Securing Willoughby's Future engagement outcomes report

November 2023

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Executive summary

Between 26 September and 5 November 2023, Willoughby City Council conducted an extensive community engagement campaign to seek feedback on four rate rise options. These options are listed below:

Option name	Reduce Services	Maintain Services	Increase Services	Increase Services and Infrastructure
Option number	1	2	3	4
Overall rate increase	3.5%	12%	15%	20%
Includes Special Rate Variation?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Awareness-raising and engagement activities

Awareness-raising activities included:

- Sending 30,057 letters, accompanied by a six-page brochure, in the mail to all ratepayers, including ratepayers based overseas.
- Sending out more than 36,000 emails to various databases
- Placing 42 pavement sticker signs around 10 localities
- Publishing social media posts which were seen 198,853 times
- Distributing at least 1,585 flyers to businesses and passers-by
- Promoting translated engagement sessions on a Chinese language media site

Other awareness-raising activities included digital marketing signs, on-hold messages, email signature blocks, distributing flyers in venues, sending direct emails and Council newspaper advertisements.

Council achieved high awareness levels, with an estimated 47% of Willoughby LGA residents being aware of the rate rise options. This is higher than the 34% average awareness rate for other Sydney councils which have undertaken rate rise engagement campaigns.

Engagement activities included:

- Creating a Securing Willoughby's Future online Have Your Say portal which was visited 5,100 times (www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/swf)
- An invitation on the Have Your Say portal to complete an online opt-in survey (1,873 respondents filled out the survey)
- Commissioning research company Micromex to undertake a representative telephone and online survey of 419 residents (survey was weighted to reflect the 18 plus age and gender profile of the LGA)
- Holding eleven engagement events attended by 56 people, including a stakeholder roundtable with Progress Associations and business groups
- Inviting respondents to make comments or submissions to explain their feedback

The vast majority of participants (95% in the opt-in survey and 78% in the representative survey) were residential ratepayers.

Sentiment outcomes

Community sentiment was measured by asking survey respondents to:

- Either rate each option against five sentiment ratings (from Very Supportive to Not At All Supportive)
- Rank every option from one (most preferred) to four (least preferred)

The key sentiment outcomes for both the opt-in (Have Your Say) and representative (Micromex) surveys were:

- 64% of opt-in survey respondents, and 74% of representative survey respondents, ranked an SRV option as their first option
- Across both sentiment questions, Maintain Services had the highest levels of overall support.
- Residential landowners and renters ranked Maintain Services, and then Increase Services, as their highest ranked options.

These outcomes are further explained in the table below:

Measure	**Opt-in (Have Your Say) survey finding**	**Representative (Micromex) survey finding**
Percentage of respondents who ranked Special Rate Variation option as first option	64%	74%
Option average ranking score		
Most preferred	Maintain Services (1.93)	Maintain Services (1.97)
Second most preferred	Increase Services (2.30)	Increase Services (2.16)
Third most preferred	Reduce Services (2.58)	Reduce Services (2.82)
Least preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.19)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.05)

Measure	Opt-in (Have Your Say) survey finding	Representative (Micromex) survey finding
Percentage at least "Somewhat Supportive" of option		
Most preferred	Maintain Services (57%)	Maintain Services (72%)
Second most preferred	Reduce Services (44%)	Increase Services (65%)
Third most preferred	Increase Services (42%)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (53%)
Least preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure (27%)	Reduce Services (38%)

Other key sentiment outcomes only available in the opt-in (Have Your Say) survey were:

- Business renters, workers and visitors ranked Increase Services as the highest ranked option, while business ratepayers ranked Reduce Services as the highest ranked option, while noting the relatively small participant base in these cohorts.

Other key sentiment outcomes only available in the representative (Micromex) survey were:

- If respondents who selected Reduce Services as their highest ranked option are removed, Increase Services was the highest ranked option
- All age groups ranked the options in the same order as the overall ranking results. However, compared to the overall ranking result, there was marginally more support towards the SRV options among respondents aged over 65, and marginally more support towards Reduce Services among respondents aged 18-34.
- When asked why they had chosen Reduce Services as their first preference, 45% of respondents stated they selected it because other options are not affordable, or because they don't want an increase.
- About one in four respondents who chose either the Maintain Services or Increase Services option as their first preference did so because it was regarded as an 'affordable option'.
- About one in four people who chose Maintain Services as their first preference stated they wanted existing service levels to remain.
- Those who chose Increase Services or Increase Services and Infrastructure as their first preferences wanted to see services, facilities and infrastructure upgraded, and were willing to pay for this.

Verbal and written comments

In addition to the statistical data collected in the two surveys, and comments collected and analysed in the representative survey, a wide range of other verbal and written comments were collected.

This included 39 emailed comments, 26 submissions, 891 comments in the online survey and 126 verbal comments made across 11 events. One of the submissions was from the owners of Chatswood Chase, Chatswood Westfield and Northbridge Plaza, objecting to the rate increase on the basis it would make it more difficult to attract tenants to these centres and could affect development decisions.

Commonly-mentioned statements included:

- Rate increases should not be contemplated in current cost of living environment
- Council needs to be more frugal and efficient to keep rates down, and review discretionary services
- Overall satisfaction with Council services and a desire to improve them

Opt-in (Have Your Say) survey results

Between 25 September and 5 November 2023, a total of 1,873 participants chose to complete the Have Your Say survey.

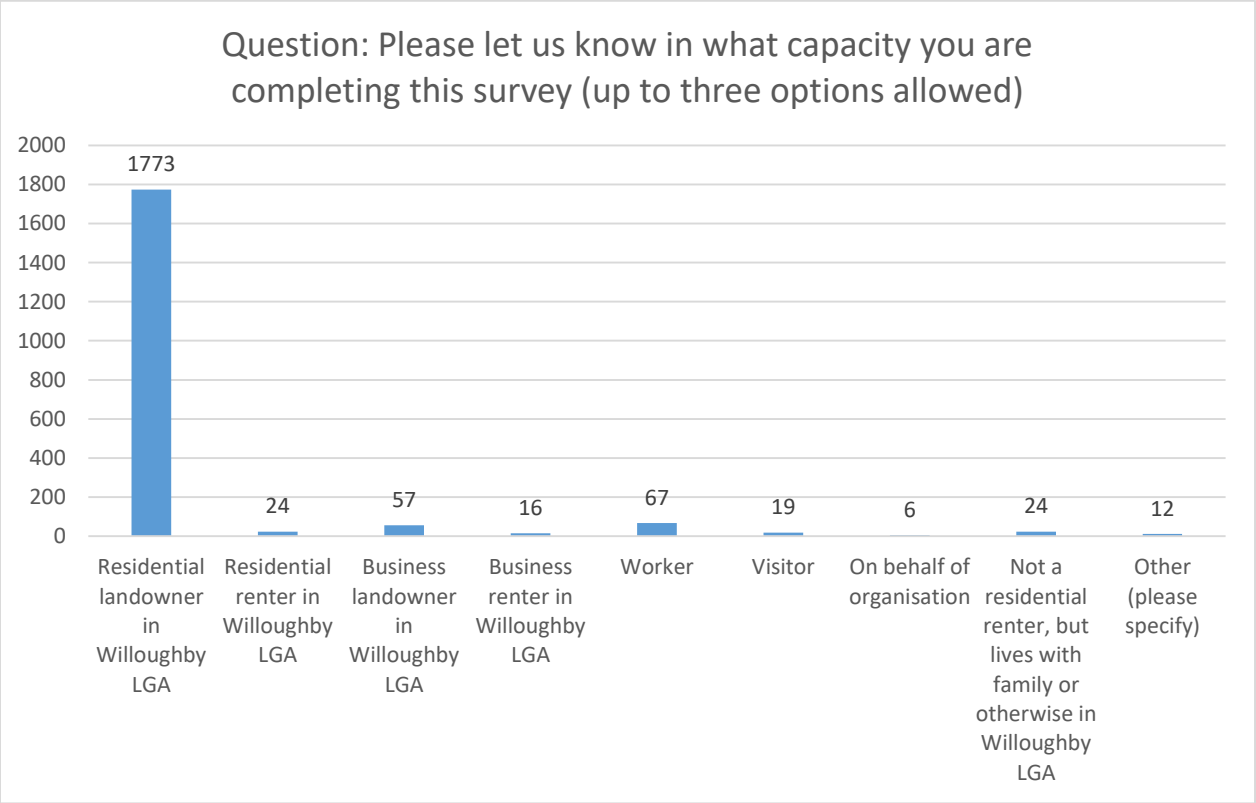
Participant information

Capacity in which participants filled out survey

Respondents were asked to state the primary capacity in which they were completing the survey. Participants were allowed to choose up to three options.

As shown below, 1,773 (or 95% of all) participants were completing the survey as residential landowners.

Figure 1 – Capacity in which participants filled out the opt-in survey



"Other participant" types included the following:

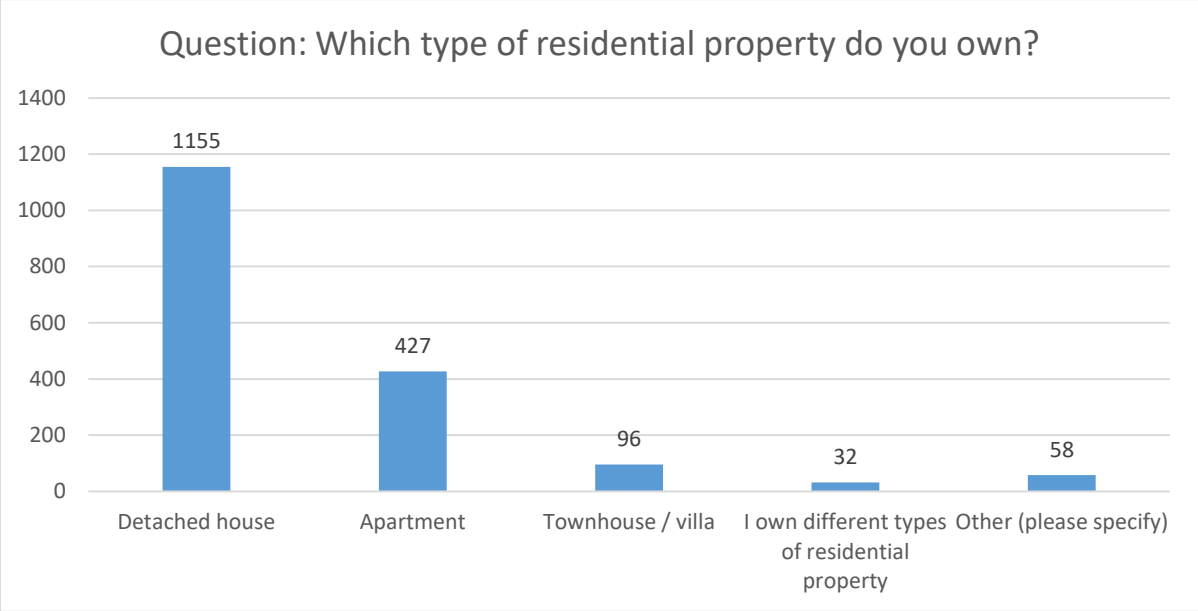
- Former Council staff member
- Spouse is a residential landowner in Willoughby LGA
- Volunteer at community organisation
- Renting out a unit until we are ready to downsize.
- "Lover of Willoughby"
- Child studies in Willoughby

In total, some 6% of Willoughby's total residential ratepayers, and 1.9% of total business ratepayers, participated in the opt-in survey.

Property types owned by residential landowners

Most residential landowners who completed the survey were owners of detached homes. Landowners who nominated "other" were usually owners of duplexes or semi-detached properties.

Figure 2 – Property type among residential landowners who filled out opt-in survey

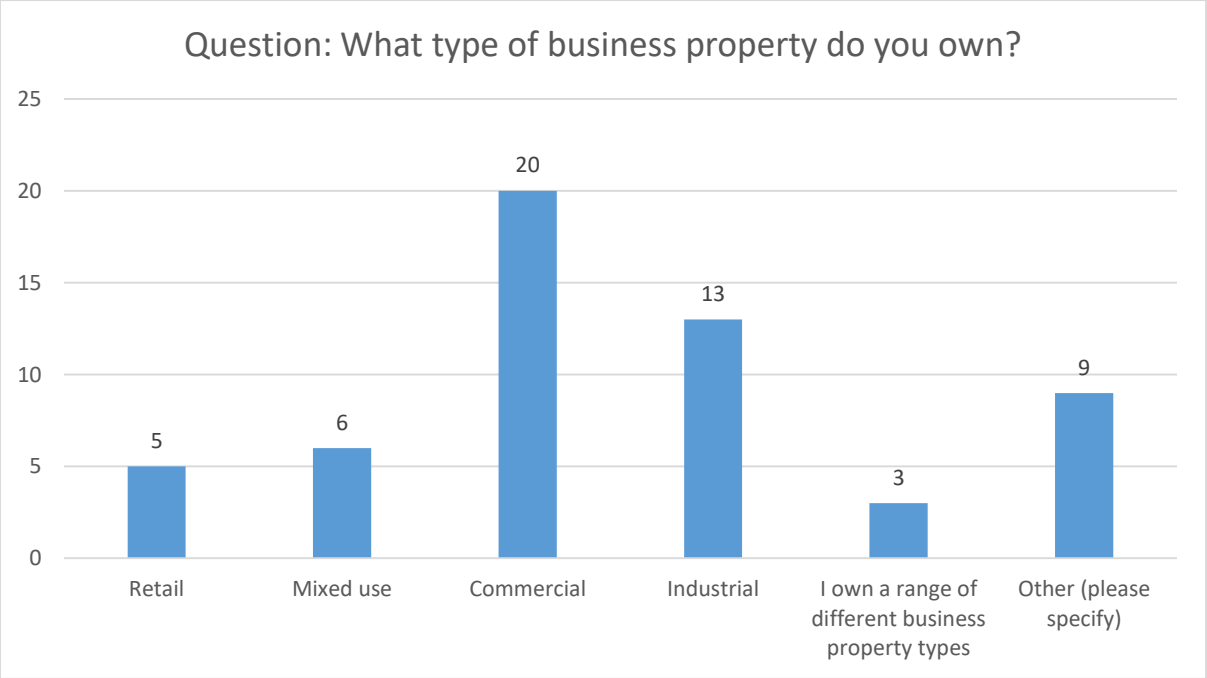


Property types owned by business landowners

Around one in three business landowners who completed the survey were owners of commercial property.

Participants who nominated themselves as an "other" landowner included people with investment properties, who worked from home or owned a medical suite.

Figure 3 – Property type among opt-in survey business landowners who filled out survey



Location of respondents

Respondents who indicated they owned property, or rented a business or home, in the Willoughby LGA were asked to state the relevant suburb. Chatswood was the most represented suburb among all respondent types.

Figure 4 – Location of opt-in survey respondents (number and percentage)

	Residential landowner location		**Business landowner location**		**Residential renter location** [1]		**Business renter location**	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Artarmon	174	9.8	15	26.3	2	8.3	4	25
Castle Cove	67	3.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Castlecrag	103	5.8	1	1.8	-	-	-	-
Chatswood	392	22.1	22	38.6	8	33.3	6	37.5
Chatswood West	66	3.7	1	1.8	2	8.3	1	6.3
Lane Cove North	65	3.7	1	1.8	-	-	-	-
Middle Cove	57	3.2	-	-	1	4.2	-	-
Naremburn	191	10.8	4	7.0	6	25	-	-
Northbridge	185	10.4	1	1.8	1	4.2	-	-

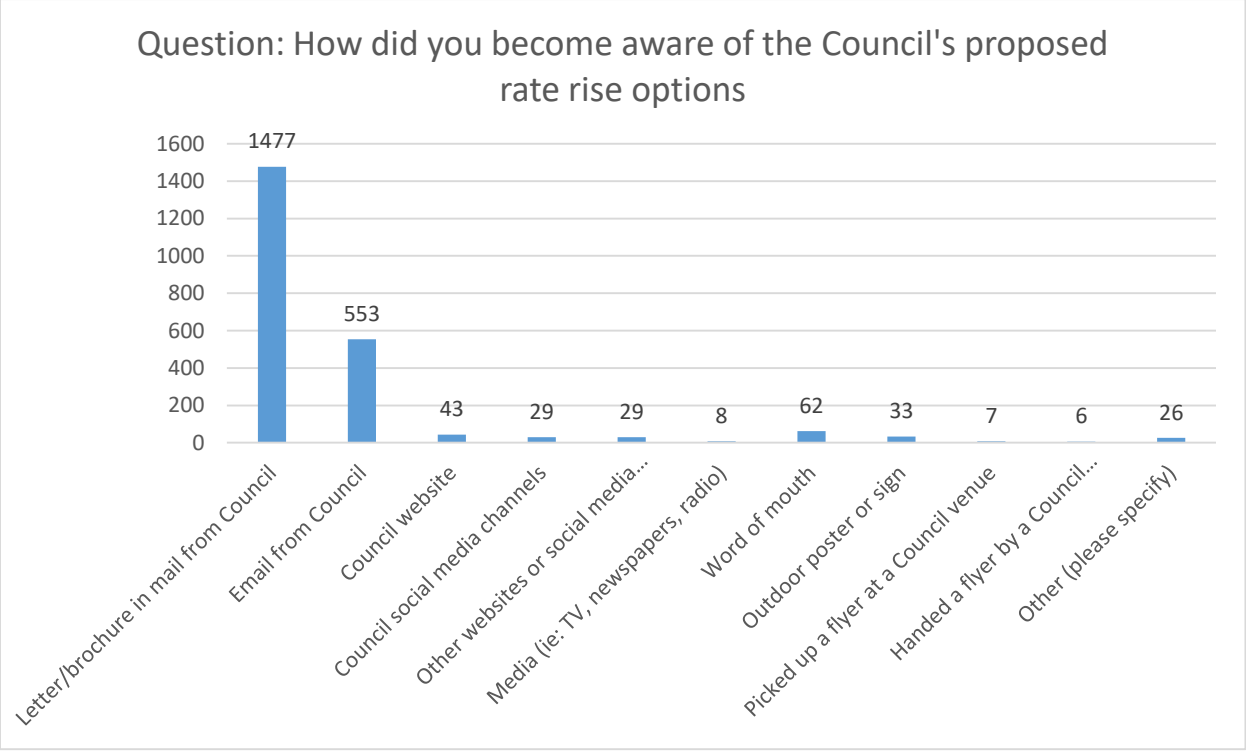
[1] Excludes people living with their families

	Residential landowner location		Business landowner location		Residential renter location [1]		Business renter location	
North Willoughby	85	4.8	3	5.3	2	8.3	1	6.3
Roseville	59	3.3	2	3.5	2	8.3	-	-
St Leonards	44	2.5	1	1.8	-	-	2	12.5
Willoughby	195	11.0	5	8.8	-	-	1	6.3
Willoughby East	71	4.0	-	-	-	-	1	6.3
I own property in multiple suburbs	19	1.1	1	1.8	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**1,773**	**100**	**57**	**100**	**24**	**100**	**16**	**100**

How participants became aware

Participants were asked how they became aware of the engagement process. Some 79% of participants stated they became aware as a result of the letter and brochure sent to all ratepayers.

Figure 5 – How opt-in survey participants became aware of engagement activity



Other information

Participants were also asked if they had read about the four different options, before making their selection. Some 1,865 (or 99.6% of all) participants confirmed they had read information about the options.

Overall participant sentiment

To gauge sentiment, participants were asked to:

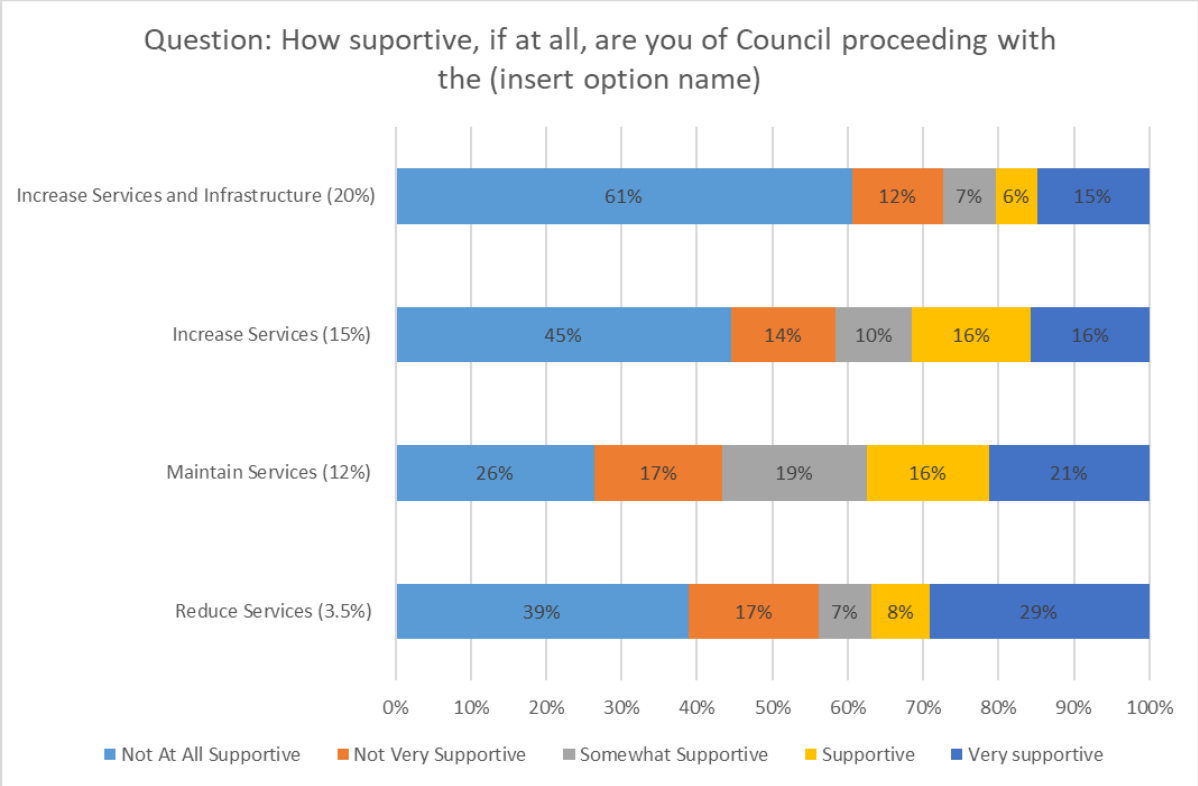
- State whether they were Very Supportive, Supportive, Somewhat Supportive, Not Very Supportive or Not At All Supportive for each of the four options (the option rating question)
- Rank each of the four rate rise options in order of preference, with 1 being most preferred and 4 being the least preferred (sentiment ranking question)

Option rating question - overall

The option rating question allowed participants to outline their level of support for each option, without being required to rank options. This meant respondents had the ability to state they were supportive, or not supportive, of all options.

In response to this question, 57% of respondents said they were at least Somewhat Supportive of Maintain Services, compared to 44% for Reduce Services, 42% for Increase Services and 27% for Increase Services and Infrastructure. [2]

Figure 6 – Level of support for each rate rise option in opt-in survey using sentiment rating question



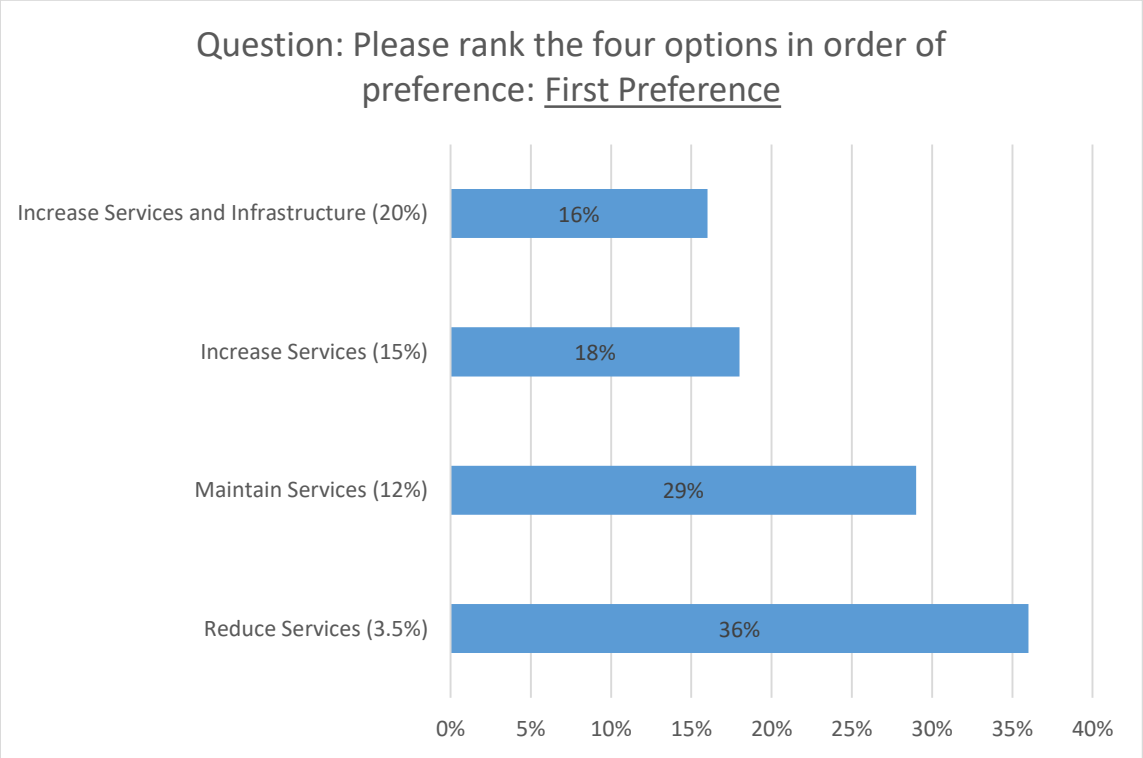
[2] Minor variance between sum of relevant percentage of Maintain Services and Reduce Services options, and overall number, due to rounding of percentage of each option

Option ranking question - overall

As mentioned above, in the option ranking question respondents were required to rank each of the four rate rise options in order of preference, with 1 being most preferred and 4 being the least preferred (sentiment ranking question). A number needed to be selected (from 1 to 4) in all four option boxes for the question to be recorded.

In this question, and as shown in the table below, some 64% of respondents selected one of the three SRV questions as their first ranked option. [3]

Figure 7 – Percentage of respondents to opt-in survey that selected option as their first ranked option in sentiment ranking question



Separately, when the average ranking scores for each option are calculated, it can be seen that Maintain Services is the most popular option, as it has the lowest score.

Figure 8 – Overall preference ranking of four rate rise options in opt-in survey

Ranking	Option	Average ranking score
Most preferred	Maintain Services	1.93
Second most preferred	Increase Services	2.30
Third most preferred	Reduce Services	2.58
Least preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure	3.19

[3] Minor variance between the sum of the percentages of the three SRV options, and the overall figure, due to rounding of option percentages

Sentiment among different participant types

This section of the report outlines the overall preference of different participant types.

Option ranking question - preference of residential landowners

Of the 1,773 residential landowners who filled out the opt-in survey, the Maintain Services option was the most preferred option.

Figure 9 – Preferences of residential landowners only

Ranking	Option	Average ranking score
Most preferred	Maintain Services	1.92
Second most preferred	Increase Services	2.30
Third most preferred	Reduce Services	2.57
Least preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure	3.20

Option ranking question - preference of business landowners

Of the 57 business landowners who filled out the opt-in survey, the Reduce Services option was the most preferred option.

Figure 10 – Preferences of business landowners only

Ranking	Option	Average ranking score
Most preferred	Reduce Services	1.70
Second most preferred	Maintain Services	1.82
Third most preferred	Increase Services	2.72
Least preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure	3.75

Option ranking question - preference of residential renters

Of the 24 residential renters who filled out the opt-in survey, the Maintain Services option was the most preferred option.

Figure 11 – Preferences of residential renters only

Ranking	Option	Average ranking score
Most preferred	Maintain Services	2.08
Second most preferred	Increase Services	2.38
Third most preferred	Reduce Services	2.50
Least preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure	3.04

Option ranking question - preference of business renters

Of the 16 business renters who filled out the opt-in survey, the Increase Services option was the most preferred option.

Figure 12 – Preferences of business renters only

Ranking	Option	Average ranking score
Most preferred	Increase Services	2.13
Second most preferred	Maintain Services	2.19
Third most preferred	Reduce Services	2.56
Least preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure	3.13

Option ranking question - preference of workers

Of the 67 workers who filled out the opt-in survey, the Increase Services option was the most preferred option.

Figure 13 – Preferences of workers only

Ranking	Option	Average ranking score
Most preferred	Increase Services	2.10
Second most preferred	Maintain Services	2.27
Third most preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure	2.67
Least preferred	Reduce Services	2.96

Option ranking question - preference of visitors

Of the 19 visitors who filled out the opt-in survey, the Increase Services option was the most preferred option.

Figure 14 – Preferences of visitors only

Ranking	Option	Average ranking score
Most preferred	Increase Services	2.16
Second most preferred	Maintain Services	2.26
Third most preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure	2.74
Least preferred	Reduce Services	2.84

Option ranking question - preference of people who don't rent, but live with their family or otherwise

Of the 24 survey respondents who don't rent, but live with their family or otherwise, who filled out the opt-in survey, the Maintain Services option was the most preferred option.

Figure 15 – Preferences of people who don't rent, but live with their family or otherwise

Ranking	Option	Average ranking score
Most preferred	Maintain Services	1.88
Second most preferred	Increase Services	2.04
Third most preferred	Reduce Services	2.96
Least preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure	3.13

Option ranking question - overview of preference by participant type

Below is an overview of option preference by participant type.

Figure 16 – Overview of preferences by participant type

Option	Participant types which rank this option highest
Maintain Services	Residential landowners, residential renters and people who don't rent, but live with their family or otherwise
Increase Services	Business renters, workers and visitors
Reduce Services	Business landowners

Option ranking question - preference by residential landowners by suburb

The table below outlines the average ranking score for each option, depending on the suburb in which the residential landowner was based.

The table shows that residential landowners in all 14 of the LGA's suburbs expressed most support for Maintain Services. Landowners in 12 out of the 14 suburbs stated that Increase Services was their second most preferred option. The exception to this outcome was in Northbridge, where landowners stated that Reduce Services was their second most preferred option, and in St Leonards, where the second most preferred option was equally split between Increase Services and Reduce Services.

Figure 17 – Preferences of residential landowners by suburb

Suburb	Number of survey responses from suburb	First ranked option	Second ranked option	Third ranked option	Fourth ranked option
Artarmon	174	Maintain Services (1.93)	Increase Services (2.25)	Reduce Services (2.75)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.07)
Castle Cove	67	Maintain Services (1.91)	Increase Services (2.18)	Reduce Services (2.69)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.22)
Castlecrag	103	Maintain Services (1.95)	Increase Services (2.22)	Reduce Services (2.60)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.22)
Chatswood	392	Maintain Services (1.90)	Increase Services (2.36)	Reduce Services (2.48)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.26)
Chatswood West	66	Maintain Services (1.98)	Increase Services (2.32)	Reduce Services (2.61)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.09)
Lane Cove North	65	Maintain Services (1.94)	Increase Services (2.35)	Reduce Services (2.46)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.25)
Middle Cove	57	Maintain Services (1.96)	Increase Services (2.32)	Reduce Services (2.58)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.14)
Naremburn	191	Maintain Services (1.87)	Increase Services (2.25)	Reduce Services (2.65)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.22)
Northbridge	185	Maintain Services (1.90)	Reduce Services (2.34)	Increase Services (2.40)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.36)
North Willoughby	85	Maintain Services (1.93)	Increase Services (2.20)	Reduce Services (2.82)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.05)
Roseville	59	Maintain Services (1.98)	Increase Services (2.14)	Reduce Services (2.68)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.20)
St Leonards	44	Maintain Services (1.98)	Reduce Services (2.41) Increase Services (2.41)		Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.20)
Willoughby	195	Maintain Services (1.90)	Increase Services (2.32)	Reduce Services (2.56)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.22)
Willoughby East	71	Maintain Services (2.06)	Increase Services (2.23)	Reduce Services (2.77)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (2.94)
I own properties in multiple suburbs	19	Maintain Services (2.16)	Increase Services (2.32)	Reduce Services (2.53)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.00)

Option ranking question - preference by property type

There was no significant difference between property type owners, when it came to ranking rate rise options.

Figure 18 - Preferences of residential landowners by property type

	First ranked option	**Second ranked option**	**Third ranked option**	**Fourth ranked option**
Detached home owners	Maintain Services (1.94)	Increase Services (2.28)	Reduce Services (2.61)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.17)
Unit owners	Maintain Services (1.88)	Increase Services (2.36)	Reduce Services (2.47)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.29)
Townhouse / villa owners	Maintain Services (1.98)	Increase Services (2.30)	Reduce Services (2.65)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.07)
Other owners	Maintain Services (1.84)	Increase Services (2.16)	Reduce Services (2.88)	Increase Services and Infrastructure (3.12)

Representative (Micromex) survey results

Council commissioned research consultancy Micromex to conduct a representative survey of 419 residents, comprising 250 phone surveys and 169 online surveys. The survey was weighted to reflect Willoughby's age and gender population profile (among residents aged 18 or over) and undertaken from 3-15 October (one week after Council's engagement campaign commenced).

This report provides a summary of the headline statistics from this survey. A full copy of the Micromex report, including more detailed data analysis and the script and questions used to inform feedback, is available at www.haveyoursaywillougbhy.com.au/swf.

A total sample size of 419 residents 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 419 residents, 19 times out of 20 the same results would be expected.

Participant analysis

The representative survey was primarily targeted at residents. Participants were however also asked whether they were business ratepayers.

Figure 19 – Participant analysis in representative survey

	Residential ratepayer	**Business ratepayer**	**Don't pay residential rates (ie: renter)**
Number of participants	328	8	87
Percentage of participants	78%	2%	21% [4]

The representative survey did not produce any useful results for business ratepayers, due to the low number of participants.

Awareness

Prior to completing the survey, just under half of respondents were aware that Council was exploring various rate rises (47%).

This awareness level is well above benchmark levels, with data collected by Micromex from 4,453 survey participants in other metropolitan council rate rise projects showing just 34% of participants were aware of the applicable rate rise options. It should also be noted that this favourable awareness result is likely to have been higher if Micromex had conducted its survey later in Council's engagement campaign.

Awareness was significantly lower for those aged 18-34, non-ratepayers, and those who have lived in the area for ten years or less, which is likely to reflect that fact these participants were less likely to be property owners and therefore would not have received a letter from Council about the rate rise options.

[4] Responses add to more than 100% as a respondent could pay both residential and business rates.

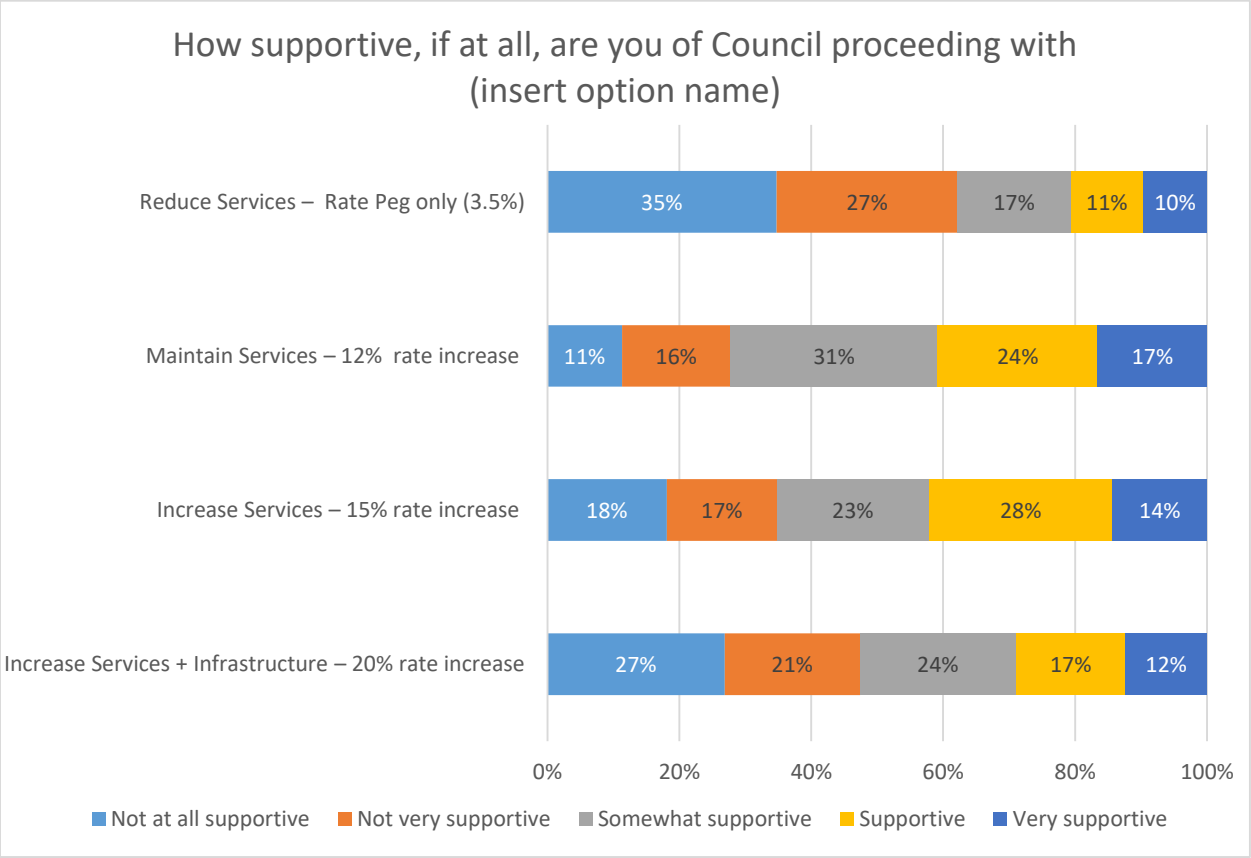
Sentiment results

Option rating question – overall result

Residents were given an explanation of each rate variation option. After the explanation of each option, residents were asked to rate their support for each option from Very Supportive to Not At All Supportive.

In response to this question, 72% of respondents said they were at least Somewhat Supportive of Maintain Services, compared to 65% for Increase Services, 53% for Increase Services and Infrastructure and 38% for Reduce Services.

Figure 20 – Level of support for each rate rise option using sentiment rating question (representative survey)

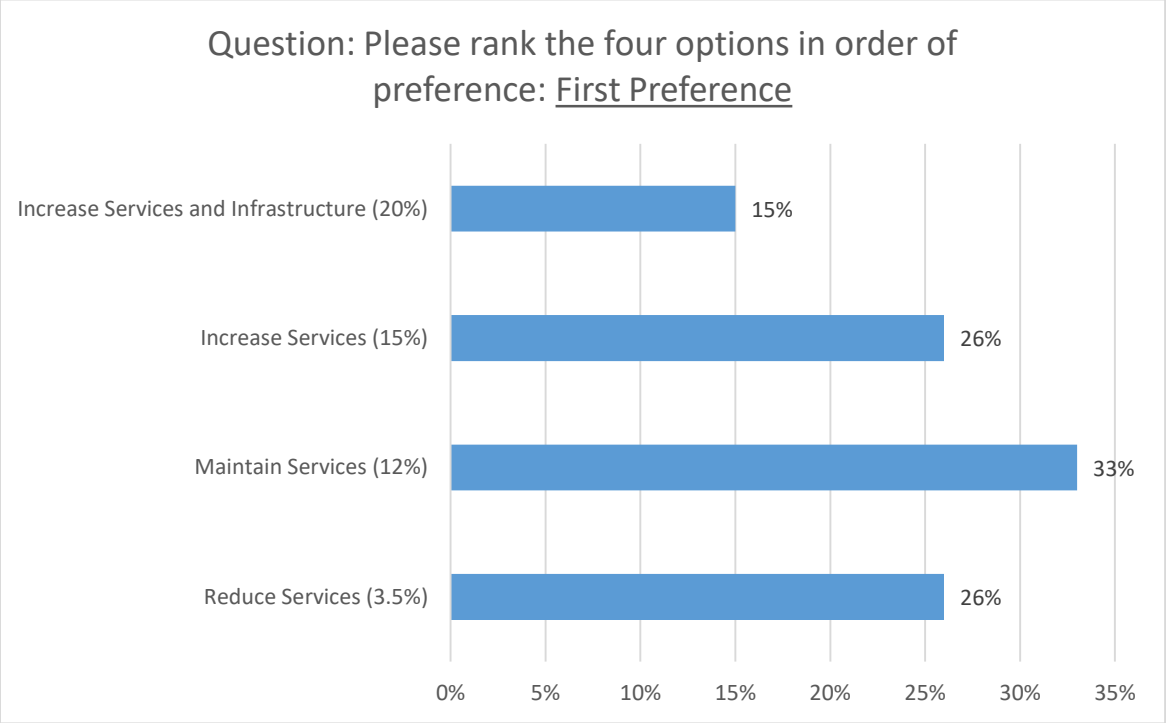


Option ranking question – overall result

In the option ranking question, respondents were asked to rank each option from 1 (most preferred) to 4 (least preferred). Some 74% of residents had a first preference for one of the three SRV options (Maintain Services, Increase Services or Increase Services and Infrastructure).

Of the three SRV options, 33% of respondents had a first preference for Maintain Services, 26% for Reduce Services and 41% had a first preference for either Increase Services or Increase Services and Infrastructure.

Figure 21 – First preference of respondents in option ranking question (representative survey)



The ranking results (from 1 to 4) for each option were then averaged to create an average ranking score for the relevant option.

Using this measure, among all survey respondents, Maintain Services was voted as the most preferred option in the representative survey, followed by Increase Services, Reduce Services and Increase Services and Infrastructure. This order is consistent with the opt-in survey.

Figure 22 – Overall preference ranking of four rate rise options (representative survey)

Ranking	**Option**	**Average ranking score**
Most preferred	Maintain Services	1.97
Second most preferred	Increase Services	2.16
Third most preferred	Reduce Services	2.82
Least preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure	3.05

Option ranking question – ratepayers versus non-ratepayers

Ratepayers and non-ratepayers (ie: renters) supported Maintain Services and Increase Services as their top two options. Non-ratepayers supported Increase Services and Infrastructure as their third option, while residential ratepayers supported Reduce Services as their third option.

Figure 23 – Option preference ranking compared results from residential ratepayers and non-ratepayers

Option	Residential ratepayer ranking	Non-ratepayer (renters) ranking
Maintain Services	1.96	1.99
Increase Services	2.20	2.01
Reduce Services	2.76	3.09
Increase Services and Infrastructure	3.08	2.91

Option ranking question – age and gender

The option ranking outcomes were relatively consistent between men and women.

The overall ranking of options was also consistent across all age groups.

However, older residents were marginally more likely to support the three SRV options, and less likely to support the Reduce Services option, compared to the overall ranking score. Meanwhile, younger residents had a marginally increased level of support for Reduce Services, and less support for Maintain Services and Increase Services, compared to the overall ranking score.

Figure 24 – Overall preference ranking of four rate rise options by gender and age (representative survey)

Option	Overall	Gender		Age			
		Male	Female	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
'Maintain Services' – 12% rate increase	1.97	1.98	1.95	1.99	1.98	1.99	1.89
'Increase Services' – 15% rate increase	2.16	2.24	2.09	2.25	2.18	2.07	2.13
'Reduce Services' – Rate Peg only	2.82	2.74	2.90	2.70	2.82	2.83	2.99
'Increase Services + Infrastructure – 20% rate increase	3.05	3.04	3.05	3.06	3.03	3.10	2.99
Base	419	198	220	106	133	94	86

Option ranking question – Ward location

Respondents in the Naremburn and Sailors Bay Wards supported Maintain Services as their most preferred option, followed by Increase Services, Reduce Services and Increase Services and Infrastructure. This ranking is consistent with the overall ranking result.

Respondents in Middle Harbour Ward and West Ward produced ranking results which were different to the overall ranking results, as outlined below:

- Middle Harbour Ward supported Increase Services as its preferred option
- West Ward placed Reduce Services as its least preferred option.

Figure 25 - Overall preference ranking of four rate rise options by ward (representative survey)

Council Ward	Number of Responses	First ranked option	Second ranked option	Third ranked option	Fourth ranked option
Middle Harbour	110	Increase Services (2.05)	Maintain Services (2.06)	Reduce Services (2.94)	Increase Services & Infrastructure (2.96)
Naremburn	101	Maintain Services (1.92)	Increase Services (2.25)	Reduce Services (2.55)	Increase Services & Infrastructure (3.28)
Sailors Bay	104	Maintain Services (1.90)	Increase Services (2.30)	Reduce Services (2.78)	Increase Services & Infrastructure (3.02)
West Ward	104	Maintain Services (1.98)	Increase Services (2.08)	Increase Services & Infrastructure (2.93)	Reduce Services (3.01)
Overall	420	Maintain Services (1.97)	Increase Services (2.16)	Reduce Services (2.82)	Increase Services & Infrastructure (3.05)

Option ranking question – time lived in area

Residents who've lived in the LGA for 11 or more years were more likely to support Maintain Services, compared to residents who've lived in the LGA for 10 years or less.

Figure 26 - Overall preference ranking of four rate rise options by time lived in area (representative survey)

Option	Overall	Time lived in area		
		10 years or less	11- 20 years	More than 20 years
'Maintain Services' – 12% rate increase	1.97	2.04	1.94	1.92
'Increase Services' – 15% rate increase	2.16	2.14	2.20	2.16
'Reduce Services' – Rate Peg only	2.82	2.86	2.73	2.85
'Increase Services + Infrastructure – 20% rate increase	3.05	2.97	3.12	3.06
Base	419	142	109	169

Option ranking question – respondents who stated SRV option was their first preference

Another way to calculate an average ranking score is by only counting the ranking score of people who selected one of the SRV options as their first preference (by removing the 26% of respondents who selected Reduce Services as their preferred option).

Using this measure, there is a higher preference (lower mean rank) for the Increase Services option amongst the remaining 312 respondents.

Figure 27 – Overall preference ranking of four rate rise options after people who ranked Reduce Services were removed (representative survey)

Ranking	Option	Average ranking score
Most preferred	Increase Services	1.86
Second most preferred	Maintain Services	1.91
Third most preferred	Increase Services and Infrastructure	2.78

Comments and submissions made

As part of this engagement process, participants were able to make comments or provide submissions. This section of the engagement outcomes report analyses these comments and/or submissions.

Comments made in representative survey

In the representative survey, respondents were asked an open-ended question about why they selected the first preference they did. The resulting verbatim comments were then coded into themes by research company Micromex.

For those who chose Reduce Services as their first preference, 45% selected it because other options are not affordable. Top reasons for selecting a preference that involved the Maintain Services option surrounded concerns for maintaining service levels and that it is affordable. Those who chose Increase Services, or Increase Services and Infrastructure, want to see services, facilities and infrastructure upgraded.

Figure 28 – Percentage of respondents who provided reason for selecting applicable option as their first preference in representative survey

	Rate Peg only	**12% rate increase**	**15% rate increase**	**20% rate increase**
Doesn't want an increase/can't afford/increase too high	45%	16%	7%	4%
Affordable option	9%	23%	25%	10%
Maintain service levels	1%	26%	10%	24%
Council needs the increase/only solution	3%	16%	20%	24%
Upgrading services, facilities and infrastructure	0%	4%	26%	39%
Prevent service decline	4%	17%	7%	18%
Ensure rate rise can be afforded by the entire community	7%	16%	13%	2%

Written comments

- A total of 39 emailed comments were received - these are listed as Attachment J.

- Some 891 of the 1,873 respondents in the online survey made a comment to support their survey inputs. These comments are available at Attachments K to N and are listed by the first ranked option of the respondent.
- Some 26 submissions were received, as either attached to emails, uploaded to the Have Your Say portal or Word or PDF documents or sent as letters in the post. These are shown at Attachment F

When participants explicitly gave permission to publish their name (via the Have Your Say portal survey), the applicable name is published alongside the comment or submission.

Council did not ask participants who provided comments via email or posted letter whether they wanted their names published alongside the comment or submission. For this reason, no name has been published alongside these contributions.

It should also be noted that the following organisational comments or submissions were received.

Figure 29 – Organisational comments and submissions

Organisation	Comment / submission
ANLCM Properties Pty Ltd	We wish to keep cost of rates low - we too are experiencing inflation in other areas and increasing rates adds to the cost burden.
Willoughby Symphony Choir	Although rate rises are not (popular), I think cuts to services would be detrimental to the whole local government area
Northern Suburbs Tennis Association	WCC rates are very reasonable and a 'catch up' is justified
Urbis on behalf of Northbridge Plaza (Dexus), Westfield Chatswood (Scentre Group) and Chatswood Chase (Vicinity Centres)	See among other submissions in Attachment F

Option sentiment across emailed comments and formal submissions

Given that some writers of emailed comments or submissions stated they were unable to fill out the online survey, an analysis has been undertaken of the option sentiment among this feedback.

Of the 65 emailed comments or submissions, 18 supported a SRV option and 13 supported Reduce Services. A number of writers either did not nominate an option they supported, or nominated a new option which included:

- Reduce rates
- Keep rates on hold

- Differential rate increase between residents and businesses
- New rate increase percentage

Figure 30 – Options supported in comments and submissions

Option	**Support for this option among emailed comments or formal submissions**
Maintain Services	13
Reduce Services	13
Increase Services	2
Increase Services and Infrastructure	3
No specific option	23
Option other than four options	11

Verbal comments

Participants at the online and in-person engagement events asked questions or made some 126 comments. These questions and comments are available at Attachment G, H and I.

In addition one verbal comment was received directly by the SRV Project Manager that “rates are low, I pay $2,600 for a unit at Cairns, I have no objection to a small amount of increase.”

Regularly-mentioned themes and statements

An analysis was undertaken of all written and verbal comments and submissions (excluding the comments collected as part of the Micromex survey).

Figure 31 - Statements made three or more times in comments and submissions

THEME: AFFORDABILITY FOR RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES	
Statement	*Frequency*
• These rate increases are being proposed at a time when increasing cost of living is already an unaffordable burden	97
• Council needs to be more frugal and efficient	51
• Pensioners & self-funded retirees cannot afford extra rates	25
• I can afford an increase, but please consider those who can’t	3
• Increased services or infrastructure is important and affordable	8

THEME: SRV OPTIONS AND THE STRUCTURE OF RATE INCREASES	
Statement	*Frequency*
• Need for an intermediate option between 3.5% and 12%	8
• Increase business rates and leave residential rates alone	3
• Explain the permanency and timing of the rate options	7
• Option 5 to reduce or zero rates increase and reduce services	4
• Businesses are recovering from COVID-19 and business rates are already excessive – some businesses may need to leave	5

THEME: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
Statement	*Frequency*
• Release survey results to the community	6
• Engaging, clear and well-constructed strategy & communications	9
• On-line registration, contact details, response and survey too hard	8
• Forced ranking is coercive if in disagreement with Option 2, 3 & 4	5

THEME: POTENTIAL SERVICE CHANGES	
Statement	*Frequency*
• Nominate which services will be cut or increased – more detail	27
• Nominate infrastructure to be upgraded	3
• Review discretionary services, cut them and focus on core business	47
• At least match the rate increase with inflation rate – that's fair	21
• Inflation will come down and Council will recover costs	3
• Limited benefit gained from increased services or infrastructure	3
• Too many and too diverse services are provided by Council	8
• Reduce the standard and frequency of waste services	6
• Single dwelling areas pay more in rates, so deserve more services, while unit dwellers use more services	5
• Many do not use all Council services, which subsidises others	3
• Consider service improvements when the economy improves	3
• Satisfaction with services and the opportunity to improve them	63
• Desire for future improvements through increased infrastructure	35
• Increased services & infrastructure adds to land values	6

THEME: MANAGEMENT, ON-COSTS AND OVERHEADS	
Statement	*Frequency*
• Clarify and reduce management on-costs and overheads	3
• Reduce glossy hard-copy communications and propaganda	3
• Financial mismanagement by, and mistrust of, Councillors and staff	15
• Isn't Council able to use reserves rather than raising rates	3

THEME: ALTERNATIVE COST-CUTTING MEASURES	
Statement	*Frequency*
• Consider the sale of Council assets	5
• Cancel, reduce or defer capital works projects – Bellambi St Square an example of wasted expenditure	37

• Maximise other non-rate revenues and develop new sources	6
• Review staffing levels and reduce salaries	7
• Get the best value from contractors	3
• Re-consider merging with other Councils	3
• Use surpluses to reduce debt and unforeseen events	3
• Isn't Council able to use reserves instead of raising rates	3

THEME: GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT	
Statement	*Frequency*
• Increasing development and population means more rates income	12
• Increasing populations need more services and maintenance	13
• Demand more from developers to service growth needs	3

THEME: NSW GOVERNMENT INFLUENCES	
Statement	*Frequency*
• Need to understand IPART decision making process & next steps	6
• Relationship of rate increases to unreasonable land valuations	6

Attachment A – Detailed information about engagement activity

Engagement portal

A dedicated engagement portal was created, under the promotional banner *Securing Willoughby's future*. This portal can be found at www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/swf

This portal included the following features:

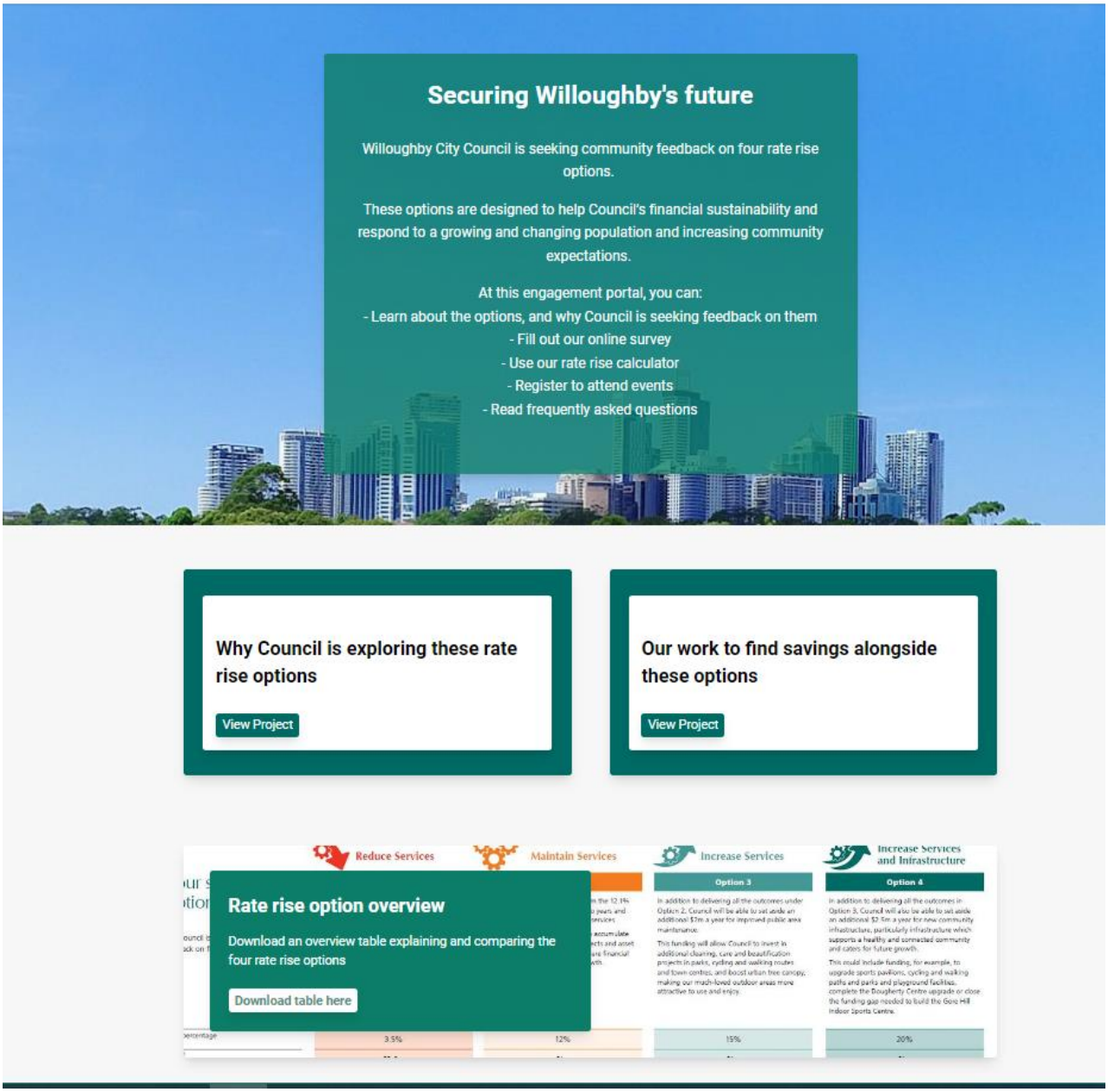
- A home page
- A page explaining why Council was examining rate rise options
- A page explaining Council's historic and future approach to finding savings, alternative revenue and efficiencies
- A downloadable version of the key comparison table in the six-page community brochure sent to all ratepayers, and the ability to download the brochure itself
- Pages on each of the options, including (on each page) rate tables breaking down the average rate impact of the option (including the SRV component) by each major rating sub-category by percentage and dollar figure in 2024/25
- A more detailed (and downloadable) table showing the average rate impact of each option (including the SRV component) by each major rating sub-category by percentage and dollar figure from 2024/25 to 2027/28
- Online survey link
- Online rate increase calculator, which was used by ratepayers to calculate the impact on their rates
- Pages in four different languages (Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Japanese and Korean)
- Page encouraging people to register for events
- Frequently asked questions
- Project timeline
- Contact details

Below are some key statistics in regard to interaction with the portal

Figure 32 – Statistics in regard to portal interaction

Number of portal visits	5,100
Number of people who completed survey	1,873
Number of people who visited online rates calculator page	285

Figure 33 – Screenshot of Securing Willoughby's future portal



Surveys

Two surveys were conducted for the project.

A representative survey was conducted by independent research company Micromex on behalf of Council. This survey targeted local residents, however also asked whether these residents were business ratepayers. Some 419 residents were included in this survey.

Separately, an opt-in survey was made available on the Have Your Say portal. A total of 1,873 people filled out this survey, including a wider range of participants (including for instance visitors, workers and local organisations).

Engagement events

A total of eleven engagement events were held. The table below outlines the date and attendance in relation to these events.

Figure 34 – Event details and attendance

Event	**Date**	**Attendance**	**Summary of comments raised**
Webinar	10 October	15 [5]	Attachment G
Translated event for Cantonese speakers	17 October	6	Attachment H
In-person engagement event for residents at Willoughby	18 October	4	Attachment H
In-person engagement event for residents at Artarmon	19 October	3	Attachment H
Stakeholder roundtable with Progress Associations and business groups	19 October	13	Attachment I
In-person engagement event for non-Chatswood businesses at Willoughby	24 October	0	N/A
In-person engagement event for Chatswood businesses at Chatswood	25 October	0	N/A
Translated event for Mandarin speakers	26 October	0	N/A
In-person engagement event for residents at Chatswood	31 October	6	Attachment H
In-person engagement event for residents at Naremburn	1 November	2	Attachment H
In-person engagement event for residents at Castle Cove	2 November	7	Attachment H
TOTAL		56	

[5] A video copy of the webinar was placed online and was viewed 36 times

Attachment B – Detailed information about awareness-raising activities

The engagement process included the following elements.

Mailout to ratepayers

A total of 30,057 letters (from the Mayor), accompanied by a six-page brochure, were sent in the mail to all ratepayers, including ratepayers based overseas.

While there were 32,507 rateable properties at the time of the mailout, 30,057 letters were sent out after 2,446 duplicate addresses were removed.

The letter is shown at **Attachment C** and the brochure is shown at **Attachment D**.

Bulk emails from Council

Bulk emails from Council promoted the initiative, and included the following:

- Email to 7,532 registrants on Council's Have Your Say site announcing the commencement of engagement (sent Monday, 25 September)
- Email to 8,042 business owners and operators, who have registered for GST and have their primary business location located in the Willoughby Local Government Area (LGA) (sent Tuesday, 26 September).
- Email to 2,142 ratepayers who had elected to receive their rates notice by email (sent Tuesday, 26 September)
- Monthly Have Your say email sent to 8,345 registrants (sent Monday, 9 October)
- Event registration reminder to 8,632 Have Your Say registrants (sent Friday, 27 October)

The initiative was also the subject of a promotional banner, included in an email to 1,832 subscribers of Council's monthly Enews (sent 28 September 2023). '

Clarifications in consultation material

It should be noted that the average residential rate increase under Option 2 (Maintain Services) was described in community consultation material as $130 when (after rounding from $130.52) it should have been more accurately described as $131. The issue is not considered material or significant.

The community consultation material also clarified that Council has the second lowest average residential rates in Northern Sydney (contrary to the statement in the August 2023 meeting report which said Council had the lowest average residential rate).

Pavement stickers

A total of 31 small and 11 large pavement stickers, promoting the rate rise options, were placed in the following localities around the LGA:

- Chatswood West (outside library)
- Chatswood CBD (in and around mall)
- Castle Cove (in retail centre)

- North Willoughby (in retail centre)
- Castlecrag (in retail centre)
- Artarmon (in Wilkes Avenue café strip)
- St Leonards (outside railway station)
- Naremburn (in retail centre)
- Willoughby South (in retail centre)
- Northbridge (in retail centre)

Photos of the stickers are shown below:

Figure 35 – Large sticker

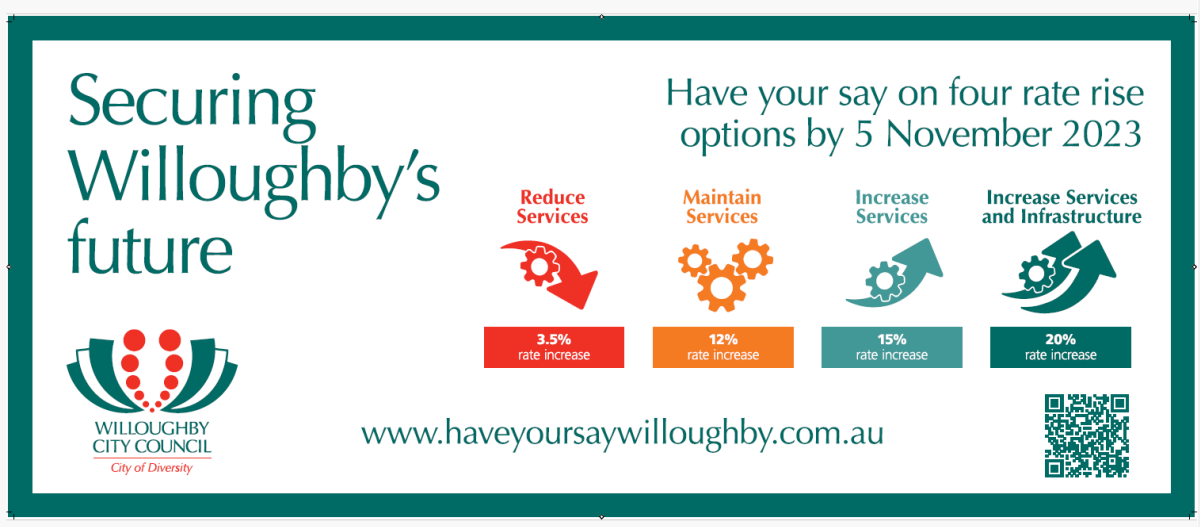


Figure 36 – Small sticker



Figure 37 – Example of pavement sticker in Chatswood Mall



Digital signs

Digital signs raising awareness of the rate rise options were placed in Council's foyer and on digital advertising signs in the Chatswood mall.

Figure 38 – Digital promotional sign in Council's Victor St head office foyer



Social media

During the awareness-raising period, Council undertook two social media campaigns. The first campaign released the message below on Facebook and Instagram, including through organic and promoted (ie: paid) posts on Council's accounts, between 26 September and 11 October.

"Willoughby Update: Did you know Willoughby's average residential rates are the second lowest in Northern Sydney? But, we're facing financial challenges including COVID-19 losses and rapid inflation increases, along with a growing population and increasing community expectations.

Council needs your input on four rate rise options (shown in the graphic).

This is your chance to shape our future! Visit www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/swf by Nov 5 to learn more, share your thoughts by filling out the survey, and use the rate calculator.

Let's secure Willoughby's future together!

#HaveYourSay"

Council also released the message below on Facebook and Instagram, between 5 and 12 October to promote engagement events. This message was also subject to paid promotion.

"From next week, we're kicking off a series of community engagement events on our four rate rise options.

This includes a webinar on the evening of 10 October, followed by nine in-person events for residents and businesses across the LGA from 17 October to 2 November.

Two of these events will be translated in either Cantonese or Mandarin.

This is a great opportunity to receive a presentation on the options and to make a comment, or ask a question, directly to a Council representative.

Find out more and register here - https://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/rate-rise-option..."

Collectively, these two messages:

- Reached 83,074 social media account holders
- Were seen 198,853 times, including on multiple times by the same account holder
- Resulted in 1,351 engagement activities, including through reactions, comments, shares, views and clicks
- Led to 1,237 link clicks

Figure 39 – Promoted social media post on Facebook



Figure 40 – Promoted social media post on Instagram



Other letters and emails

Personalised emails were sent to representatives of Chatswood Chase and Chatswood Westfield, including inviting them to participate in a one-on-one meeting.

A letter was also sent from the Mayor to Willoughby MP Tim James, informing him of the initiative.

Video

A video which featured the Mayor explaining the background and detail of the rate rise options was featured on the engagement portal home page and uploaded to Council's YouTube channel. By the end of the engagement period, this video had 123 views.

On-hold message

During the engagement period, Council's on-hold message (heard by people calling Council who are placed on-hold) was amended to reference the rate rise options.

Media release

A media release was issued on 25 September to 132 media contacts. This media release was also published online, including on Council's website home page, at https://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Council/News-and-media/securingwilloughbysfuture

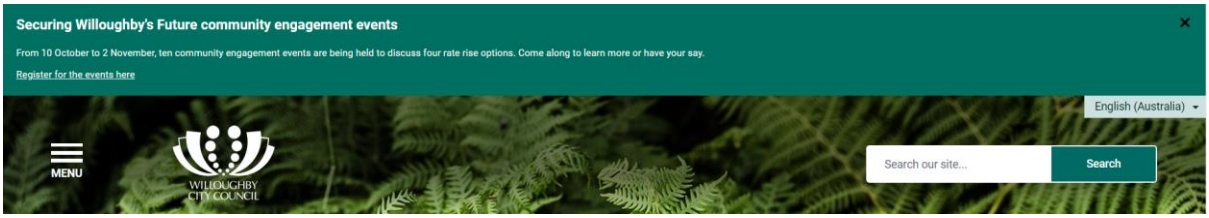
This media release was featured in media stories in the Hornsby-Ku-ring-gai Post and North Shore Living on 1 November 2023.

Website home page

On 26 September, a banner was placed on the bottom of Council's main website home page, directing people to the website portal.

On 5 October, a banner was placed on the top of the Council's main website home page, promoting engagement events. The events were also listed in the website's event listing area.

Figure 41 – Banner on Council's main website promoting engagement events



Flyer distribution to venues

A DL-sized printed flyer was distributed to a range of Council venues, including:

- Chatswood Library, and branch libraries
- Dougherty Centre
- Willoughby Leisure Centre
- Zenith Theatre
- Willoughby Park Centre
- Chatswood Youth Centre
- Victor St head office foyer

Flyer distribution to businesses and passers-by

Around 1,585 DL-sized flyers were distributed to businesses and to passers-by in town centres around the LGA, as shown in the table below.

Figure 42 – Flyer distribution by location and date

Place	Number of flyers distributed	Distribution date
Chatswood	700	Wednesday 4 October
Artarmon	150 + 150 left at newsagent	Thursday 5 October
Naremburn	100	Thursday 5 October
Castlecrag	15 + 150 left at butcher	Thursday 5 October
Castle Cove	50	Thursday 5 October
Northbridge	90	Thursday 5 October
Willoughby	30 + 150 left at cafe	Thursday 5 October

Further flyer distribution took place on 27 October, at Naremburn and Castle Cove, to promote engagement events happening the following week. This was mainly via leaving flyers at local businesses.

Community noticeboard

An A3 poster promoting the engagement activity was placed in library community noticeboards at Artarmon, Northbridge, Chatswood West, Naremburn and Castle Cove and in general community noticeboards at Castle Cove and Castlecrag.

Figure 43 – Community noticeboard sign



Non-English speaking communication

In line with the endorsed engagement plan, awareness-raising effort (for Willoughby's non-English speaking population) was focussed on Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese and Korean.

Efforts to reach this cohort included:

- Call-to-action text in Traditional and Simplified Chinese, Japanese and Korean on the Mayor's mailout letter and brochure
- Pages with translated text on Council's Have Your Say portal
- Sending the media release to 107 media contacts working for Chinese, Korean and Japanese-focussed media outlets

- Emailing local community leaders and regular attendees of the MOSAIC centre
- Running a one-week promotional campaign on the Vision Times WeChat site, seeking to encourage community members to come to translated community engagement sessions

Figure 44 – Advertising banner on Vision Times WeChat site



Newspaper advertisement

The rate rise option engagement was promoted via Council's full-page advertisement in North Shore Living (3 October 2023) and Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Post (1 October 2023) – see Attachment E.

Email signature

The engagement process was promoted through the automatic attachment of a promotional banner to all outbound Council emails by individual staff members, as shown below:

Figure 45 – Promotional banner attached to Council email signature



Attachment C – Letter from Mayor

00001-FR 2620800000

[redacted]

WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL
City of Diversity

Securing Willoughby's future: have your say

Dear valued ratepayer

I am writing to seek your views on four rate rise options, which are designed to help Willoughby City Council's financial sustainability and guide its future funding priorities.

Despite having the second lowest average residential rates in Northern Sydney, Council has a good track record delivering strong financial management and high community satisfaction levels. The Council is now facing two challenges to this situation.

Firstly, due to a growing and changing population and increasing community expectations, Council is under more pressure to maintain and improve services.

Secondly, Council is finding it more difficult to respond to these pressures, due to a deteriorating financial position which has followed:

- $20.6m in COVID-19 losses
- Wild weather requiring infrastructure repairs
- High inflation forcing up costs by 12.1% in the two years to June 2023
- The NSW Government capping rates well below inflation levels

We are now seeking community feedback on four rate rise options to respond to the above challenges, known as **Reduce Services, Maintain Services, Increase Services** and **Increase Services and Infrastructure**.

The **Reduce Services** option would involve Council undertaking widespread service reductions to balance its budget, while at the same time increasing rates from 1 July 2024 in line with the NSW Government rate revenue peg (assumed to be 3.5%).

The other three options would involve Council applying for a special rate increase.

The **Maintain Services** option would see Council maintaining highly valued services at current levels, through a 12% rate rise which would recoup inflation losses over the last two years.

Under the **Increase Services** option, rates would rise 15% and Council would deliver an additional $2 million a year for public area maintenance.

The **Increase Services and Infrastructure** option comes with a 20% rate rise and would deliver both the additional $2 million a year in public area maintenance together with the additional benefit of $2.5 million a year for new community infrastructure.

Under the options, average residential rates would rise between $38 to $218 a year, or between 73 cents to $4.19 a week.

The Council recognises the potential rate rises come at a time when many community members are facing cost of living pressures.

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www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL
PO Box 57, Chatswood NSW 2057 | Head Office: 31 Victor Street, Chatswood NSW | Ph: 02 9777 1000

Given this, Council has committed to continuing its existing work to cut unnecessary costs and find alternate revenue sources to reduce the impact of any special rate rise.

The Council is now seeking detailed community feedback on these options.

I encourage you to read the attached brochure and to go to www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au or scan the QR code on this page, to find out more and have your say between 25 September-5 November 2023. At the Have Your Say site, you can also register to attend a range of online and in-person engagement events.

I look forward to working with you to help secure Willoughby's future.

Yours Sincerely,

Tanya Taylor
Mayor
Willoughby City Council

INFORMATION IN YOUR LANGUAGE

English
Willoughby City Council is seeking community feedback on four options to help plan for its financial future and funding priorities, three of which involve a special increase in Council rates. More information, including a web page in your language, is available at the website below.
www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

简体中文 (Simplified Chinese)
Willoughby市议会正在就指导其未来财务运营的四个选项征求社区反馈意见，其中三个选项涉及到特别增加市政税。我们诚邀您于10月26日参加社区参与会议，我们会在会议上提供翻译服务，查询更多信息，包括简体中文网页，请访问以下网站：。www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

繁體中文 (Traditional Chinese)
Willoughby市政府正在就指導其未來財務運營的四個選項徵求社區反饋意見，其中三個選項涉及到特別增加市政稅。我們邀請您於10月17日參加社區參與會議。我們會在會議上提供翻譯服務。查詢更多資訊，包括繁体中文網頁，請瀏覽以下網站。www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

日本語 (Japanese)
ウィロビー・シティカウンシルでは、コミュニティの皆様から、カウンシルの将来の財政を導く4つの選択肢についてご意見を求めています。その3つには、カウンシル・タックスの特別増額が含まれています。詳しい情報は、日本語のウェブページを含めて、以下のウェブサイトでご覧いただけます。www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

한국어 (Korean)
윌로비 시티 카운슬은 향후 재정을 계획하는 4가지 방안에 대한 지역사회의 의견을 수렴하고 있습니다. 이 중 3가지는 카운슬 지방세의 특별 인상과 관련된 것입니다. 한국어로 된 웹페이지를 포함한 자세한 정보는 아래 웹사이트에서 확인하실 수 있습니다. www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

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Attachment D – Six-page brochure



Willoughby City Council is inviting community members to have their say about four rate rise options.

This brochure explains why Council is exploring these options, along with more detail about each option and how you can have your say.

Have your say by 5 November 2023 at www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

Have your say on four rate rise options:

Reduce Services	Maintain Services	Increase Services	Increase Services and Infrastructure
3.5% rate increase	12% rate increase	15% rate increase	20% rate increase

www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

About your rates and Council's financial options

Around 43% of Council's revenue comes from rates paid by landowners. These rates pay for more than 70 services, including upgrading roads and stormwater infrastructure and caring for parks and sporting fields.

Some 95% of community members are satisfied with the services that the Council provides.

Over the past two years, because of low NSW Government rate peg limits and the cessation of Council's Infrastructure Levy in 2022, Willoughby ratepayers have seen their average rates fall by 3.2%. At the same time, inflation has risen by 12.1%. Council has the second lowest average residential rate in Northern Sydney.

Council has prepared four rate rise options for community feedback, each with an accompanying rate increase to apply from 1 July 2024.

These options are known as:

- Reduce Services
- Maintain Services
- Increase Services
- Increase Services and Infrastructure

Inflation has outstripped Council's rates by 15.3% since 2021

↑12.1%
Consumer price index increase 2021-23

↓3.2%
Willoughby City Council average rate decrease 2021-23

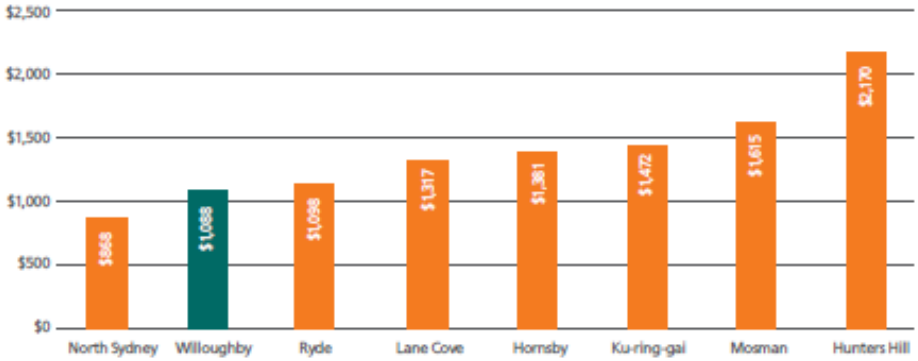
The Reduce Services option would involve Council undertaking widespread service cuts, while at the same time increasing rates in line with the NSW Government rate revenue peg (assumed to be 3.5%).

The other three options would involve Council applying to the NSW Government for a special rate increase.

Each of the options also include cost cutting and revenue targets. These targets will ensure Council continues its existing work to find savings, and new non-rate revenue sources, to reduce the impact of any rate increase.

Council has considered alternatives to these rate rises, including raising debt, selling assets or relying on government grants, but does not consider these to be feasible or timely.

Willoughby has the second lowest average residential rates in Northern Sydney



All figures are for the 2023/24 financial year, with the exception of Ku-ring-gai for which 2021/22 figures are the latest available. North Sydney figure excludes infrastructure and environmental levy.

Why Council needs to secure Willoughby's future

Willoughby City Council entered the COVID-19 era in a healthy financial position, recording surpluses totalling $48.3m in the three years to 2018/19.

Since that time, and as shown in the chart below, Council has been impacted by a range of external factors, including:

- $20.6m in COVID-19 pandemic revenue losses
- Wild weather requiring infrastructure repairs
- High inflation forcing up costs by 12.1% in the two years to June 2023
- The NSW Government capping Council's rate revenue at just a third of these inflation levels and shifting costs onto local government

In addition, Council's temporary Infrastructure Levy ceased in June 2022. This action resulted in a $2.96 million reduction in rate revenue and a $38 fall in average residential rates in 2022/23.

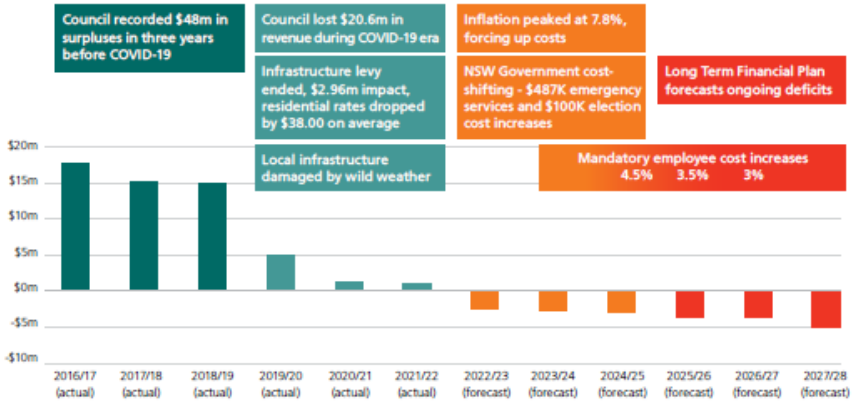
These and other issues have resulted in Council moving from surpluses (in other words profits) to deficits (in other words losses) – a financial situation that is not sustainable.

New forecasts show that, without substantial change, Council could get into financial difficulty by mid 2025.

In addition, with Willoughby's population estimated to grow by 12% between 2016-2036, and increased community expectations, Council is under more pressure to enhance services, particularly when it comes to caring for public areas and delivering new community infrastructure.

Council is now seeking community feedback on rate rise options to deal with the above challenges.

Issues driving the Council from profits to losses



This chart shows Council's annual operating results (actual from 2016/17 to 2021/22 and forecast from 2022/23 to 2027/28). The forecast losses from 2024/25 assume that Council has not implemented any of the rate rise options outlined in this brochure.

Have your say on these options

Willoughby City Council is now seeking community feedback on four rate rise options.

	Reduce Services	Maintain Services	Increase Services	Increase Services and Infrastructure
	Option 1	**Option 2**	**Option 3**	**Option 4**
	Council will undertake service cuts and find new revenue sources to maintain a balanced budget, without increasing rates above the NSW Government rate revenue peg. Council will have limited ability to fund new services or community projects and will be vulnerable to the impact of future financial, climate and growth shocks.	Council will be able to recover from the 12.1% inflation increase from the last two years and continue to provide highly valued services. In addition, Council will be able to accumulate modest funds for community projects and asset renewal, and have a buffer for future financial shocks, extreme weather and growth.	In addition to delivering all the outcomes under Option 2, Council will be able to set aside an additional $2m a year for improved public area maintenance. This funding will allow Council to invest in additional cleaning, care and beautification projects in parks, cycling and walking routes and town centres, and boost urban tree canopy, making our much-loved outdoor areas more attractive to use and enjoy.	In addition to delivering all the outcomes in Option 3, Council will also be able to set aside an additional $2.5m a year for new community infrastructure, particularly infrastructure which supports a healthy and connected community and caters for future growth. This could include funding, for example, to upgrade sports pavilions, cycling and walking paths and parks and playground facilities, complete the Dougherty Centre upgrade or close the funding gap needed to build the Gore Hill Indoor Sports Centre.
KEY FIGURES				
Proposed rate rise percentage	3.5%	12%	15%	20%
Cost cutting target[1]	$2.8m	$1m	$1m	$1m
New non-rate revenue target	$0.5m	$1m	$1m	$1m
Average annual surpluses which, subject to financial shocks, could be re-invested in new community services and projects	$0	+$5.22m	+$4.77m	+$5.05m
KEY OUTCOMES				
Removes deficits in 9 years between 2024/25 and 2032/33	✓ (5 out of 9 years)	✓ (all 9 years)	✓ (all 9 years)	✓ (all 9 years)
Allows Council to withstand future financial shocks and collect reserves for infrastructure	✗	✓	✓	✓
Maintains existing highly valued services	✗	✓	✓	✓
Allows asset upgrades and renewals to the level required	✗	✓	✓	✓
Provides a stable environment for staff retention and morale	✗	✓	✓	✓
Additional $2m a year for public area maintenance and urban tree canopy	✗	✗	✓	✓
Additional $2.5m a year for new community infrastructure	✗	✗	✗	✓
POTENTIAL INCREASE IN AVERAGE RATES[2]				
Residential ratepayers	$38 / year | $0.73 / week	$130 / year | $2.50 / week	$163 / year | $3.13 / week	$218 / year | $4.19 / week
Business (general) ratepayers	$228 / year | $4.38 / week	$783 / year | $15.05 / week	$979 / year | $18.82 / week	$1,305 / year | $25.09 / week
Business (Chatswood Town Centre) ratepayers	$273 / year | $5.25 / week	$936 / year | $18 / week	$1,170 / year | $22.50 / week	$1,561 / year | $30.01 / week

1 Revenue and cost-cutting targets for the Reduce Services option would be met across 2024/25 and 2025/26. Targets for Maintain Services, Increase Services and Increase Services and Infrastructure options would be met in 2024/25

2 Shows proposed rate change in 2024/25, which would be built into the rate base and therefore stay in place permanently and increase in subsequent years in line with the NSW Government rate peg only

FIND OUT MORE

More detailed average rate change tables, including showing the potential Special Rate Variation percentage and changes in in future years, are available as part of the analysis of each rate rise option at www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/swf

How to have your say

Council is undertaking a comprehensive community awareness and engagement program in relation to the rate rise options.

This will include a webinar on Tuesday, 10 October and in-person community engagement sessions for residents and businesses, with two translated sessions for Mandarin and Cantonese speakers, being held between 17 October and 2 November.

Please register for the above events and find out more about the proposed options at
www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au
or by scanning the QR code on this page.

At the above website, you will also be able to:

- Learn more about the options
- Fill in our online survey, make a comment or upload a submission
- If you have your latest rates notice handy, calculate your exact potential rate increase using our online calculator

To provide feedback, participants will need to be able to either register with, or log into, our online Have Your Say portal. This is easiest to do on a desktop computer.

Alternatively, please send a submission to:

Willoughby City Council,
PO Box 57,
Chatswood NSW 2057, Australia
(address the letter to Special Rate Variation Project Manager).

In addition, community members may receive a call from a research company conducting a randomly-selected survey.

Please have your say on or before Sunday 5 November 2023.

For queries (not submissions) please call (02) 9777 1000 or email - email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

INFORMATION IN YOUR LANGUAGE

Traditional Chinese
Willoughby 市政府正在就指導其未來財務運營的四個選項徵求社區反饋意見，其中三個選項涉及到特別增加市政稅。我們邀請您於10月 17日參加社區參與會議。我們會在會議上提供翻譯服務。查詢更多資訊，包括繁体中文網頁，請瀏覽以下網站。
www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

Simplified Chinese
Willoughby 市议会正在就指导其未来财务运营的四个选项征求社区反馈意见，其中三个选项涉及到特别增加市政税。我们诚邀您于10月26日参加社区参与会议，我们会在会议上提供翻译服务。查询更多信息，包括简体中文网页，请访问以下网站。
www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

Japanese
ウィロビー・シティカウンシルでは、コミュニティの皆様から、カウンシルの将来の財政を導く4つの選択肢についてご意見を求めています。その3つには、カウンシル・タックスの特別増額が含まれています。詳しい情報は、日本語のウェブページを含めて、以下のウェブサイトでご覧いただけます。
www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

Korean
윌로비 시티 카운슬은 향후 재정을 계획하는 4가지 방안에 대한 지역사회의 의견을 수렴하고 있습니다. 이 중 3가지는 카운슬 지방세의 특별 인상과 관련된 것입니다. 한국어로 된 웹페이지를 포함한 자세한 정보는 아래 웹사이트에서 확인하실 수 있습니다.
www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au

Attachment E– Newspaper advertisements

Figure 46 – Living Local advertisement in North Shore Living (3 October 2023) and Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Post (1 October 2023)



Willoughby City Council *City of Diversity*

LIVING LOCAL

IN FOCUS: SECURING WILLOUGHBY'S FUTURE

From 25 September to 5 November 2023, Council is seeking feedback on four rate rise options to assist its financial sustainability and guide future funding priorities.

One of the options would involve Council undertaking service reductions, while increasing rates from 1 July 2024 in line with an assumed 3.5% NSW Government rate revenue peg. The other three options would involve Council applying for rate increases between 12-20% to either maintain or increase services and infrastructure.

Willoughby has among the lowest average residential rates in Northern Sydney. Council is encouraging community members to have their say about the options to help secure Willoughby's future.

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

At our most recent meeting, Council reiterated its support for the 'Uluru Statement of the Heart' and committed to creating awareness in our community about the upcoming Voice to Parliament referendum. The motion supported building awareness in our community and providing venues in accordance with the Community Facilities Hire Policy in order to facilitate a fair and informed public debate on this issue.

We also agreed to undertake community consultation on four rate rise options to secure Willoughby's future. The Council recognises potential rate rises come at a time when many community members are facing cost of living pressures. Council is doing everything possible to limit the impact of any rate rises, by continuing our existing work to cut unnecessary costs and find alternate revenue sources.

I encourage you to go to **haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au** to find out more and have your say between 25 September and 5 November 2023.

I look forward to working with the community to help secure Willoughby's future.

Cr Tanya Taylor
Mayor, Willoughby City Council

BEAT THE HEAT

As the summer season approaches, we are committed to ensuring your safety and comfort during the inevitable heat.

"Beat the Heat" resources serve as a comprehensive guide to help you navigate the challenges of high temperatures. Find valuable tips for staying cool, whether it's seeking solace in our scenic parks or taking a refreshing dip in local swimming spots visit our Resilient Willoughby web page on **willoughby.nsw.gov.au**

Watch our video on how to stay safe and prepare for an emergency like a heatwave.

2023 REFERENDUM

The Australian 2023 referendum is approaching and it's your chance to have your say. On Saturday October 14 all eligible citizens aged 18 years and over must vote by law.

Voting in a referendum is simple yet crucial. Enrolled voters will answer "yes" or "no" to a specific question, recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a Voice to Parliament.

Visit **aec.gov.au/referendums** for polling locations and open times, postal, remote and early voting options. To enroll or update details, visit the Australian Electoral Commission website **aec.gov.au**. Your voice matters, so cast your vote this October.

CONNECT WITH WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR ENEWS
willoughby.nsw.gov.au/subscribe

31 Victor St, Chatswood | PO Box 57, Chatswood NSW 2057 | 9777 1000 | willoughby.nsw.gov.au | email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

Attachment F– Word or PDF submissions received

Submission 1: Ros and David Clune

Council services can be divided into core and non-core. The background information does not make that vital distinction when it talks about blanket cuts to services.

In our observation, Willoughby Council has unnecessarily committed to many feel good, tokenistic projects rather than concentrating on its core responsibilities of roads, parks, open space maintenance, libraries, rubbish collection etc. If you can afford both fine (which does not seem to be the case), but if you can't these non-core programs should go first.

Some examples: why do the ratepayers of Willoughby have to pay to lobby for a 'transition to a circular economy'. Ditto the 'Hi Neighbours Program to promote neighbour connections & reduce social isolation in high rise apartments'. The 'Emerge' festival's five week scope and cost could surely be cut before slugging ratepayers. Why do we need to fund a glossy newsletter distributed regularly to all ratepayers that is a propaganda sheet devoid of real information?

We would like to see a breakdown of the head office costs of WCC. How much is spent on non front-line workers, eg media, events managers etc? What does the GM get paid? How many support staff does the mayor have?

Our reaction to the financial deficit, and the easy solution of a rate rise, is that there is scope for expenditure reduction as first priority.

Ros and David Clune



25 September 2023

Submission 2

Council Submission - Rates

In order to adequately consider options:

1) need to understand extent of service changes which could be included under each option and specifically what particular services would be included

2) Does the above include – greater use of contractors and if so what specifically, and a reduction in council HQ overheads

3) How does Willoughby current rate levels and increases over say the last five years compare with all of Sydney's councils. Same comparison broken down into classifications including corporate overheads and senior management salary levels, business and private rate levels

4) Would further amalgamation of councils reduce costs to Willoughby ratepayers

5) Term of the plan before it comes up for review

6) What is the cost of future major projects that have yet to commence and the potential saving on each should they not proceed

7) Has selling of some council assets been considered including those that could be disposed of through greater use of contractors

Submission 3: Eric Leung

Submission to Willoughby Council on proposed rate increase:
Name: Eric Yeung
Capacity: Rate payer for [redacted]

Submission:
I am disappointed that there is not a moderate option between 3.5% and 12%. I agree the financial position of the Council must be reinforced, but at the same time I think a moderate curb on services during this difficult period is also feasible. The commitment by the council of a symbolic $1m cost reduction is NOT adequate. The other 2 options (15% and 20%) just shows the council is out of touch with the difficulties the residents and the local businesses are facing today.

Submission 4: David Hale

Submission on Council rate rise options 26 September 2023 A lot of the landowners in Chatswood are older retirees with limited income, increasing medical care costs and facing the rising costs of living that everyone else faces. It is not reasonable for the Council to increase rates in the name of expanding services in difficult times like these. If there are limited funds, then services should be cut back, and less important projects also need to be cut back. Australians have battled crises over history. Everyone, including local Councils, will need to be frugal and spend money more efficiently- this will be a good opportunity for Willoughby Council to carefully scrutinise how best it will spend the available resources and funds. As a family we STRONGLY OPPOSE ANY INCREASE IN RATES AND SERVICES and FAVOUR REDUCING SERVICES GOING FORWARD. David Hale

Submission 5: Robert Oser



28 September 2023

Willoughby City Council
PO Box 57
Chatswood NSW 2057

Attention: **Special Rate Variation Project Manager**

This is my submission on the four rate rise options in “Securing Willoughby’s Future”.

I support the Maintain Services 12% increase, by increasing the levy in the required $ amounts on commercial property and leaving residential rates unchanged.

I submit and express my disappointment that the brochure inviting “have your say” should intentionally create the impression that Willoughby Council is financially well managed because it has the second lowest average rates in Northern Sydney.

Apart from the fact that simple arithmetic averages are in themselves misleading, the reason for the relatively lower rate is the high proportion of commercial property in the Council area, mainly in Chatswood. Only North Sydney has a larger commercial component.

In this respect, the brochure contains misleading and deceptive statements.

Additionally, you fail to disclose the Council's financial position. A current Statement of Financial Position should be attached to the options.

Sincerely
Robert Oser

Submission 6: Chris White

To whom it may concern,

Good old Willoughby CC, at it again, applying the 1960s style cost plus mentality to an organisation that has a guaranteed rates income of somewhere between $65 – 70M per annum and still cannot live within its means. Furthermore, that ignores the income from a reasonably extensive property portfolio (what is the current vacancy rate?) the management of which could be described as at best, “doubtful” and worst “commercially hopeless”.

You continue to blame the dreaded negative income effects of COVID for the greater PART OF your woes which in 2023 is completely spurious and unacceptable. All options should be immediately dismissed out of hand.

What to do in such a situation you then ask? My response is very simple which is what all commercial organisations (remember, that‘s the part of the economy that employs people and generates wealth) do in these challenging economic times, “cut your cloth to suit your purse” which effectively means, conducting an extensive and very aggressive root and branch review of your cost structure asking the question, “is this planned expenditure necessary in the future efficient functioning of WCC”. An attitude which up until now, is totally foreign to the organisation.

A few tips and questions:-

1. Number of employees – is the current headcount (I assume it is bloated!) appropriate to WCC and where can we drop off people (redundancies!) and improve efficiency? Here’s a hint – eliminate the events team and use external people for the soon to be reduced number of events.

2. Place a freeze on all new employment and where people resign in the future, ask whether they need to be replaced;

3. Freeze all salaries from the mayor and GM downwards.

4. Get all employees back to the office and efficiency will improve i.e. cancel working from home immediately;

5. Cancel the $11M planned expenditure on the council chambers. This in the light of +$7M spent on the same building 2 years ago and what did that achieve?

6. Have a good look at the funds planned to be spent with Technology One on a computer system which has not functioned properly since being installed.

7. Cancel the following planned expenditure items:-

    a. CBD marketing plan;

b. Community engagement strategy; and

c. Public toilet strategy implementation.

The cancellation of superfluous projects highlighted in item 7 above is just a start, there are others.

Yes, many of the measures above are difficult, probably unpopular but necessary, thereby injecting some much needed financial discipline into WCC. The alternative is to continue the well worn path of using the poor old ratepayers (domestic and commercial) as a bottomless pit cash cow.

Submission 7: Fiona Maggs

I would like to propose that there is a solution that achieves the best outcomes at the lowest cost.

By critically assesses services there may be valuable savings.

From a householders perspective ie our council has very high household waste collection services - can you reduce green waste pick up during winter to only every fortnight. Can the recycles be pulled back to fortnightly? What about a campaign that if your bin is only 1/2 full - don't put it out to make the process quicker. Similarly the big waste pick up could be reduced to 1 less per year. These strategies would reduce the cost, and therefore with a moderate rate increase you could continue to improve services which is critical.

Fiona Maggs



Submission 8: Craig Selman

Securing Willoughby's future

29 September 2023

This could be a textbook example of how to manage change:

- We genuinely don't know which option will work best, so let's trial one of the four.
- If you reduce services and it proves unsuccessful, you can acknowledge its failure, then pursue one of the other options.
- By contrast, if you raise rates, that rise is permanently baked in and can never be reversed.
  If it proves to be unsuccessful, you can switch to a 'reduce services' strategy but there's no way you can reduce rates by 12%, 15% or 20% - politically, it just can't be done.
- So be sensible, be logical and trial 'reduce services' first.

Craig Selman

Resident / Rate payer



Submission 9: Gregory Szuladzinski

Rate options for the Council.

I definitely vote for Reduce Services option. I don't understand why the council would want to reduce services in spite of being granted 3.5% increase for the rates. "Community Projects" are one of the largest expense items, as the latest Willoughby News show. Only one of those 6 listed there, namely Stormwater and Drainage makes a convincing sense. (This is also one of the smallest items.)

The remaining tens of millions in projects are totally inappropriate for these hard times. Let me remind you of an unfortunate project called "Bellambie street closure" in Northbridge. It is ugly and useless in spite of probably tens of thousands spent.

Sincerely yours

Gregory Szuladzinski

Submission 10: Evan Gongolidis

I have reviewed your attachment booklet for the council meeting of June 2023 to understand the financial positon of the council that warrants such extreme decisions regarding council rates. Your strategic financial objective of a balanced budget should be your top priority.

This usually means in practice, to manage your expenses so that they do not exceed your revenues, not vice versa. Rates constitute about one quarter of your annual revenues. So, you could elaborate what are you actively doing to maximise the other three quarters of your revenue before imposing higher rates on your constituents.

The core task is then to actively reset your expenses. Apply zero based budgeting, justifying each expense from scratch. The significant cost of about $30 million for the Sport Centre will not repeat in the future, releasing about 15% of your budget.

This should more than offset any inflationary costs without any rate increases for the foreseeable future. Further, prioritise projects across your stated strategic outcomes subject to how essential they are.

For example, the outcome of “connected, inclusive and resilient” that is supported with about $25 million is nebulous and arguably beyond the scope of a local council. Lastly, reassess your employee costs of about $47million for est. 350 Council employees. Revisit how many employees you really need to service the needs of your council following the prioritisation of necessary services. Also, the avg. employee cost of $135,000 seems rich and will need to be benchmarked by role. These are just some topline suggestions of fiscal management actions that you could undertake before resortng to raising rates.

Submission 11: Criastina Cifuentes

I congratulate Council on attempting to engage with the community on the proposed rate increase options and appreciate it is a difficult task. However, I feel the information provided is too little to allow an informed assessment and the phone survey is not the best approach for a difficult issue. It is too simplistic to offer the options as Council has framed them without additional context and information.

With this in mind, I have gone through the proposals in more details since doing the phone survey and have moderated my answers to reflect the lack of detail and transparency in the Council material.

I agree Council needs some additional rate increases to repair its financial position but whereas previously I supported the 15% increase, on reflection Council has not adequately justified this. Instead I'm more inclined to support the 12% option but even so feel that council has still not provided enough detail.

In deciding on which option to present to IPART Council must be able to address the following issues:

Council has not explained how Covid impacted on revenues - only states it had revenue losses of $20.6m. Are these one-off losses or structural?

If cyclical the financial position is more recoverable over time than if structural. This is important as some households are under cyclical cost-of-living financial stress with high interest rates and inflation. Has Council attempted any impact assessment on rate payers by segment – residential, business as a minimum? Has Council considered a sculpted price path with a modest rate increase in the coming two years followed by higher increases as interest rates abate?

Council does not present an indicative or past budget or budget forecasts under the four options. As such it's impossible to assess what a $1m-2.8m cost cutting target or a $0.5-1m non rate revenue target mean. Similarly, it doesn't provide context for what could be expected of a $1.5m increase for new community services ie how big is the capex program? It also does not provide forecast net financial positions under each of the 4 options over the forecast period - only the do-nothing scenario which is an unrealistic option.

Council doesn't clearly explain what will happen to rate rises over the forecast period. Are the proposed increases one off ie just for FY24 or FY25? What happens in following years given the proposals are framed in terms of removing deficits over a 9-year period?

Council hasn't explained the rationale for 9 years or why it needs to ensure there are no deficits in each of the 9 coming years or whether any other expenditure options will be considered during the forecast period in tandem with rate increases.

Council has not adequately explained why it can't adopt some maintenance or capital works deferral decisions. It just says asset sales and maintenance deferral are not feasible or not timely.

Council has not explained whether the average annual surpluses in the table one off are or accumulate each year at the estimated level in each option or what the projected surplus will be in forecast years under various options.

Council has not explained how a 20% rise only gives rise to a $2.5m a year in additional community infrastructure. The incremental gain in infrastructure seems very small considering the size of the rate increase.

Council has not explained how the $168m special purpose funds are to be used. How does this fund run down under the various options and how is it used to maintain services/infrastructure. It is large amount relative to the paltry $2.5m for new infrastructure under option 4.

Council has not provided enough detail on the planned cuts under options 1 and 2 or planned expansions under option 4 - they are all generalized statements. How do we know whether they are services we value? What is being done for seniors or residents with no children? How will the options assist business? Council should undertaker a willingness to pay study to see what services are valued most under the options and what ratepayers are willing to pay for.

Council does not provide any indication of population growth over the 9 year forecast period nor what this might mean in terms of services and revenue. It makes a general statement of a 12% increase over a 20 year period with no additional detail in how this would impact services provide by local government as opposed to State and Commonwealth government.

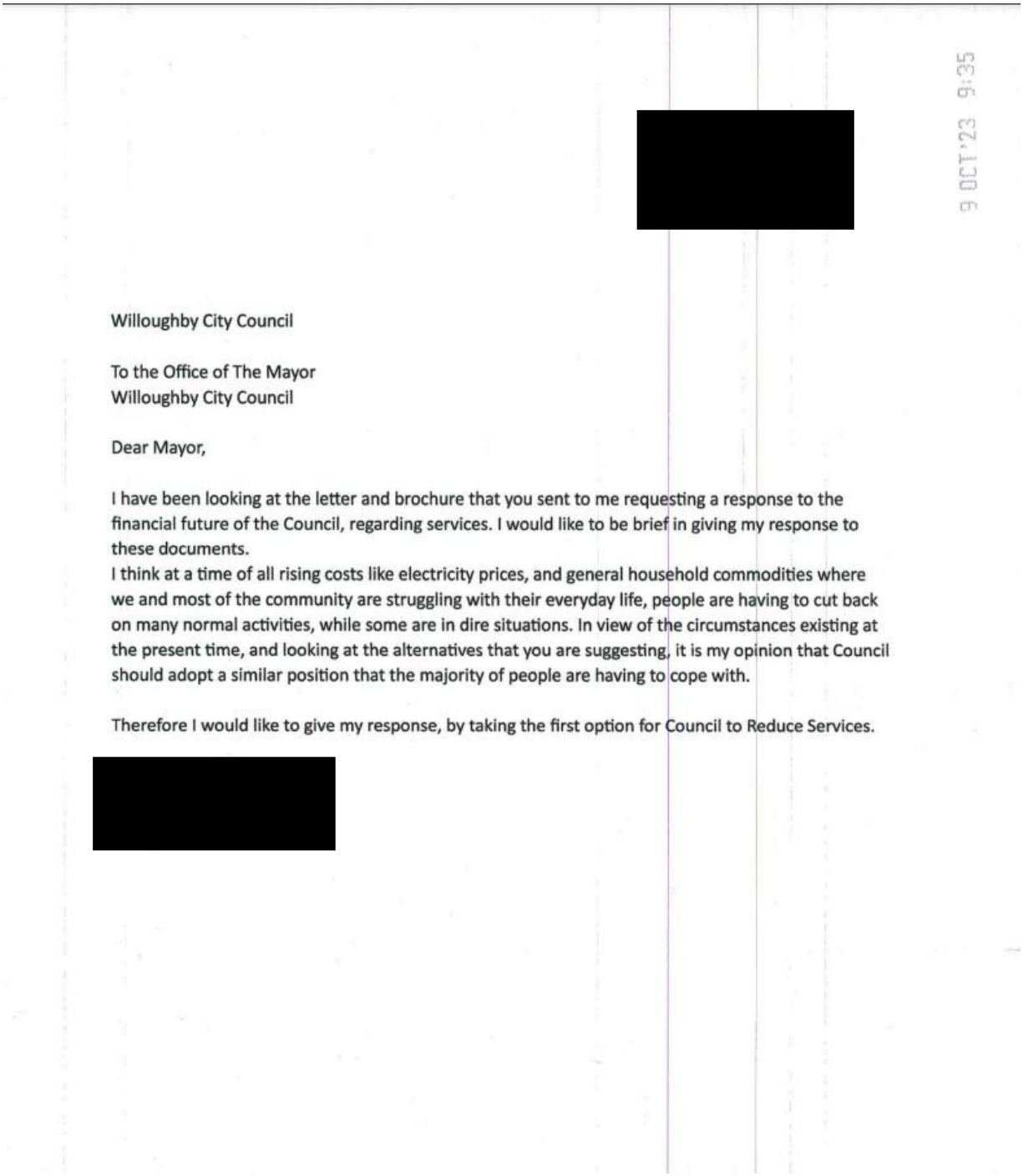
I hope Council takes these comments into account and genuinely attempts to engage with the questions. I would hope Council will also be transparent and post the results of the surveys and an anonymised summary of the submissions and questions raised.

It would be very disappointing to read Council's submission to IPART only to see it has reverted to a minimalist approach of comparing our rates with other councils, forecast inflation, and basic financial information and saying yes we consulted with the community without providing more detailed and relevant information.

Yours sincerely

Criastina Cifuentes

Submission 12



9 OCT '23 9:35

[redacted]

Willoughby City Council

To the Office of The Mayor
Willoughby City Council

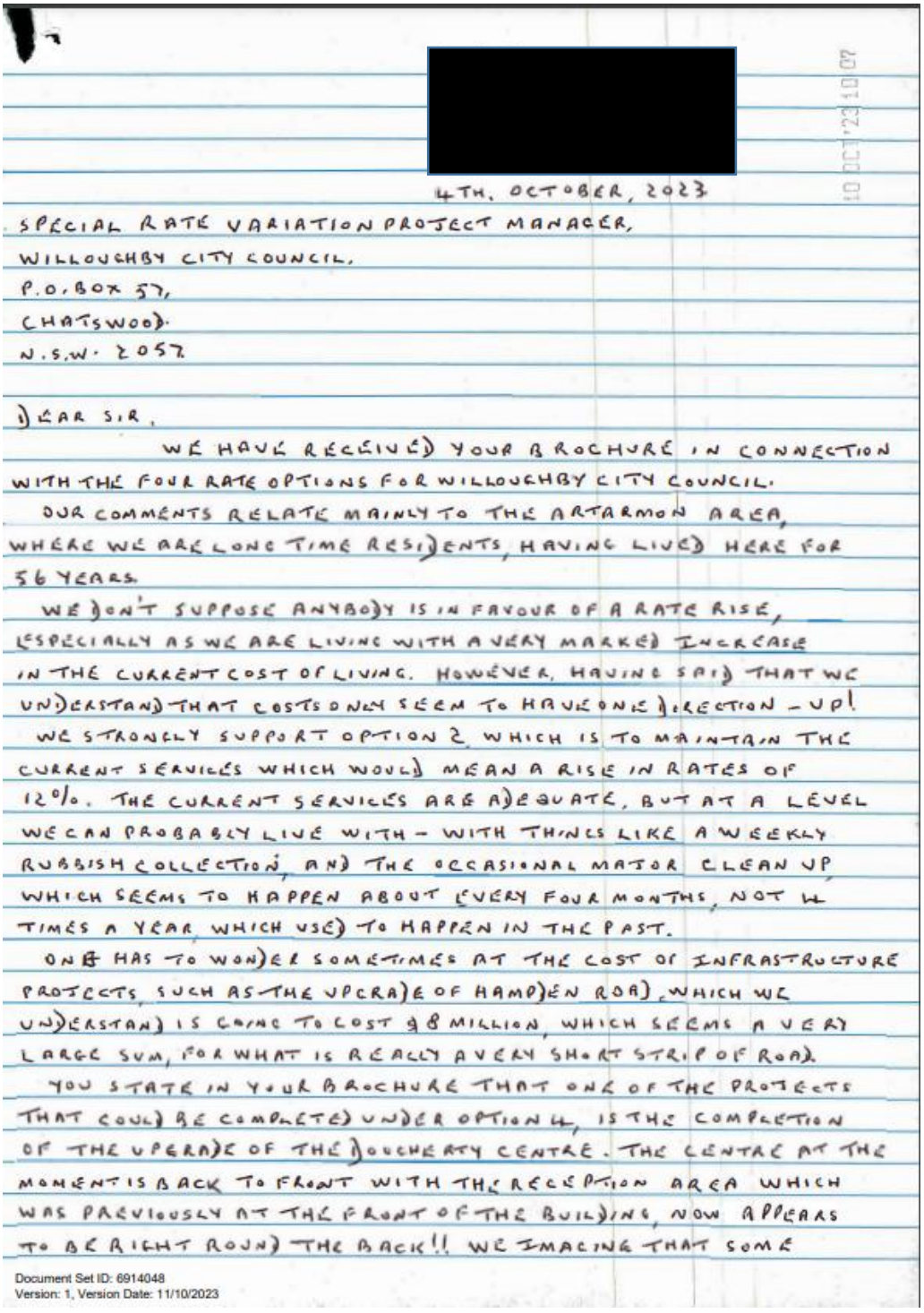
Dear Mayor,

I have been looking at the letter and brochure that you sent to me requesting a response to the financial future of the Council, regarding services. I would like to be brief in giving my response to these documents.
I think at a time of all rising costs like electricity prices, and general household commodities where we and most of the community are struggling with their everyday life, people are having to cut back on many normal activities, while some are in dire situations. In view of the circumstances existing at the present time, and looking at the alternatives that you are suggesting, it is my opinion that Council should adopt a similar position that the majority of people are having to cope with.

Therefore I would like to give my response, by taking the first option for Council to Reduce Services.

[redacted]

Submission 13



[redacted]

10 OCT '23 10:07

4TH. OCTOBER, 2023

SPECIAL RATE VARIATION PROJECT MANAGER,
WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL,
P.O. BOX 57,
CHATSWOOD.
N.S.W. 2057

DEAR SIR,

WE HAVE RECEIVED YOUR BROCHURE IN CONNECTION WITH THE FOUR RATE OPTIONS FOR WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL.

OUR COMMENTS RELATE MAINLY TO THE ARTARMON AREA, WHERE WE ARE LONG TIME RESIDENTS, HAVING LIVED HERE FOR 56 YEARS.

WE DON'T SUPPOSE ANYBODY IS IN FAVOUR OF A RATE RISE, ESPECIALLY AS WE ARE LIVING WITH A VERY MARKED INCREASE IN THE CURRENT COST OF LIVING. HOWEVER, HAVING SAID THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT COSTS ONLY SEEM TO HAVE ONE DIRECTION - UP!

WE STRONGLY SUPPORT OPTION 2 WHICH IS TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT SERVICES WHICH WOULD MEAN A RISE IN RATES OF 12%. THE CURRENT SERVICES ARE ADEQUATE, BUT AT A LEVEL WE CAN PROBABLY LIVE WITH - WITH THINGS LIKE A WEEKLY RUBBISH COLLECTION, AND THE OCCASIONAL MAJOR CLEAN UP WHICH SEEMS TO HAPPEN ABOUT EVERY FOUR MONTHS, NOT 4 TIMES A YEAR WHICH USED TO HAPPEN IN THE PAST.

ONE HAS TO WONDER SOMETIMES AT THE COST OF INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, SUCH AS THE UPGRADE OF HAMPDEN ROAD, WHICH WE UNDERSTAND IS GOING TO COST $8 MILLION, WHICH SEEMS A VERY LARGE SUM, FOR WHAT IS REALLY A VERY SHORT STRIP OF ROAD.

YOU STATE IN YOUR BROCHURE THAT ONE OF THE PROJECTS THAT COULD BE COMPLETED UNDER OPTION 4, IS THE COMPLETION OF THE UPGRADE OF THE DOUGHERTY CENTRE. THE CENTRE AT THE MOMENT IS BACK TO FRONT WITH THE RECEPTION AREA WHICH WAS PREVIOUSLY AT THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING, NOW APPEARS TO BE RIGHT ROUND THE BACK!! WE IMAGINE THAT SOME

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Version: 1, Version Date: 11/10/2023

[redacted].

2.

MORE WORK NEEDS TO BE DONE.

WITH AN INCREASE IN WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL POPULATION ESTIMATED TO GROW BY 12%, WITH INCREASED COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS, ONE WOULD IMAGE THAT THERE WOULD BE AN INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF RATEPAYERS TO HELP PAY SOME OF THE INCREASED COSTS

WHAT THOUGHT (IF ANY) HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THE POSSIBILITY THE APPLICATION FOR A SPECIAL RATE VARIATION, WOULD NOT BE APPROVED BY THE GOVT. OF THE DAY?

[redacted]

Submission 14

[redacted]

Dear Sir,

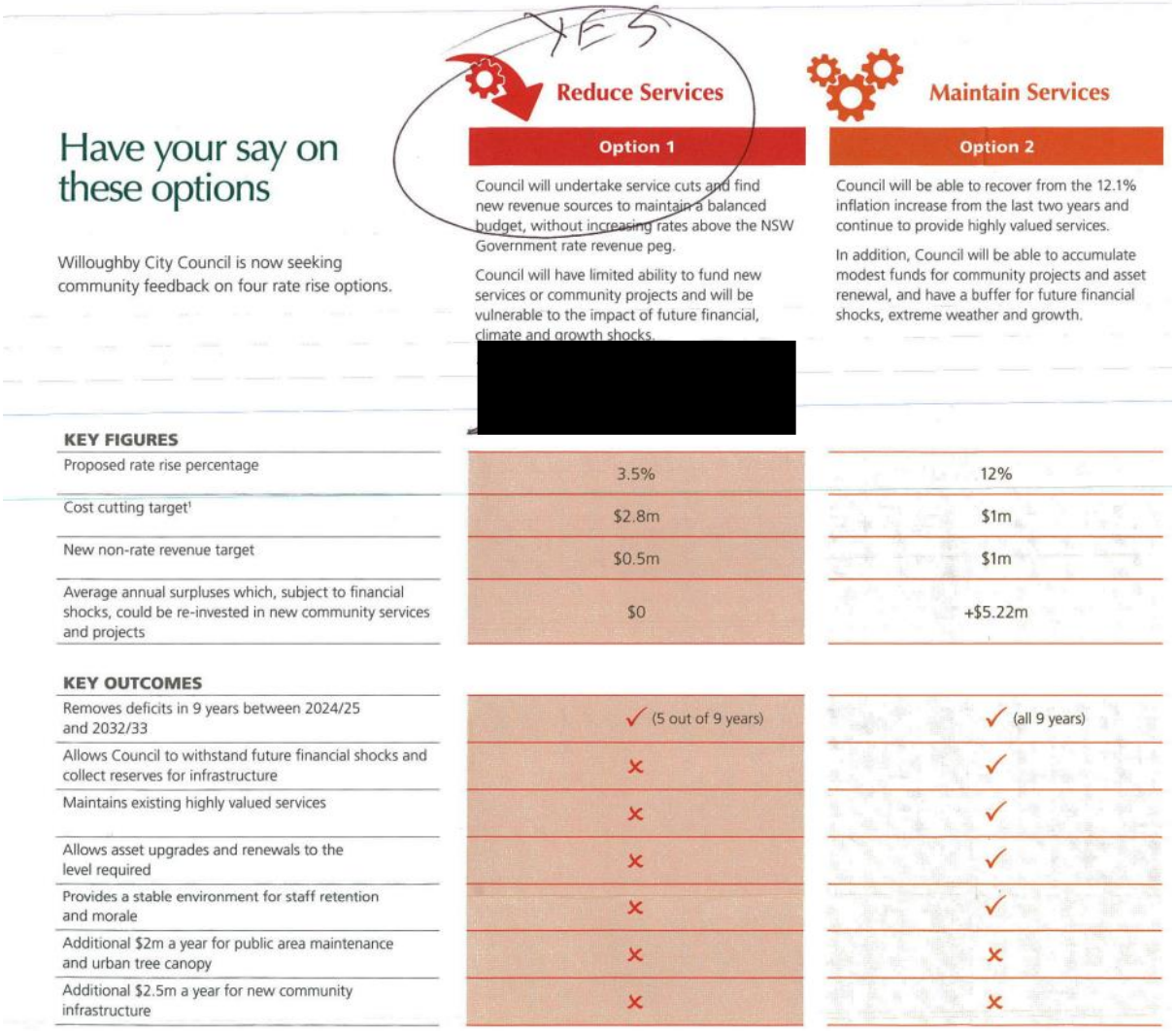
As I am a pensioner and you increase my rates every year anyway I cannot afford any extra rate increase.

Y[redacted]

23 9:34

Document Set ID: 6912635
Version: 1, Version Date: 09/10/2023

Submission 15



Have your say on these options

Willoughby City Council is now seeking community feedback on four rate rise options.

YES

Reduce Services

Option 1

Council will undertake service cuts and find new revenue sources to maintain a balanced budget, without increasing rates above the NSW Government rate revenue peg.

Council will have limited ability to fund new services or community projects and will be vulnerable to the impact of future financial, climate and growth shocks.

[redacted]

Maintain Services

Option 2

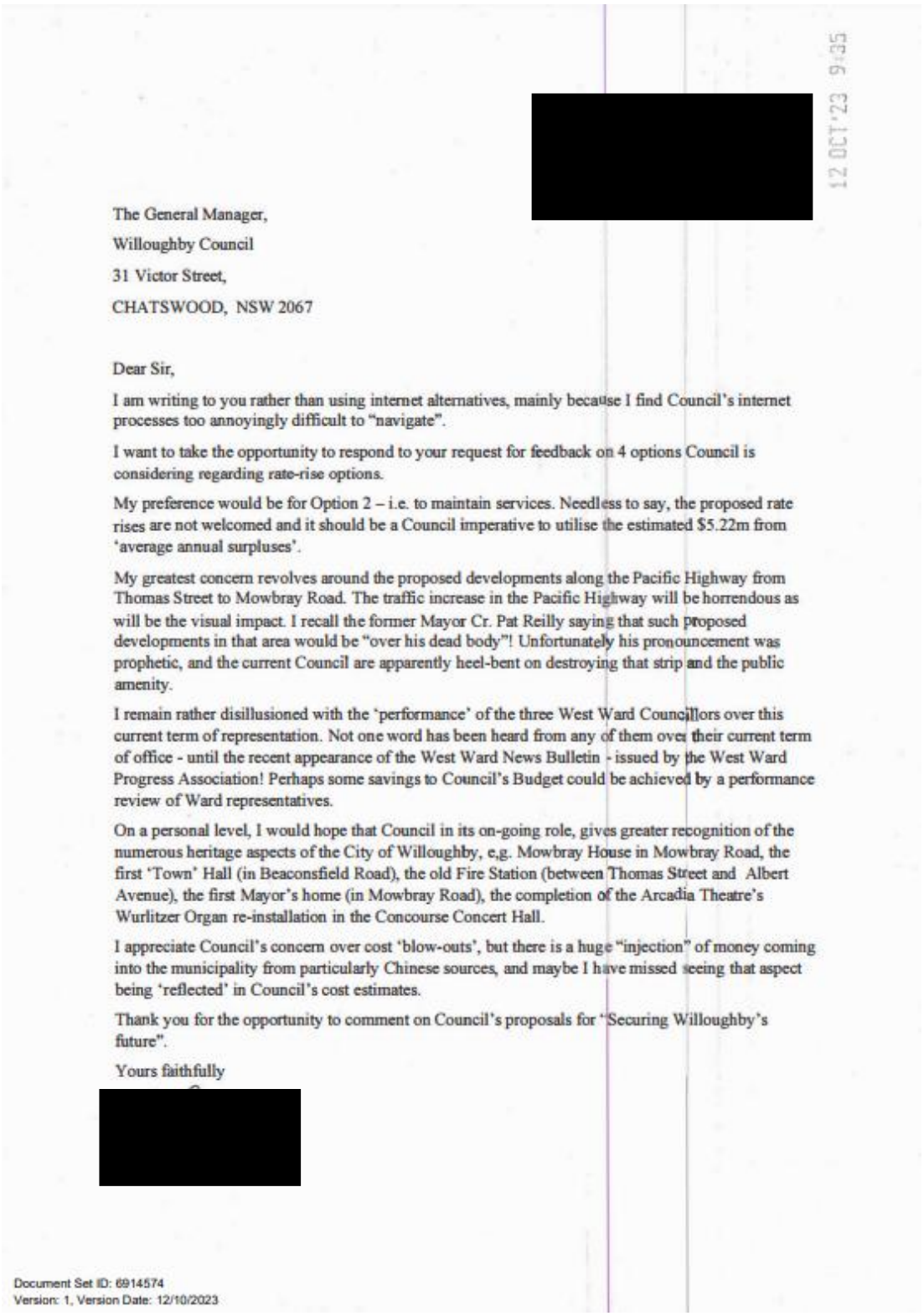
Council will be able to recover from the 12.1% inflation increase from the last two years and continue to provide highly valued services.

In addition, Council will be able to accumulate modest funds for community projects and asset renewal, and have a buffer for future financial shocks, extreme weather and growth.

KEY FIGURES	Option 1	Option 2
Proposed rate rise percentage	3.5%	12%
Cost cutting target[1]	$2.8m	$1m
New non-rate revenue target	$0.5m	$1m
Average annual surpluses which, subject to financial shocks, could be re-invested in new community services and projects	$0	+$5.22m

KEY OUTCOMES	Option 1	Option 2
Removes deficits in 9 years between 2024/25 and 2032/33	✓ (5 out of 9 years)	✓ (all 9 years)
Allows Council to withstand future financial shocks and collect reserves for infrastructure	✗	✓
Maintains existing highly valued services	✗	✓
Allows asset upgrades and renewals to the level required	✗	✓
Provides a stable environment for staff retention and morale	✗	✓
Additional $2m a year for public area maintenance and urban tree canopy	✗	✗
Additional $2.5m a year for new community infrastructure	✗	✗

Submission 16



12 OCT'23 9:35

[redacted]

The General Manager,

Willoughby Council

31 Victor Street,

CHATSWOOD, NSW 2067

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you rather than using internet alternatives, mainly because I find Council's internet processes too annoyingly difficult to "navigate".

I want to take the opportunity to respond to your request for feedback on 4 options Council is considering regarding rate-rise options.

My preference would be for Option 2 – i.e. to maintain services. Needless to say, the proposed rate rises are not welcomed and it should be a Council imperative to utilise the estimated $5.22m from 'average annual surpluses'.

My greatest concern revolves around the proposed developments along the Pacific Highway from Thomas Street to Mowbray Road. The traffic increase in the Pacific Highway will be horrendous as will be the visual impact. I recall the former Mayor Cr. Pat Reilly saying that such proposed developments in that area would be "over his dead body"! Unfortunately his pronouncement was prophetic, and the current Council are apparently heel-bent on destroying that strip and the public amenity.

I remain rather disillusioned with the 'performance' of the three West Ward Councillors over this current term of representation. Not one word has been heard from any of them over their current term of office - until the recent appearance of the West Ward News Bulletin - issued by the West Ward Progress Association! Perhaps some savings to Council's Budget could be achieved by a performance review of Ward representatives.

On a personal level, I would hope that Council in its on-going role, gives greater recognition of the numerous heritage aspects of the City of Willoughby, e,g. Mowbray House in Mowbray Road, the first 'Town' Hall (in Beaconsfield Road), the old Fire Station (between Thomas Street and Albert Avenue), the first Mayor's home (in Mowbray Road), the completion of the Arcadia Theatre's Wurlitzer Organ re-installation in the Concourse Concert Hall.

I appreciate Council's concern over cost 'blow-outs', but there is a huge "injection" of money coming into the municipality from particularly Chinese sources, and maybe I have missed seeing that aspect being 'reflected' in Council's cost estimates.

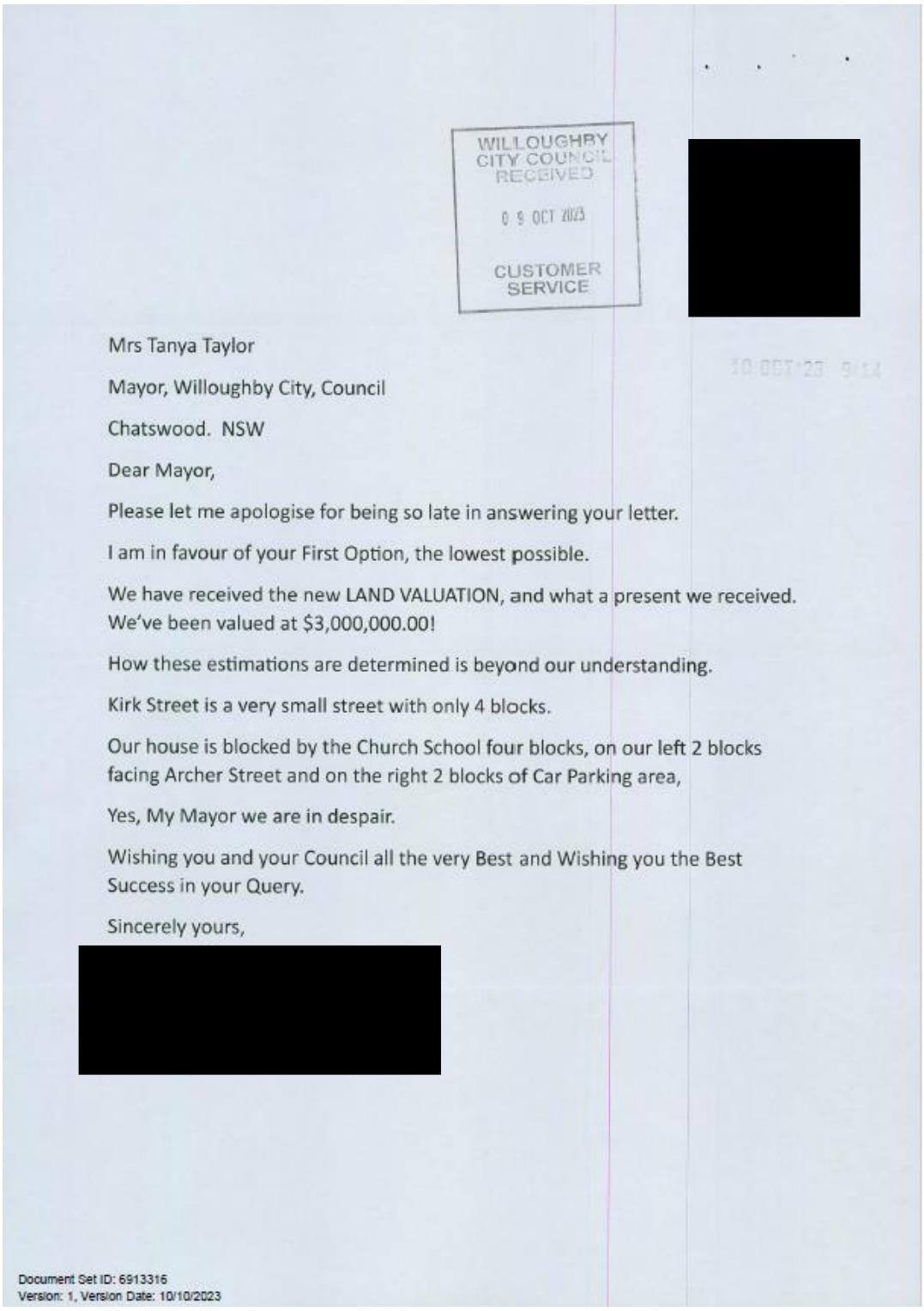
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Council's proposals for "Securing Willoughby's future".

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Document Set ID: 6914574
Version: 1, Version Date: 12/10/2023

Submission 17



WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL RECEIVED

0 9 OCT 2023

CUSTOMER SERVICE

[redacted]

10 OCT '23 9:14

Mrs Tanya Taylor

Mayor, Willoughby City, Council

Chatswood. NSW

Dear Mayor,

Please let me apologise for being so late in answering your letter.

I am in favour of your First Option, the lowest possible.

We have received the new LAND VALUATION, and what a present we received. We've been valued at $3,000,000.00!

How these estimations are determined is beyond our understanding.

Kirk Street is a very small street with only 4 blocks.

Our house is blocked by the Church School four blocks, on our left 2 blocks facing Archer Street and on the right 2 blocks of Car Parking area,

Yes, My Mayor we are in despair.

Wishing you and your Council all the very Best and Wishing you the Best Success in your Query.

Sincerely yours,

[redacted]

Document Set ID: 6913316
Version: 1, Version Date: 10/10/2023

Submission 18

ATT: MARK SKELSEY

REPLY to the MAJOR's REQUEST FOR INPUT DATE 11 / 10 /2023

WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL RECEIVED 18 OCT 2023 CUSTOMER SERVICE

Dear Cr Taylor,

In response to your invitation for input re rate rises.

Over the years Willoughby Council have done a pretty good job in my view. I have been a ratepayer in Willoughby for 45 years. Over his time I have seen many changes and facilities introduced that never existed. Are all these services necessary?

For example with Google now using AI the internet has virtually rendered the library obsolete as far as information gathering is concerned.

I realise it is used as a study area, however it is a very large area and could possibly be downsized and any excess area leased.

-: Recycling :-

On a recent ABC news program it showed an enormous warehouse stacked to the roof with compressed plastic that will NOT be recycled.

Is the recycle bin we diligently fill also just a feel good thing ?. According to the ABC News broadcast no one wants the stuff.

What is the single biggest expense for the council ?.

What is the Total wage bill including, all salaries, super, redundancies, allowances etc ?. How many employees are on the payroll ?.

Interest liability on loans.

I am sure you would agree that the waste collection service is VITAL for public health, however are the Contractors being used giving their best competitive Prices to the council ?.

I would like to see the option to Reduce Services to contain budget "blowout".

Too many services in my opinion.

Document Set ID: 6918284
Version: 1, Version Date: 20/10/2023

Times are difficult for many folks at the moment, food prices, just the basics are more expensive than ever. Fruit is off the table for many households.

Many are struggling with mortgages, strata levies and so on just to keep a roof over their heads.

Governments are traditionally one of the biggest sources of inflation, carrying on regardless of prices of the basics. A Federal politician was recently asked by the press "What is the price of a loaf of bread " ? He did not know.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit ones views.

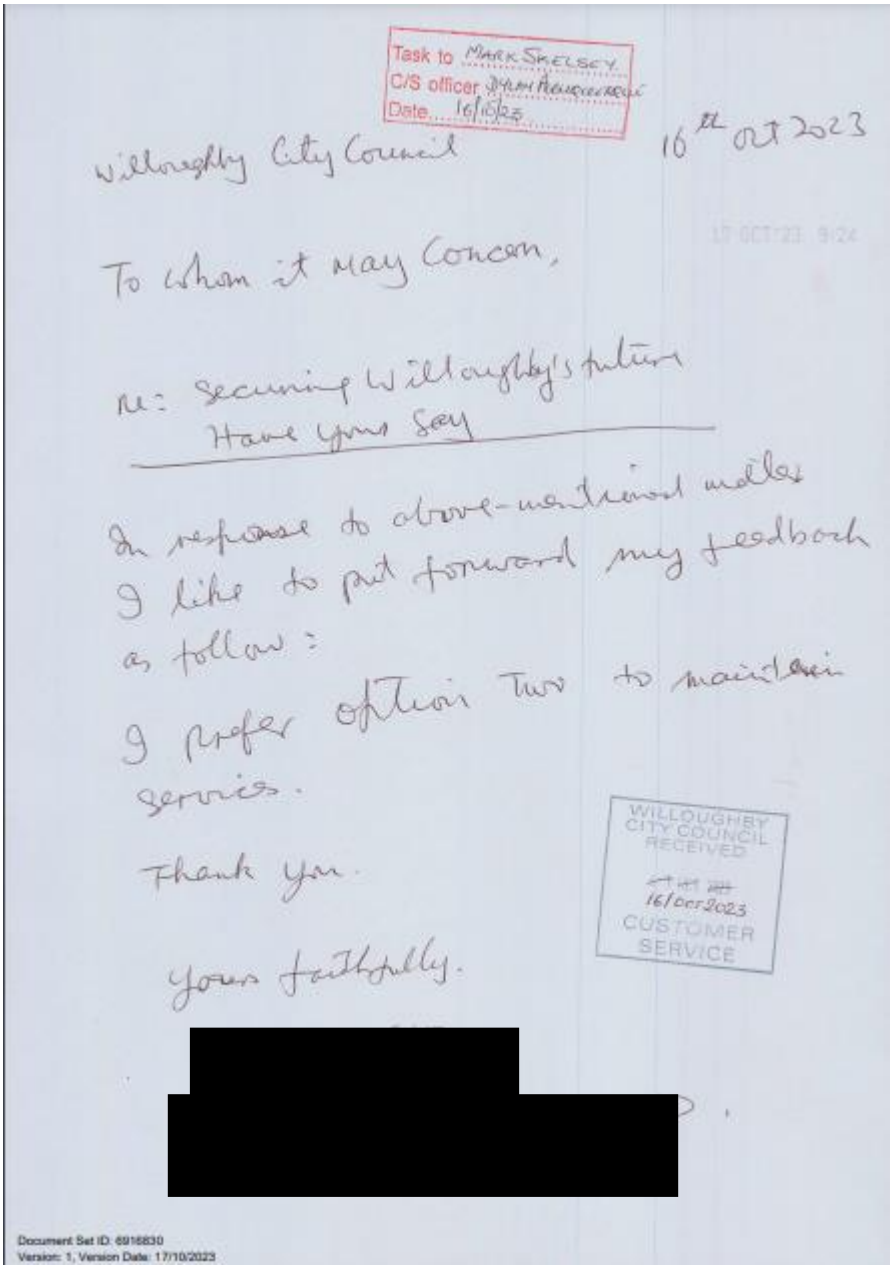
Keep up the good work, [redacted]

[redacted]

WILLOUGHBY
CITY COUNCIL
RECEIVED
18 OCT 2023
CUSTOMER
SERVICE

Document Set ID: 6918284
Version: 1, Version Date: 20/10/2023

Submission 19



Task to MARK SHELSEY
C/S officer [redacted]
Date 16/10/23

Willoughby City Council

16th Oct 2023

17 OCT '23 9:24

To whom it may Concern,

Re: Securing Willoughby's future
Have your say

In response to above-mentioned matter
I like to put forward my feedback
as follow:

I prefer option Two to maintain
services.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully.

[redacted]

WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL
RECEIVED
16/Oct/2023
CUSTOMER SERVICE

Document Set ID: 6916830
Version: 1, Version Date: 17/10/2023

Submission 19: Raquel Martinez

Dear Councilors,

You are right in saying that proposals to further increases of council rates beyond the minimum is unwelcome and undesired in light of the raising cost of living that the current government does not seem to manage well.

I cannot support any of the proposal you have outlined: reduce, maintain or increase services. This is because you have not outlined in detail, like an ordinary person would expect, in a budget simply how much you have spent in aspects such as for example:

1. Exact or estimated amount destined for maintenance of sports facilities
2. Exact or estimated amount destined for Maintenance of public spaces
3. Exact or estimated amount destined for Maintenance of road infrastructure, traffic safety and signage
4. Exact or estimated amount destined for rubbish collection and cleaning
5. Exact or estimated amount destined for salary and wages the Council pays to all its workers
6. Exact or estimated amount destined to pay its contractors in the various aspects they hire contracts for
7. Exact or estimated amount destined for environment and green matters
8. Among others and in addition to the above.

You surely cannot expect the residents and tenants of the large council of Willoughby to make an informed decision without outlining how you plan to spend the money you current have, the monies you will collect, and the fund you receive from NSW government.

Speaking of NSW Government, you have shown a bit of waste of these precious funds with the Emerge festival. This event, which was not attended by Northbridge residents, produced noise pollution. The Council should be all for reducing pollution including noise, particularly on Sailors Bay Road where we already experience parking and noise and traffic related issues from early morning to late in the afternoon daily.

This program was said to be funded by the NSW government. The Willoughby council is currently proposing at the same time to increase rates dramatically because of the tight financial position it says it has. The NSW monies should have been wisely used instead of being wasted on nightly events: we have playground areas that need continuous upkeeping as well as green and sports areas in the large council we live in; we have rubbish collection expenses to forecast and set money aside for; we have road and infrastructure to upkeep; we have traffic signage and issues to address; we have school, parking, and other residential and commercial aspects that council needs to invest money on. Instead, Willoughby council used state funds to put on live entertainment. How can you demand more money from residents in the council when you have shown little disregard for resources management?

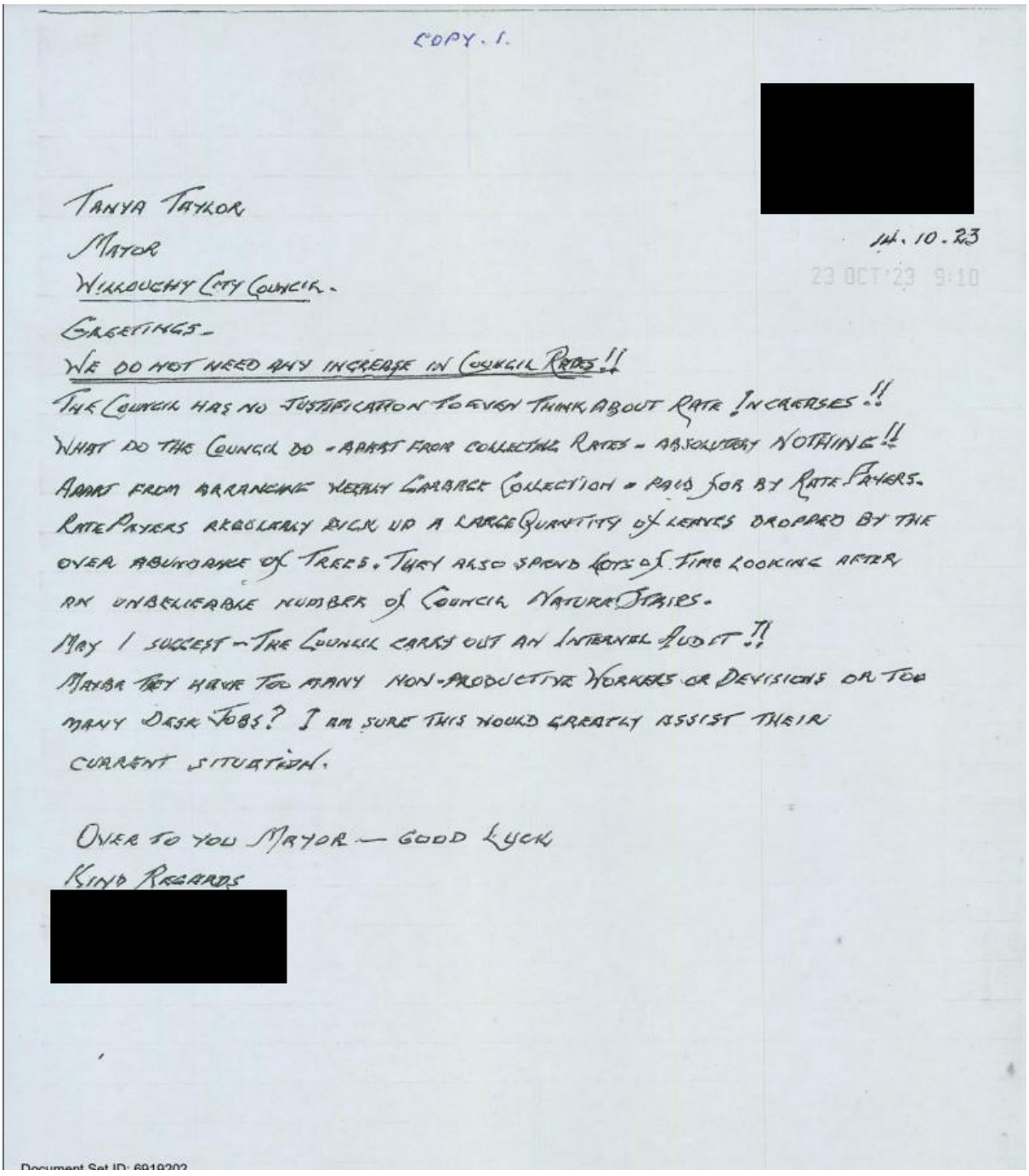
Please list all the services you intend to reduce vs the services you already provide before you ask us to vote on whether we want councillors to reduce their ability to service the large council.

Thanks for the opportunity to make submissions.

Raquel Martinez

18 Oct. 23

Submission 20



COPY. 1.

[redacted]

TANYA TAYLOR
MAYOR
WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL.

14.10.23

23 OCT 23 9:10

GREETINGS.

WE DO NOT NEED ANY INCREASE IN COUNCIL RATES!!

THE COUNCIL HAS NO JUSTIFICATION TO EVEN THINK ABOUT RATE INCREASES!!

WHAT DO THE COUNCIL DO - APART FROM COLLECTING RATES - ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!!

APART FROM ARRANGING WEEKLY GARBAGE COLLECTION - PAID FOR BY RATE PAYERS.

RATEPAYERS REGULARLY PICK UP A LARGE QUANTITY OF LEAVES DROPPED BY THE OVER ABUNDANCE OF TREES. THEY ALSO SPEND LOTS OF TIME LOOKING AFTER AN UNBELIEVABLE NUMBER OF COUNCIL NATURE STRIPS.

MAY I SUGGEST - THE COUNCIL CARRY OUT AN INTERNAL AUDIT!!

MAYBE THEY HAVE TOO MANY NON-PRODUCTIVE WORKERS OR DEVISIONS OR TOO MANY DESK JOBS? I AM SURE THIS WOULD GREATLY ASSIST THEIR CURRENT SITUATION.

OVER TO YOU MAYOR — GOOD LUCK

KIND REGARDS

[redacted]

Document Set ID: 6919202

Submission 21

[redacted]

16 – 9 – 23

23 OCT'23 9:10

Special Rate Variation Project Manager

With the community stressed by the high cost of living and few with incomes that have increased by 12% it is outrageous to propose raising Council Rates.

As the intention is to have greater density in population in the Willoughby area it is grossly unnecessary. To build two high towers and six other high rise buildings will result in hundreds more rate payers bringing greater Council income.

The result for the area will be gross overcrowding for all present facilities. It is already crowded to walk along footpaths in the shopping district and side streets are burdened with car parking making the area unpleasant for residents. Even with the present extensions the local schools are overcrowded and lack playing fields for students. The services in hospitals are stretched and transport and roads are strained.

We expect better from a Council which is elected to serve local best interests.

I strongly oppose the increase in population density and any increase in Council Rates.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

Document Set ID: 6919220
Version: 1, Version Date: 23/10/2023

Submission 21: Mark Crew

Re: Willoughby City Council proposed rate rise.

Dear Council Officers and Councillors,

Considering that all members of this community and Council are affected by the aftermath of the COVID pandemic, and current inflationary pressures, I think we can all be thought of as 'in the same boat'.

It is apparent that the IPART annual rate increase is inadequate and below the current inflation rate set by the RBA. Therefore I feel it justifiable for council to apply for permission to, at the very least, match rate increases to the current inflation rate.

To expect much more from the community might add even more pressure on this municipality's constituents finances.

I have opted to support the rate increase of 12% to maintain the current level of services, as I can afford it. I just hope that in your deliberations on this issue that you are mindful of those who may not be in that position.

We have a fantastic municipality with hard working and engaged communities. Educational programmes on waste management would be a good start to reduce costs.

Better recycling practises and waste reduction would be required. Improved transport options of better cycleways, reliable loop-service busses and safe walkways all reduce car dependance, resulting in less wear and tear on our local roads and therefore costs.

By maintaining local employment we reduce the need for travel, thereby reducing cost burdens to community members and in turn road maintenance costs.

Other social initiatives such as local and affordable childcare centres would help reduce the burden on our community members to travel out of area. All these initiatives need to be prioritised and/or promoted.

People are generally willing to engage in supporting their community, but need guidance and encouragement. That is best done by setting good examples. If Council is seen to be economising, practising open decision making and producing noticeable improvements in services, you will bring the community with you.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Crew

Submission 22



Name: [redacted]

Address : [redacted]

We vote For decrease in services For contact, phone [redacted]

[redacted]

24/11/2023.

Attention Rates Dept

WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL RECEIVED 27 NOV 23 CUSTOMER SERVICE

Submission 23: Urbis on behalf of Northbridge Plaza (Dexus), Westfield Chatswood (Scentre Group) and Chatswood Chase (Vicinity Centres).

URBIS

ANGEL PLACE
LEVEL 8, 123 PITT STREET
SYDNEY NSW 2000

URBIS.COM.AU
Urbis Valuations Pty Ltd
ABN 28 105 273 523

3 November 2023

Mark Skelsey
Special Rate Variation Project Manager
Willoughby City Council

via Email: email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mark

PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

We write in relation to the community consultation process for the Special Rate Variation (SRV) proposed by Willoughby Council on behalf of the following landowners and their tenants:

- Dexus as managers of Northbridge Plaza
- Scentre Group, as owners and managers of Westfield Chatswood, and
- Vicinity Centres, as owners and managers of Chatswood Chase.

We understand that council are considering three SRV scenarios which would further increase the council rates charge by between 12% and 20% in FY25.

We cannot support any SRV which proposes to further increase the rate charges on commercial landowners and their tenants for the reasons set out in this submission.

The quantum of increase will directly impact the businesses operating within the centres

The magnitude of the proposed increases will significantly impact the 400+ businesses operating within Chatswood Chase, Northbridge Plaza and Westfield Chatswood as council rates are predominantly paid by the centres' tenants under NSW retail tenancies legislation.

The owners and managers of these centres worked with their tenants to provide considerable rental support to help sustain their businesses through the COVID-19 crisis and into the future. These proposed increases will directly counteract this support in the current retail economic environment which is challenged by inflationary pressures, significant increases in utility charges and ongoing challenges with the labour market.

Council rates for commercial property in Willoughby are already excessive

Initially, the council rates paid by commercial landowners and tenants in Willoughby Council are already high relative to the council rates charged in surrounding councils.

Attachment 2 to Item 12.1 of council's agenda for its meeting on 28 August 2023 details the average rates paid by a commercial ratepayer within Willoughby's 'Business – General' rating category is $6,524 in FY24. This charge is materially higher than the average council rates levied by surrounding councils which, as shown in the table on the following page, range from being 5% less (North Sydney) to 75% less (Hornsby) with the only council area with a higher charge being Ryde Council.

URBIS

Council Area	Average Rates Business - General	Discount to WCC
Hornsby	$1,665	-74.5%
Canada Bay	$2,617	-59.9%
Mosman	$3,499	-46.4%
Lane Cove	$4,800	-26.4%
North Sydney	$6,153	-5.7%
Willoughby	$6,524	Base
Ryde	$9,995	-

It should be noted that as this analysis is limited to the 'Business – General' rating category only, it is not influenced by the higher LV's within the Chatswood CBD with the average council rates charge within the 'Business – CBD' rating category being higher at $7,803. This disparity is also further exacerbated for both Chatswood Chase and Westfield Chatswood being contained within 'centre specific' rating categories that target the landowners and their tenants with materially higher ad valorem 'tax rates'.

These already excessive council rate charges would be exacerbated by the proposed SRV increases of 12% to 20% as shown in the table below (in FY24 dollars).

Council Area	Average Rates (WCC +12%)	Discount to WCC	Average Rates (WCC +20%)	Discount to WCC
Hornsby	$1,665	-77.2%	$1,665	-78.7%
Canada Bay	$2,617	-64.2%	$2,617	-66.6%
Mosman	$3,499	-52.1%	$3,499	-55.3%
Lane Cove	$4,800	-34.3%	$4,800	-38.7%
North Sydney	$6,153	-15.8%	$6,153	-21.4%
Willoughby	$7,307	Base	$7,829	Base
Ryde	$9,995	-	$9,995	-

Conversely, the average rates for residential property in Willoughby are low

The average residential rates within Willoughby Council are low relative to surrounding councils as noted in Item 12.1 of council's agenda for its meeting on 28 August 2023:

> *In 2023/24, Council had the lowest average residential rate of any council within the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (NSROC) region, as shown in Figure 4 below. While the figure does not include 2023/24 average rate information from Ku-ring-gai Council, in 2020/21 (the latest year the NSW Government published comparative information) Ku-ring-gai had higher residential rates than Willoughby.*

The disparity in residential rates charges is material with the average rates of $1,088 per ratepayer in FY24 being some 12% less than the next lowest charging council area (North Sydney at $1,233 per ratepayer – excluding the infrastructure and environmental levy) and 50% of the residential rates in Hunters Hill Council, as demonstrated in Figure 4 of Item 12.1 and replicated below.

Council Area	Average Rates Residential-General	Existing WCC 'Discount'
Willoughby	$1,088	Base
North Sydney	$1,233	-11.8%
Lane Cove	$1,317	-17.4%
Hornsby	$1,381	-21.2%
Mosman	$1,615	-32.6%
Hunters Hill	$2,170	-49.9%

URBIS

Accordingly, the proposed SRV will simply amplify the excessiveness of the charges for commercial ratepayers rather than addressing the disparity in 'affordability' that exists between residential and commercial ratepayers in Willoughby Council.

The level of council rates in Willoughby Council are a barrier to tenant attraction and impacts investment decisions

The excessive level of council rates (existing and proposed) levied by Willoughby Council on commercial landowners and their tenants creates a barrier for the attraction of tenants into the centres. The level of these charges and their volatility with further SRV applications puts centres within Willoughby Council at a competitive disadvantage to shopping centres in other Local Government Areas in competing to attract and retain tenants.

Further, the level of the charge and its volatility will also impact investment and development decisions on these centre (current and future) relative to other development opportunities.

As above, we cannot support any SRV which proposes to further increase the rate charges on commercial landowners and their tenants given these charges are already excessive relative to surrounding council areas. If council remain committed to pursuing an SRV to materially increase the council rate charges for commercial ratepayers, we would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our submission and modelling further.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Sam Allsop
Director

[redacted]

Submission 24



Willoughby Council.

I wanted to express my views by email but do not want to register to login in. A very unsatisfactory process.

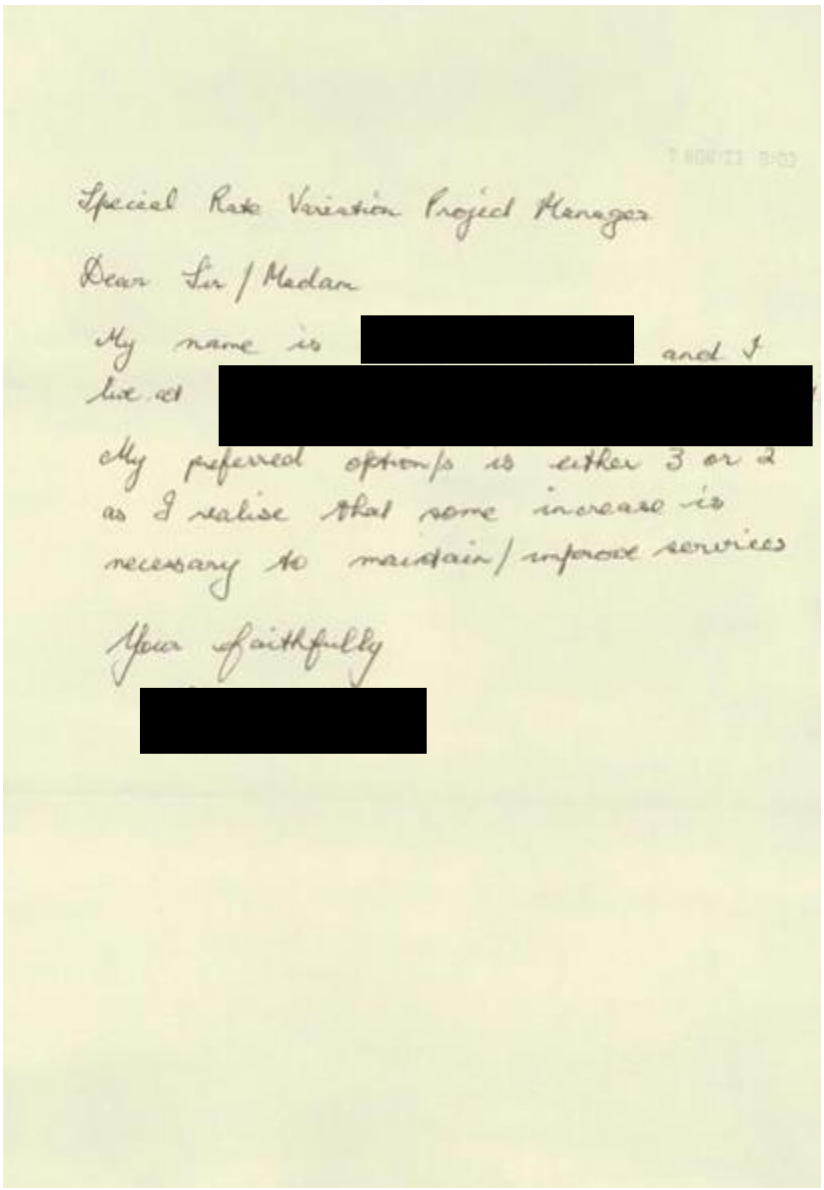
Hence I will use an old fashioned form of communication and write to you.

I opt for option 2 for rate rises. There are increasing costs of living and I feel sure that in such a bureaucracy as yours there are cost cutting measures you can implement and be more efficient and accountable.

Your sincerely,



Submission 25



Special Rate Variation Project Manager

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is [redacted] and I live at [redacted]

My preferred option/s is either 3 or 2 as I realise that some increase is necessary to maintain / improve services

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Submission 26: Alex Danilov

As I mentioned during the meeting some weeks ago, Council wastes money on stupid, unnecessary projects. Several examples of which I know are as follows:-

The Concourse in Chatswood was a huge waste of money and mainly aimed at increasing the standing of the self-aggrandizing mayor at the time. We all had to pay a fortune for that. (My letter to the mayor at the time should be on file.)

Recently, money was wasted on painting pedestrian stripes on an existing speed bump at the corner of Rohan St and Willoughby Rd, and extending the footpath into Willoughby Rd so some plants could be placed there. What possible purpose did this serve, especially after there were many objections which you ignored?

You intend to demolish a perfectly acceptable path and a brick wall containing mature coffee plants in the Naremburn shopping area, in spite of many objections. There is nothing wrong with the path, and the brick wall with coffee plants acts as a noise and view barrier, and is perfectly acceptable. I want to know who among the business owners there asked for this work to be done. I know of no-one who wants it, and it will cause loss of income for the shopkeepers (they'll probably sue you for this loss) and disturbance to all who use the area now, of which I am one. A sensible lower cost alternative would be to repair the walking area in the park at the end of Rhodes Avenue, which has been in a terrible state for all the 25 years I have lived here. The only thing ever done there has been to employ someone to drive a concrete grinding machine to grind away some of the more dangerous edges which are and continue to be a huge trip hazard. This has been done at least three times in the last 25 years, and is absolute stupidity and a waste of our rate money. Fix it once and for all and pay a fraction of what you intend to waste on the unnecessary Naremburn shopping precinct upgrade.

Some genius decided it would be a good idea to build brick plant holders along the noise barriers at the end of Rhodes Avenue, but it didn't occur to this same genius that plants need water, so they all died. After I wrote to Council the dead plants were replaced with Cacti. Please provide me with a list of people who requested these plant holders be fitted there.

Council has a weird policy on tree removals, to the point where some years ago one of my neighbours asked to remove a large gum tree which threatened to topple onto the house or footpath, and Council refused permission until the people enlisted the aid of other neighbours with a petition, which finally achieved a result before some pedestrian was killed by the tree.

When I wanted to replace an existing car-port with a kit garage, some moron from the Council insisted I obtain an engineer's approval to ensure the slab would support a car. This slab had supported a car for many years before, but I had to pay over $300 for an engineer to sign a piece of paper saying the slab was strong enough.

After I obtained permission to build the garage and a drive entrance, and asked about linking the two with a drive, the Council genius to whom I spoke told me that just because I had received permission for a drive entrance and a garage, I would not necessarily receive permission to link the two.

The re-development of the Leisure Centre may well be of some use, even though it was quite adequate before, providing most things which people wanted (including me), but of all the rate payers in Willoughby, exactly how many will benefit?

The list goes on and on, to the point where I believe the council may be staffed with many incompetent idiots (all of whom could be sacked to save money). One could be forgiven for thinking that Council sit around being paid, while thinking up idiot projects on which to waste money. If you` want to spend a bit usefully, fill in the hole in the location next to a large tree in the Cammeray parking area where I parked recently after heavy rain and had to wade though 150mm of water because the surface is so uneven.

Willoughby Council have as much high-rise rate income as North Sydney, and will soon have millions more from rates which will come in from all the over-developed buildings which you have permitted.

In my time I have managed multi-million dollar projects in Australia and overseas, and brought them in on time and on budget. If you cannot do this with the enormous income you have, it means you lack financial competence.

Some simple suggestions:

Get rid of as many incompetent employees as possible to save on wages.

Ensure that you are charged only for waste bins which are collected, not a bulk price for waste collection. This is another result of privatizing everything, where costs only increase and services deteriorate. Residents could then help by recycling more and wasting less, lowering the costs of garbage collection at the same time. Governments of all stripes insist on propagating the same old lies, telling everyone that privatization will result in more competition and lower prices. I defy you to provide ONE example of cheaper prices from ANY entity which has been privatized.

Have some employees (or all employees who move around the area) report back to Council on anything which needs attention, on a daily or weekly basis, and then plan on having this done, so residents don’t have to wait until someone complains about something. An example of this is high energy consumption lights in sporting areas being left on through the day, potholes, faulty lighting in parks, trees and branches left on walking areas (specifically along Flat Rock Drive), etc, etc.

If possible, save some money and return as many services as possible to the public, to avoid the insane prices which all privatized services charge, and which should never have been privatized.

If you would like more suggestions, I am happy to provide more examples.

Attachment G – Webinar comments

Question / Comment / Notes	Type of comment / question	Summary of response provided
Just to clarify, what kind of services are we reducing? Is it simply reducing the frequency for bin pick ups? Eg general rubbish are picked up once a fortnight, instead of weekly?	Written	• Rubbish is part of domestic waste fund, which is separate to Council's general fund, so waste would not be targeted for any reduced services
I am supportive of the Increased Services and Infrastructure option, it would be good if we don't waste money on increased services	Verbal	• This will be considered in next Operational Plan and Budget • Would be interested if you suggested some ideas to be considered under this option
How much debt does council have and can Option 2 (Maintain Services) be used to reduce debt	Written	• Our debt is largely linked to The Concourse, which is a long-term asset • It is not intended to use Option 2 to reduce debt, but feedback on this is sought. • In June 2023, we had $37.5m of debt out of $2bn in assets, which is manageable in terms of current operating profile
I am receptive to Option 2 (Maintain Services) and would like to see council build up their reserves for unforeseen events, rather than add new services	Verbal	• Thank for you feedback on this
When the new rate will take place?	Written	• It will start in the 2024 - 2025 financial year
In regard to the assets, are you considering selling any assets (income generating or debt)?	Verbal	• We don't intend to sell assets which have a substantial income-generating role.
What is the value of our reserves present?	Verbal	• Our reserves are $180 million • We publish this information each month in our investment report
What percentage of this reserve do you use on an annual basis?	Verbal	• 91% is quarantined for specific purposes, with the other 9% available for general use

So, the community vote on the percentage increase or is that just council?	Verbal	• We're seeking your views now and we are taking into considerations extra feedback / commentary
Just confirming the SRV will be adjusted correspondingly if the PEG rate is different?	Written	• The headline number will be the applicable rate rise, the Special Rate Variation component will be adjusted depending on the published rate cap
What's the general consensus of the survey so far? Is any particular option standing out?	Verbal	• We will not share the current results at the moment, as it could influence the final outcome
Curious to know, how does Willoughby's 4 proposals (reduce services, 12%,15% and 20%) compare with other nearby Councils such as North Sydney, Lane Cove etc?	Written	• We had some facts and figures on previous slides • So we know Hornsby has asked for one, it is possible Ku-ring-gai will be putting a Special Rate Variation forward for the 25/26 financial year

Attachment H– Comments and questions at in-person engagement events

Translated event for Cantonese speakers at Council Chamber on 17 October

Date	17/10/2023
Location	Willoughby Council, Council Chambers
Timing	7.00pm – 8.30pm
Attendees	Six community members

Question / Comment / Notes
Any Government subsidies or grants available to the Council?
Does the Hornsby Council rate (on the Council rate comparison slide) include their SRV increase?
What would North Sydney Council's rates be if you included the SRV?
What are the services that would be cut by the Council under Option 1?
Has the State Government subsidised any losses for the Council, particularly during COVID?
Does the council take responsibility of the losses and profits?
What is the percentage/amount of income from rates?
Why do we (Willoughby Council) want to do a nine year forecast?
Is there a timeframe for the 3.5% + 8.5% increase (with Option 2)?
Could you please help me understand a financial policy – after 9 years, there will be the same surplus as after 1 year ($40-ish million), not re-investing surplus? Does that mean that the Council is essentially never building a reserve? Does Council have a reserve fund now?
If there are more high-rise buildings, we might need more parks (re: Option 3, in response to spending more money on maintaining and improving parks)
Comment - Surprised amount Council has is so low/that it costs so little to run a council
When you present, it would be easier if you included actual figures, rather than percentages?
Regarding the rate renewal, there are more high-rise buildings coming – is this more money for Council?
Is the local bus service run by Council?
If everyone opts for Option 1, if something happened that required more funding after a couple of years, could Council still increase the rate/change rates? Or will you still be doing the same thing? Option 4 would be more stable?

In-person event for residents at Willoughby Uniting Church on 18 October

Date	18/10/2023
Location	Willoughby Uniting Church
Timing	7.00pm – 9.00pm

Attendees	Four community members and Councillors Taylor and Mouradian

Question / Comment / Notes
What were the examples of the extreme weather consequences in our area?
Where was there loss of revenue?
What other figures do the councils allow their rates? Would there be another alternative?
Is the population adjustment rate Council wide or state wide?
Compliment: “Love Willoughby and wouldn’t want to move”
Definition of loss, are you excluding capital contribution? Do you include expenses, depreciation, amortisation? Why is the presentation not inclusive of capital contributions?
Don’t understand presentation isn’t inclusive in capital contributions – before grants and permissions?
Why did you cut senior staff?
How do you create savings?
If you’re making a loss can you make the money back elsewhere? Government’s role is not profit generating but you’re offering a service
Will this slideshow be available?
Are CBD rates less than Willoughby?
How many councils were included in graph?
How do you decide on where you’re going to cut cost versus what you’re going to spend? Where are the priorities coming from? Is it the “squeaky wheel gets the most oil?” Does this mean services being cut like garbage pick-up? How do we help you make a decision on this, we can zoom in on priorities?
Footpath modification on Willoughby Road – how much did that cost? Why can’t that be on the website? What was the point of that? Why can’t this be on the website without having to bother Council? Complete waste of money
Redevelopment of Naremburn shop precinct from what I can see it’s not finalised and needs to go to tender – do we know how much that costs?
Have you worked out which services will be reduced?
Would you publish the pros and cons and specifically what you would plan to do before you go ahead?
Is there a difference between businesses and residentials? Do they give feedback too?
Where do you take into an account on rate increases? Where do you take account of that? New units in high rises?
In the Willoughby LGA – rich and poor diverse range – is our LGA more diverse than say Ryde? The average doesn’t mean anything. Are you referring to cost of living (not the income)?
What’s the decision-making process? Cutting services, increasing rates, how do we make that decision? The decision is not really in our hands.
Services like maintenance, like maintenance of the grounds, traffic islands– is that what that means?
Compliment: “Bus 120 is really good
You put up four options what is your recommended option do you have a preference?
Do you take into the account the options on the survey? Will survey results actually impact the final result?
Will the survey summary result be available?

In-person event for residents at Artarmon on 19 October

Date	19/10/2023
Location	Willoughby Leisure Centre Community Hall, Artarmon
Timing	7.00pm – 8.30pm
Attendees	Three community members

Question / Comment / Notes
If we get more people into the area (for growth and population) does that mean the council will have more money coming in? Does that mean you focus on more rates?
Operating revenue divided by expenditure? What does that mean?
Has there been any financial pressure on the council resulting from the amalgamation process?
Just to clarify the numbers, is it $130 rate increase in first year then 3.5 % over the next few years ($130 a year in perpetuity)?
$2 million into maintenance then taking away from somewhere else, what is that “something else”?
What are the new rates like and when, is it 2023-2024?
It’s a lot conceptually – is there an easier way to understand this?
Can we have a picture on what the Council owns?
The people who actually run the parking company do it through Council? What about Chatswood Chase?
Option 3 or 4 would be quite acceptable
How does Council determine their costs, revenue and rates? What about next steps, are you releasing the survey results?
The dollars are not that big in the grand scheme of things
Not a strong attendance tonight. These events could have been more clearly promoted on the back of the brochure

In-person engagement event for residents at Chatswood

Date	31/10/2023
Location	Willoughby Council Chambers
Timing	7:00pm – 8:30pm
Attendees	6 community members

Question / Comment / Notes
Why is the ratio/margin 2.5%, when we only need 2%?
Do the first two options (option 1 and 2), mean that there is no maintenance?
How do you use the additional funding? For example - tree maintenance. Understanding that it makes our area look more attractive, but we need to maintain them to keep them safe.
Do Willoughby Council know what other Councils doing?
Would Council think about merging with other councils?
Other Councils are increasing rates by 20-30% over 5 years - why is Willoughby Council suggesting to have the 20% increase within 1 year?

What's the review process over time? If this is perpetuity and the wealth of the Council becomes greater, at what point do you say you have enough at this time?
How persuasive will the community consultation be on making the decision (about rate increase)?
So, the Council and Councillors will make this decision, but it won't be definitive?
Who sits on IPART?
Discussion on where the money goes – often people don't appreciate what the council does now and when it can do with more resources i.e. streetscapes, footpaths, that can be approved throughout all of Willoughby.

In-person engagement event for residents at Naremburn

Date	01/11/2023
Location	Naremburn Community Centre
Timing	7:00pm – 8.30pm
Attendees	2 community members
Question / Comment / Notes	
Who determines that annual award increase? (3%)	
Do you run the COVID testing Clinic at the car park? Were there additional costs?	
Are the rate rises impacting residential and businesses?	
When will this rate rise be implemented?	
What infrastructure will you consider upgrading?	
What are the increased services you are considering?	
Comment: With climate change – thought needs to be where tree shades need to be.	
Comment: Futureproofing of new buildings with regards to heat waves – better insulation to new buildings.	

In-person engagement event for residents at Castle Cove

Date	02/11/2023
Location	Castle Cove Community Centre
Timing	7:00pm – 8.30pm
Attendees	7 community members
Question / Comment / Notes	
Who determines that annual award increase? (3%)	
When will this rate rise be implemented?	
What infrastructure will you consider upgrading?	
How does it compare to other councils regarding Council's operating result?	

Does this include government grants for COVID?
Is it common amongst councils to have vacant roles to balance the budget? I'm concerned that it does not make it an enticing place to work for (at Willoughby Council), as it indicates that 1 person is doing 2 roles.
Comment: It is important that the wording should be changed from "target" or an "assumption" for vacant jobs
Survey could have been done earlier in the morning and not during COVID (re. ceased loop bus services)
Outsourcing Devonshire Street – Do we know how it impacted people who need the childcare?
Where are the standard services in the community? It's disappointed that the gov does not set targets for standard services. Services have suffered and worse than what it was before.
Residents living in apartments use more of the Council facilities than home owners.
It's an aging population. We need more bus services in Castle Cove.
What are the increased services you are considering?
Feedback: Regarding Option 1 - it too broad and difficult to make a decision, as we do not know which services will be cut to make a decision.
Comment: Once we determine the budget, then they can work out what can be cut/increased. What the community can do – is to make suggestions.
Comment: Castle Cove would like more services with our higher rates (more houses than apartments).
Regarding option 3: Can we be ensured the 2mill will go into beautification?
Comment: If we go with option 3 and 4 – we need it to be super clear, and make it be known that there is a hardship program. Concerned about those with a fixed income (pensioners)
We should push back, and demand more from the developers to help service our growth.
Feedback: This is the most engaging council has been with the community. Congratulations on getting this together.
How do you define high value services?

Attachment I – Report of rate rise option stakeholder roundtable held on 19 October 2023

Venue: Council Chambers Victor St Chatswood

Time: 8.00 – 9.15am

Date: 19 October 2023

Overview

On 19 October 2023, Willoughby City Mayor Tanya Taylor, CEO Debra Just and Chief Financial Officer Stephen Naven led a roundtable on the rate rise options with representatives of Progress Associations and business organisations from across the LGA.

The event involved Ms Just running through a presentation for the attendees, and the opportunity for attendees to ask questions during and after the presentation. The purpose of the event was to brief the attendees to ensure their submissions and members were well-informed.

Photo of the roundtable in session



There were 21 questions in total, with six regarding alternate revenue streams, three regarding rate rise option details, five regarding rates details, three regarding finances, one regarding staffing, one regarding Council's other projects and one regarding specifics of working to accommodate future growth.

Attendees expressed their thanks by delivering a round of applause at the event’s conclusion. The meeting closed a little after 9.15am.

Attendees

	Attendees	Organisation
1.	John Chase	Northbridge Progress Association
2.	Tony Richards	Northbridge Progress Association
3.	Mary Ann Irvin	Artarmon Progress Association
4.	Michael Chen	Artarmon Village Incorporated
5.	Judy Simpson	Artarmon Progress Association & Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations
6.	Phillip Briggs	Naremburn Progress Association
7.	Kristina Dodds	Willoughby South Progress Association
8.	Tony Tenney	Willoughby South Progress Association
9.	Kate Westoby	Castlecrag Progress Association
10.	Wendy Norton	Castle Cove Progress Association & Federation of Willoughby Progress Associations
11.	Diana Pryde	Chatswood West Ward Progress Association
12.	Andrew Nelson	Chatswood West Ward Progress Association
13.	Carol Chen	Chatswood Chamber of Commerce

Council representatives present and their roles

Representative	Role
Mayor Tanya Taylor	Chair
CEO Debra Just	Presenter
Chief Financial Officer Stephen Naven	Observer, answer questions if needed
Community Engagement Specialist Neal Robinson-Clark	Event project manager
Community Engagement Officer Elizabeth Scott	Assistant project manager

Questions / comments raised:

Theme	Questions / comments in theme
Rating structure	Will new high rise apartments change our demographics? What are the median rates? Rates only account for 40% of revenue after covid, will that change? What is the average rate based on land use? Apartments vs single dwellings etc Are rates based on value of land? If so, if the value of land falls will the rates fall too? What is the percent of business ratepayers? Is there special materials for businesses? How permanent is the rate increase? Do businesses pay rates or do landowners?
Finance strategy	What about reserves and capital? Why is staffing vacancy always at 7%? There is not a lot of transparency around assets sales and portfolio management. What is the revenue benchmark process for Willoughby venues?
Expenditure	What's the current timing for CONNECT?

	What was the infrastructure levy implemented for? Has service reduction for waste collection been considered? Council is spending money on services that are not seen as core and we might need more community education
Revenue	What are the Developer options and are they included in our numbers? What is the normal percent for developer contributions?
Other	Commending Council for their engagement efforts on the SRV project.

Attachment J – Emailed comments

Location / capacity of participant	Comment
Residential ratepayer, suburb unknown	Given the substantial revenue generated from the numerous high-rise developments in Willoughby, it seems that the council is already receiving significant income for its services and future projects. Meanwhile, our salaries have increased by only 0%, and the cost of living has risen by 12%. Therefore, it would be reasonable to consider reducing the council rates.
Artarmon resident	Can you please pass this on to your marketing team/designers. Brilliant well constructed mailed comms to residents explaining the % rate rise increases. It clearly articulates all options and the benefits. It's beautiful. After a short read Id moved my position from maintain at 12% to 20%. So...all I want to do is tick a box stating Im in the 20% crowd. I scan the QR code...get taken to a survey, log in etc etc. Im digital savvy...waaaaay too hard. Good luck...I tried. I am done. Damn shame
Residential landowner, suburb unknown	Maintain services - Option 2
Residential landowner, Northbridge	I would like to vote for the 3.5% increase option. While I highly appreciate the dedication of rangers and other staff, the council's expenditure on some public areas makes me puzzled. The new brick area on Bellambi St, Northbridge. It have costed a fair bit of money (someone told me 300,000) I do not believe it will bring that level of benefit to the people. Some time ago, the council replaced the kerb stone on Sailors bay Rd opposite Shore Oval with sand stone, and made sand stone planters. Some street resurfacing, an example of which I cannot provide, makes me puzzled. Painting of bicycle paths in some roads in the absence of safe bicycle lanes makes me puzzled. This area is mature without being obsolete. I hope such fringe expenditure would be cup back and be spent on staff to attract quality people.
Residential landowner, multiple suburbs	My wife (name deleted) and I own (address deleted) Artarmon (address deleted) Artarmon (address deleted) Artarmon and (address deleted) Chatswood. We have received your letters asking us to have our say on four rate rise options. We vote to reduce services for a 3.5% increase. I tried to go to www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au but it required me to register and sign on before I could vote and I was unable to do that.
Residential ratepayer, Chatswood	We are rate payers of Willoughby Council having lived here for the past 12 years. I've received a letter seeking feedback on options for Rates – I've tried navigating your haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au website – but found it too convoluted and confusing – so thought it easiest to send you this email. In short, our strong recommendation is to reduce services to attempt to reduce rates. In terms of "why", we do not find the current level of services either necessary or adequate – so we definitely do not want those "services" increased or expanded. By way of example… • Repeated engagement with development planning has been cumbersome and ineffective • Obfuscation when dealing with repeated complaints to deal with a demonstrably dangerous and menacing dog in the neighbourhood • Obsessive pursuit – to the point of threatening harassment - for a number of years over an air conditioning unit • Unnecessary closing of playing fields for children with minor rain.

	• Disproportionate “rights” granted to dog owners on playing fields over those of children wishing to play • Digging up and relaying asphalt on lowly trafficked neighbourhood streets which do not require it (versus not addressing the terrible conditions of Willoughby Rd) Our observation over the last dozen years is that while Council is trying to hard to be an engaging and comprehensive service provider, largely the services being provided are either infective, based on poor judgement, or lacking common sense, produce poor outcomes, or are services which are simply not necessary. So our recommendation is for Council to do LESS, rather than try and do more.
Castle Cove resident and Chatswood CBD business owner.	I understand the difficult position the council is in. As a rate payer, I want the council to focus on the essential services that benefit majority of the rate payers, and reduce services that that only benefiting minority groups.
Castlecrag ratepayer	Thank you for your letter regarding 'rate rise options' which arrived in my post box yesterday. I am a Castlecrag Resident and Ratepayer, and I am emailing you as the on-line 'have your say' is largely with respect to 'four rate rise options', when in fact there are several more options that should be canvassed, which I outline below: * Option 5 - Maintain Services following a thorough review of Council's expenditure, ensuring that expenditure is aligned with reasonable and realistic Ratepayer expectations. Rate increased pegged at 3.5%. Councils were established to provide basic services such as roads, garbage collection, public open spaces, community centres, planning and building approvals etc. However, over time they have morphed into all manner of areas, pet-projects, edifices, financing of events etc. And unfortunately I frequently see Council wasting Ratepayer funds on unnecessary matters and works, and without direct consultation with Ratepayers who may be impacted by them - such as the wasteful proposed conversion of a useful existing car park beside the Griffin Centre in Castlecrag into yet another park (Castlecrag is already proliferated with small parks),or further unwanted traffic devices on Edinburgh Road, Castlecrag etc. And of course I see unspent Council budget being hastily spent during May - June most years. * Option 6 - Sale of The Concourse. Nil rate increase. Council's ownership of The Concourse is an extravagance, and an example of Council's activities having morphed well beyond its original purpose. Selling The Concourse to the private sector would vastly improve Council's finances, through debt retirement and providing investible funds for the future. I understand that most of Council's indebtedness is due to The Concourse. I do not believe that any of the 'four rate rise' options are realistic, particularly Option 1 of 'Reduce Service' with rate increase pegged at 3.5%, or Option 3 'Increase Services' with a 15% rate rise, or Option 4 'Increase Services and Infrastructure" with a 20% rate rise. Option 2 'Maintain Services' but with a with an 3.5% rate rise (not 12% and only after a rigorous review of Council expenditure) may be acceptable. In summary, my view is that Council should refocus on its basic purpose in life, refocus on what are realistic community expectations, and consult directly with Ratepayers prior to launching Council developed 'initiatives'.
Naremburn residential ratepayer	With regard to council's rate option increases. My preference would be option 2 to maintain the current level of services.

Northbridge resident	I definitely vote for Reduce Services option. I don't understand why the council would want to reduce services in spite of being granted 3.5% increase for the rates. "Community Projects" are one of the largest expense items, as the latest Willoughby News show. Only one of those 6 listed there, namely Stormwater and Drainage makes a convincing sense. (This is also one of the smallest items.) The remaining tens of millions in projects are totally inappropriate for these hard times. Let me remind you of an unfortunate project called "Bellambie street closure" in Northbridge. It is ugly and useless in spite of probably tens of thousands spent.
Status not known	Thank you for your pamphlet outlining 4 options for "Securing Willoughby's Future". The four options provided were: 1. Reduce Services (with a 3.5% rate increase) 2. Maintain Services (with a 12% rate increase) 3. Increase Services (with a 15% rate increase) 4. Increase Services and Infrastructure (with a 20% rate increase) However I think there is a 5th option that your nice, printed documentation neglects to mention. How about reducing the General Manager's salary to around $200K per annum? We can get someone very well qualified for that amount of money and the next level of management of the council? These management salaries are totally out of control. Why should a GM of a local council be paid on par with the Prime Minister of the entire country? Why should this be a mandated employment increase? When was the last time this went out to open tender for this kind of money? It pretty much boils down to rates, roads and rubbish. It's not that complicated. It does not deserve these outlandish fixed term contracts and salaries. If you're asking the community to tighten our belts - that's fine - but we would like to see the pain shared equally here. We would absolutely like to see Deborah Just's salary be taken down by about 50%. Thank you. I look forward to a serious, considered response.
Willoughby residential landowner	1) As an owner of a small flat in Willoughby and another elsewhere, and both living in a retirement village, we favour the Reduce Services choice as one that will have a lesser affect on our lives. 2) I was astounded to find your request that I give you my email with its password – unbelievable at a time when we have to protect ourselves from scams and other intrusions. I believe that this will result on a reduction in replies to your request for resident and owner views. Perhaps you wish to reduce the number of responses – "fewer says".
Northbridge ratepayer	Thank you for offering different levels of service to cope with various costs. I vote for REDUCE SERVICES because I believe the remit for Councils has gone far too wide. I know you provide lots of services and landscaping etc but I don't think these are the role of Council Many services used to be provided in the past by volunteers (I used to be one as secretary of the original occasional child care centre) and I think we should return to this model. Also, as an example, I think the expenditure at Artarmon village is quite unwarranted. It does not widen the road for cars. It is certainly attractive but I think a gross waste of rate payers money
Willoughby residents	My wife and I are happy to pay more and enjoy more infrastructure spend.
North Willoughby resident	I think that the council should maintain their level of service, as it currently exists, and that the Council's Charges should be increased to a level that enables them to do so.
Northbridge resident	I would like to provide feedback that I would like to recommend the option to 'reduce services' to help keep down rates rises to a minimum. In the current period going forward with higher interest rates and cost of living increases, keep rate increases to a minimum would be supported in my view.

Status not known	What a load of inexplicable nonsense. I have professional qualifications and university degrees and worked in varying senior management jobs, but from the complicated publication you have sent out, have absolutely no idea how to respond and to whom I can have my say. Has your brochure been tested on the general public? I'm sure not. So I can only assume, like others, any results from your survey will be unlikely to represent your ratepayers views. It seems just a waste of ratepayers funds.
Status not known	I hereby vote for the reduced service option.
Business, other information not known	NIL rate increase is the only option acceptable
Castlecrag resident	We have read all the options, but we still do not know how to vote for the option we want, which is the large one. So tell us how to do that
Status not known	Having reviewed the options I vote for Option 3 Increased services.
Status not known	Arrange free entry or very low low fee to the waste management area in Artarmon, it will cut cost for them on the rubbish collection or old junk pick up because less booking
Status not known	I am writing to express our support for Option 2 ie "Maintain Services" at a proposed rate rise 12%.
Artarmon resident	Today I received a letter: UPDATE – Artarmon Parklands Pavillion. There might be some justification for notifying me as a ratepayer but in view of Council wanting to increase rates, this way of doing it doesn't represent any attempt at the frugality that might be expected in the circumstances. The notice is on expensive, heavyweight, glossy paper and in a hand-delivered envelope. Should Council not adopt the advice of the old addage: 'Look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves'.
Status unknown	I would like to see services maintained which would involve a rate rise of 12% but given the current cost of living increases this would hit some struggling ratepayers very hard.
Willoughby South small business owner	I am writing to you to express my concerns regarding the current proposed increases to council rates. I have read the proposed changes and voted to reduce services and increase rates by 3% as this was the cheapest option The council have noted that these proposed changes come at a time when Australians have been hit hard by cost of living pressures, however I believe this point deserves more consideration. My council rates have already increased from a year ago and interest rates are only going to increase until 2025 and only now strata companies are just starting to increase their rates. Things are about to get a lot harder and it needs to be seriously questioned if raising council rates will cause more harm than good. I also feel that alternate revenue streams have not been considered. As you are aware I previously lead a petition for the couincil to grant parking permits for my building. The residents were willing to pay for these permits as required and I'm sure there are many others across the local suburbs also willing to pay for permits. Yet the petition was denied for non sensical and outdated reasons. I seek your support to keep council rates as low as possible. Preferably avoiding any increases but I realise that this may not be pheasable.
Willoughby resident	I'm providing feedback on behalf of my 94 year old mother who lives at (address redacted) Willoughby. She doesn't have a computer so I'm passing on her 'say'. Of the 4 options she prefers option 2 ie services to remain the same as they are now.
Chatswood resident and ratepayer	I am a senior resident & ratepayer in Chatswood. I provide housing & care for my adult daughter, who has a longterm medical disability.

	With the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, I am making this submission to Willoughby Council to adopt Option 1 - Reduce Services - 3.5% rate increase i.e. rate increases in line with NSW Government rate peg.
Status unknown	You never listen, so what's the point
Artarmon business property owner	I have tried to register my vote many times on the Have Your Say web site, all to no avail. In the end I phoned your office last week and, after a lengthy discussion with the Council person I was put through to answer my questions, I was advised to email Council with my Option Preference. This may be because of my age (over 85) and my lack of experience in dealing with issues on line. Anyway, my name is (name redacted) and I am responding as the business property owner of (address redacted). I would like to register my choice of Option 4 to Increase Services and Infrastructure with a 20% rate increase.
Status unknown	I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to express my concerns about the recent rate rise online survey that was distributed to the taxpayers in our community. While I appreciate the council's efforts to gather public input, I believe that one specific question in the survey may inadvertently coerce taxpayers into agreeing to the rate rise without giving them a fair and unbiased opportunity to express their preferences. The question I would like to address is the one that asks participants to rate different options from most preferred to least preferred. The concern here is that this question may not allow for a truly accurate representation of taxpayer sentiments. It could inadvertently pressure respondents into favoring one option over the others, even if they have concerns or reservations about the proposed rate rise. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to seeing the improvements in the survey and participating in a process that genuinely reflects the views of our community members.
Status unknown	I wish to maintain services with an increase of 12%.
North Willoughby resident	My feedback is as follows Option 2 Maintain services
Chatswood resident	Regards to your letter of increasing council fee, as a long term Chatswooder and Willoughby council rate payer we strongly say that councillors and mayors should stop using rate payer's money to buy their ideal or own selected car, because that's huge amount of rate payer's money to satisfy personal desire, they are employed by council and receive salary, they should offer their own cars like ordinary people do. Please do not misuse rate payer's money. Rate payer's money is for building our community only. Please manage rate payer's money better to avoid increasing council fee! LIfe is very harsh now for every one. Thank you very much for your prompt attention.
Status unknown	Under the proposal to increase rates the Council should maintain services with either no or a minimal increase in rates. I would also request that the Council find out why the Government is not passing some of the hard earned money that people give it in taxes, back down to the people, via the Council. Where is all this money going? People already pay the Council enough money in rates and fines and should not have to part with any more.
Status unknown	Hello Council team, I know you are trying to collect more council rate, but I do not have an ideal about the service we are receiving around Chatswood west at current stage. We are at

	low the low end of the of the Chatswood any way, What service would you like to reduce ? How many residents support you? I tried to login to your account but I am blocked out, as my email address is linked to Everbrite. not keen to increase council rate, we are not at the high end of the town.
Northbridge resident	Dear Willoughby City Council, I note Willoughby City Council (WCC) does not accept the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal NSW (IPART) peg rate without knowing the actual rate. How then does WCC determine the claimed shortfall and calculate the increases in rates? It seems WCC does not accept the independent scrutiny of IPART given "IPART's rate peg takes into account the annual change in the Local Government Cost Index (LGCI), which measures the average costs faced by NSW councils, in addition to a population factor based on each council's population growth." IPART also makes provision for special variation in the peg rates. So why is WCC not first providing the business case to IPART to seek an increase, rather than immediately fall back on ratepayers ? I find it hard to reconcile the current claims with "The 2021/22 Financial Statements find Council in a robust, healthy and sustainable financial position. Council's reserves and ongoing revenue streams will enable us to continue to provide services to the community and to deliver planned projects and capital works." This, in the middle of the 2021-23 period of concern, despite COVID losses and the failure to achieve a couple of financial performance indicators, at least one of which appears to be sensitive but could be quickly fixed by seeking more from ratepayers rather than managing it another way. WCC have not provided a business case to demonstrate the need to increase rates or decrease services. The 2022 Financials indicated any COVID losses were managed and they should now be much reduced. The increase in operational costs in the 2022 Financials appears to be approx. 1.5%, so where is the rest ? One of the few significant changes in the period of concern appeared to be the loss of some infrastructure grant funding. WCC appear not to be strategic in planning, in admitting to letting the infrastructure levy lapse, and not being prepared for wild weather events which have been forecast for years, and not anticipating that inflation would rise above the historical lows, and not anticipating that IPART is likely to raise the peg rates in future if indeed inflation raises operating costs. Therefore, I don't believe WCC have provided a business case to justify either an increase in rates or a reduction in services. WCC need to manage any pressures within their "robust, healthy and sustainable financial position".
Chatswood residential ratepayer	I am happy for the option of the Increase Services for 15% rate increase. I also would like to express my have your say in regards to seeking community feedback. I am a landowner resident in Chatswood who live in the strata building. Most of the Strata Plan nowadays, there are many more investor owners than owner residents. Those investor owners live somewhere else. That means they are not really part of our Willoughby Community. I realised that many of those investor owners do not care about the community, do not care about the building maintenances and do not care about the council services they receive. All they care about is maximum rental income and minimum outgoing expenses. Asking community feedback to those investor owners who live somewhere else may affect the true community feedback. Because most likely those investor owners express their opinion for minimum rate increase only as they do not care about the services but all they care about is a minimum outgoing expenses.
Chatswood property owner	I would like Willoughby Council to maintain services, which implies an increase of 12% in rates for the year.

Attachment K– Comments made by participants who supported Reduce Services as their first ranked option

Council need to stop wasting money and look to more efficiency.
Cost of living increases are impacting everybody and the council needs to become more efficient or reduce all but the very necessary services like rubbish removal and emergency road repairs. The council has an obligation like all families to manage services within the current budget restraints.
1. Council voluntarily gave up millions during COVID-19 to businesses. How about clawing back all the revenue you gave away during that time. 2. Council closed Willoughby Leisure Centre at the same time as North Sydney Pool. No doubt Willoughby Leisure Centre is over budget. 3. Time for Council to cut the cloth to suit ones purse. Roads, Rates, Rubbish. Stick to those 3.
Please review your expenditure and cut the unnecessary spending
At a time when Cost of Living is high it would inappropriate to add to the financial burden already carried by you ratepayers. Council should first look at increasing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of its existing structure.
You have allowed all these new developments Council will be getting extra rates from the new occupants. Council has approved all these developments and now we have to suffer the consequences . We have a Mayor who is not visible in the community you never hear from her. I have been emailing Council for years about the lack of Street lighting in Penkivil St nothing done no response. You only hear from Mayor when there is an election. Jilly Gibson was the Mayor of Nth Syd very active in the community and still is, always writing posts in a Kirribilli Connections. What's our Mayor doing ? Trying to raise our rates people are sick of rising costs and disappointing Government and local Gov. You'll raise the rates nothing surer so I cannot understand why even have this survey.
Council ought to balance its budget. I have to, notwithstanding costs of living pressure - the inflation Council speaks about also applies to residents. Council mentions average rates falling by 3.2%, however my rates have not fallen. On the contrary, they have increased. As to infrastructure repairs, this ought to have been budgeted for long term - that is simply good management. There is otherwise no explanation for the COVID-19 losses. There are a significant number of new apartment blocks that have gone up in the Council area, which ought to have brought in a significant amount of new rates. However, Council is not responsible for infrastructure like new schools or hospitals to accommodate the increase in population to justify infrastructure costs. And I would think the rates levied on the new apartment blocks ought to cover any increase in Council services associated with the increase in population. 'No' to council increases beyond those it is entitled to. Indeed, it should proceed on that basis by maintaining current services, rather than reducing them.
There is a significant jump in the revenue peg from 3.5% to 12% in the next option. Can you please look at a new option in the middle, say 8%? Also look at reducing red garbage collection to encourage residents to reduce their environmental footprint. Thanks
Council could make significant savings, without reducing services, if it kept its capital works at a reasonable level. For example, if the residents were asked whether they really wanted $4M , admittedly some of it non council money, for the Hampden Road upgrade, at a costy of increased rates, then Im sure their enthusiasm for it would have been tempered. A $1M refurbishment would work just as well. The services are generally needed , but some of the capital works' are simply excessive indulgences, allowing a photo op for the mayor and councilors. So the question is a bit

cunning. Rates go to services and capital woks and maintenance of capital works. More money into maintenance and less in ego driven vanity projects would greatly assist in balancing the books.
Not enough detail provided in terms of services that will change depending on the options chosen
We believe there is an overabundance of some services and staffing, particularly those in the council-owned nature and gardening maintenance which we believe to be excessive.
The commercial rates are already heaps higher than residential and we get basically nothing for them. Rubbish stays in left in the street for weeks. It seems like we are treated as a cash cow and nothing else.
cost pressures coming from every quarter …we all need to live within our means
In my opinion Council should review its work productivity and necessities of some projects.
cant afford to live here if the costs of living continue to increase as my income cannot keep up with all the other increases and this one just adds to it. So like other things I have to cut back on things - so should the council
Cost of living has increased substantially so a slight reduction in council services would not be felt
Cant afford it atm with everything else increasing,please defer at least 1 year
In the current cost of living pressures we find it difficult to support any increase. There are quite a number of new medium density developments in our which should add significantly to the Councils income in the next few years.
Cost of living pressures mean any limits on council spending good.
The council provides far too many services and wastes vast amounts of money. It needs to cut services and expenditure severely. Look after garbage and parks - there is very little else councils need to do.
I receive very little benefit from council services apart from the library and rubbish collection. I believe much money is wasted on increasing 'greenie',projects and numerous child playground refurbishments which appear redundant and under-utilised in Castlecrag. I have had some communication with the council regarding limited regular activities for senior citizens in the Dougherty centre but pleased to see the introduction of line dancing and resumption of sketching classes. Other councils such as Mosman and Kuringai are much more proactive in this area and the Dougherty centre appears a much wasted resource.
Low rates should be the priority of Council.
Have you reviewed council costs? You have decided to close Devonshire St Child care which was making a profit. How many other real services is council reviewing that make a profit or loss? How much are you paying council executives... are there any costs associated with executive team that can be trimmed.... is council paying for uncommercial executive benefits? Is that expenditure being reviewed? Have you got your headcount right? Is your competitive tender process appropriate for the current environment? None of that seems to have been answered.
We are all being expected to manage with less. Willoughby council should be no different to any other household budget.
There is too much money being wasted with projects that do not need to be undertaken, Edward St is an example. I would only support an increase above the prescribed rate if the money was being

spent wisely. Key issues are not resolved, but new projects keep getting funded. I am not supporting council increases while the focus is not on repairs, safety and cost saving.
There are already enormous cost of living pressures on households, including energy inflation (20%+ increases) and food inflation. Any other increases in rates should be kept to a minimum to assist families
Enough people are struggling with the cost of living now. It is not the time to be campaigning for any increase in Council rates. Council should be tightening their belts like all residents have to. Time for new projects to be put on hold and the essentials only paid for
My rates are already exceptionally high because of the VG's valuation of my property. Currently $4,798.0 a year with a rate component of $4,155.80. Yet services provided to me are the same as to the lowest domestic rate payer in the WCC area. For me the estimated annual increase is as follows: 3.5% = $145.45; 12% = $498.70; 15% = $623.37; 20% = $831.16. I understand the "wealthier supporting the less wealthy" policy of rate calculation but my wife and I are retired on a limited fixed income and can ill afford an increase. Council would better serve its community by a more commercial approach to Council spending, eliminating waste and more economically delivering its current services.
Garbage disposal n street lightening r to be maintained. It would be good to know what services r to be reduced before we make a submission
When the new Chatswood library and concourse centre was built, council was very clear there would be no financial burden in the ratepayers. In addition, with increasing density there is increasing revenue to Council. Everyone else is tightening expenditures, Council needs to as well, this is no time to increase services.
Existing council services are more than adequate. More seems to be being spent than necessary e.g. upgrade ro Sanders Park
I am strongly against borrowing from the future, directly or indirectly. I believe that the Council should prioritize future generation housing/rates challenges above increased park care, additional pavilions etc. I believe that rates will be unlikely to undergo a relative decrease later. Why not stay in alignment with the rest of NSW? I accept this may be a disappointing opinion. The stress of reduced services should be distributed as equitably as possible. Thank you for the opportuniy to comment.
LOWER rates
The community is sick of the never ending rising costs of living and Council raising rates is not going to help
Cost of living pressures are overwhelming, so it’s completely unreasonable to raise costs and unnecessary to add services. Many of the current council “services” aren’t even needed are a luxury that should be trimmed.
Keep to the basics - 1 Keep the roads in order (clean, potholes, in good repair, resurfacing etc) 2 Keep the footpaths in order (in good repair and safe for pedestrians) 3 Keep the parks in order (clean and maintained) 4 Collect the garbage 5 Keep community centres maintained 6 Keep building site compliant with regulations and approval conditions.
I am a business owner, so I know I can't just pass on my cost increases to my customer - I need to find more innovative ways to offset those costs. I am appalled at public servants, like at Willoughby Council, who choose the lazy, low road: making threats to cut services unless large rate increases are approved. Fatuous comments about how "we know residents have cost pressure" make this

even more appalling. The correct solution: do the job you are paid for as managers and maintain services within the rate peg.
There should have been a option to reduce rates
Rates are circa double that of a similar property in North Sydney.
As a retired couple, and not withstanding the pensioner rebate on Council rates, we can't absorb any more rate rises. Enough is enough. Look for cost cutting measures.
I would support rate rises if they went to actual services. The council needs to stop wasting money on WOKE causes, such as reconciliation plans and carbon reduction and focus on the only thing we want from a council. Local services, infrastructure and amenity. Narrow the focus to only this and I would happily pay more. I wont pay a cent more for stupid causes outside the scope of what Councils exist for.
everyone has to cut budgets in these tough times. If Council increases rates it will make ratepayers suffer more pain. Council must make difficult savings decisions just like the ratepayers do
Firstly, why on earth do I have to set up a sign in and go through all this rigmarole in order to complete a survey - is it to deter people from providing feedback - what a ridiculous way to do things! If Council is finding it so difficult to make ends meet, why don't you simply sell the incredible amount of infrastructure involved in the Councourse that you used ratepayer money over many years to build? Hopefully it would be worth more than you spent on developing it, but I somehow doubt it.
Not many business owners and employees have had an annual increase of 3.5% to our income. Yet during a cost of living crisis, Willoughby council presents a 3.5% increase as being the 'reduce service' option, and 12% to even maintain services. How do you think customers of a business would react if the business increased prices by 12% for the same service?
I believe that many of Council's current services are unnecessary. Many others are running inefficiently. Much more can be done to trim costs. Focus on the basics
With increased cost of living we all need to be more productive, but productivity is declining. I am against spending money inefficiently.
As already acknowledged in your emails, this is a time of significant financial pressure and instability for community members, so I would expect to see the government stepping in to close the gaps as opposed to having the additional costs passed on to the community. I strongly support a service reduction to simply "keep the lights on" while we navigate through these difficult times with the thinking of reviewing it in a near (and hopefully better) future.
There is massive challenges for households at the moment and you are proposing options with 15 and 20% increases. It's a disgrace. First port of action should be to tighen the belt at WCC, and look for cost savings within the administration functions, then if necessary start cutting 'nice to have' services first. Until such time as the council has reduced its funding shortfall, some community based activities may have to be cut or scaled back and prioritise essential services. Effectively council is spending beyond its means at the moment. Do better, and stop pushing the problem down the line to the rate payers. For example, you sent me both an email and the letter in the post... STOP relying on physical mail, look to make all rates notices electronic (its both more cost effective and more environmentally sound). Thats just one small example of where council is wasting money hand over fist.

Reduce services further so there is no rate increase.
Too expensive and don't see much good services being delivered
we could wait until inflation rate decreases and payroll increases to increase our council rates
Collect rubbish, maintain footpaths and council roads, operate and maintain libraries, reserves, pubic toilets and public swimming pools. Stay out of politics.
I am financially struggling, my average pay rise over the past 5 years of less than 1%pa.
Council should concentrate on the basic services & avoid "the nice to haves"
Household Income is already stretched to its limits recently due to various RBA rate rise and this will be the nail in the coffin. Please hold off so that we do have some breathing space to get our household budget in order.
Why not a rate increase that is a compromise between different levels?
at this stage, with the inflation, the slowing economic and the high interest rate it wouldn't be a good move at all to increase the rate
Why would you want to increase rates so much in a cost of living crisis ? Landlords will pass these increases on to renters so everyone will cop a cost increase.
I would like to see the area continue to improve infrastructure and services and although cost is a burden it’s worth it to me to improve our suburb
State government should step in . Crazy billions of tax payers dollars spent by state on infrastructure without value returns . Fixing the problem not by passing it to residents
The Council needs to reassess which services are reduced. For example, prioritise cuts to festivals - why do we need to pay for Emerge Festival and the likes, over infrastructure and maintenance
Personal economic situation
I appreciate the opportunity to have input into this decision making process. For our family, other than for necessities, such as garbage collection and water/sewerage maintenance, we don't use Council services. I've often thought it's not very fair for those families that have no need or interest in the many and varied events or services Council runs to be paying fees for everyone else.
Spent too much on Concourse
People are feeling strain enough as it is, our mortgage has gone up $1k/month we don't need to be paying extra money mainly for services we don't use
The same applies as if you are working in a private enterprise… you need to work out a way to do more with less. This is NOT YOUR MONEY.
As an Aged Pensioner a rate increase would make things much more difficult to make ends meet.
Cost of living pressures. I believe the council can find savings else where until inflation drops
Rates are already unaffordable
The council should be able to find efficiency/productivity savings before raising rates higher than inflation . That is why interest rates are going to force everyone in the community to achieve better productivity.

Council must live within its means just like anybody else. "Reduce service" is an emotive term. Council should adjust its services and expenses and adapt to new circumstances. What happens to all your surpluses from previous years? Cut your own remunerations before cutting services. Raise your productivity before cutting services.
We are all tightening our belts!
I hope Council can review their budget, trim their costs and bear in mind the huge cost of living residents are trying to cope with by managing their own budgets.
Council needs to get back to core servicers. It need to get out of activities that the private sector could service. Council staff levels can be reduced by reducing the focus. Marketing staff should be reduced to one person to support the Mayor. Some unwanted Council land can be leased for 50/100 years. There are many other initiatives that can be considered. Council is is about the five Rs: - Rubbish and Roads and Reduce costs, Reduce costs, Reduce costs.
As a retired person it is extremely difficult to pay Bills with the current price increases across virtually all products and services. I believe Council has the responsibility in these times of steep Cost of Living pressures on families to explore all avenues of reducing their costs and explore more effective ways of managing costs. Obtain more assistance from The State Government.
cannot afford any rate rises and will not be supporting any of these options as they are all unreasonable at this current time
It should be easy for WCC to reduce UNNECESSARY expenditure and prioritise essential services that most residents pay their rates for. Eliminate all unnecessary activities (eg supporting fringe arts) and getting involved in quasi-political activities. Sustainability is national, WCC should concentrate on recycling. It is all about getting back to basics such as rubbish, recycling and roads.
Over the years the rate is index adjustment, but on top of that the council also get increased rate based on an unrealistic property land value. This land value is closed to the property value, and totally out of touch with reality.
Cost of living have increased everywhere and while I understand the pressures this presents to the council we all need to tighten our belts. At my work, people have been let go and we need to do the same job with less people and we only been given a small increase to our pay way below inflation. If rate owners have to face this then the council must also do the same.
Any rate increase greater than inflation is unacceptable. The council should review all non-core services, including community and other grants and reduce or eliminate these. Councils should be focused on core services such as refuse collection.
I have a property in the Central Coast council area, and therefore I have first hand experience of what permanent base rate rises mean. My preference is to keep base rates as they are if rises in them cannot be reversed. The peg rate will ensure that our rates continue to rise automatically.
Utility services have placed unprecedented pressures on the general public, Interest rates, food, power 40%+>, people can ill afford more rises at present
council seems to be spending a lot of money on unnecessary items
With interest rates already at unsustainable levels, increasing council rates will force people to choose between paying mortgage or eat. In this inflationary market, I do not believe spikes in rates and services are needed.
The cost of living has placed a significant burden on families. This is just another cost increase.

Very disappointed that you are increasing rates. I will remember this at the next council elcetions.
I am on a fixed income and cannot afford any increase in rates on top of other inflation caused increases
Rates are already high.
I want to be informed of the outcome Stop wasting money on vanity projects which are only accessed by very few residents, concentrate on the basics I don't want to rank the options above, should be single choice
It will put more strain on my already very tight household budget.
It is the Council's obligation to continually reduce the cost of providing goods and services, and not just continually increase prices as is the manner in which most Govt Agencies seem to operate. As with everyone in the country we are all doing it tough and Willoughby Council needs to understand that and try and push the cost of service down by becoming much more efficient at every aspect of your business.
No
Landowner should not be responsible to bad budget management from the council. Covid situation could have been managed differently and that created inflation. I don't want to be impacted and have to pay more because people in charge have been taking the wrong decision.
N/A
Council should find new revenue sources and undertake a deep dive into costs to ensure services are maintained
I have experienced first hand the gross inefficiency of the council. The only option should be reducing the red tape and bureaucracy in the council and the number of people employed. I imagine the biggest cost to council is salaries.
A lot of the landowners in Chatswood are older retirees with limited income, increasing medical care costs and facing the rising costs of living that everyone else faces. It is not reasonable for the Council to increase rates in the name of expanding services in difficult times like these. If there are limited funds, then services should be cut back, and less important projects also need to be cut back. Australians have battled crises over history. Everyone, including local Councils, will need to be frugal and spend money more efficiently- this will be a good opportunity for Willoughby Council to carefully scrutinise how best it will spend the available resources and funds. As a family we STRONGLY OPPOSE ANY INCREASE IN RATES AND SERVICES and FAVOUR REDUCING SERVICES GOING FORWARD.
High inflation applies to everyone, Willoughby has more population Than say hunters hill, by 61500 people, the rate income is significant. The surplus 48m deducting the loss during Covid is merely a years surplus, does not add up, except maybe poor management. Perhaps look into fixing that?
Green bin and recycling bin only needs to be collected once a fortnight. Alternate weeks
I want you dolts to just focus on Roads, Rates & Rubbish and forget all your other virtue signaling, prancing around wasting rate payers' money on zealot garbage. Stop the rot and just get on with the basics and we ratepayers will decide and pay for whatever extras we require.
95% of the community is reported as being satisfied with the current services that the council provides as such and in this current climate I see no reason to change. Focus on less development

and multiplex high rises and therefore less increase in population in the area, our schools are already at capacity and the infrastructure cannot support it not do we want it.
You left out "Reduce Services and Reduce Rates" as an option. Very disappointing.
Please keep the cost low
The council needs to cut discretionary services to work within its budget and keep or increase core business services. there is a lot of inefficiency observed , mostly due to lack of communication and consultation. This results in rework.
During the most significant increase in cost of living in a generation, it is not appropriate for council to increase rates at accelerated rates (12% and higher). Council needs to make difficult cost cutting decisions in the same way that all households and commercial enterprises are required to do.
With the increase in inflation causing financial burden in all aspects of life, we all have to reduce to our expenses and hence services
It was not very long ago that the Council increased rates. I don't believe its inflation figure and the inflation is coming down. Land values are constantly increasing rates in any case. The compounding effect of increasing land values and increasing rates seems unreasonable. I am very doubtful of the Council's case for increasing rates.
We pay enough rates. You need to learn to manage your money better.
This is gross mismanagement and such wasted money spent by the council
How dare you present an ultimatum to either increase rates or reduce services. How dare you suggest that the public should front up the cost of your financial mismanagement. Inflation is an easy wall to hind behind and a convenient way to disguise your financial incompetence. Show us exactly what your costs are and by what percentage they have increased over the past 12 months. Only a council would suggest rate rises of circa 15% during a time of economic turmoil for many. A truly shameful proposal. Manage your balance sheet better in future which will allow you to maintain services without proposing outrageous rate rises.
People are still struggling with the cost of living.
Have you ever heard of USER PAYS. Once people have to vote with their own money, you find out what services are really valued.
Cost of living already an issue
In difficult economic times we all have to tighten our belts - council included.
I'm senior and my pension don't increase
Like all other businesses, Willoughby council must find productivity enhancements and efficiencies to save cost to secure Willoughby's future. The council should focus on the core services for its constituents (e.g. Waste) and cut costs in non-core areas.
With cost of living increases the only viable option for many people will be to reduce services to minimise the increase. The other 3 options (12-20%) increases will severely impact many household budgets further than they have already been impacted.

Unfortunately the current economic conditions have forced most Australians to reduce their expenditure due to the increase in service costs no matter where you live. This means that some of the previous "must haves" like holidays etc have been dispensed with. Council is obviously in the same situation and must consider the same action. It is obvious that Council has been spending on unnecessary items particularly in the "social" areas and these have to go! It is indicative of very poor management when anyone spends more than they earn, so my vote is to reduce services. But even then the rates have been forecast to increase by 3.5%, and that is 3.5% more than my income has increased so I would appreciate it if you did not increase my financial burden. BTW - thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on these options.
At breaking point with interest rate rises. Couldn't pay one more cent on rates. We all have huge rising costs and no rising income or wage increases to off set these increases so please make adjustments and cut backs like we all are rather than instead of pushing us off the cliff . Please have a heart. It's really tuff atm. That's why the cap was brought in to help us through not to find ways around it so you can keep spending. It's just wrong and a group of us from the area all discussed this today.
Council are on a go slow now so I can't imagine a reduction in services! We have been residents of North Arm Rd for over 30 years and have made numerous requests for a hedge / road/ path upgrade to no receive no action from Willoughby Council
Seems council is wasting our money on services that are of little importance to residents. Planting hundreds of trees in the name of the environment and then not having the resources to maintain them so they fall on roads etc is a waste of spending. Perhaps consult residents on what services they deem important - garbage, roads, more parks. Council allows additonal apartments to be built replacing single dwellings therefore increasing rates payments and they are still working at a loss. How can we increase parkland and space for this over populated community if the priority is high rise?
Council should be focussed on helping residents with cost of living. Council should be focussed on providing the basic services well but not add on's if funds not available. Example ... the 3 x per annum bulk pickup's could be replaced with request service ... once free and 2 additional with cost recovery ?
Reduce costs within the council. I know councils have Millions of dollars and are making good money already. reduce your own costs.
Have we reached that point where a number of council services are given a value beyond their benefit to the community, in order to maintain a percuniary reward for the council employees who administer then? When any other organisation needs to pull their horns in and stop spending like the billionaires they aren't, they just get on and do it.
Disappointed with the lack of detail as well as definitive guide around how additional funds will be spent and what services would be cut. Signifies a lack of accountability from Council to commit to what they will spend money on. To be clear we would be prepared to put our hands in our pocket if ownership and responsibility is taken by Council to be transparent with spending!
Council is out of touch. Local council should be abolished and more power to state government. No need to decentralise rubbish collection and park management. Everyone you talk to in counci is unhelpful, slow and doesn't see ratepayer as a customer - get rid of the council please.
Look into ways of cutting unnecessary spendings.

Cost of living is high. I don’t get much value out of what Willoughby council offers its residents
Cost of living pressures are very high….we all need to tighten our belts!
We all have cost of living expenses increased, including interest rates. I cannot afford any more costs to my weekly budget. It is of note that this online survey likely misses many elderly or less educated or imigrant subgroups of our local area, so I hope is representative of all those that matter.
There is no evidence optimization opportunities were applied in the past in order to manage costs and the pub test for the maintain option does not add up to a 12%.
You need to be more efficient
I think it's tough on retirees who are not earning an income to be asked to support an increase in our rates. Personally I do not benefit from a lot the services provided by Council other than waste services. I would prefer it if there were some way to recognise self-funded retirees (as opposed to Pensioners) to give us a break on Council Rates. We're not all wealthy baby boomers, and some of us are struggling with the increases to the cost of living across the board.
Its too much of an increase for the last 3 options due to higher living expenses in general. We can't afford another high increase in another area
I suggest less diversity and higher concentration on the essentials, eg roads, footpaths, clean ups.
Given that most property in the LGA have increased in the rateable value there will be a natural increase in rates. No further increase should be required at all.
I cannot afford any increase. If there was a zero increase option I would select that. The Council needs to "tighten its belt".
I believe council miss manage funds
Can’t afford to pay for your mismanagement
The cost of living crisis is already stretching homeowners. Rather than rates increases we need to reduce expectations and reduce services.
Manage costs - like evewry other busuiness has to. Stop going for easy target by increasing rates
I currently see regular council spending being wasted and adding more rates to this pot will only increase waste in Willoughby
Would like to see council focus on core objectives. Conducting training courses and other educational activities, advocating for state or federal issues such as the referendum should be removed immediately. These are not core business.
Council should find savings within unnecessary social programs, including diversity programs
Council needs to find ways to cut their overheads and running costs and if projects are unaffordable they should be scrapped. Live within your budget as the community and business has to do so.
no rise cut back on wasted money economize
We are also having to cut back in our own goods and services to cope with inflation. Local govt is in a better position than us individuals to absorb costs and work to a budget. Cut back on Exec bonuses and cars, less travel, less entertaining, there’s a whole saving in those alone

Council needs to raise their productivity and do more for less given high cost of living pressures rate payers are facing
I don't agree with any of this .. even if u have us choosing 1-4 I vote 4 the whole way . It's a disgrace that u would even do this survey
Everything is going up. I am a pensioner and am struggling badly to keep my own daily costs down in order to live a healthy life.The cost of living now is too expensive to maintain.
Being a pensioner, I barely manage to keep up with my bills at present. eg. home and contents insurance has gone up by a massive 45% this year. Yet my disability pension has stayed pretty much the same. How am I to pay for food and heating?
Rather than increase rates to residents, a preferred option is to SiGNIFICANTLY INCREASE taxes or levies to Developers, whose greed goes straight to their hip pocket and does NOT give back or participate innany positive way to the community. Please include this as an option in the future.
High mortgage interest rates (mortgage stress) and real inflation with food, infrastructure (Electricity, Water) cost materially increased. Companies have announced redundancies to cut cost. Council must not add to burden of mortgage stress.Households and corporates are cutting cost (redundancies have been announced). In these economic stress times council must reduce services and not add to mortgage stress to households.
Thank you for the opportunity to have a say. Given the significant rate if inflation and increase in interest rates for mortgage borrowers such as ourselves we are financially struggling to just get by and strongly encourage the Council members to go with option 1, which is most affordable.
Option 1 is most preferred given financial distress from mortgage payments, increase in cost of living, inflation and increase in energy and fuel prices.
Council are getting screwed by government.
~$200 annual increase to secure future of infrastructure etc is worth doing now.
Why isn't the council committing to cost saves across all options? What are your productivity measures in the first place?
It would be unreasonable to increase rates beyond 3.5% in these times. I do not support rates going up beyond 3.5% and would accept a reduction in services
Too many other services are increasing at the same time. Council should be responsible and operate within the government rate increase guidelines.
Budget management should be a priority and effort spent on work that does not really have a meaningful impact on the community should be shelved like every other business has to do. Council waste on projects which are election based decisions and glamour projects that add little should be shelved. Why do we have 8 gardeners regularly prying a wildness track but refuse to leaking pipes that damage walk paths
I think we have too many councils and need to amalgamate some of them. This will be a more cost-effective approach, rather than passing these costs onto residence. Plus, why do the amounts go from 3.5% to 12% - no option in between. This will be a big increase for many families and during a time of high inflation and the approach is inconsiderate. Nor does not give people confidence that the money is being manage sufficiently. Please consider amalgamating councils before you increase our rates.

I am happy with council having a minimal role. Council does a good job providing essential services, non essential services are not needed in my opinion
There is no justification for raising rates any more than the minimum amount. If individuals within the LGA wish to access services that need to be reduced in order to achieve this then they should access them on a "user pays" basis. Many residents, like me, only make use of the basics provided by council (eg rubbish collection) and see no reason for having to subsidise those people who choose to access other services. The decision council makes on this rate increase matter will strongly influence my choice at the ballot box next time there is a local council election.
Councils need to run like business by managing costs and improving productivity. I can't go to my customers with double digit price increases particularly in the current environment.
I find that a huge amount of public money is being wasted on "prettying up" rather than on needed infrastructure. A prime example is the horrific changes to Artarmon shopping strip. you are losing the character of the place. Shameful waste.
The significant increase in energy prices, general cost of living and rising mortage interest rates are making it hard for my household to afford a 12% increase of council rate. We can only live with reduced council service.
Frankly, as it is life's tough with many rate rises. Inflations are sky high and we do not need more rate rises. Furthermore, i doubt with the increased rates, services will improve. As it is Willoughby council is slow to respond, emails sent fallen to deaf ears, streets are filthy and not cleaned, drains are clogged with leaves and debris, illegal street parkings are getting worse and no patrols. We should keep things as it is and don't see why we need to have rates increased by 3.5% and yet with reduced services? Council needs to prove yourself in the first place but at the moment, I don't see this being the case.
Council should audit all levels and costs of current services provided with a view to reducing them.
We have a huge mortgage and other big commitments on top of a high cost of living expenses hence any rate increase/s will add more financial stress into our life. Please refrain from introducing any increase/s in rates please.
Given current cost of living pressure Council should economize and look to ways to raise revenues and reduce less important services.
The increase in the other 3 options is way too much more than my pay increase.
3.5% in current environment is already a lot. We are all working harder to keep a balanced budget and council should be no different. Finding new revenue sources is a good idea or reduce services until inflation settles. It doesn't hurt to have to scrutinize spending, be that households, governments or companies, which can reduce waste and inefficiencies.
Some suggestions on cost reduction: - no more free pre-booked clean up collection - monthly or bi-monthly scheduled clean up collection rather than 3 scheduled plus a free pre-booked per year (I am assuming the utilisation of prebook service is high) This facilitates more often collection services which reduce the need of pre-booked service while people can still book their paid services if needed
The impact of the rising cost of living becomes most noticeable when we make our everyday household purchases. Even though the increase in individual expenses may seem small, when we take into account electricity, gas, and all our other expenses, it becomes clear that we can no longer afford these rising costs.

These are hard times with high rises in the cost of living, and not the right time to proceed with increased infrastructure and other projects. Business should pay more of any rate increase.
If rates go up more than 3.5% I won't be able to afford to pay for my car, my unit levies, my electricity bill, my groceries etc.
The council fee is charged based on property value, which means residents in Northbridge paid more council fees than other suburbs. Then, the percentage increase has more impacts on residents in this area. It's not fair for us to pay more council fee now, not even to mention increasing it by percentage. That's outrageous!
Living cost increase, household income reduce by half due to a new born.
I think it is an absolute disgrace that because of councils inability to manage finances the burden be pushed to the rate payers. Council charge outrageous fees to everyday citizens don't maintain facilities and provide exceptionally little in return. The fact that the council seperated garbage collection is nothing but an additional tax. The council should merge with neighbouring councils and achieve economics of scale . Councils lack of fiscal capability should NOT be funded by the residents. This proposal is an absolute insult.
The proposed options to increase rates by as much as 12% are unaffordable and have been poorly communicated
I am not confident of the audit of projects and expenditure of the Council. Im also not confident that the best use of financial resources is being achieved. Like all residents (and Australians), Id lie to see the council do more with less funding and with distinct accountability for expenditure.
You should list out what services would be cut, and what would increase u der different proposed options.
Cost is too high
Na
The council is hardly doing a great job of keeping up with projects and maintenance as it is. The roads are WOEFUL and have been since long before COVID-19 could be sighted as an excuse. The ridiculous cost, inconvenience and inefficiency of the street scape at Artarmon station is a prime example of wasted funds, let alone the disruption to business owners along the strip. Keeping it short, the council has hardly spend the revenues that well historically to justify an increase in rates over the state government threshold, let alone 12-20% Spend it better, use it wisely, improve the ROADS in the district rather than widening a footpath and adding trees next to a rail corridor in one suburb perhaps…
People have become too focused on short-term, hip pocket issues. Services and infrastructure are the paramount components of a cohesive society. I've lived in the USA and have witnessed, at first hand, the degeneration of societies when people vote for narrow interests.
Will support lower services
Council needs to stop complaining that it doesn't have enough money, when it charges significantly more than North Sydney Council, which does an excellent job of looking after its residents without continual rate rises (my sister lives there). If Willoughby Council is struggling it should consult and copy what North Sydney Council does (or better yet, merge with them).

It’s appalling that you are even considering the decrease in services in alignment with a rate increase in the the midst of a cost of living crisis.is the council tone deaf to what citizens are experiencing???
The proposal is ridiculous and completely out of step.
The proposed increases are insulting considering covid was a government led plan. There is no doubt this has resulted in a significant increase to cost of living in all aspects. When does this stop?
Rates are already too high as is absolutely everything else right now, cost of living is close to unbearable. Reduced services is only viable option at present. Even that still comes with a 3.5% increase.
This could be a textbook example of how to manage change: We genuinely don't know which option will work best, so let's trial one of the four. If you reduce services and it proves unsuccessful, you can acknowledge its failure, then pursue one of the other options. By contrast, if you raise rates, that rise is permanently baked in and can never be reversed. If it proves to be unsuccessful, you can switch to a 'reduce services' strategy but there's no way you can reduce rates by 12%, 15% or 20% - politically, it just can't be done. So be sensible, be logical and trial 'reduce services' first.
The cost of living is out of control, all government including council must ensure every possible way to reduce the impact of this on working tax and rate paying people. Anything more than reduce services are forcing all but super rick people out of the area.
I find the reference to reduction in "services" misleading and obtuse (perhaps deliberately so as to alarm residents). Council should be able to maintain essential services (such as waste collection, park, road and storm water maintenance, planning regulation, libraries etc) and reduce spending on "community projects" that benefit very few, are often wasteful, undesirable, duplicative and have negligible advantage to the community as a whole. In our local community, the "Bellambi square project" is an example of a completely incomprehensible use of taxpayers money. It is largely regarded as comical, but for the cost and inconvenience it has no doubt caused. Council should stick to its principal functions under the local government act. Now is not the time to be spending money on virtue signalling and self-righteous vanity projects.
Times are tough Its time to cut back on costs not increase spending. Amongst other things, Seeing footpaths paved one day and dug up soon after and bitumen replacing new pavers is not spending money wisely.
I was forced to set up an order of the preferences but I do not support any rate increase other than the minimum of 3.5%. It's unacceptable asking for a rate increase without providing the data that explains in which items the money is currently being spent. "highly valued services"? "stable environment for staff retention and morale"? What's more stable than a city council? what about residents' retention and morale? Unacceptable. Current spending should be audited / shown to the public before asking for a rate increase. I'm sure there are plenty of useless services that can be cut off to avoid rate increase while keeping the same level of service on the important matters.
People are hurting a great deal due to inflation, with vastly increased cost of living expenses. Now it is time for council to cut back on unnecessary spending.
Prefer to minimize council rate as cost of living here is already too high
Cost of living has already increased enough, salaries have merely increased 4-5% therefore we can not afford these increases
Now is not the time to put increased financial pressure on Families

The less the merits
I prefer option 1
Rate Increase for councils should be in line with the Government rate pag. Please let me know the outcome of the survey (aggregated data across all options please) I don't want to rate option 2-4 in question #12, as option 1 is the only one I would endorse. However due to the surveys limited functionality, it forces me to make a choice
Council Services are currently very satisfactory, but too much is spent on minor projects like Bellambi St closure which is very unpopular with surrounding businesses due to parking problems.
There is no justification in increasing costs to maintain or improve services. Reduce the costs to fit the budget like everyone else has to do with cost of living pressures
Should be an option between the 3.5 and 12% options. Eg 7%
I don't see any extra services anyway - I live on Strathallen Ave and see the weeds growing in the centre divided and in a couple of years we will have trees there. No one cleans the streets anymore All I see is reduced services anyway. Cut your funding to the Art Gallery and other places which are not frequented that often. Pick up the recycle and gardens bins every 2 weeks (we have big enough bins for this) There are so many ways you can streamline services to keep the rates down
The council needs to improve productivity and efficiency rather than just raise rates
I don’t think you completely understand the heightened pressure of inflation already on the residents. There shouldn’t be any increase in rates for the next 1-2 years until the pressure of inflation reduces.
Better for council to increase projects when inflation subsides and households are not stretched with bills
Because I think I'm already paying too much for council rates, so I'm wondering what you all do with the money
All businesses and government agencies are needing to find savings. Council needs to step up and do the same - and not ask for more money.
I don't know how you have so far been unable to identify ways to save money, there is so much fat within your operations and for such a poor service from an extremely wealthy area I am not sure why you should be given more funds.
Should tax and charge businesses that operate in the area more rather than its residents.
Cannot afford price rises. Cut services as required
Salaries are not rising at 12%+, so like families, Council should also live within its means
Option 3 and 4 will affect already stretched community members.
Very few of us are receiving pay rises - these options are just unaffordable
Huge cost of living pressures
The focus needs to be in efficiency. With that the number of services to be reduced can be more limited. Once better efficiencies are demonstrably, then might come to time to request support for restoration and/or additional services.
Living cost is increasing. Council services are well and can be reduced in some areas.

Tough times require cutting back on spending
Cost of living pressures
I don't make use of most of councils services as it is so see no value in increasing services. Further, council should deal with some austerity like the rest of us… What is the 20% Covid loss?? Council still collected rates - they should not have suffered any material loss.
Query if there's been enough discussion prior to arriving at only 4 options? Note I've only indicated "supportive" for Reduce Services in light of all other available options (which is also why I couldn't indicate "very supportive") because it's the least financially challenging option made available for residents in this survey. Also, can Council please substantiate the claims under the "deteriorating financial position section"? (Eg how did $20.6m in COVID-19 losses come about? How was it calculated and accounted? How did Council arrive at inflation forcing up cost by 12.1% when that is not CPI?)
Even in a seemingly affluent area such as Willoughby the current impact of inflation and interest rates are having a detrimental effect on the welfare of residents. It is my recommendation that Council makes the minimal increase now even if that means are reduction of services or the realisation of assets. The options above 12% are maid of 'nice to have' options vs. essential services. Council should seek further revenue by having those running businesses using council property (e.g. dog walkers, personal trainers) recompense council. Finally, Councils recent LEP that "Chatswood CBD Strategy stated that no residential land uses were to be permitted west of the North Shore rail corridor as there was further opportunity for office growth in this zone' is clearly at odds with the Minns Government where they are supporting a strategy to encourage offices and short terms rentals to be converted and used for residential purposes, I strongly suggest Council revisit this decision and seek support from the State government to explore opportunities for increasing residential premises in Willoughby.
We all need to live within budget. Cannot just simply push problem on to rate payers. Let us decide what services are to be withdrawn.
Rate increase not supported
As a retiree, I have not budgeted for a rate increase of 12.1% or above. I think the council needs to focus on reducing expenditure and getting its finances back into the black.
I would have preferenced option 2 (12% rate increase) had it not been for the apalling waste of council funds spent on the stupid, ugly and completely unnecessary "public space" at Bellambi in Northbridge. If the Council has money to burn on senseless projects like that, it could do with some belt tightening. I do NOT however, support the reduction of waste collection to fortnightly. That is unhygienic and 3rd world not appropriate for a modern city suburb. I have otherwise been impressed with efficient bin replacement, and dangerous tree removal on council land adjoining my property-so it's a shame some bright spark came up with the Bellambi fiasco. Truly stupid IMHO.
As a single 1 bed home owner with no kids, my costs are in proportion already much higher than anyone else and the benefits minimal. I have a mortgage that is about to double, combined to many other costs increase, and just can't afford more increase.
The cost
You have already mismanaged budgets and don't think you can do better in the future
Can't afford any more money to pay extra fees for literally everything

they are already expensive enough
Currently when the inflation is high, the economy is contracting, on the edge of recession (most countries has declared they are in recession as USA and Germany), people usually tighten their belts and reduce their spending. Therefore the last 2 option are absolute. The council should not fuel the inflation, when all of us trying to contain it and the salaries do not move up with the inflation I believe It is inappropriate to ask for increase of the services at all.
I hope the council would consider rezone the so called conservation area. Most of houses look old and tired, so is the suburb where I live. When a lot of other suburbs develop fast and bring a lot of value to the landowners, we are left way behind. Quite disappointed to be honest therefore not supportive for rate increases.
Need to cope with family financials and prefer minimum increase option or no increase option.
Council provides excellent services , with many marginal ones that can be cut back on
I don't think it's the right time to increase rates as high cost of living at the moment causes a lot of pressure on families. Thankyou
I am retired and can not afford increased rates
I am in favour of council, like other businesses that have a budget, finding ways in which to cut costs and operate within the financial constraints available to the council.
Just as the council is $ strained, so is the public. We can’t afford rate increases
Living costs and inflation are high enough, please don't add more to people living here.
Cost of living pressures make the 12% and above impossible for us
Cut back on wastage.
Cannot afford it
Times are tough, and as a family we are having to work harder with longer hours for the same money and make sacrifices like less holidays for the good of our future and believe that its only fair that council should consider doing the same for the good of the community for the time being.
You do not do near enough as it is. Too many old & cracked foot paths, you do not maintain trees like you are supposed to on the streets.
I will not support any rate increase above the 3.5%. The council provides lots of free entertainment activities that are not needed. Those should be cut first instead of increasing rates
We wish to keep cost of rates low - we too are experiencing inflation in other areas and increasing rates adds to the cost burden.
Consider lower increase for pensioners. An increase of 12% to 20% is not manageable for aged pensioners.
Council has immense waste in infrastructure spending eg why a new pool at Willoughby, overdone sidewalk outside Artarmon railway station and I can go on.
Do not increasre rates. I have lived here for +30 years and in that time have seen very little to support any increase in rates. Council has sufficient funds already exsisting, this should be used to support the rate payers currently, who have collectively created those funds rather than put further pressure on all in what is

a very streched economy already. On face value this is just passing the buck and seems like poor managment and historically poor value for what is done.
Putting the average rate is not accurate. You should separate average HOUSE rate and average UNIT rate. It under values the actual rate increases for those with houses.
Given the current interest rate rises, cost of living I support measures to reduce economic pressures on families. Happy to review down the track when circumstances improve r.e. rate increases. Would appreciate keeping essential services the same e.g. rubbish collection but hold off on 'nice but not essential' things e.g. projects like the public area near the Strathallen and Sailors Bay intersection until economic circumstances improve

Attachment L– Comments made by participants who supported Maintain Services as their first ranked option

Council needs to manage with the existing rate base - adjusting rates for inflation is acceptable - Council should manage its spending priorities to manage to the inflation adjusted rate income.
Believe efficiency savings can be made as well
I would suggest for Council "to get back on track financially" before continuing to spend on projects/ increase services. Option 2.
I believe that Council can cut expenditure further in non-priority areas rather than imposing a large rate rise. I am, however, aware of the unexpected and unavoidable costs incurred in recent years so I would reluctantly support a minimum rate rise.
Willoughby Council has previously been alleged to have mis-invested public funds, so I do not trust the Council to rate charge for more than is necessary to maintain existing services
I question the spending decisions of council, including money wasted on unwanted footpaths in Middle Cove and questionable street repairs. Budget repair should include better discipline/ prioritisation of funding.
Being a resident for over 57 years it is vital that our existing services remain. I don't believe option 3 or 4 should be considered.
False economy to cut sevices. Need to maintain pleasant and healthy surroundings.
I don't want the level of service to reduce, but it's a stretch to manage the higher rates. Now is not the time to expand services.
This is the best compromise between rate increase and service availability and to better secure Council's future financial position
At a time of cost of living increases, maintenance of existing services at the least increase in cost is most appropriate for most people
I think we need to increase to maintain the status quo and then over the next few years work out if some of the programs run by council should be continued. Then we will have a better position as to if cuts to services can be made.
We need to maintain services but we are all under financial stress.
Until interest rates drop we need as minimal rate increases as possible.
I have been disappointed with Council's ability to deliver services in a polite and timely manner since I have lived here over the past 20+ years. It seems residents are ignore or put on hold for ever with their inquiries and co0ncerns but developers can do whatever they want without consequences - I don't see increasing rates enormously is going to change or fix this.
As the current economic environment is quite tough at the moment with no payrise for most and increase in interest payments and other expenses it’s not affordable to have too much of an increase.
Why is there no option between 3.5% and 12%. Option 4, under the current financial strain of the gernal economy is irresposible at this time. This should be scrapped and instead there should be an option around 7.5%

Businesses are still in recovery mode that financial pressure could result in moving shutting down or moving to another area to trade.
As a resident, I support maintaining at least the current services. Reducing services will be detrimental to our community
Based on what is outlined in the Maintain services, I think this is fair option for residents & council. I was disappointed to see money wasted in placing cobble stones in select roads around Artarmon with no real benefit.
Please consider saving money on rubbish removal services which I think can be greatly reduced. Make the bins smaller - especially the recycling bin. Make this a fortnightly collection, not weekly. It will make people consider a purchase that comes wrapped in large volumes of carboard etc. let alone the plastic and Styrofoam that likely is put in the recycling. A bin the same size as the red bin is sufficient for everyday recyclable items. Some huge houses are being built in Willoughby and these residences with 5 bedrooms should be paying more for rubbish removal if they need bigger bins.
I am disappointed that there is not a moderate option between 3.5% and 12%. I agree the financial position must be reinforced, but at the same time a moderate curb on services is also feasible. The commitment by the council of a $1m cost reduction is NOT adequate. The other 2 options (15% and 20%) just showed the council is out of touch.
Focus needs to be on cost reduction not just new services
I feel a reasonable rate rise is acceptable but we need to maintain services.
The level of service we currently receive is very good. I would not like it to reduce. However, I do not think there is a need to increase it either If the population is increasing then so is presumably the number of dwellings and therefore the rates income to Council. So I find that part of the justification doubtful.
I think some increase is warranted to maintain services.
Moderation
Council needs to manage its rate payers after tax money better.
Maintaining existing level of services is most important. The current level of inflation has forced up costs by 12.1%, but inflation is expected to return to an acceptable level by 2025, which will enable Council to improve services eventually or at least maintain current services.
we can't afford substantially higher rates. But we also don't want to see our services reduced. Can't see what benefit we'd get from increased services and/or infrastructure so voting to maintain.
Some of the issues faced are one off events and don't require a permanent rate rise. A levy to cover certain events would have been far more acceptable.
I am retired on limited income and there is no consideration given to me for this. We do not have to be a worldclass standard community with more fancy playgrounds and swimming pools and parks as long as we have all the basic services working efficiently.
Wild weather being a reason for cost, give me a break
I recognise that to maintain services, we have to pay more for them. If the council goes broke that is not good for anyone.
Balance between cost and maintenance.

Start with Option 2 and then let's review the budgets next year
We are now paying the price for money wastage over the years, especially with wasting money on rubbish like excessive and unnecessary speed humps, poorly designed roads and traffic lights, allowing overbuilding of residences, which hugely increases heavy road vehicle traffic and parking, leading to continual inconvenience to residents and damaging of roads and infrastructure!!
With current high interest rates, an increase in council services would be untenable and a decrease in services would be unacceptable.
Do not want us to be in deficit.
No
Council rates already too high for the services provided
I have been living in the area for over 18 years and I am very satisfied with the services provided by the council. I believe maintaining them would be an excellent outcome.
I would not want to see any reduction in local council services.
This is an embarrassment for Council. All businesses have experienced the same issues and yet they have had to adjust their business models to allow for much lower increases in their revenue. There should be another model that requires the Council to get more efficient combined with a price increase of say 8% to maintain current services.
Wage rises have been minimal over the past 3 years and have supported owing to inflationary pressure. Lets hope Council have also.This being the case minimal increases are required until interest rates and inflation have subsided.
As a pensioner the cost of living increases for all government services are significantly impacting our standard and quality of life
We need funding for projects but with inflation only at 6 to 7% I think a 15-20% increase is far too much. We are on a part pension so something that is fair to us is welcome. And really we very rarely use the services of say library, swimming pool. The increase could definitely be used for fixing potholes in roads.
Your options are misleading and incomplete. (1) Willoughby and North Sydney have relatively low residential rates because of large proportion of commercial rates. (2) For Maintain Services 12% increase, you can levy the required $ amounts on commercial property and leave residential unchanged. (3) you fail to disclose the Council's financial position. A current Statement of Financial Position should be attached to the options.
It’s important to maintain services but within a tight budget
My rates are above the average now and as a self funded retiree any increase above necessary to maintain services would be very difficult to afford.
I do not recommend a pre-planned sharp increase in rates over 4 or 5 years as inflation is expected to drop and economic condition is subject to change. So let's take slowly and step by step.
My rates are considerably above the Council average due to an unreasonable increase in UCV. I have asked the State government to justify the increase but no response. I am a self funded retiree and have seen a significant decrease in my costs and and a decrease in my pension. I will receive no consideration in paying my rates and taxes and do not believe that any additional services will benefit me.
Willoughby City Council is quite similar the North Sydney Council in that it contains a large commercial business district. The additional rates and charges earned provide significant financial

benefit to the Council which many other council areas do not have. This needs to be factored in when considering any additional rate increases.
If the council increases services and infrastructure spending and then inflation increases further, we will be locked in to escalating rate rises to maintain the increased services and infrastructure. If we maintain existing services, then we just need to deal with current inflation issues. Perhaps we could also review contracts and suppliers to see if savings can be made?
I cannot afford a big increase in rates and I'm happy with the services already provided
would be good if you could ask for infrastructure support in 2 years once the cost of living pressure would have eased. I support in principles, but would rather start paying for them in 2 years.
It is a challenge to simply maintain services after a couple of years of higher than previous inflation, so some extra increase in rates is to be expected.
Think it would be useful to review all current services provided by council and advise ratepayers of any initiatives planned or underway to streamline them to save money before actually discontinuing services.
As noted - this is JUST for the residentail rate compoent. When added to the waste that went up 10% last year and given arguments, can only assume same this year, it raises the overall cost up way more. Also, with options 2 - Maintain services - you predict a $5.22M surplus - more than enough to cover the Additional 2M for public area maintenance. A 3.22M surplus is still strong. Means really could have offered your residents option3 for the % increase in Option2
I am strongly opposed to a 20% increase - which takes my rates to well over $2,000 per annum.
Ideally council would invest more into local beautification but this should be maintenance not projects. Willoughby looks like it is unloved. Weeds everywhere
Just think we should maintain current services and consider increased services and infrastructure when broader economic circumstances improve
This is probably one of the best council initiatives I have ever seen, if only more governments behaved this way. Let's treat everyone like adults, let them know the ramification of each choice and allow people who care enough to vote. Primo
A lot of people are under financial stress out there. This may lessen in 12-24 months. Keeping costs well down in this period would be respectful of that; the option to increased services and infra afterwards will always remain.
I am okay with maintaining current service levels as I think Willoughby council do an amazing job already.
my rates are $2,071 already. The services provided are plenty. Parks and playgrounds seem to be redone at an alarming and unnecessary frequency.More people now live in the area in apartments and dual occupancies so more rates would be collected.Residents are suffering enough with higher food prices and mortgage payments.We all have to tighten our belts so council should do the same.
Residents are under the same or worse financial stress as Council. Delay whatever can be delayed without harm being caused to residents of Willoughby.
"Maintain" is important/worth funding.
I would like to propose that there is a solution that achieves the best outcomes at the lowest cost. By critically assesses services there may be valuable savings ie our council has very high household waste collection services - can you reduce green waste pick up during winter to only every fortnight. Can the recycles be pulled back to fortnightly? What about a campaign that if your bin is only 1/2 full

- don't put it out to make the process quicker. Similarly the big waste pick up could be reduced to 1 less per year. These strategies would reduce the cost, and therefore with a moderate rate increase you could continue to improve services which is critical.
The reality is that the population is doing it tough, worse than thje official figures wouild suggest, and it is very adverse to further impede the financial survival of those doing it tough
I understand there is always cost inflation and as a community, we should do our best to spread the increase. I believe it is critical to maintain the current level of service for the community considering the benefits we all enjoy. If possible, improving those services in an efficient way (i.e. within a reasonable cost increase) would be a good outcome if supported by the majority of the community. Thank you for the opportunity to have my say.
There should be a fifth option. Not supportive of rate increases in the current economy. Why suggest to reduce services but ask us to pay more for this reduction in services???
Pretty rubbish to have to rate these options without a clear indication of what's at risk; or what investments the additional rates might entail.
I would prefer rates to stay the same due to cost of living pressures, but can see the benefits of council having a surplus in case of emergency. Plus I would not want to see services decrease.
Would like to know if the cost of the Concourse development negatively contributed to the current financial situation.
Where are the options for council looking after grass cutting on council land? I have more grass outside my property than in it and I'm expected to maintain it. Council should remove rubbish ✓ and maintain common areas/roads as a priority. Trim the rest of the activity (including political) back and focus on what is needed. Also, where are the treasure troves that have been built up over the years from development?
There have been a number of council "initiatives" which I have found confusing and wasteful over the past number of years - including the most recent "improvement" of the Artarmon Shopping precinct. Widen footpaths, plant a few new trees, approve lower class business retail opportunities and reduce travel flow.....all of which has disrupted our lives for still an undetermined timeframe. I'm sure the folks who previously occupied the benches opposite the shops with their paper bags will enjoy the new outlook. I dread to think of what other initiatives extra money would enable council to achieve....
Services have been good. Happy to see it expanded or maintained. Current infrastructure seems sufficient - slow growth over time is fine.
No further comments
Keep the same services
Very disappointing council failed to manage their financial responsibilities up to this point and now relying on extreme rate increases to fix their poor management. More information on how council plan to be more productive and how they intend to seek more external revenue stream initiatives would be beneficial to understand
Self funded 87 year old
I do not favour expenditure on capital projects such as the Bellambi St Plaza and the further costs associated with such.
Thank you for your clear explanation.
Please do not reduce service

Please do not reduce the services
I am satisfied with the current service level and wish to maintain it. I am against reducing current level of service (it could make the LGA dirtier or I cannot get what I need). I also do not see a need to increase infrastructure, they will not benefit me as an adult without kids living in the area. It may further attract more people coming to the LGA and fake "homeless" people staying in the LGA.
It would be a retrograde move to reduce services. They need to be maintained, plus the council also needs to continue to identify efficiencies and productivity gains.
In the current macroeconomic environment, it is not a good time to be considering expansion of spending programs that would add to the cost of living of residents beyond what is essential to sustain current level of services.
In the current macroeconomic environment, it is not a good time to be considering expansion of spending programs that would add to the cost of operating rental properties for property owners beyond what is essential to sustain current level of services, which would add to cost pressure to increase rent for the tenants.
I understand council's challenges. Council also has to be cognisant that wages are not growing by 12%, in fact it's probably less than 3.5% for most people. However it's easy to be confused as the communications don't outline the average year on year proposed adjustments. it would be good to see the rolling 5 year increases in rates. I do regularly see opportunities for cost savings by council. Two areas that I feel strongly about are the following: 1. Planting of large trees under power lines, and the many decades of tree lopping maintenance costs that follow this. If this is a significant cost item for council then it would be good to have a review conducted on potential solutions. 2. Re- surfacing of residential streets with new bitumen when they don't need it. I was outraged when they relaid a perfectly good surface in Beresford Avenue a few years ago.
Happy with the current services.
I am happy with current level of service, especially important services like Bushcare. Many of the 'infrastructure' projects are irrelevant to me.
People are very afraid that red bin services will be reduced in once a fortnight. If you are going to do that you must come up with ab environmentally friendly and regular service to take out people's compostable waste.
For more than 10 years there has been an increase in dwellings within the council zone presumably leading to an increase in revenue, cost reductions and efficiencies should always be considered before simply raising rates.
An already heavily populated area which cannot tolerate a reduction of services (in particular rubbish)
Financially, I cannot afford these increases, and options 3 and 4 do not provide significant benefits to my family.

Attachment M– Comments made by participants who supported Increase Services as their first ranked option

15% is acceptable,20% is a bit too far.
All for improvements but need more info to know what infrastructure project work local council would invest in, and ensure the info is proactively shared with Willoughby residents / goes through consultation / transparency around how projects are prioritised.
Quality of life is too important to reduce the services
There is an expectation that council will also provide with eliminating inefficiencies and provide for cost cuttings
Having a well-functioning council is a great benefit to its residents. Reducing services is not a good option as witnessed by the state of local government services in the UK. I am happy to pay a bit more to increase or maintain services.
I am in favour of low density and maintaining the tree canopy.
Reducing services sets a new baseline that will make it harder to return to the current levels in future. As a premium area we should be aspiring to constantly improve our council and its lifestyle.
Need to see reduction in Council administrative overheads and the scope of functions included in this.
I think it's important that the council is in a position to help and support the local community but it must also be careful not to waste ratepayers money and ensure work is carried out at an affordable cost - all too often government and local authorities seem to pay an exorbitant price for work.
I would like more transparency with regard to cost cutting measures within the various departments at Willoughby council.
I would commit to the 20% increase if something was done about very dangerous road – Brook street Naremburn, it is an extremely dangerous and busy road, there is absolutely nowhere for residents and the community to cross safely, the suburb has been divided in half. It's also impossible to turn right in a vehicle out of McBurney and Slade st safely. It has needed traffic lights at Slade Street or a pedestrian bridge for a very long time. I understand that it maybe getting speed cameras, but how does that help residents and the community cross a road to get to the local shops and the long 1-2km journey to walk to the local buses? I understand it's been hard to make a decision to fix this problem because of we have had the looming Northern Beaches Tunnel hanging over our heads for a very long time, but it was a problem before that. I can't commit to paying more rates for services, if there is no scope to make Brook st a safer street, and add services like buses to the area.
I would not like to see the current level of service go any lower than it is now. I think that a rate rise of 15% seems about the right level of increase.

Happy to pay for increased services. Give how stressed many people are at present, I do NOT think this is the time when councils should be reducing services. I do not think council's previous infrastructure projects have been fantastic investment for ratepayers and some seem to have been "vanity projects" so am unprepared to sign up for large infrastructure projects in the current economic climate.
Maintaining services and building community connections are important, however the 20% rate increase is too much for business.
I feel it's important to at least maintain the current standard and looking forward to the future. The increase from 12% to 15%, at least for a residential ratepayer is rather insignifcant from $130 to $163. Though business owners may feel quite the bulk of this compared to residential ratepayers, but my gut feel is the ratio of residential vs business is a lot higher considering the density of apartments these days..
It was reported by the council in April this year that the budget was in good health. (link below) Why is there suddenly not enough money to continue to provide current services at the current rates? https://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Council/News-and-media/Willougby-City-Council-budget-on-track
I am interested in how rates are applied to empty apartments in Chatswood.
Our community needs are growing at rapid rates so my preferred option of increase services although there is a 15% increase in rates but feel it will help our community greatly in the long run and make us more bullet proof financially for the future.
I'm looking forward to seeing our LGA have a better and more secure future.
Increased services should be provided in consultation with rate payers. *I am not in favour of redeveloping parks (eg Muston Park) when they are working well at present. *Funds need to be spent wisely and efficiently. eg I am a keen cyclist, but find the shared path on the highway from Mowbray Rd to St Leonards is a travesty as a 'cycleway'. It is narrow and didn't warrant the expense so that a box could be ticked in the provision of 'cycleways' in the area. Splashes of blue paint do not a cycleway make! A more efficient use of funds (admittedly more, but resulting in increased cycling; a good thing for our environment) would have been use of the corridor beside the Metro, while it was being developed. At least from Chatswood to Artarmon, off-road) I guess that opportunity has now passed, unfortunately? Funding needs to be continued to support the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra and Choir, to maintain the Concourse as an entertainment destination, that has positive consequences for all of Chatswood.
Green spaces and cycling infrastructure are important for the city
Willoughby Council does a reasonably good job of spending our money and it is worthwhile not having a failing infrastructure
I don't think reducing services is a plausible realistic option. Not saying the standards by the council have not been good to date, but I don't think we can afford to do less without detrimental impact on the community. There has been inflationary pressures everywhere, so a 10-20% rate increase is 'normal' in my opinion. I would like to suggest perhaps council can cut down on spending such as Spring Fair and other unnecessary outputs (unless these are profit-accretive for council, from fees imposed on stall holders). As additional revenue source, I would suggest increasing the rates for buskers and other non-urgent type of activities that do not have a humungous amount of value-add.
Lets keep our home viable and beautiful.
I would like Chatswood to look cleaner.

we need to maintain and hopefully improve the range and quality of services
I believe reducing services and investment by the council will affect the most needy for these services and thus reduce the diversity of the community and people. Not investing means that there will be a time lag and possibly an inability to catch up with quality improvements and services to ensure this area continues to be a desirable place to live and work.
Population and demographic changes are relevant. Are they considered?
Option 3 and 4 should include aggressive cost cutting to services park option 1
20% is very costly for me as a pensioner. However I think that the 15% is fairer and brings our rates better in line with other councils.
Reducing services will diminish utility of all residents but probably those in most need the most. Unreasonable. Of the others, 15% with increased services around urban tree coverage etc makes sense to me, but I am unsure on going all the way to a 20% rise for an infrastructure fund. Better to have periodic levies if really needed.
Tree canopy is important as well as maintaining other services like garbage removal and cleaning since amount of people in the area increased massively.
I support increasing services though I do not understand what a special rate variation is.
I would like to see council improve the efficiency of their own operations, cut costs where possible and maximise other sources of income before contemplating anything more than a 15% rate rise.
There are more people in Willoughby and there will be more in the future. We need to keep going to maintain Willoughby council.
Not committed to infrastructure projects, but better services and especially improving urban tree cover are vital.
As self funded retirees, our limited incomes oblige us to prefer the option that is as affordable as possible yet also is of most benefit to us personally, which is option 3.
Thank you for the letter & brochure with a very clear explanation.
I live on a disability support fixed income, so I can't afford increased rates. I also think that services need to be maintained and increased.
Council needs to hire its own sufficient maintenance staff to maintain all public areas. Contractors provide poor services at higher costs in comparison. Council must take ownership of a full and ongoing solution.
Would like to see a higher cost reduction target to remove inefficiency such that we would have benefits of option 4 while paying rate increase of option 3.
The information provided by Council for increasing rates has come as a surprise considering the lack of services currently provided over the last few years. Council asks for more funds however is not managing the current funds to save revenue. Why are you redoing Artarmon the way you have designed it, you could have saved money by simplifying the design. Council will have an influx of fees and rates with all of the proposed development in Chatswood and I'll bet Council will do nothing about traffic. We unfortunately only hear from Council how bad things are and you penalise the residents for Council's poor decisions and wasted money and you never state how much revenue Council will gain from new development. Council has done very little for the residents on Beaconsfield Road near the Golf club, you have not been diligent in ensuring the builder complies with the DA nor is Council investigating the dust and noise which is just horrendous. Council needs to do more if you want

further rate increases as Council has not been doing enough over the last few years for residents to have any confidence that Council knows how to manage funds and how to look after the residents. Council will increase rates anyway no matter how residents comment. Best Wishes you can save and manage funds better in future.
I don't want to see waste from council. It's important to improve and maintain parks, sports grounds etc. I don't see value in library upgrades. Only other comment: LOADS of new builds in the area. Please don't keep approving these if you can't afford the infrastructure.
For me personally, I would be happy to pay higher rates to support Option 4. I also believe that there are many in this LGA who could afford to pay more. However, I recognise that the community generally are currently concerned about cost of living and I think the Council is best to proceed with options 2 or 3. I think Option 1 could expose the Council to significant financial risk and ultimately the community will grumble about reduced services even if they voted for that option.
Need to create local economic activities that will generate revenue without over burdening local businesses and residences. Inflation needs to be adjusted.
Public area maintenance and urban tree canopy programs are important to me.
Need to properly maintain roads, parks garbage collection as the priority.
Cost of living may impact paying increased rates, but inflation impacts council. But amenity is important and maintains housing prices so if I have to downsize I am better off
Strong Preference is not to reduce service
Services must be maintained or improved
I think you should maintain the current services. The difference between 12% and 15% is small enough that I support the 15% increase services option.

Attachment N– Comments made by participants who supported Increase Services and Infrastructure as their first ranked option

We should spend now whilst we have the opportunity to prevent further decline in our facilities
Increased rates will allow Council to out more funds towards solutions that support more housing diversity through an increase in density in our Neighbourhood, not just railway stations.
With a declining revenue base and increased community demands for services a significant increase in rates is essential. A $4/week increase is very easily manageable.
I'm willing to chip in a bit more money every year, but it would be good to see concrete plans and throughlines from increased rates to improved services!
Our council provides fabulous services, but we need to maintain and invest in improvements to our community's assets.
With rather high population density, it is very important that all facilities, especially recreation and passive enjoyment areas are maintained to a high standard - hence higher rates
Willoughby LGA has a backlog of infrastructure project backline that should be funded in order to serve the residents and resilience in impacts caused by climate change.
Everything is going up and so is the cost of maintaining infrastructure. I am happy to have increases that keep Willoughby up to date and safe!
Even after reading all 4 options, without knowing the details on how would you spend the money (i.e. projects pipeline and specific infrastructure), how can us the rate payer say yeah, here's a blank cheque for extra 20%, go do whatever you want to do. The reason I'm supportive of rate increase (15% of above) is that Willoughby council has done a good job thus far and being a proud local residents, I really hate to see the quality of life going down. And by paying a ransom is probably our only options, right? otherwise, who would say by giving an increase of 3.5% and we'd guarantee you with a reduced service?? I can't tell that to my boss, am I? I can't tell my employer that I'll take inflationary pay rise but I'll give you less because you being cheap.
I support increasing the rates to provide the best possible amenity of the LGA
As long as the community have input and aware of the planned infrastructure
I really love the parks and outdoor spaces around here, and would love to see improved cycling options, which is a major weakness in this LGA.
Would much encourage more sustainable infrastructure including Bike Paths
I do hope Council has not engaged external consultants to design and run this program. We must have the capability within!
Need more maintenance and infrastructure to prevent future decline
I have never supported rate reductions. With the pressures from cost increases and the decreasing support of state government. it is unrealistic and even suicidal to do so
I'm lucky enough to be in a position to go for the most expensive option, which I believe is needed to keep Willoughby thriving. I recognise that this may not be the case for others.
I'm happy to pay more for better services and infrastructure. Particularly footpaths and cycleways. Willoughby has done a decent job but is far behind other councils in these areas. If this increase can

be used in part to improve walking and cycling in our council area then I'm all for it - improving footpaths, building new cycleways, creating safer streets. This will be beneficial for the health and wellbeing of our communities, businesses, and our environment, and is much needed.
You have noted that in the increased services options that this will support job retention. I am assuming that this means a pay rise? I would expect to see any money from an increase in rates above the NSW Government rate revenue peg of 3.5% go only to maintaining and increasing services. If this is not the case how will the money from the increased rates be distributed?
I feel the need to invest in order to keep the area a thriving, modern place to live.
we are happy to pay for improved services
Don’t let the neo cons take over!
Well done on the communications- very clear
We've always been happy with the level of service provided by Willoughby Council.
I’d prefer not having to pay more money. Everyone already has a lot to pay and this is just an added cost
Willoughby Council does good things for the community. Rates are probably too low. The cost of my preferred option is not even the cost of one coffee a week.
I believe the rates in Willoughby are far too low compared to the value of housing. This benefits older residents that have been here for years at the expense of new and younger residents. For example, I have a $500k investment property in Cessnock and my rates are $500 per quarter vs my house in Willoughby that is only $380 per quarter.
I want to keep the area and its services of a high standard. We need to pay increased rates to have a high standard of services for the community. I do not want our high standard of living and council services to suffer due to lack of money.
Go for it.
Strongly against reducing services
Given that the brochure states that increased costs are partly due to inflationary pressures, I hope council will adjust rates accordingly when inflation rate falls.
I support raising rates significantly to improve infrastructure in our future. I would especially want to see the money appropriately used to support services for social housing and residents, great public areas, and social infrastructure. I intend to be a residential landowner in Whilloughby in the future and understand this rate rise affects me both then, and now as a renter.
Rates increase would be reasonable and affordable
I would like to know how council will keep costs down please
Council needs to retrieve rates that were lost during the covid crisis to enable an increase in services and infrastructure for the future of Willoughby
Service increase needs to be on practical things not more bureaucracy
We need to keep moving forward and preparing for the future even if that costs more in the short term. We will benefit in the long run.

It’s a modest yearly increase in actual terms (despite being 20%)and will provide enormous benefits for me and my family. Those proposed works will benefit me and my kids and future generations and continue to provide a beautiful area for us to live in. I fully support the measures as the increase to me and my family’s welfare and wellness is more than made up for by my financial contribution.
Increased service levels and reliable infrastructures are key to securing a brighter future for Willoughby and Australia.
Willoughby council does a great job in comparison with other councils i have experienced I am happy to give them the tools they require especially as current rates are very reasonable
Simply cannot afford 12% increase or more while income is a lot less than pre-covid
if we want better services, we need to pay for them.
I want to live in a fully functioning and forward-looking council area.
It doesn't make sense to reduce services; maintaining current services increases by 12% and increasing services by 15% - ratepayers would hardly notice the difference in their rates. Best to increase services and infrastructure if possible. There's always community infrastructure that needs upgrading and Willoughby is an excellent Council.
My support for an increase in services and infrastructure is conditional on the re-building of the Haven Amphitheatre as a component of the increase in infrastructure
I have a very low opinion of Willoughby Council ... as a resident of 40 years you have never provided an acceptable level of service .. my enthusiasm to support a rate rise is linked to an expectation that you do actually provide both the service you promised and failed to deliver and more on top of that.
Better library services. Please have no fees to reserve a book.
Very disappointed that the Council has reduced support of residents access to RecycleSmart services from once-a-month to once-every-3-months. I consider providing REAL sustainable systems of conservation and reuse/ recycle systems a priority. Also disappointed that the Council has not reinstated pre-Covid opening hours at branch libraries. Also disappointed that Willoughby Park Centre is being more proactive in offering various activities across the Council venues (such as various exercise classes avail for all age groups from "tiny tots" through to seniors) as were available pre-Covid.
I hope that the maintenance funding will explore the possibility of creating much needed footpaths and steps from the road to the property boundaries on the south side of Coolaroo Toad . The road side area is steep and dangerous for us to access our vehicles on the road . Thanks
I would like to see infrastructure spent on a better community centre for people to hold events eg kids parties or meetings. Eg upgrading bales park building
We are particularly persuaded by the fact that we have the second lowest rates in comparison to similar suburbs. We greatly benefit from the services provided by Council
Excellent articulation of the challenges, root causes and options available. Enhancing our local community and improving resiliency is a fantastic return on $218 per year
We must keep investing in our area for future generations
Investment in services is needed
Improving services and infrastructure will improve the harmony of the district and hopefully maintain and increase the property price.

The 20% increase is the only option if we are to expand community engagement.
It's fair to raise rates to match inflation but on top of that I feel it's fair that we continue to build infrastructure that benefits everyone. After all, our LGA has plenty of 'wealthy' landowners who have had a nice bump from inflation on rental income from their properties or other high paying jobs.
Willoughby Council rates have always been low compared to others in greenfield areas. We need more and better infrastructure to support our growing population and whereas I would like to see that funded reasonably through new developments, we all need to contribute through our rates,
Just increase the rates by 20% and give us better services and infrastructure.
Increased services and infrastructure will improve the quality of life of residents in Willoughby, today and in the future. It is also vital for dealing with the impacts of climate change, which can only increase.
Willoughby needs to spend more on improving separated active transport infrastructure to support the massive increase in population growth in the LGA and reduce the reliance on cars for short trips.
I value the services Willoughby provides, including library, parks, Northbridge Baths; I also believe Council uses money effetcively for supporting those in greater need than myself
20% is my preference, keen to see services and infrastructure improved across the LGA
I'm not one for spending money where it isn't necessary BUT: The value of land in Willoughby has increased substantially over the past decade and that is partly because the Willoughby Council maintain the municipality to a very high standard and provide quality services. To reduce or just maintain services would be a retrograde step and would ultimately impact on land values. Rate payers can't expect to pay low rates but yet live in a beautifully maintained municipality.
I wholeheartedly endorse the proposal to increase services and infrastructure within the Willoughby City Council area. Our community is evolving with increasing densification, and it's vital that we invest in upgrading our infrastructure to keep pace with this growth. I particularly advocate for a balanced approach that encourages more medium-density options as well as high-density to ensure diversity. I hope to continue to see Willoughby Council prioritise the maintenance of our green spaces and parks. As our area grows, preserving these green oases becomes even more critical. In addition, I hope the council remains committed to providing affordable housing options for our essential workers. It's disheartening to witness teachers and nurses being forced out of our community due to rising rental costs. I strongly advocate for the development of safer and more protected cycling paths. Cycling routes which are on the road often put cyclists in precarious situations, particularly when they are sandwiched between parking spaces and travelling vehicles. Improving cycling infrastructure not only encourages sustainable transportation but also enhances safety for cyclists. Let's invest in well-designed, protected cycling paths to make our streets safer and more accessible for everyone.
I am very supportive of council investing in infrastructure and services in an ongoing and sustainable manner - this makes Willoughby a great place to live, work and play.
We need to upgrade the facilities, infrastructure in order to keep Chatswood as a high standard areas and everyone loves to live in.

If we want to make sure Willoughby continues to be desirable and home to a connected, resilient and safe community we need to invest in infrastructure and maintain services at the same time. That requires more money. We will all benefit from increased council services.
An investment in the betterment of our suburb and it better supports residents
I am a higher income earner therefore the increase will not impact me financially. With the impact of covid and future financial projections I believe it's important for the council to maintain a surplus. Continuous investment in Willoughby i believe will ensure willoughby as an area maintains high standards and a desirable living location. I firmly believe there should be an increase in investment - rising costs, inflation, population growth need to be factored in in order for willoughby to simply maintain its standard and infrastructure of the area.
I think Willoughby Council needs many more resources in order to maintain and upgrade community infrastructure. I think that in comparison to what Lane Cove Council is achieving and North Sydney Council, Wiloughby Council is far behind. This is understandable, it has a very large population and area. We all need to pull together to improve the facilities in our Willoughby area.
Our rates are comparatively low. Council should improve services and community infrastructure
The services and infrastructure are essential to the character of Willoughby council areas. This is a great opportunity to review the needs of residents and business owners and to make ambitious plans that will serve the needs of all.
A service I would like to see is soft plastic and compost collection
Council needs to continue to invest in infrastructure and community.
If we want to ensure Willoughby remains a desirable location to live and/or operate a thriving business, we need to maintain and improve services and facilities. Anything less will slowly erode property values and our standard of living in the community over time. Any short term savings in rates with lesser options will be counterproductive in the long term.
Increased services and infrastructure is required to support Willoughby's growing population so that it remains an attractive place to live, work and visit.
If you are increasing rates please make sure the money is used wisely and not just to benefit the departments that can make residents lives very difficult and unpleasant