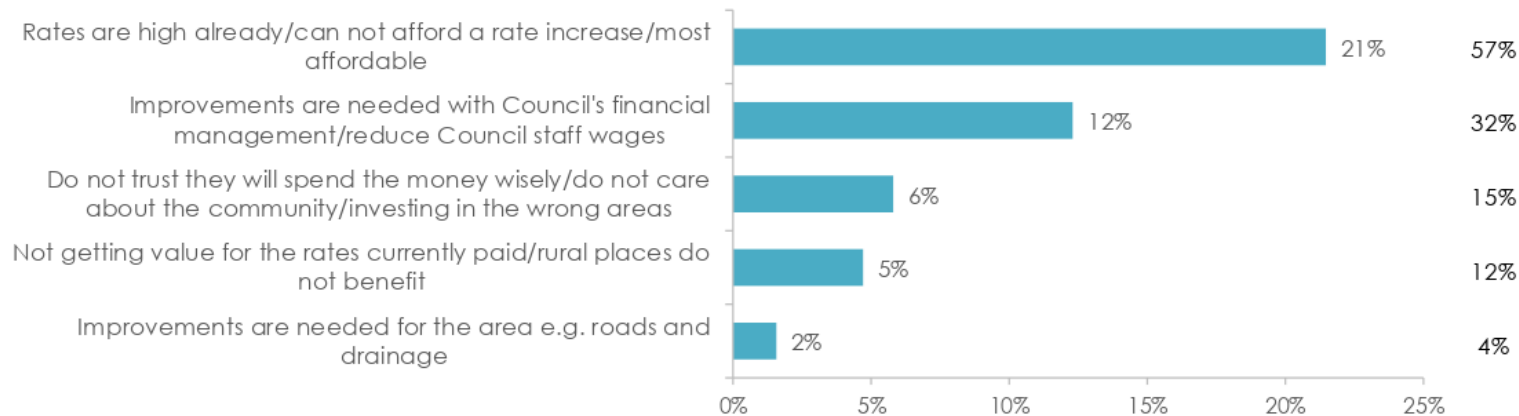
*"Council needs to reduce the wages they pay their workers"*

*"Shouldn't be asked to pay more rates due to lack of services"*

*"Council is mismanaging funds"*

### Option 1: Rate Peg Only % of total sample (N = 401)

% of respondents preferring Option 1  
(N = 152)



See the Appendix for the complete list

**21% of residents stated they prefer Option 1 as they believe this is the most affordable option and cannot afford to pay anymore. 12% also believe that Council must improve their financial management before increasing the rates.**

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## Reasons for Preferring Option 2: Stabilise Assets (37%)

Q3b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

*"More affordable for the community but also getting something out of it"*

*"Realise that money is required to improve infrastructure"*

*"Willing to pay a small additional amount if more assets could be provided in the Broadwater area"*

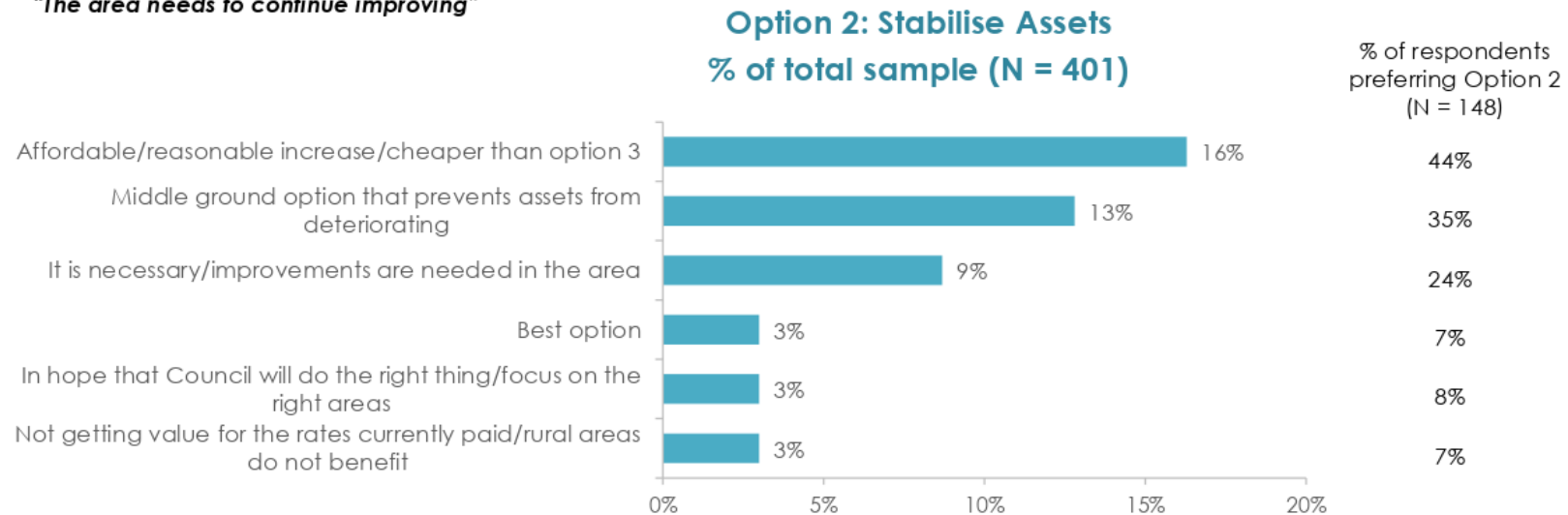
*"Middle ground and easing into rate increase"*

*"Don't want services to deteriorate"*

*"Rural roads desperately need to be maintained to help out the farmers"*

*"Council need to care for the country residents as well as the town residents"*

*"The area needs to continue improving"*



See the Appendix for the complete list

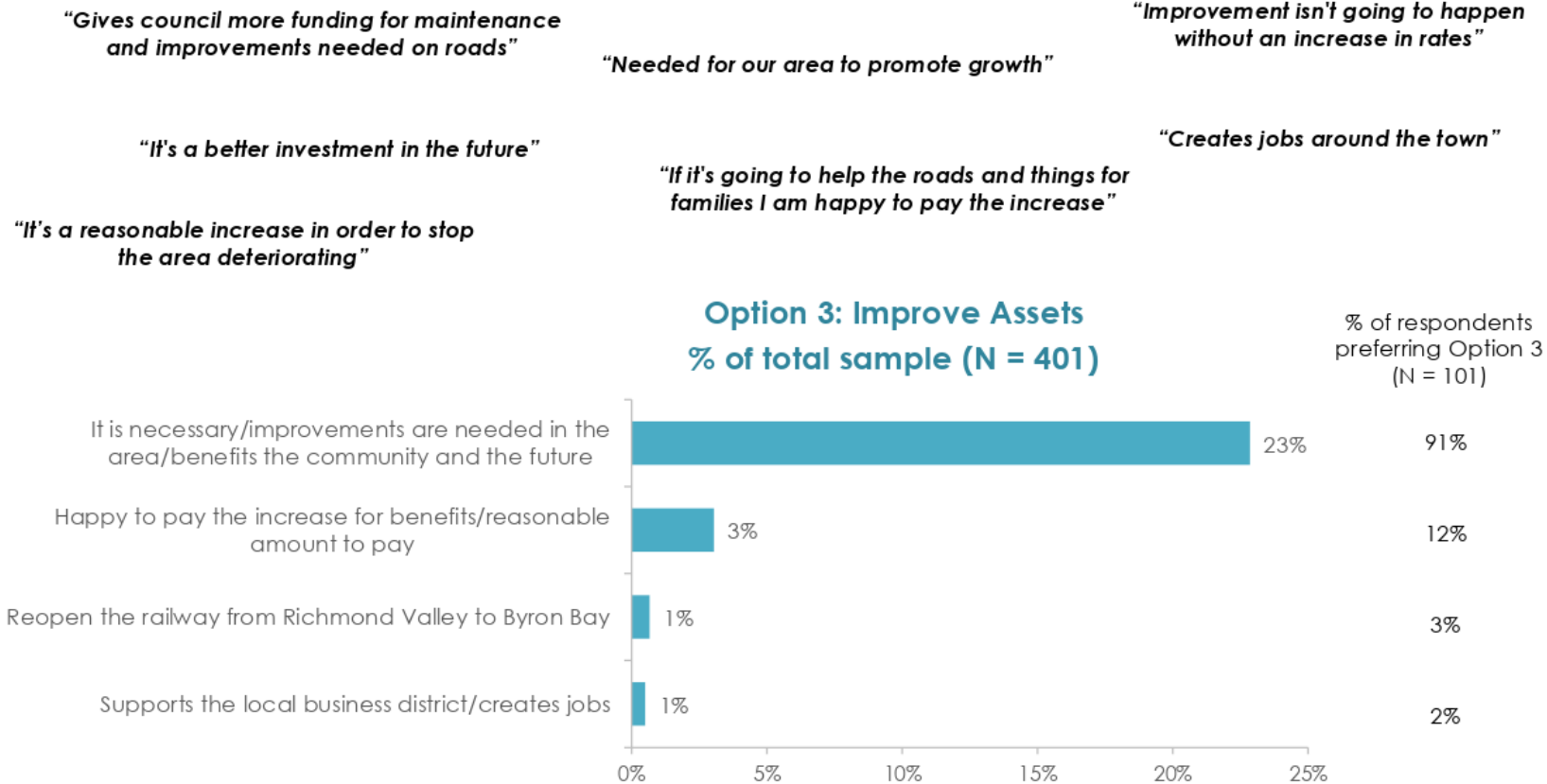
**16% stated that Option 2 is a reasonable increase, especially in comparison to Option 3. 13% of residents stated they are in favour of Option 2 as it provides a middle ground that prevents current assets from deteriorating and 9% believe this increase is necessary.**

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## Reasons for Preferring Option 3: Improve Assets (25%)

Q3b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?



See the Appendix for the complete list

**23% of residents (the largest reason for support overall) believe Option 3 is necessary as improvements are needed and this will benefit the community now and in the long term.**

# Community Diagnostics

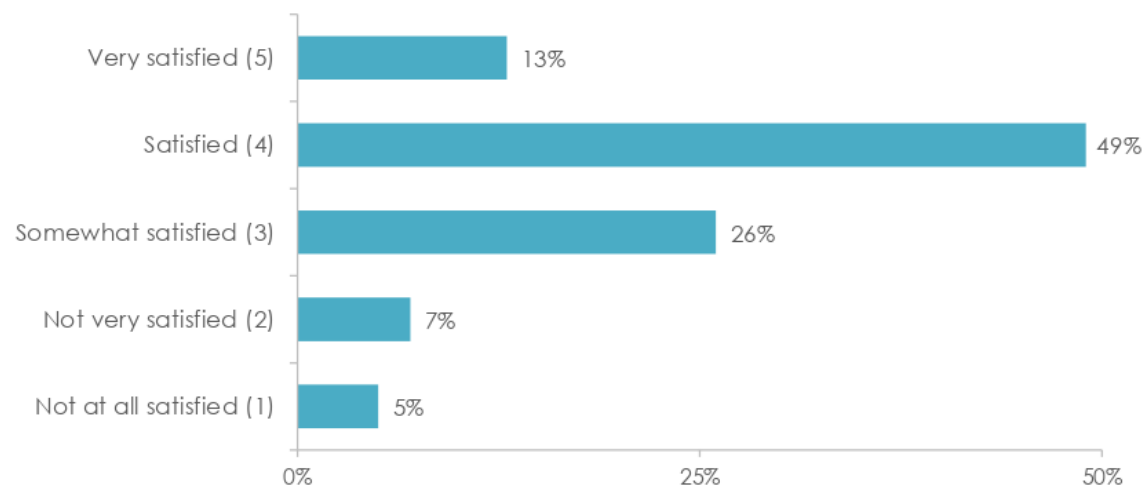


# Overall Satisfaction with the Performance of Council

Q1b. Overall, for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean satisfaction rating	3.56	3.45	3.66	3.65	3.51	3.41	3.68	3.52	3.79 ▲
Base	404	199	205	84	89	112	119	342	62

	Township	Village	Rural Suburb	Aware of the SRV prior to call	Not aware/not sure
Mean satisfaction rating	3.66 ▲	3.54	3.35 ▼	3.56	3.56
Base	243	51	110	116	288



NSW LGA Brand Scores	Mean rating
Richmond Valley Council	3.56
All of NSW	3.42 ▼
Regional	3.31 ▼

Base: N = 404

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied  
 ▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

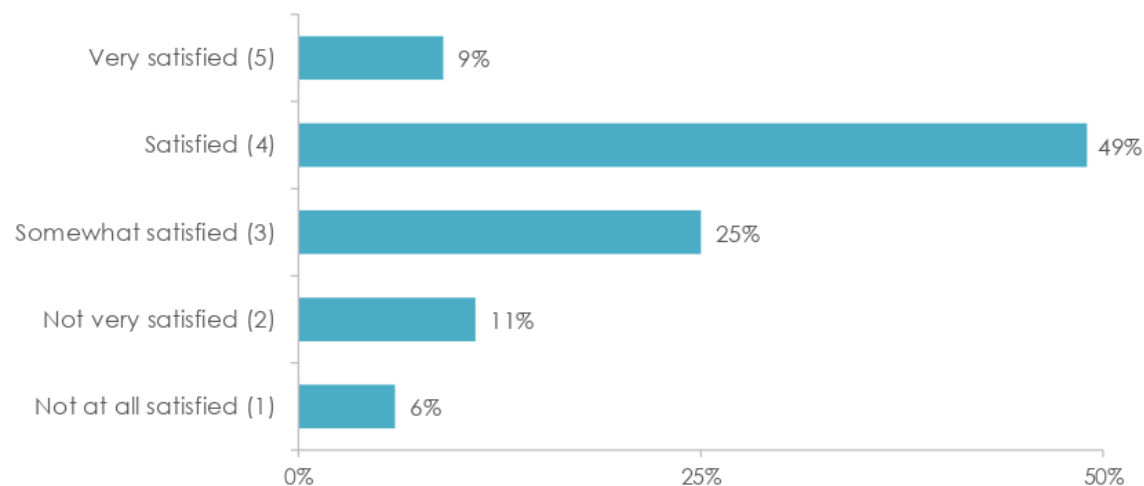
**88% of residents were at least somewhat satisfied with the performance of Council over the last 12 months. This result is significantly greater than our 'all of NSW' and 'Regional' benchmarks. Non-ratepayers and those located in a township were significantly more likely to be satisfied, whilst those located in a rural suburb were significantly less satisfied.**

# Satisfaction With Quality of Infrastructure and Facilities

Q1c. How satisfied are you with the quality of infrastructure and facilities provided by Council in the local area?

	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Mean satisfaction rating	3.45	3.47	3.43	3.47	3.30	3.37	3.61▲	3.41	3.64
Base	404	199	205	84	89	112	119	342	62

	Township	Village	Rural Suburb	Aware of the SRV prior to call	Not aware/not sure
Mean satisfaction rating	3.56▲	3.29	3.28	3.49	3.43
Base	243	51	110	116	288



Base: N = 404

Scale: 1 = not at all satisfied, 5 = very satisfied  
▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)

**83% of residents were at least somewhat satisfied with the quality of infrastructure and facilities provided by Council.**

**Residents aged 65+ and those located in a township were significantly more satisfied.**

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# Projects & Priorities



## Key Priorities for Council in the Local Area

Q1a. What do you think are the key priorities for Council in the local area?

Key Priorities	N = 404
Maintenance and improvement of roads and supporting infrastructure	59%
Waste management e.g. improving the household collection service, preventing illegal dumping, reduce fees, rural areas, etc.	8%
Water management/supply/quality/restrictions	8%
Maintaining/increasing infrastructure/community buildings	7%
Appearance and maintenance of the area	6%
Business and employment growth	6%
Management and protection of the natural environment/improving the health of the River	6%
Nothing, happy with the way the area is/Council is doing a good job	6%
Provision and maintenance of footpaths/kerbs and guttering/drainage	6%
Council - financial management/improving operations/more community consultation	5%
More facilities and services for youth/management of youth	5%
Enforcement of laws and regulations e.g. speed limits, illegal camping and animal control	3%
Managing and attracting tourism	3%
Provision and maintenance of parks/playgrounds	3%



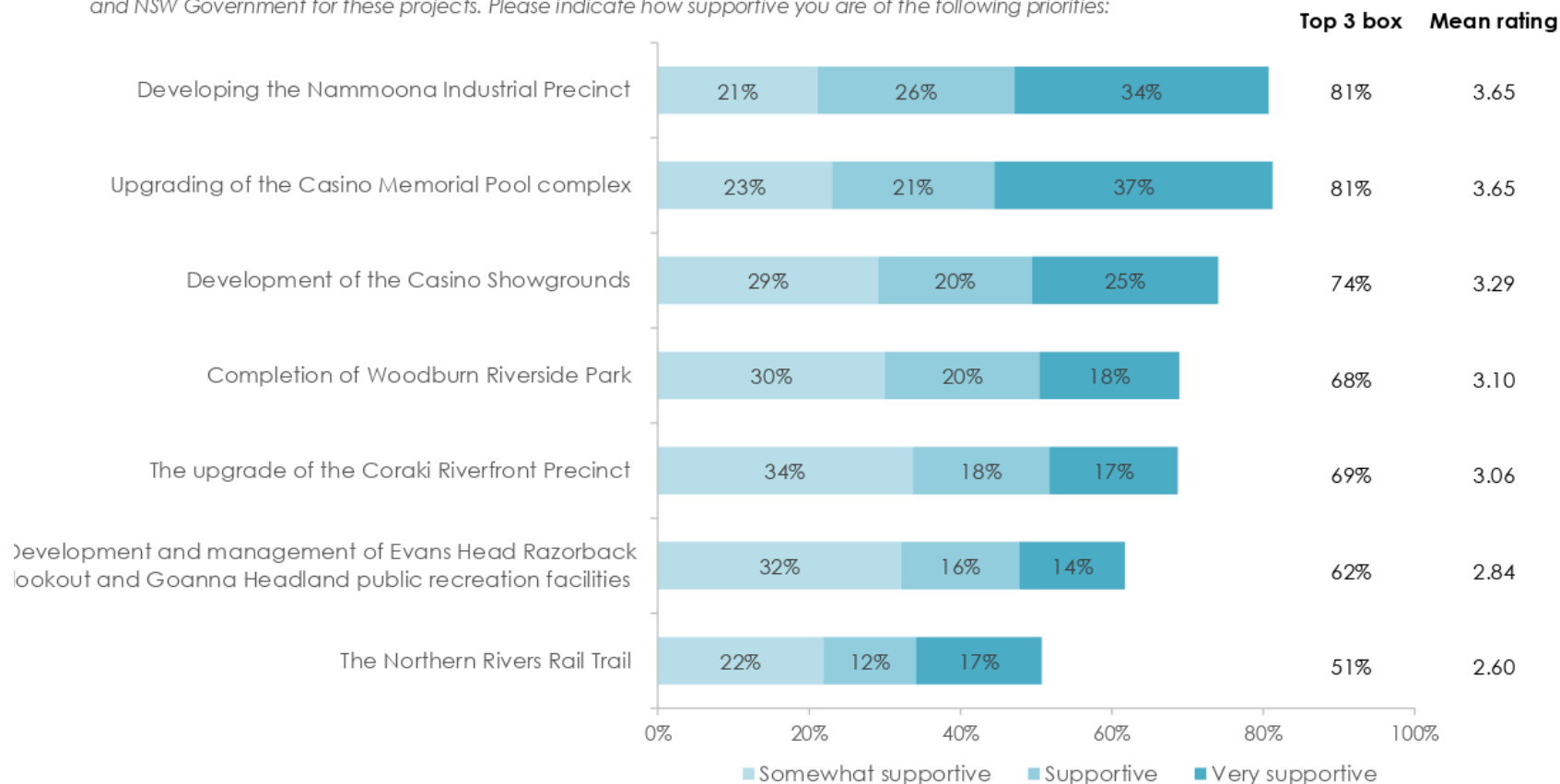
<sup>2</sup>Please see the Appendix for responses fewer than 3%

**The maintenance and improvement of roads was identified as a key priority for the area by 59% of residents. Other priority areas include waste and water management.**

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## Support For Priorities – Current and Future Services

Q5. Richmond Valley Council has identified priorities for delivery in the coming four years, as outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan. Council is seeking your opinion on these priorities so that it can manage the delivery of current and future services. We pursue grant funding opportunities from the Federal and NSW Government for these projects. Please indicate how supportive you are of the following priorities:



Base: N = 404

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

Refer to the Appendix for list of complete priority descriptions, full table of results and results by demographics

**Developing the Nammoona Industrial Precinct and upgrading of the Casino Memorial Pool complex had higher relative levels of support, with 81% of residents at least somewhat supportive of both of these projects.**

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# Appendix





# Background and Objectives

## Background

Richmond Valley Council spends around \$15.7 million on the maintenance and renewal of local assets and infrastructure each year, however, it should be investing at least an additional \$1 million a year to keep them safe and functioning.

Despite its best efforts, Council recognises available funding is not enough to keep community assets in an acceptable condition.

As such, they are consulting with the community about the potential to address the shortfall with a Special Rate Variation (SRV), presenting the community with 3 options to consider and provide feedback on.

## Objectives of the survey

To obtain a statistically robust and clear measure of the community's understanding and attitude towards a potential SRV.

Specifically:

- Measure awareness levels and sources of information about a Special Rate Variation
- Measure levels of support for different SRV options (options were randomised to mitigate order effect)
- Obtain a hierarchy of preferences for the different options
- Community attitude towards a number of key projects
- Measure community satisfaction with the performance of Council



# Methodology & Sample

## Data collection

Micromex Research, together with Richmond Valley Council developed the questionnaire.

Telephone interviewing (CATI) was conducted during period 23<sup>rd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

## Sample

N=404 interviews were conducted. A sample size of 404 provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.9% at 95% confidence. This means that if the survey was replicated with a new universe of N=404 residents, that 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.9%.

For the survey under discussion the greatest margin of error is 4.9%. This means for example, that an answer 'yes' (50%) to a question could vary from 45% to 55%. As the raw data has been weighted to reflect the real community profile of Richmond Valley Council the outcomes reported here reflect an 'effective sample size'; that is, the weighted data provides outcomes with the same level of confidence as unweighted data of a different sample size. In some cases this effective sample size may be smaller than the true number of surveys conducted.

## Interviewing

379 of the 404 of respondents were selected by means of a computer based random selection process using the electronic White Pages and SamplePages.

In addition 25 respondents were recruited face-to-face, this was conducted at a number of areas around the Richmond Valley LGA, i.e. Casino Town Centre and Evans Head Town Centre.



# Methodology & Sample

## Data analysis

The data within this report was analysed using Q Professional.

Significance difference testing is a statistical test performed to evaluate the difference between two measurements. To identify the statistically significant differences between the groups of means, 'One-Way Anova tests' and 'Independent Samples T-tests' were used. 'Z Tests' were also used to determine statistically significant differences between column percentages.

Within the report, ▲▼ are used to identify statistically significant differences between groups, i.e., gender, age, ratepayer status and awareness of the SRV.

## Percentages

All percentages are calculated to the nearest whole number and therefore the total may not exactly equal 100%.



## Sample Profile

QB. Which town/village do you live in/near?

Town/Village	N = 404	Town/Village	N = 404
Casino	49%	Spring Grove	1%
Evans Head	11%	Swan Bay	1%
Coraki	7%	Tatham	1%
Ellangowan	4%	West Coraki	1%
Woodburn	3%	Whiporie	1%
North Casino	3%	Woodview	1%
Bentley	2%	Bungawalbin	<1%
Yorklea	2%	Clovass	<1%
Backmede	1%	Dobies Bight	<1%
Broadwater	1%	Doonbah	<1%
Coombell	1%	Dyraaba	<1%
East Coraki	1%	Hogarth Range	<1%
Fairy Hill	1%	Myrtle Creek	<1%
Greenridge	1%	Naughtons Gap	<1%
Leeville	1%	New Italy	<1%
McKees Hill	1%	Stratheden	<1%
Mongogarrie	1%	Upper Mongogarrie	<1%
Rappville	1%	Wyan	<1%
Shannon Brook	1%		

Q8. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

Employment status - other	Count
Self employed	15
Carer	4
Farming	4
Volunteer	2
Semi-retired	1



## Source of Information on a Special Rate Variation

Q4a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?

Q4b. How were you informed of the Special Rate Variation?

### Of those aware of the SRV

	Male	Female	18–34	35–49	50–64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer	Township	Village	Rural suburb
Newspaper advertisement	47%	52%	0%▼	51%	45%	68%▲	48%	75%	47%	53%	57%
Mail out - community newsletter	30%	41%	66%	21%	43%	29%	34%	49%	38%	31%	26%
Mayoral Column	5%	8%	0%	5%	11%	7%	5%	25%	5%	29%▲	2%
Council website	5%	5%	0%	17%▲	4%	1%	4%	25%	4%	0%	11%
Information kiosk	0%	3%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	25%▲	2%	0%	0%
Other	36%	34%	48%	62%▲	22%	23%▼	37%	0%	38%	32%	26%
Base	66	50	15	27	27	46	110	6	85	8	23



## Preferences for Special Rate Variation Options

Q3a. Please rank the 3 options in order of preference:

1 <sup>st</sup> preference	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Option 1	38%	41%	35%	23%▼	44%	40%	42%	41%▲	22%
Option 2	37%	34%	39%	51%▲	32%	35%	33%	37%	36%
Option 3	25%	25%	26%	26%	25%	25%	25%	22%	42%▲

2 <sup>nd</sup> preference	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Option 1	22%	19%	26%	25%	25%	21%	20%	23%	19%
Option 2	59%	61%	56%	46%	60%	61%	64%	60%	53%
Option 3	19%	20%	18%	28%	15%	18%	16%	17%	28%

3 <sup>rd</sup> preference	Overall	Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Option 1	40%	40%	39%	51%	32%	39%	38%	36%	59%▲
Option 2	4%	4%	5%	3%	8%	4%	4%	3%	11%▲
Option 3	56%	56%	57%	46%	61%	57%	59%	61%▲	30%

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)



## Preferences for Special Rate Variation Options

Q3a. Please rank the 3 options in order of preference:

1 <sup>st</sup> preference	Township	Village	Rural suburb	Aware of the SRV prior to call	No/Not sure
Option 1	37%	58%▲	32%	40%	37%
Option 2	37%	28%	40%	40%	36%
Option 3	26%	14%▼	28%	20%	27%

2 <sup>nd</sup> preference	Township	Village	Rural suburb	Aware of the SRV prior to call	No/Not sure
Option 1	21%	28%	24%	25%	22%
Option 2	58%	68%	56%	56%	60%
Option 3	21%	3%▼	20%	19%	19%

3 <sup>rd</sup> preference	Township	Village	Rural suburb	Aware of the SRV prior to call	No/Not sure
Option 1	43%	14%▼	44%	35%	41%
Option 2	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%
Option 3	53%	82%▲	51%	60%	54%

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)



## Preferences for Special Rate Variation Options

Q1b. Overall, for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas?

Q3a. Please rank the 3 options in order of preference:

	Preference by <u>overall satisfaction with the performance of Council</u>		
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Option 1 – Rate peg	3.21 ▼	3.51	3.95 ▲
Option 2 - Stabilise	3.65	3.54	3.32
Option 3 - Improve	3.99 ▲	3.75	3.32 ▼

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

Q1c. How satisfied are you with the quality of infrastructure and facilities provided by Council in the local area?

Q3a. Please rank the 3 options in order of preference:

	Preference by <u>satisfaction with the quality of infrastructure and facilities</u>		
	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Option 1 – Rate peg	3.22 ▼	3.31	3.77 ▲
Option 2 - Stabilise	3.52	3.45	3.09
Option 3 - Improve	3.72 ▲	3.67 ▲	3.27 ▼

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

Base: N = 401

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of satisfaction (by group)





## Key Priorities for Council in the Local Area

Q1a. What do you think are the key priorities for Council in the local area?

Key Priorities	N = 404	Key Priorities	N = 404
Community safety/reducing crime e.g. more police, street lighting	2%	Better NBN in the area	<1%
Keeping rates low/providing value for the rates paid	2%	Creating opportunities	<1%
Providing/maintaining basic services	2%	Dealing with climate change	<1%
Provision and maintenance of public swimming pools	2%	Increase in rates	<1%
Community development/support groups	1%	Maintaining low density housing	<1%
Expand housing opportunities e.g. for pensioners, aboriginal communities, medium density etc.	1%	Progress in the area	<1%
Holding more family friendly events	1%	Providing more information about the Special Rate Variation	<1%
Hospitals and healthcare e.g. more doctors, mental health facilities, reopening of the hospital etc.	1%	Providing more schools for the growing population	<1%
Increased recreational areas e.g. walking trails, dog parks, gym equipment, etc.	1%	Provision of drought relief for farmers	<1%
Making the town more accessible for elderly and disabled people	1%	Reduction in cost of living	<1%
More access to the river	1%	Shade for outdoor activities e.g. sporting fields/playgrounds	<1%
Provision of parking	1%	Shared cycleways	<1%
Public/community transport	1%	Swimming	<1%
Services and facilities for the ageing population	1%	Toilets kept open at the Arcade	<1%
Traffic management	1%	Too many cabins instead of camping	<1%
Unequal funding/services to more regional areas	1%	We do not have a Councillor in our area to represent us	<1%
Access to libraries/library services e.g. more books	<1%	Don't know/no response	5%



## Support For Priorities – Current and Future Services

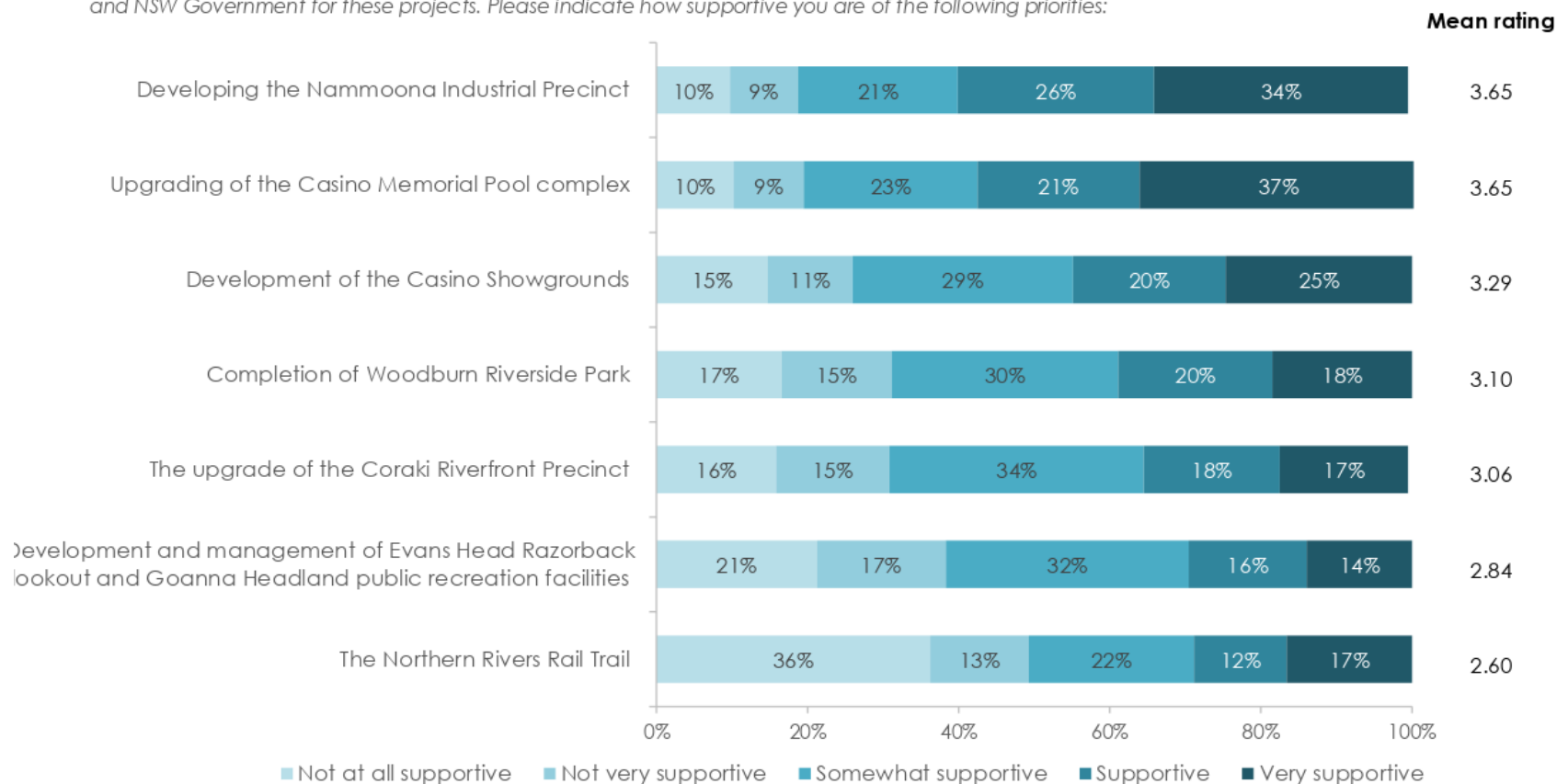
35. *Richmond Valley Council has identified priorities for delivery in the coming four years, as outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan. Council is seeking your opinion on these priorities so that it can manage the delivery of current and future services. We pursue grant funding opportunities from the Federal and NSW Government for these projects.*

Description on Graph	Full Description
The Northern Rivers Rail Trail	The Northern Rivers Rail Trail will link Casino to Lismore through to Murwillumbah as a cycling and walking track on the old railway line. This will be a partnership with other local councils to boost tourism
Upgrading of the Casino Memorial Pool complex	Upgrading of the Casino Memorial Pool complex with new filtration system, pool access ramps, zero depth water play space, accessible heated therapy and Learn to Swim pool, new twin tube water flume slide, refurbishment of entrance and kiosk, addition of food court and new children's wading pool
Development and management of Evans Head Razorback Lookout & Goanna Headland public recreation facilities	Development and management of Evans Head Razorback Lookout and Goanna Headland public recreation facilities
Completion of Woodburn Riverside Park	Completion of Woodburn Riverside Park upgrade work ahead of the Pacific Highway bypass including building the boardwalk and landscaping the eastern side of the park
Development of the Casino Showgrounds	Development of the Casino Showgrounds to include an indoor equestrian arena, redevelopment of the horse racing training stables, and renewal of the sand track and racecourse, to support the training industry and employment
Developing the Nammoona Industrial Precinct	Developing the Nammoona Industrial Precinct which includes the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange, Council's Waste facility, Riverina Stockfeeds and potential inter-modal industrial facilities to increase business and employment
The upgrade of the Coraki Riverfront Precinct	The upgrade of the Coraki Riverfront Precinct which will include walking paths and trails, improved beach and water access, better picnic facilities, indigenous art and educational works, along with historic displays. Improved playground amenity and exercise stations



## Support For Priorities – Current and Future Services

Q5. Richmond Valley Council has identified priorities for delivery in the coming four years, as outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan. Council is seeking your opinion on these priorities so that it can manage the delivery of current and future services. We pursue grant funding opportunities from the Federal and NSW Government for these projects. Please indicate how supportive you are of the following priorities:



Base: N = 404

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



## Support For Priorities – Current and Future Services

35. Richmond Valley Council has identified priorities for delivery in the coming four years, as outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan. Council is seeking your opinion on these priorities so that it can manage the delivery of current and future services. We pursue grant funding opportunities from the Federal and NSW Government for these projects. Please indicate how supportive you are of the following priorities:

	Overall	Male	Female	18–34	35–49	50–64	65+	Ratepayer	Non-ratepayer
Developing the Nammoona Industrial Precinct	3.65	3.61	3.69	4.04▲	3.56	3.68	3.41▼	3.58	4.03▲
Upgrading of the Casino Memorial Pool complex	3.65	3.55	3.75	3.94	3.70	3.61	3.45▼	3.56	4.15▲
Development of the Casino Showgrounds	3.29	3.12	3.45▲	3.67▲	3.14	3.34	3.08▼	3.20	3.80▲
Completion of Woodburn Riverside Park	3.10	2.96	3.23	3.20	3.07	3.05	3.09	3.00	3.63▲
The upgrade of the Coraki Riverfront Precinct	3.06	2.95	3.17	3.28	3.05	3.01	2.97	2.94	3.76▲
Development and management of Evans Head Razorback lookout and Goanna Headland public recreation facilities	2.84	2.72	2.96	2.97	3.01	2.78	2.68	2.71	3.53▲
The Northern Rivers Rail Trail	2.60	2.48	2.72	2.75	2.86	2.64	2.26▼	2.45	3.41▲

▲ ▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)



## Support For Priorities – Current and Future Services

35. Richmond Valley Council has identified priorities for delivery in the coming four years, as outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan. Council is seeking your opinion on these priorities so that it can manage the delivery of current and future services. We pursue grant funding opportunities from the Federal and NSW Government for these projects. Please indicate how supportive you are of the following priorities:

	Township	Village	Rural suburb
Developing the Nammoona Industrial Precinct	3.76	3.04▼	3.71
Upgrading of the Casino Memorial Pool complex	3.80▲	3.01▼	3.62
Development of the Casino Showgrounds	3.36	2.77▼	3.38
Completion of Woodburn Riverside Park	3.12	3.27	2.98
The upgrade of the Coraki Riverfront Precinct	3.02	3.47▲	2.98
Development and management of Evans Head Razorback lookout and Goanna Headland public recreation facilities	2.90	2.52▼	2.86
The Northern Rivers Rail Trail	2.65	2.74	2.42

▲▼ = A significantly higher/lower level of support (by group)



## Reasons for Preferring Option 1: Rate Peg Only (38%)

Q3b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

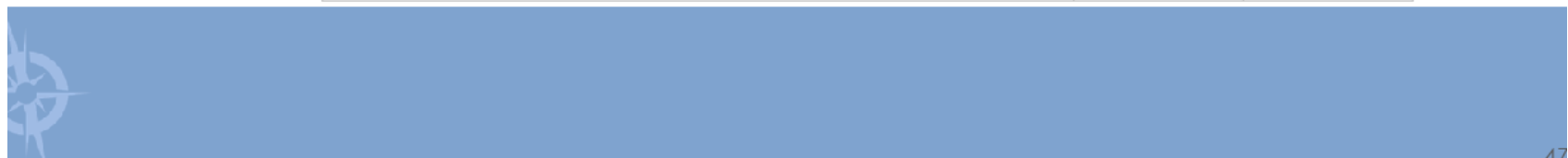
Option 1 – First Preference	% of total sample (N = 401)	% of those preferring Option 1 (N = 152)
Rates are high already/cannot afford a rate increase/most affordable	21%	57%
Improvements are needed with Council's financial management/ reduce Council staff wages	12%	32%
Do not trust they will spend the money wisely/do not care about the community/investing in the wrong areas	6%	15%
Not getting value for the rates currently paid/rural places do not benefit	5%	12%
Improvements are needed for the area e.g. roads and drainage	2%	4%
Better option for the community	1%	4%
Council is overstaffed	1%	3%
Council needs to make more efficient use of current infrastructure/look for other ways to improve	1%	2%
Other sources of revenue should be sought	1%	2%
Do not need new infrastructure/area doesn't need improving	<1%	1%
Make the plans public (have public meeting)	<1%	1%
The people who live in the outskirts bring in the most money for the economy e.g. farmers	<1%	1%
Don't know/nothing	1%	3%



## Reasons for Preferring Option 2: Stabilise Assets (37%)

Q3b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

Option 2 – First Preference	% of total sample (N = 401)	% of those preferring Option 2 (N = 148)
Affordable/reasonable increase/cheaper than option 3	16%	44%
Middle ground option that prevents assets from deteriorating	13%	35%
It is necessary/improvements are needed in the area	9%	24%
Best option	3%	7%
In hope that Council will do the right thing/focus on the right areas	3%	8%
Not getting value for the rates currently paid/rural areas do not benefit	3%	7%
Council needs to be more efficient/things are not getting done	2%	6%
Improvements are needed with Council's financial management	2%	5%
We need to find the money from federal and government funding rather than struggling families	1%	1%
Biggest problem is not knowing how we rate it against other councils	<1%	1%
Financially the community will struggle	<1%	<1%
Helps when rate payers can see where there money is going	<1%	1%
It seems like rates are going up and up all the time	<1%	1%
Don't know/nothing	1%	3%



## Reasons for Preferring Option 3: Improve Assets (25%)

Q3b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

Option 3 – First Preference	% of total sample (N = 401)	% of those preferring Option 3 (N = 101)
It is necessary/improvements are needed in the area/benefits the community and the future	23%	91%
Happy to pay the increase for benefits/reasonable amount to pay	3%	12%
Reopen the railway from Richmond Valley to Byron Bay	1%	3%
Supports the local business district/creates jobs	1%	2%
If the rates go up then there should be obvious results in terms of infrastructure and assets	<1%	2%
As long as all the funds aren't just spent in casino, I'm happy to pay more	<1%	1%
Council should really justify the increase in rates - not a huge difference between 2nd and 3rd option	<1%	1%
Council spends their money well	<1%	1%
Councils should lobby the NSW Government to spend more money in rural councils rather than in the cities	<1%	1%
I don't approve of the nose-end parking	<1%	1%
Low income earners need to have more reductions in rate payments	<1%	1%
There are lots of other variables you have to take into consideration	<1%	1%
There should be other ways to get funded	<1%	1%
We don't live in town	<1%	1%
Don't know/nothing	<1%	2%





# Questionnaire



**Richmond Valley Council  
Community Survey – Special Rate Variation  
January 2019**

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is ..... from Micromex Research and we are conducting a survey on behalf of Richmond Valley Council on a range of local issues. The survey will take about 10-15 minutes, would you be able to assist us please?

**QA. Before we start, I would like to check whether you or an immediate family member works for Richmond Valley Council.**

- ☐ Yes (Terminate survey)  
☐ No

**QB. Which town/village do you live in/near?**

Townships: - 60%

- ☐ Casino  
☐ Evans Head

Villages: - 15%

- ☐ Broadwater  
☐ Coraki  
☐ Rappville  
☐ Riley's Hill  
☐ Woodburn

Rural suburbs: - 25%

- |  |  |                                      |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Backmede         | <input type="radio"/> Ellangowan       | <input type="radio"/> North Casino   |
| <input type="radio"/> Baryabba         | <input type="radio"/> Esk              | <input type="radio"/> Piora          |
| <input type="radio"/> Bentley          | <input type="radio"/> Fairy Hill       | <input type="radio"/> Shannon Brook  |
| <input type="radio"/> Bora Ridge       | <input type="radio"/> Gibberagee       | <input type="radio"/> Six Mile Swamp |
| <input type="radio"/> Boorabee Park    | <input type="radio"/> Greenridge       | <input type="radio"/> Spring Grove   |
| <input type="radio"/> Bungawalbin      | <input type="radio"/> Hogarth Range    | <input type="radio"/> Stratheden     |
| <input type="radio"/> West Bungawalbin | <input type="radio"/> Irvington        | <input type="radio"/> Swan Bay       |
| <input type="radio"/> Busbys Flat      | <input type="radio"/> Kippenduff       | <input type="radio"/> Tabbimable     |
| <input type="radio"/> Camira           | <input type="radio"/> Leeville         | <input type="radio"/> Tatham         |
| <input type="radio"/> Clearfield       | <input type="radio"/> McKees Hill      | <input type="radio"/> The Gap        |
| <input type="radio"/> Clovass          | <input type="radio"/> Mongogarie       | <input type="radio"/> Tomki          |
| <input type="radio"/> Codrington       | <input type="radio"/> Upper Mongogarie | <input type="radio"/> West Coraki    |
| <input type="radio"/> Coombell         | <input type="radio"/> Mount Marsh      | <input type="radio"/> Whiporie       |
| <input type="radio"/> Dobies Bight     | <input type="radio"/> Myrtle Creek     | <input type="radio"/> Woodview       |
| <input type="radio"/> Doonbah          | <input type="radio"/> Naughtons Gap    | <input type="radio"/> Wyan           |
| <input type="radio"/> Dyraaba          | <input type="radio"/> New Italy        | <input type="radio"/> Yorklea        |
| <input type="radio"/> East Coraki      | <input type="radio"/> North Woodburn   |                                      |

**Q1a. What do you think are the key priorities for Council in the local area?**

.....

**Q1b. Overall, for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues but across all responsibility areas? Prompt**

- ☐ Very satisfied  
☐ Satisfied  
☐ Somewhat satisfied  
☐ Not very satisfied  
☐ Not at all satisfied

**Q1c. How satisfied are you with the quality of infrastructure and facilities provided by Council in the local area? Prompt**

- ☐ Very satisfied  
☐ Satisfied  
☐ Somewhat satisfied  
☐ Not very satisfied  
☐ Not at all satisfied

**Concept statement**

Richmond Valley residents have consistently told Council that assets such as roads, public spaces, parks and footpaths are important to them, and Council needs to improve their condition.

Council spends around \$15.7 million on the maintenance and renewal of local assets and infrastructure each year, however, it should be investing at least an additional \$1 million a year to keep them safe and functioning. This doesn't include extra money needed to fund the depreciation, maintenance and renewal of new assets.

Despite its best efforts, Council recognises available funding is not enough to keep community assets in an acceptable condition.

There is no easy solution to addressing this funding gap. Put simply, if the gap is not addressed now the community assets which Council manages will deteriorate and become unusable.

The NSW Government sets the amount that Councils can increase their rates by each year. At the moment, that amount, known as the rate peg, is an annual increase of 2.7%; however, the NSW Government can also approve additional rate increases to fund particular projects – these are known as Special Rate Variations. A proposed special rate variation will be necessary in our Shire to maintain and manage our assets to ensure Council delivers services in line with community expectations and remains financially sustainable into the future.

Council acknowledges that any rate increase may adversely impact some community members. Council has a Hardship Policy and alternative payment options to assist ratepayers should they have difficulty keeping up with their rate payments. Please contact Council for further information regarding this.

There are three options which I would like you to consider. Each option will have varying impacts on local assets and service quality.

**Option 1 – Rate Peg Only.** Our assets would decline with more assets in poor condition. The focus would be on managing risk, including the possible closure and removal of unsafe assets and reduction of services.

**Option 2 – Stabilise Assets.** We would stabilise the decline of our community assets and be able to fund the required renewal and maintenance of our assets into the future.

**Option 3 – Improve Assets.** Council would improve the quality of our community assets and have a greater capacity to fund asset upgrades and new works.

Let's look at the options in more detail:

**Note: Rotate order of exposure 1-3/3-1**

**Option 1: Rate peg - 2.7% increase only**

No Special Rate Variation. Rates would increase by the annual projected rate peg amount of 2.7% next year and 2.5% per year for the following 3 years. Over the four-year period, this is a cumulative increase of just over 10.5%. Residential ratepayers who are currently paying around \$970 per year would pay, on average, just over \$1,070 by 2022/23.

This option would generate \$1.3 million over 4 years, which is simply the rate peg increase allowed for by the State Government.

Under this option the impact would be further deterioration of assets, including the worsening of:

- Roads
- Town centres and public spaces
- Community buildings
- Public toilets
- Footpaths
- Stormwater drainage; and
- Parks and open spaces, including playgrounds

Council would also have virtually no capacity for new capital work, meaning it would have difficulty funding new assets such as footpaths, shared pathways, and community facilities. It would also be unable to undertake works like upgrading the state of the gravel road network, or the progressive rehabilitation of the local sealed road network.

In order to meet the NSW Government's Fit for the Future financial benchmarks, Council would be required to reduce or close some services.

**Q2a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 1? Prompt**

- ☐ Very supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Somewhat supportive
- ☐ Not very supportive
- ☐ Not at all supportive

**Option 2: Stabilise Assets – 5.5% increase**

An annual increase of 5.5% for four years, consisting of the rate peg amount of 2.7% and an additional special rate variation amount of 2.8%. Over the four-year period this is a cumulative increase of just under 24%. At the end of the four-year period the Special Rate Variation increase would be built into the rate base. Residential ratepayers who are currently paying around \$970 per year would pay, just over \$1,200 by 2022/23. Based on what the average residential ratepayer will pay on top of the projected rate peg this equates to an extra \$0.47 per week next year, \$0.63 per week in year two, \$0.66 per week in year three and \$0.73 per week in year four.

This option would generate \$3 million over 4 years which is \$ 1.7 million more than under the rate peg.

Council would be able to continue with the its current preventative maintenance and renewal program to stabilise the condition of priority assets.

This would also help Council be able to meet the NSW Government's Fit for the Future financial benchmarks and maintain current service levels.

**Q2b. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 2? Prompt**

- ☐ Very supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Somewhat supportive
- ☐ Not very supportive
- ☐ Not at all supportive

**Option 3: Improve Assets – 7% increase**

An annual increase of 7% for four years, consisting of the annual 2.7% rate peg and an additional special rate variation amount of 4.3%. Over the four-year period this is a cumulative increase of 31%. At the end of the four-year period the Special Rate Variation increase would be built into the rate base. Residential ratepayers who are paying around \$970 per year would pay approximately \$1,270 by 2022/23. Based on what the average residential ratepayer will pay on top of the projected rate peg this equates to an extra \$0.77 per week next year, \$0.91 per week in year two, \$0.96 per week in year three and \$1.15 per week in year four.

This option would generate \$3.9 million over four years, which is \$2.6 million more than under the rate peg. This option would stabilise the deterioration of our assets and gradually improve their condition over time. It would enable Council to fund a more extensive program of gravel road upgrades, the rehabilitation of sealed roads and the renewal of town centres and public spaces. It would be able to deliver these improvements sooner and bring forward much-needed maintenance.

Council would also be able to meet the NSW Government's Fit for the Future financial benchmarks a lot earlier and maintain current service levels with some capacity to invest in new or expanded services.

**Q2c. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 3? Prompt**

- ☐ Very supportive
- ☐ Supportive
- ☐ Somewhat supportive
- ☐ Not very supportive
- ☐ Not at all supportive

Q3a. Please rank the 3 options in order of preference:

	1 <sup>st</sup> preference	2 <sup>nd</sup> preference	3 <sup>rd</sup> preference
Option 1 – Rate Peg only	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Option 2 – Stabilise assets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Option 3 – Improve assets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q3b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

.....

Q4a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (Go to Q5)
- ☐ Not sure (Go to Q5)

Q4b. How were you informed of the Special Rate Variation? *Prompt*

- ☐ Mail out- community newsletter
- ☐ Council website
- ☐ Newspaper advertisement
- ☐ Mayoral Column
- ☐ Information kiosk
- ☐ Other (please specify) .....

SIGNATURE PROJECTS:

Q5. Richmond Valley Council has identified priorities for delivery in the coming four years, as outlined in Council's Community Strategic Plan. Council is seeking your opinion on these priorities so that it can manage the delivery of current and future services. We pursue grant funding opportunities from the Federal and NSW Government for these projects. Please indicate how supportive you are of the following priorities, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all supportive and 5 is very supportive. *Prompt*

Rotate order

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>The Northern Rivers Rail Trail</b> will link Casino to Lismore through to Murwillumbah as a cycling and walking track on the old railway line. This will be a partnership with other local councils to boost tourism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Upgrading of the Casino Memorial Pool complex</b> with new filtration system, pool access ramps, zero depth water play space, accessible heated therapy and Learn to Swim pool, new twin tube water flume slide, refurbishment of entrance and kiosk, addition of food court and new children's wading pool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Development and management of Evans Head Razorback Lookout and Goanna Headland public recreation facilities</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Completion of Woodburn Riverside Park</b> upgrade work ahead of the Pacific Highway bypass including building the boardwalk and landscaping the eastern side of the park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Development of the Casino Showgrounds</b> to include an indoor equestrian arena, redevelopment of the horse racing training stables, and renewal of the sand track and racecourse, to support the training industry and employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Developing the Nammoona Industrial Precinct</b> which includes the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange, Council's Waste facility, Riverina Stockfeeds and potential inter-modal industrial facilities to increase business and employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>The upgrade of the Coraki Riverfront Precinct</b> which will include walking paths and trails, improved beach and water access, better picnic facilities, indigenous art and educational works, along with historic displays. Improved playground amenity and exercise stations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Demographics**

The following information is used for demographic purposes only.

**Q6. Please stop me when I read out your age bracket: *Prompt***

- ☐ 18-34
- ☐ 35-49
- ☐ 50-64
- ☐ 65+

**Q7. Which of the following best describes the house where you are currently living?**

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

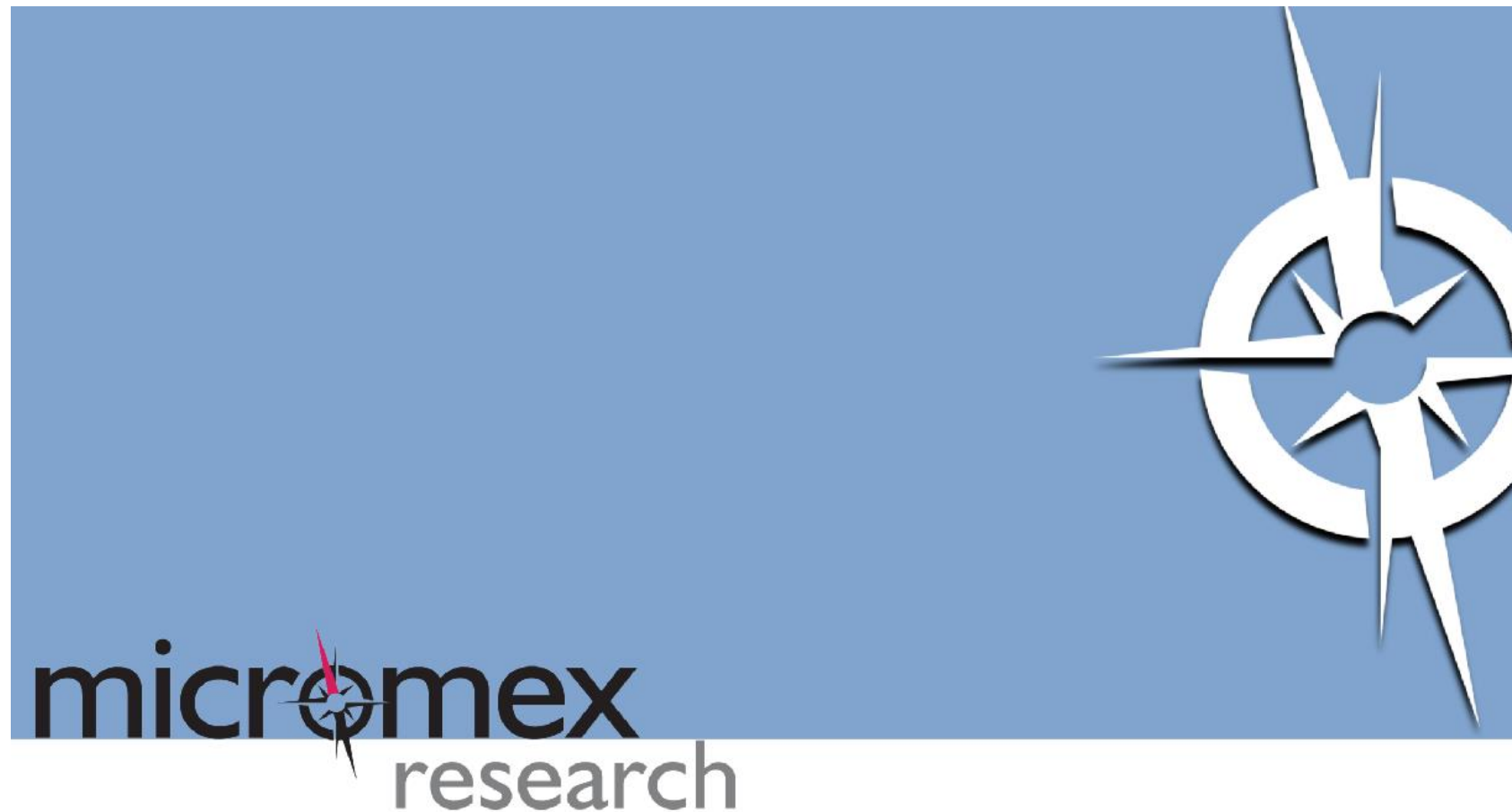
**Q8. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? *Prompt***

- ☐ Work full time in the LGA
- ☐ Work full time outside the LGA
- ☐ Work part time in the LGA
- ☐ Work part time outside the LGA
- ☐ Home duties
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Unemployed/Pensioner
- ☐ Other (please specify).....

**Q9. Gender by voice:**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

To find out more information about Richmond Valley Council's policies and Special Rate Variation proposal, please access [www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au](http://www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au)



Telephone: (02) 4352 2388  
Fax: (02) 4352 2117  
Web: [www.micromex.com.au](http://www.micromex.com.au)  
Email: [stu@micromex.com.au](mailto:stu@micromex.com.au)

**Full range of free text responses outlining respondents' opinions regarding the proposal for a special rate variation.**

**Taken from online survey provided by Micromex, January – February 2019, with 55 respondents total.**

**Respondents were invited to consider Options 1 – Rate Peg Only (2.7%), Option 2 – Stabilise Assets (5.5%) and Option 3 – Improve Assets (7%)**

**Option 1 – Rate Peg Only (2.7%)**

1
The younger generation do not care and do not respect any improvements that our Council may make to the community, and majority of them are not rate payers. So why should my hard earned money that goes towards my rates be spent only for kids to ruin. Then Council has to spend more money cleaning and refurbishing.
It reads better for a little country town where shop are closing down and little money in town
Need to stabilise
Cut unnecessary spending and Council should find extra funds to improve real assets
No response
Allow Council to provide and maintain infrastructure
Just personal preference
I believe money is being wasted, both on things that don't need doing and on requirements stemming from poor state and federal legislation.
Costs
Maintain status quo
Rates are too expensive now
Need to improve assets not decline
Need to maintain our roads, etc.
For the future of our town. I want my kids to enjoy this place as much as I did as a child
No response
This town needs to be improved but you also need to look after people who pay rates & are out of town but yet get nothing
It's enough for what I think the community needs.
I am prepared to pay more improved services and new infrastructure
Improve services for residents.
I would be happy to have the option 1 increase in rates over the next few years, but I do not see the rates we pay going towards worthwhile investments
Of the three options it is the preferred - more affordable.
Ordinary businesses don't overcharge the customer to cover costs, they reduce costs in the business first
No response
I am struggling to afford rates currently
Undecided
The town is struggling and locals cannot afford the added financial pressure of a ridiculous rate rise
Rates are to dear and people are stifling to pay them
Look after Current assets
I just don't see where all the money has been spent in the first place.
Utility prices of power and gas plus cost of living continues to rise.
I'm happy to make a small contribution but council needs to reduce expenditure on

unnecessary items
We need to be able to maintain our infrastructure into the future for the next generations
Living costs are too expensive and could only afford the least percentage increase
Affordability
No response
It's too expensive as it is for what we get as residents
The amenities and facilities we have need to be maintained effectively and not forgotten while all the new upgrades happen. Utilise and improve on what we have.
Release/approve reasonable land for housing and increase your yearly rates income that way.
I think it will work better for the community
We are pensioners
I see this as a not so heavy a burden on rates payers to accept
Improvement in town
I don't want a rate increase at all.
We need to keep improving our infrastructure to make it a better place to live
Too improve our region
The council has a checkered history of management of previous additional rate variations
We currently don't get facilities like towns of rubbish collection so y pay
Overall standard of assets is fine. Improvements aren't necessary
I want council to provide what is needed to grow Casino by encouraging and allowing new businesses which will then provide funds through additional revenue
Financially, on a single income it's the most we can afford
2 things need to be fixed up to keep the town growing for the future.
Assets need to be maintained
to allow the towns to progress and the service to improve
Too expensive
Need to be improving assets to improve community pride and involvement



**Option 2 – Stabilise Assets (5.5%)**

<b>2</b>
Not good
Need to seek more government funding
Local council are unconstitutional, and therefore any changes are just a continuation of the treason.
Resists the temptation of wasting money
Just maintain as is
Stabilize assets not lose any
Preserve assets
Gravel road maintenance
Roads, could you guarantee a better local road network with that extra funding?
High percentages of rate payers are already under financial strain
Constantly creating new assets is a burden on maintenance
Our council owned areas around our area are maintained by people living in the street not council
The last rate rise done wonders for this area
Lower my expectations on service levels
Outreaching communities that are smaller than the 'bigger' town ships of Casino, Evans Head, Woodburn, etc. also need to be looked after and supported effectively.
We live in the country area where we have our own septic, water & pay for garbage collection
The rate variation will increase the impact on Evans Head residents of a currently inequitable burden
3 town growth, business growth, Casino is central to a lot of sport, school interactions, getting more people to the area
Letting assets deteriorate costs more in the long run

**Option 3 – Improve Assets (7%)**

<b>3</b>
No better
There is limited ability for residents to have a say about where only is spent - most are staff pet projects
I might as well choose what save me money as council will just do as it pleases regardless of the will of the people.
Affordable to most of the ratepayers
Don't need improvement
Can't afford to lose assets
Swimming pool upgrades
Community financial support, community programs. Why not more investment in that. We have a generation of teens with no respect for public or person property, maybe some investment into community programs would help, not fancy public gym equipment, much like the barbeques in the same area, they will be mistreated
The distribution of funds and assets should be controlled by the rate payers who fund these items
Remember the area doesn't have wealthy ratepayers
I have lived in this area for 4 years and I haven't seen anything that even looks like money was spent. The
You need funds to run a sustainable operation
Council tightened its budget and not rely on constantly increasing our rates
Having facilities in smaller towns to provide opportunities for residents and rate payers along with visitors to utilise and make it an area to want to go to
Main road to our residence is the Summerland Way with most maintenance funds come from State Government
People with fixed incomes are hard hit by such variations esp. long-term Evans Head residents
Must move forward and peg rate won't do it.
Having a good local facilities and parks keeps locals in the area which is good for all businesses

**Additional text box 1**

<b>4</b>
As an out of town resident, we will be the last to be thought of for roads and drainage yet we are expected to adhere to the same development requirements.
Informs NSW state government that we are not a walkover
Town entrances
What would the Council do about my safety walking around my neighbourhood? What about my personal damages caused by disrespectful teens who scream up and down my street at 3am
An assessment of areas needing the highest cost of maintenance vs rates raise should be conducted for user pays system
Ageing population
Looking at what is charged in rates, etc. and what households actually use (waste usage for country/property owners when they don't use the dump or have curb side pickup is unfair on their budgets)
There is little coherence in the overall balance between development and socio- cultural conservation

**Additional text box 2****5**

It is hard enough to make ends meet, I need to work away from home as I can't earn enough on minimum wage in town to cover a home and maintain it.

Economic Development

What is being done now is not enough, at least where it counts and that can't be blamed on funding

Be realistic not all about show!

Council's engagement with the community is haphazard and communication needs considerable improvement



## Rate pegging and IPART

**Council is facing the challenge of balancing community expectations with future financial sustainability and we need your help to make some important decisions.**

Like many other NSW councils, our roads, footpaths, drainage and other community assets require ongoing maintenance and upgrades to ensure they meet the level of service expected by the community.

As things currently stand, Council's revenue is regulated under rate pegging. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) sets a rate peg which limits the amount by which councils can increase their rate revenue from one year to the next. For many years, the rate peg has not kept pace with the cost to maintain infrastructure and provide services to the community.

We are seeking your feedback on a proposal to apply to IPART for a special rate variation (SRV). Without this, Council will not be able to sustain the community service delivery and infrastructure needs.

While we understand a rate rise is never welcome, we believe a SRV is necessary to meet the short and long-term needs of the community.

We will be seeking community feedback through public meetings on Monday 4 February in Casino and Wednesday 6 February in Evans Head, as well as via a community survey.

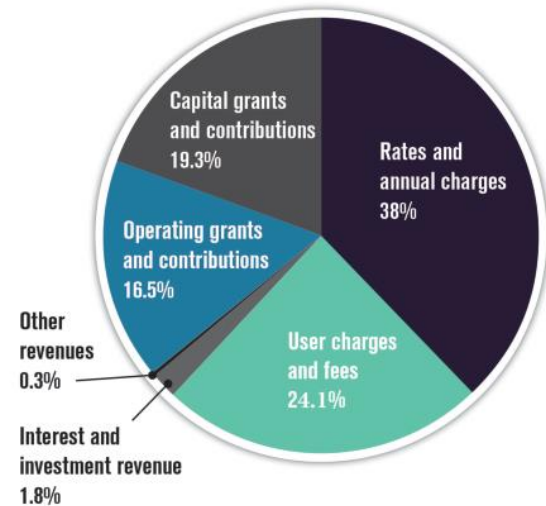
Our priority is to ensure a vibrant future for the Richmond Valley. You are encouraged you to take the time to read this newsletter.

More in-depth information is available at our website [richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au](http://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au) and at Council's Casino and Evans Head offices, as well as our local libraries.

## What are the challenges we face?

- Dispersed population and rates income of \$12.4 million, which is only 21.76% of expenditure
- Government operating grants not keeping pace with expenditure needs
- Funding increasing asset renewal and depreciation expenses

Combined rates and annual charges make up less than half of Council's revenue, which is why it is important we are always on the front foot when it comes to seeking other sources of funding and finding efficiencies in how we operate.



## Did you know?



**Council has around 80,000 assets to maintain, which in 2017-2018 attracted depreciation of \$10 million, excluding water, sewer and waste.**

The main types of assets paid by your general rates include roads, bridges and footpaths, plant and equipment, buildings, stormwater drainage, parks, gardens and cemeteries. Other Council assets which currently require maintenance and renewal include: the Casino Drill Hall site; the Casino Indoor Sports Stadium; the Casino Community and Cultural Centre; the Casino Civic Hall; the Casino, Coraki and Evans Head libraries; the Casino Showground and Racecourse; the Casino, Coraki, Woodburn and Evans Head public swimming pools; the Casino Visitor Information Centre; the Coraki Riverside Caravan Park and Camping Grounds; the Coraki and Woodburn SES buildings, the Casino-Evans Head Surf Club, Stan Payne Oval facilities, Broadwater-Rileys Hill Hall, Rappville Hall and open spaces infrastructure.



Richmond Valley Council

### CONTACT US:

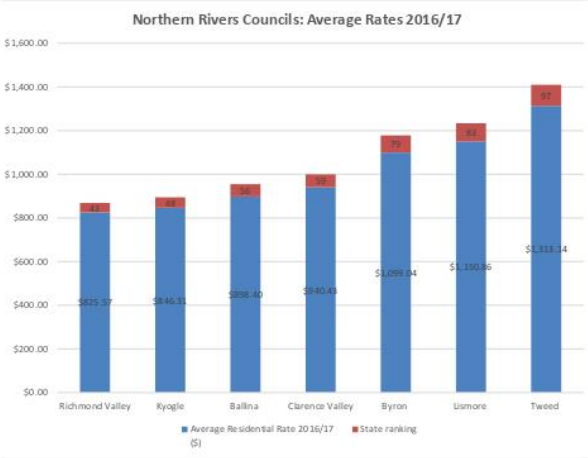
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e: [council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au)  
w: [www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au](http://www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au)

## How our rates compare with other Northern Rivers councils

Rates are a tax on land based on a property's unimproved capital value. How we allocate our rate revenue is determined by our Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and annual operational plans.

Councils in NSW are required to make decisions and set their revenue policies in the best interests of the whole local government area. This is a challenge for all councils when there are limited funds available.

Richmond Valley Council continues to have the lowest or second lowest rates across the Northern Rivers, per head of population, as demonstrated in the latest Office of Local Government data



(see graphs below).

Even after the higher proposed rate increase of seven percent, residents will still be paying significantly less in rates than other Northern Rivers councils.

As the local government area grows, we are faced with many necessary changes and challenges and your Council will lead and respond.

However, Council is determined not to go down the path of financial non sustainability. We must meet our operational spend with appropriate rating levels and our current rating levels are comparatively low and insufficient to continue to deliver our current service levels.

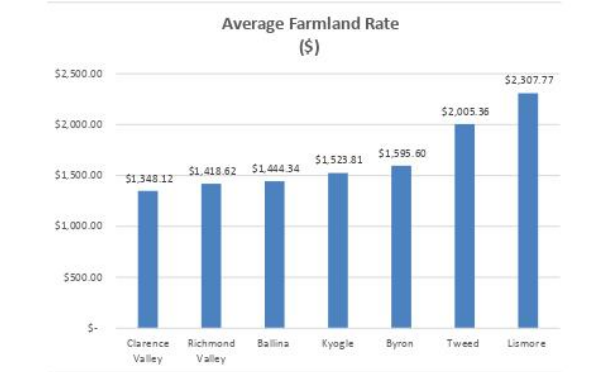
Specific challenges for Council include:

- maintaining the current economic base
- retaining the friendly, relaxed atmosphere in our towns and villages while ensuring adequate amenities are developed
- fostering appropriate investment and development
- meeting competing infrastructure demands generated by increased population and visitation levels

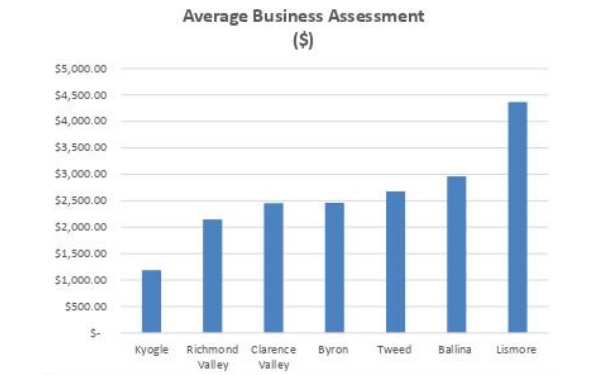
At Richmond Valley Council we are committed to delivering excellent services for our communities.

This is why we will be having conversations with our ratepayers to achieved a balance between how much you are willing to contribute to your future and how much it is necessary for Council to deliver on its promises, become sustainable and meet the community's expectations.

### The Richmond Valley has the second lowest average rates for farmland on the Northern Rivers.



### The Richmond Valley has the second lowest average business assessment for the Northern Rivers.



### Woodburn skate park



### CONTACT US:

p: 6660 0300  
e: [council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au)  
w: [www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au](http://www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au)



Mayor, GM message: ‘planning for our future together’



Over the past five years Council has delivered many significant capital projects, has increased service levels and added additional services, and increased our capacity to deliver for the community.

This fresh approach came about after the development of our Community Strategic Plan, which outlines the community's priorities and highlights residents' desires for better services and facilities.

As residents would be aware, Council is currently in its last year of a five-year special rate variation. This has allowed Council to invest an extra \$5.5 million in our road network, around \$3.7 million in capital upgrades including Casino, Woodburn and Coraki riverfronts, and Casino, Evans Head and Woodburn skate parks, as well as various other projects.

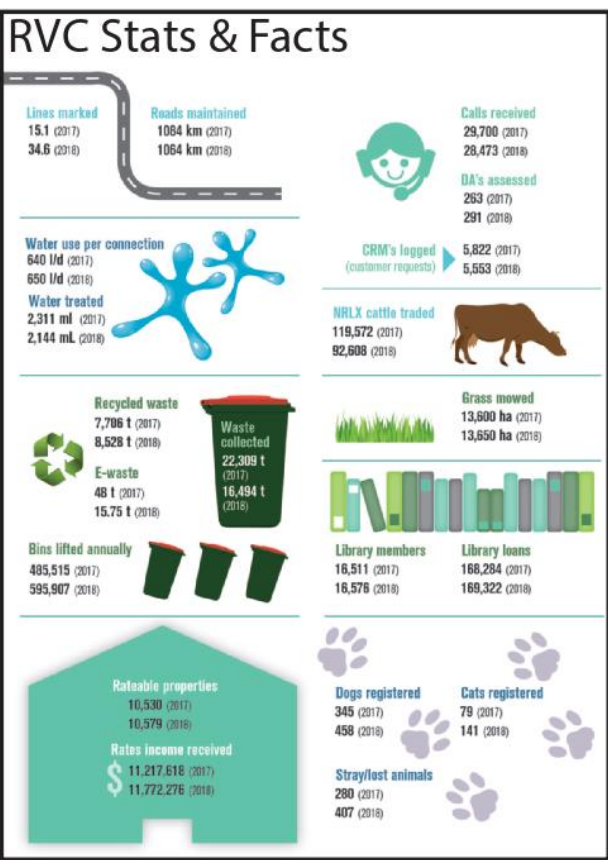
The current variation also allowed Council to increase the renewals of public toilets and other facilities in our parks with an extra \$700,000. There

was also an extra \$400,000 of improved maintenance, namely playgrounds, road drainage and public toilet maintenance.

Along with all the projects Council has delivered from the current special rate variation, we have also been successful in gaining additional grant funding from both the Federal and NSW governments. Out of these grants we are delivering a \$14 million upgrade to the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange, constructed a \$1 million cycleway from Broadwater to Broadwater Beach, a youth space at the Broadwater Rileys Hill Hall, new tennis courts and clubhouse for Evans Head, upgrading the Rappville Road, received extra funding for the Woodburn riverfront upgrade and the Casino Drill Hall and Amphitheatre projects, added \$1.4 million to the Federal Government's \$1 million investment to upgrade the Woodburn-Coraki Road.

With the addition of new assets there is an ongoing maintenance and renewal expense, as well as increased depreciation to fund. While achieving cash surplus budgets in the past five years and driving efficiency across its operations, Council's revenues are not enough to maintain its infrastructure at an acceptable level, nor able to proceed with new projects.

Being this is the last year of the current special rate variation, it is both prudent and timely that Council goes back to the community to discuss what has been delivered from the past rate variation, what the cost is to continue to deliver our current service levels as well as keeping our assets in good shape, and test the community's appetite for a further special rate variation. While we are mindful of the cost of living pressures being felt by all of our ratepayers we, as a community, need to invest in our assets and our future as we agreed in our current Community Strategic Plan.



How will the SRV be spent?

A 5.5% SRV will generate \$2.97 million over a four-year period from 2019-2020 to 2022-2023, and a 7% SRV \$3.86 million.

- Roadwork and renewal of urban streets
- Grading unsealed local roads to meet existing service levels
- Additional maintenance of the rural road network: bitumen maintenance; drainage; patching; roadside slashing; gravel maintenance; and vegetation management
- Increased funding to maintain existing services across Council operations including emergency services
- Additional bitumen resealing and gravel re-sheeting to keep our roads at a good a standard and prevent them from deteriorating
- Culverts, causeways, drainage and footpath renewal
- Community assets renewal

The SRV applies to your general rates only and does not apply to the waste management, water and sewerage charges on your rates notices.



SRV will keep the Valley's investment momentum going

As Council is coming to the end of its current special rate variation, it is timely to go to the community and have a discussion regarding the current costs of service levels and asset maintenance.

To start the discussion with the community, RVC's Finance team has modelled three different scenarios (featured below) which shows the yearly and weekly increase. Scenario one is what the future looks like without a further special variation; but includes a 2.7% increase in next year's rate peg as advised by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal. Scenario two is continuing with a 5.5% variation, including the rate peg, and scenario three increases the variation to 7%, including the rate peg.

2.7% Rate Peg							
Category	Ave Rate	Ave Rate @ 2.7%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase	Ave Rate @ 2.5%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase
Residential	\$ 969.43	\$ 998.16	\$ 28.73	\$ 0.55	\$ 1,022.01	\$ 23.85	\$ 0.46
Rural Residential	\$ 846.29	\$ 870.12	\$ 23.83	\$ 0.46	\$ 895.54	\$ 25.42	\$ 0.49
Business	\$ 2,860.44	\$ 2,940.58	\$ 80.14	\$ 1.54	\$ 3,015.92	\$ 75.34	\$ 1.45
Farmland	\$ 1,606.77	\$ 1,647.39	\$ 40.62	\$ 0.78	\$ 1,691.90	\$ 44.51	\$ 0.86
5.5% SRV							
Category	Ave Rate	Ave Rate @ 5.5%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase	Ave Rate @ 5.5%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase
Residential	\$ 969.43	\$ 1,022.64	\$ 53.21	\$ 1.02	\$ 1,079.34	\$ 56.70	\$ 1.09
Rural Residential	\$ 846.29	\$ 895.54	\$ 49.25	\$ 0.95	\$ 943.21	\$ 47.67	\$ 0.92
Business	\$ 2,860.44	\$ 3,027.14	\$ 166.70	\$ 3.21	\$ 3,200.24	\$ 173.10	\$ 3.33
Farmland	\$ 1,606.77	\$ 1,701.43	\$ 94.66	\$ 1.82	\$ 1,790.44	\$ 89.01	\$ 1.71
7.0% SRV							
Category	Ave Rate	Ave Rate @ 7.0%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase	Ave Rate @ 7.0%	Yearly Increase	Weekly Increase
Residential	\$ 969.43	\$ 1,038.13	\$ 68.70	\$ 1.32	\$ 1,109.31	\$ 71.18	\$ 1.37
Rural Residential	\$ 846.29	\$ 908.25	\$ 61.96	\$ 1.19	\$ 974.98	\$ 66.73	\$ 1.28
Business	\$ 2,860.44	\$ 3,055.99	\$ 195.55	\$ 3.76	\$ 3,277.18	\$ 221.19	\$ 4.25
Farmland	\$ 1,606.77	\$ 1,726.86	\$ 120.09	\$ 2.31	\$ 1,850.83	\$ 123.97	\$ 2.38

Community meetings

Council will be holding community meetings in:

- **Casino on Monday 4 February; and**
- **Evans Head Wednesday 6 February**

We will also be conducting a community telephone survey, managed by Sydney-based company Micromex Research, which has undertaken previous surveys for RVC.

Around 400 residents will be called and asked to participate. Those receiving a call will be representative of our population.

Your feedback is important and we would appreciate hearing your thoughts.

More information

Council's website has a dedicated page with all the information you need to make an informed decision. Please visit [richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au](http://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au) Documents are available for viewing and downloading.

Information will also be available at:

- The Casino administration building
- Casino Community and Cultural Centre
- Council's Evans Head office and library
- Casino Library
- Coraki Library
- Mobile library


Should you wish to discuss the contents of this newsletter with a Council officer, please call 6660 0300.



## Post Details

**Richmond Valley Council**  
Published by Sharon Jean [?] · 8 January at 14:28 ·

Issue 10 of Valley Views was distributed to all Richmond Valley households and businesses between 10-14 December. This newsletter contains important information about Council's proposal for a special rate variation. Click on the below image to read more. Council is seeking community feedback through public meetings on Monday 4 February in Casino and Wednesday 6 February in Evans Head, as well as via a community phone survey. Written submissions are also being encouraged, closing midday Wednesday 6 February. Submissions can be posted to the General Manager, Richmond Valley Council, Locked Bag 10, Casino NSW 2470 or emailed to [council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au) More information on the special rate variation can be found at [http://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/.../Special\\_Rate\\_Variation/](http://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/.../Special_Rate_Variation/)



**Valley Views Community Newsletter\_SRV\_December2018**  
Issue 10 of Valley Views was distributed to all Richmond Valley...

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**1,902** People reached **171** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

Carmel Jillett Innes and Leonie Alekson 1 Comment 6 shares

**Performance for your post**  
1,902 People Reached  
21 Reactions, comments & shares

4 Like	2 On post	2 On shares
1 Wow	0 On post	1 On shares
1 Sad	0 On post	1 On shares
4 Angry	0 On post	4 On shares
5 Comments	1 On Post	4 On Shares
6 Shares	6 On Post	0 On Shares

**150** Post Clicks  
1 Photo views 40 Link clicks 109 Other Clicks

**NEGATIVE FEEDBACK**  
1 Hide Post 0 Hide All Posts  
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## All comments

Write a comment...


**Tim Smith** In case I can't make the session on FEB 6th, below are my thoughts.  
It's a tough situation. I would certainly like to see the roads etc improve and I could probably handle an additional rate rise (but definitely wouldn't be happy about it), however the majority of our residents are pensioners &/or battling farmers who certainly can't. With a population of only 22,807 (so maybe 6 or 7 thousand households), but with visitors to the area of nearly 300,000 people, our residents account for less than 8% of people in the area. It's clearly not viable that the local population is enough to cover the costs for infrastructure to support the transient population. In reading your tourism development plan (2017), there doesn't appear to be any 'silver bullets' to attract more visitors & more importantly, nothing to increase the spending of those here (the report showing we are quite under-indexed in visitor spending per head @\$254 versus the state average @\$330). Potentially the best hope for that is in Evans Head, however if I'm not mistaken, the state government draws the majority of the tourist dollar from Evans through the holiday park - what sort of cut do you draw from that to put back into the local community? To be honest, I wonder if the zone (suburbs/population) of this council is actually viable on its own under the current boundaries. If you can't draw the revenue you need from the majority (that is, the tourists), then perhaps a better solution is to merge with another council to make both more sustainable (rather than excessive rate rises on an already strained population)?  
Thanks for seeking feedback before implementing!

Like · Reply · Message · 2w

## Post Details

**Richmond Valley Council**  
Published by Sharon Jean [?] · 25 January at 10:25 ·

\*\*\* EXTENSION OF TIME - closes midday Wednesday 6 February \*\*\*  
\*\*\* ONLINE SURVEY \*\*\* We are conducting an online survey to gauge as much feedback as possible from our community on the proposed special rate variation. Your input is important and we would appreciate hearing your thoughts. Please follow this link to have your say - <https://app.keysurvey.com/f1385693/1014/> Survey closes midday Wednesday 6 February. More information on the rate variation can be found on our website - [http://www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/.../Special\\_Rate\\_Variat...](http://www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/.../Special_Rate_Variat.../)



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**3,028** People reached **461** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

Sharon Jean, Carmel Jillett Innes and 4 others 3 Comments 21 shares

**Performance for your post**  
3,028 People Reached  
37 Likes, Comments & Shares

11 Likes	6 On Post	5 On Shares
5 Comments	4 On Post	1 On Shares
21 Shares	21 On Post	0 On Shares

**424** Post Clicks  
17 Photo views 142 Link clicks 265 Other Clicks

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## Post Details


**Richmond Valley Council**  
Published by Sharon Jean [?] · 29 January at 10:30 ·

## Extraordinary Council Meeting

An extraordinary Council meeting will be held on Thursday 7 February commencing 5pm at the Council Chambers, 10 Graham Place, Casino.

The meeting is to consider the proposed special rate variation, including submissions and community feedback.

All residents are welcome to attend this extraordinary Council meeting.



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Sharon Jean, Tanya Loibl and 7 others 3 Comments 14 shares

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**Performance for your post**  
2,942 People Reached  
28 Reactions, comments & shares

9 Like	9 On post	0 On shares
1 Angry	0 On post	1 On shares
4 Comments	3 On Post	1 On Shares
14 Shares	14 On Post	0 On Shares

**170** Post Clicks  
27 Photo views 1 Link clicks 142 Other Clicks

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