

Newcastle ● VOICE

The City of Newcastle:

Road to Recovery

Application for Special Rate Variation 2015/16

Community Engagement Report

- APPENDIX -

Table of Contents

Informing the community

Appendix 1a	Advertising	page 3
Appendix 1b	Road to Recovery information booklet	page 5
Appendix 1c	Road to Recovery article in Council News (Spring 2014)	page 7
Appendix 1d	Media releases and coverage	page 8
Appendix 1e	Lord Mayoral columns	page 10
Appendix 1f	Newcastle Voice newsletter articles and communications	page 11
Appendix 1g	Social media articles	page 15
Appendix 1h	Council website	page 16

Consulting the community

Appendix 2	Telephone / Newcastle Voice survey	page 17
Appendix 3a	Telephone survey- respondent profile and weightings	page 23
Appendix 3b	Telephone survey- unweighted (raw) survey data	page 24
Appendix 4a	Telephone survey- Respondent comments, reasons for preferring rating Option 1	page 34
Appendix 4b	Telephone survey- Respondent comments, reasons for preferring rating Option 2	page 38
Appendix 4c	Telephone survey- Respondent comments, reasons for preferring rating Option 3	page 44
Appendix 5a	Newcastle Voice survey- respondent profile and weightings	page 47
Appendix 5b	Newcastle Voice survey- unweighted (raw) survey data	page 48
Appendix 6a	Newcastle Voice survey- Respondent comments, reasons for preferring rating Option 1	page 57
Appendix 6b	Newcastle Voice survey- Respondent comments, reasons for preferring rating Option 2	page 71
Appendix 6c	Newcastle Voice survey- Respondent comments, reasons for preferring rating Option 3	page 84
Appendix 7a	Feedback slip- Respondent comments, reasons for preferring rating Option 1	page 96
Appendix 7b	Feedback slip - Respondent comments, reasons for preferring rating Option 2	page 99
Appendix 7c	Feedback slip - Respondent comments, reasons for preferring rating Option 3	page 102

Appendix 1a- Advertising

Overview of rating options and community drop-in session dates (week 1)

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Which option do you think is best for your city?





We are proposing to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a multi-year special rate variation to increase our rating income above the rate peg.

There are three different options being considered. We encourage you to find out more information and provide feedback about these proposals.

[We are hosting community drop in sessions at all our local branch libraries where you can come and talk to our engagement team about the proposals.](#)

Thursday 9 October	4.30pm – 7.30pm	New Lambton Library
Saturday 11 October	9.30am – 12noon	Adamstown Library
Tuesday 14 October	1pm – 4pm	Hamilton Library
Thursday 16 October	5pm – 8pm	City Library
Saturday 18 October	9.30am – 12noon	Beresfield Library
Monday 20 October	10am – 1pm	Mayfield Library
Wednesday 22 October	4.30pm – 7.30pm	Wallsend Library
Thursday 23 October	2pm – 5pm	Lambton Library
Saturday 25 October	9.30am – 12noon	Stockton Library

Option 1: Take no action

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability

Option 3: Fund revitalisation

For more information and details on how to tell us your preferred option go to www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au and search for **road to recovery**.

Attend community sessions (week 2)

ROAD TO RECOVERY

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There are three different options being considered. We encourage you to find out more information and provide feedback about these proposals.

[We are hosting community drop in sessions at all our local branch libraries where you can come and talk to our engagement team about the proposals.](#)

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Wed 22 October	4.30pm – 7.30pm	Wallsend Library
Thu 23 October	2pm – 5pm	Lambton Library
Sat 25 October	9.30am – 12noon	Stockton Library

Option 1: Take no action

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability

Option 3: Fund revitalisation

For more information and details on how to tell us your preferred option go to www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au and search for **road to recovery**.

Reminder to have your say and impact (week 3)

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Which option do you think is best for your city?



We are proposing to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a multi-year special rate variation to increase our rating income above the rate peg. There are three different options being considered.

We encourage you to find out more information and tell us which option you prefer.

Go to www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au and search for road to recovery.

Impact on average residential rate payer	Option 1: Take no action <small>Rate peg only Total increase 15.9%</small>	Option 2: Fund financial sustainability <small>22% above the rate peg Total increase 37.9%</small>	Option 3: Fund revitalisation <small>31% above the rate peg Total increase 46.9%</small>
Annual Rates 2014/15-Year 0	\$1,074	\$1,074	\$1,074
Annual Rates 2019/20-Year 5	\$1,244	\$1,481	\$1,578
Total rate increase over 5 years	\$170	\$407	\$504
Average increase per year	\$34	\$81	\$101
Average increase per week	\$0.66	\$1.56	\$1.94

Online Herald advertising

ROAD TO RECOVERY



Which option do you think is best for Newcastle?

OPTION 1
Take no action

OPTION 2:
Fund financial sustainability

OPTION 3
Fund revitalisation

[Take the survey now.](#)

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Which option do you think is best for Newcastle?

Option 1: Take no action

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability

Option 3: Fund revitalisation

[Take the survey now.](#)

Which option do you think is best for Newcastle?

OPTION 1: Take no action

OPTION 2: Fund financial sustainability

OPTION 3: Fund revitalisation

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Take the survey now.

Road to recovery feedback form

Please tell us which option you prefer
by Friday 31 October 2014.

Age: _____
Gender: Male Female
Postcode: _____

Please rank the three options in order
of preference:

e.g. put a 1 for your first preference, 2 for your second,
and 3 for your third preference

Option 1: Take no action

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability

Option 3: Fund revitalisation

Any comments?

Please post this to us at:
Road to Recovery
The City of Newcastle
PO Box 489
Newcastle NSW 2300

Want to know what's going on?

Like us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/newcastlevoice
or
follow us on Twitter
www.twitter.com/citynewcastle
or
visit our website
www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au

Tell us what you think

Which option do you prefer?

Option 1: Take no action

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability

Option 3: Fund revitalisation

You can tell us your preferred option by:

- Completing our survey at newcastle.nsw.gov.au
- Sending us an email to mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au with the Subject: **Road to recovery**
- Or completing the Road to recovery form on the left and dropping it off at your local library or posting it in an envelope by Friday 31 October 2014
- Talking to us at one of our community drop-in sessions

Attend a community drop-in session

Thu 9 Oct 4.30pm – 7.30pm	New Lambton Library Regent St New Lambton
Sat 11 Oct 9.30am – 12noon	Adamstown Library Brunker Rd (Cnr Victoria St) Adamstown
Tue 14 Oct 1pm – 4pm	Hamilton Library James St (Cnr Murray St) Hamilton
Thu 16 Oct 5pm – 8pm	City Library Ground Floor 15 Laman St Newcastle
Sat 18 Oct 9.30am – 12noon	Beresfield Library Lawson Ave (Cnr Ogilvie St) Beresfield
Mon 20 Oct 10am – 1pm	Mayfield Library Hanbury St Mayfield
Wed 22 Oct 4.30pm – 7.30pm	Wallsend Library Bunn St Wallsend
Thu 23 Oct 2pm – 5pm	Lambton Library Morehead St (Cnr Elder St) Lambton
Sat 25 Oct 9.30am – 12noon	Stockton Library King St Stockton

Our vision

In 2030 Newcastle will be a smart, liveable and sustainable city.

We will celebrate our unique city and protect our natural assets. We will build resilience in the face of future challenges and encourage innovation and creativity. As an inclusive community, we will embrace new residents and foster a culture of care. We will be a leading lifestyle city with vibrant public places, connected transport networks and a distinctive built environment. And as we make our way toward 2030, we will achieve all this within a framework of open and collaborative leadership.

We are committed to our vision and to achieve it we need your help.

Some background

In October 2012 an independent report commissioned by the Division of Local Government (DLG) and undertaken by the NSW Treasury Corporation (TCorp) said this about Newcastle's finances:

"Liquidity position will reduce over the period and will likely result in Council becoming illiquid if they continue with the scheduled capital expenditure program due to reducing current assets and increasing current liabilities".

Following TCorp's review we completed a detailed analysis of our finances including what we needed to spend on maintaining and renewing our assets, how much we spend providing services to the community, income from rates, fees and charges, the impact of depreciation and cost shifting as well as revenue from commercial operations.

This was reviewed by the independent members of the Internal Audit Committee and advice was sought from a Financial Advisory Panel made up of leaders from the Newcastle business community.

This was used to inform our 2013-2017 Delivery Program which has previously been communicated through our community engagement program.



Progress to date

The 2013-2017 Delivery Program outlined a plan to move us towards sustainability. We have made significant progress, and over a two year period, we reduced our overall expenditure by 10% or \$12million.

We did this by:

- reduce staff numbers by 90 full time positions
- restructuring to reduce management positions
- reducing ongoing operational expenses
- prioritising capital works to make sure all projects are fully funded before work starts
- focusing on the top four priority projects
- identifying surplus assets for disposal
- lease to external provider for Beresfield Golf Course
- increasing income from commercial operations
- building productivity improvement into the budget
- selling two parking stations which generated income and reduced our backlog
- selling the civic precinct site to The University of Newcastle to accommodate 'NeW Space' city campus
- outsourcing operations of four inland swimming centres
- reducing the length of the lifeguard season to match neighbouring and metropolitan councils. Working with Hunter Surf Lifesaving to provide weekend beach patrols
- closing the Loft Youth Venue
- reducing the level of regulatory services for neighbourhood issues
- reducing the level of service for mowing, rubbish collection and road maintenance
- seeking commercial partnerships for improving community facilities including expressions of interest for Newcastle and Merewether Ocean Baths
- transferring operations of family day care services to neighbouring councils

We have done a lot, but it wasn't enough.
Now we need your help NEWCASTLE...

Appendix 1b

Road to recovery

A financially sustainable Newcastle



From as early as 2007 we have been talking to the Newcastle community about our finances and how we can secure the long term financial sustainability of Council. During this time we have undertaken a range of service reviews and engagement activities to determine community priorities and services.

Over the last two years we have taken decisive action to reduce spending and eliminate the gap between income and expenses. We have implemented a range of cost reduction initiatives and made tough decisions about prioritising services and projects to be delivered.

These changes have made a substantial impact, reducing our underlying operating deficit by more than \$10million. However, financial modelling shows that the business as usual approach coupled with further cost reductions and efficiency improvements is not enough to secure our financial future in the long term.

For more than 30 years we have been constrained by the rate peg and this will be likely to continue. Costs for fuel, telephones, electricity, construction materials and employees rates have risen faster than the rate peg.

We need to increase our revenue above the rate peg. We propose to do this by applying to IPART for a multi-year special rate variation (SRV).

The SRV proposal has been foreshadowed in yearly planning documents and community engagement sessions since 2012.

We have explored all the options, action is now required and we need your help. This will keep us on the road to recovery ensuring our long term financial future and ability to deliver our shared community vision for Newcastle 2030.

What are the options?

Option 1: Take no action

This is not a long term option. Taking no action now will result in a deteriorating operating position and the depletion of cash reserves. Our actions to date have delayed the depletion of cash reserves. This is not sustainable and our financial forecasts show that those cash reserves will diminish to an unacceptable level and we will not have enough money to cover costs.

We will be unable to properly maintain our existing infrastructure and our maintenance backlog will continue to grow. No new projects will start until the current priority projects are completed. This option includes capped rate increases determined by IPART. This is forecast at 3% per year, an increase of 15.9% over the five year period.

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability

This option, as outlined in the 2013-2017 Delivery Program, will retain and in some cases improve the existing level of services without depleting our cash reserves and ensure our financial sustainability. We will provide all the services we do now. We will be able to improve infrastructure maintenance, reduce our backlog and invest in some asset renewal.

This option includes the rate peg of 3% per year plus moderate additional increases for a five year period. The annual rate increases will be 6.5% to 6.8% per year for five years including the 3% rate peg. This option will mean an increase of 22% above the rate peg – or 37.9% total increase – over five years.

Option 3: Fund revitalisation

An additional option for consideration will allow us to improve current service levels into the future. We will be able to accelerate the completion of our priority projects as well as make substantial reductions to our infrastructure backlog. This means our facilities, roads, footpaths, sportsgrounds, parks and playgrounds will be in better condition. We will be able to contain increases to user fees and charges and we will be able to invest in new community infrastructure as our population increases. This is an additional option for consideration.

This option includes the rate peg of 3% per year plus an additional 5% per year for a five year period. The annual rate increase will be 8% per year for five years including the 3% rate peg. This option will mean an increase of 31% above the rate peg – or 46.9% total increase – over five years.

What will I get for my money?

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability

- Maintain existing levels of service
- Maintain community facilities
- Maintain and improve local roads and footpaths
- Build new infrastructure as funding becomes available
- Prioritise street tree planting as funding becomes available
- Look after our sporting facilities
- Replace playgrounds in line with our current program
- Maintain waste services at current levels
- Increase opportunities for community involvement in Council decision making
- Improve local parks and sportsgrounds

Option 3: Fund revitalisation

- Complete the restoration of the sandstone facade of City Hall
- Replacement of bus shelters
- Improve our community facilities such as our swimming pools and libraries
- Modernise our libraries
- Online DA tracking
- Expanded community engagement program
- Increase bush regeneration works
- Complete maintenance work to eliminate the backlog
- Schedule more pedestrian and local traffic improvements. There are currently \$53million of unfunded projects
- Accelerate delivery of the Hunter Street revitalisation project
- Accelerate delivery of Blackbutt Reserve improvements
- Accelerate delivery of the coastal revitalisation project
- Implement projects from the Cycling Strategy and Action Plan, including inner city cycle lanes and the Richmond Vale rail trail
- Actively contribute to the revitalisation of Newcastle
- Support the economic revival of Newcastle

Special Rate Variation options

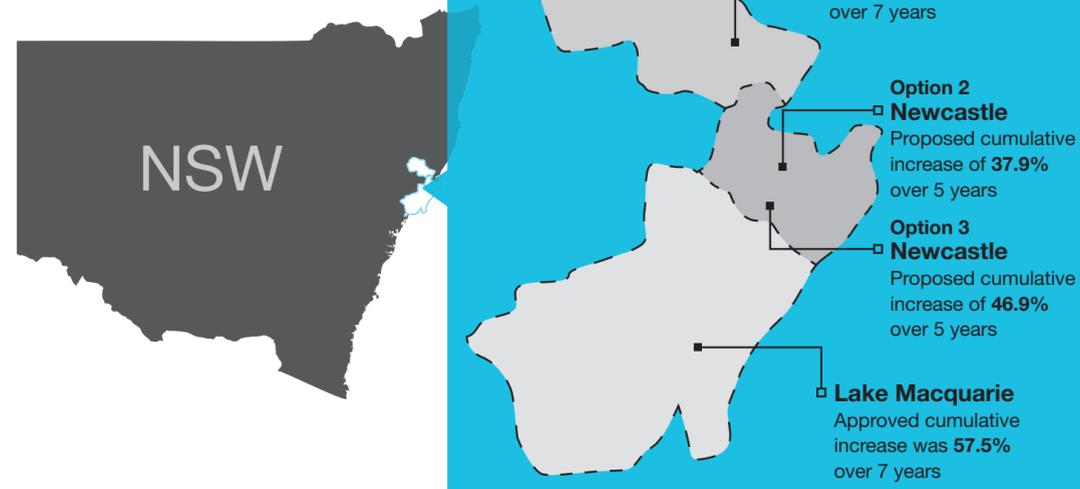
A multi-year special rate variation (SRV) is now proposed to ensure our medium to long term financial sustainability. The proposal for a SRV was included as part of the 2013-2017 Delivery Program and 2014/2015 Operational Plan.

All other options to increase revenue or reduce costs have been considered and our financial modelling confirms that the SRV is the best way to achieve a sustainable operating surplus and address the asset maintenance backlog whilst still maintaining the services and facilities the Newcastle community wants.

For residential ratepayers the average yearly increase will be:

Take no action	Fund financial sustainability	Fund revitalisation
\$34 per year or \$0.66 per week	\$81 per year or \$1.56 per week	\$101 per year or \$1.94 per week

Local Council Rate Comparisons



Option 1: Take no action

Rates are increased by the rate peg amount of 3% only over five years

Your ratable land value	No. of properties	Land value for rates calculation	Annual rates					
			2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
\$0 - \$99,999	7,987	\$50,000	\$652	\$671	\$691	\$712	\$733	\$755
\$100,000 - \$149,999	5,158	\$125,000	\$823	\$848	\$873	\$899	\$926	\$954
\$150,000 - \$199,999	15,938	\$175,000	\$938	\$966	\$995	\$1,025	\$1,055	\$1,087
\$200,000 - \$299,999	20,199	\$250,000	\$1,110	\$1,143	\$1,177	\$1,212	\$1,249	\$1,286
\$300,000 - \$499,999	8,373	\$400,000	\$1,453	\$1,497	\$1,541	\$1,588	\$1,635	\$1,684
\$500,000 and greater	3,469	\$600,000	\$1,911	\$1,968	\$2,027	\$2,088	\$2,151	\$2,215

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability

Rates increase by 6.5% to 6.8% per year over five years including the rate peg of 3%

Your ratable land value	Land value for rates calculation	Annual rates					
		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
\$0 - \$99,999	\$50,000	\$652	\$696	\$743	\$792	\$844	\$898
\$100,000 - \$149,999	\$125,000	\$823	\$879	\$939	\$1,001	\$1,066	\$1,135
\$150,000 - \$199,999	\$175,000	\$938	\$1,002	\$1,070	\$1,140	\$1,215	\$1,293
\$200,000 - \$299,999	\$250,000	\$1,110	\$1,185	\$1,266	\$1,349	\$1,437	\$1,530
\$300,000 - \$499,999	\$400,000	\$1,453	\$1,552	\$1,658	\$1,767	\$1,882	\$2,004
\$500,000 and greater	\$600,000	\$1,911	\$2,042	\$2,181	\$2,324	\$2,476	\$2,637

Option 2: How much extra per year will this cost me?

Your ratable land value	Land value for rates calculation	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total above the rate peg
\$0 - \$99,999	\$50,000	\$0	\$25	\$52	\$80	\$111	\$143	\$411
\$100,000 - \$149,999	\$125,000	\$0	\$31	\$66	\$102	\$140	\$181	\$520
\$150,000 - \$199,999	\$175,000	\$0	\$36	\$75	\$115	\$160	\$206	\$592
\$200,000 - \$299,999	\$250,000	\$0	\$42	\$89	\$137	\$188	\$244	\$700
\$300,000 - \$499,999	\$400,000	\$0	\$55	\$117	\$179	\$247	\$320	\$918
\$500,000 and greater	\$600,000	\$0	\$74	\$154	\$236	\$325	\$422	\$1,211

Option 3: Fund revitalisation

Rates are increased by 8% per year over five years including the rate peg of 3%

Your ratable land value	Land value for rates calculation	Annual rates					
		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
\$0 - \$99,999	\$50,000	\$652	\$704	\$760	\$821	\$886	\$957
\$100,000 - \$149,999	\$125,000	\$823	\$889	\$960	\$1,037	\$1,120	\$1,210
\$150,000 - \$199,999	\$175,000	\$938	\$1,013	\$1,094	\$1,182	\$1,276	\$1,378
\$200,000 - \$299,999	\$250,000	\$1,110	\$1,199	\$1,295	\$1,398	\$1,510	\$1,631
\$300,000 - \$499,999	\$400,000	\$1,453	\$1,570	\$1,695	\$1,831	\$1,978	\$2,136
\$500,000 and greater	\$600,000	\$1,911	\$2,065	\$2,230	\$2,408	\$2,601	\$2,809

Option 3: How much extra per year will this cost me?

Your ratable land value	Land value for rates calculation	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total above the rate peg
\$0 - \$99,999	\$50,000	\$0	\$33	\$69	\$109	\$153	\$202	\$566
\$100,000 - \$149,999	\$125,000	\$0	\$41	\$87	\$138	\$194	\$256	\$716
\$150,000 - \$199,999	\$175,000	\$0	\$47	\$99	\$157	\$221	\$291	\$815
\$200,000 - \$299,999	\$250,000	\$0	\$56	\$118	\$186	\$261	\$345	\$966
\$300,000 - \$499,999	\$400,000	\$0	\$73	\$154	\$243	\$343	\$452	\$1,265
\$500,000 and greater	\$600,000	\$0	\$97	\$203	\$320	\$450	\$594	\$1,664

Appendix 1c- Council News article

ROAD TO RECOVERY



All Newcastle households would have recently received information about our proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a multi-year special rate variation.

There are three different options being considered and we encourage the Newcastle community to find out more information and provide feedback about the proposals.

This month we are hosting community drop in sessions at all our local branch libraries where you can come and talk to our engagement team about the proposals.

All the details are available on our website. Go to www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au and search for road to recovery.

Which option do you think is best for the city?

Option 1: Take no action

This is not a long term option. Taking no action now will result in a deteriorating operating position and the depletion of cash reserves. Whilst our actions to date have delayed this issue, it is not a sustainable solution. Our financial forecasts show that cash reserves will diminish to an unacceptable level and we will not have enough money to cover costs.

This option limits rate rises to the annual capped rate increase determined by IPART. This is forecast at 3% per year, a cumulative increase of 15.9% over the five year period.

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability

This option, as outlined in the 2013-17 Delivery Program, will retain and in some cases improve the existing level of services without depleting our cash reserves and ensure our financial sustainability. We will provide all the services we do now. We will also be able to improve infrastructure maintenance, reduce our maintenance backlog and invest in some asset renewal.

This option includes the forecast IPART rate peg of 3% per year plus moderate additional increases for a five year period. The annual rate increases will be 6.5% to 6.8% per year for five years including the 3% rate peg. This option will mean an increase of 22% above the rate peg – or 37.9% total increase over five years.

Option 3: Fund revitalisation

An additional option for consideration will allow us to improve current service levels into the future. We will be able to accelerate the completion of our priority projects as well as make substantial reductions to our infrastructure maintenance backlog.

This option includes the forecast IPART rate peg of 3% per year plus an additional 5% per year for a five year period. The annual rate increase will be 8% per year for five years including the 3% rate peg. This option will mean an increase of 31% above the rate peg – or 46.9% total increase over five years.

Impact on average residential rate payer	Take no action Rate peg only Total increase 15.9%	Fund financial sustainability 22% above the rate peg Total increase 37.9%	Fund revitalisation 31% above the rate peg Total increase 46.9%
Annual Rates 2014/15 - Year 0	\$1,074	\$1,074	\$1,074
Annual Rates 2019/20 - Year 5	\$1,244	\$1,481	\$1,578
Total rate increase over 5 years	\$170	\$407	\$504
Average increase per year	\$34	\$81	\$101
Average increase per week	\$0.66	\$1.56	\$1.94

Other Councils across NSW have also been affected by financial pressures. Our neighbouring councils have had special rate variations approved, with Maitland receiving an increase of 63.2% over seven years and Lake Macquarie a 57.5% increase over seven years.

Visit our website to find out more about business and farmland rates to have your say www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au

Appendix 1d- Media releases and coverage.

Media release

Friday 3 October 2014 - Road to recovery: Have your say about rating options for the next five years

The City of Newcastle is continuing on the road to financial recovery with a significant improvement being made to the budget deficit over the last 18 months. The Newcastle community is now invited to provide feedback about three rating options to ensure our long term financial future is secure. [Read more](#)

During special rate variation engagement period

The Herald (newspaper)

Friday 3 October – Ratepayers get say on increase (news)

Newcastle ratepayers will be asked to choose their poison from next week and determine how big an increase they're prepared to pay in their annual council rates. [Read more](#)

Tuesday 21 October 2014 - Council takes an uncalculated risk (Letters to the editor)

IT would appear from the figures quoted in the latest appeal for rate rises in the Newcastle City Council community newsletter that the reason the council has been unable to stay within a budget is a question of basic maths. [Read more](#)

The Post (newspaper)

Wednesday 15 October 2014 – Have your say on rates, pg12

Newcastle ratepayers could be slogged with a \$100 increase on their residential rates bill, as part of proposed measures aimed at improving the long-term financial sustainability of Newcastle City Council. [Read more](#)

ABC Newcastle (radio)

Thursday 9 October - Information sessions start on Newcastle Council rate increase proposals

The first of a series of community drop-in sessions is being held today to discuss options for Newcastle Council rates over the next five years. [Read more](#)

NewFM (radio)

Tuesday 21 October 2014 – Newcastle Council post surplus

Newcastle Council say they're another step closer towards turning around their financial situation, posting a surplus of \$754 000 for the 20-13/14 financial year. [Read more](#)

Media coverage – Prior to special rate variation engagement period

Friday 25 April 2014 - [\\$400 rates hike plan for Newcastle | Newcastle Herald](#)

Friday 25 April 2014 - [EDITORIAL: Council's plan for a rate hike | Newcastle Herald](#)

Tuesday 29 April 2014 - [\\$5 entry fee floated for art gallery and museum | Newcastle Herald](#)

Wednesday 21 May 2014 - [OPINION: City working towards financial sustainability | Newcastle ...](#)

Sunday 27 April 2014 - [Councillors don't like rates plan | Newcastle Herald](#)

Appendix 1e- Lord Mayoral columns

The Star (newspaper)

Monday 6 October 2014 – Newcastle council’s debt recovery slow but sure (weekly article from Deputy Lord Mayor)

WE are continuing on the road to financial recovery with a significant improvement being made to the budget deficit over the past 18 months. [Read more](#)

Monday 13 October 2014 – Plan cuts expenditure (weekly article from General Manager)

AS we work to secure the long-term financial sustainability of the council, it is important to understand the background of the city's position. [Read more](#)

Monday 20 October 2014 – Your change to comment on Newcastle’s proposed rate rise (weekly article from General Manager)

Our Road to Recovery activities continue this week, with our proposed application for a rate increase over the next five years in public view. [Read more](#)

The Post (newspaper)

Wednesday 8 October 2014 – Financial situation on the improve, pg8 (weekly article from Deputy Lord Mayor)

We are continuing on the road to financial recovery with a significant improvement being made to the budget deficit over the last 18 months. [Read more](#)

Wednesday 15 October 2014 – The background to city’s financial position, pg8 (weekly article from Deputy Lord Mayor)

As we work to secure the long term financial sustainability of Council, it is important to understand the background of the city’s current position. [Read more](#)

Appendix 1f- Newcastle Voice newsletters and communications

August 2014 MyVoice newsletter article

Have your say!

Road to recovery

In the coming months we will be talking about Council's financial situation and a proposal to apply for a general special rate variation. The engagement activities are still being finalised but there is likely to be

- a survey open to Newcastle Voice members in conjunction with a random sample of the broader community via telephone and
- community drop in sessions across the Newcastle LGA.

Council is putting together the information now about a range of rating options. This information will include what the financial impact on the average ratepayer and were additional funds will be spent.

September 2014 MyVoice newsletter article

Road to recovery

From as early as 2007 we have been talking to the Newcastle community about our finances and how we can secure the long term financial sustainability of Council. During this time we have undertaken a range of service reviews and engagement activities to determine community priorities and services.

Over the last two years we have taken decisive action to reduce spending and eliminate the gap between income and expenses. We have implemented a range of cost reduction initiatives and made tough decisions about prioritising services and projects to be delivered.

It wasn't enough

These changes have made a substantial impact, reducing our underlying operating deficit by more than \$10million. However, financial modelling shows that the business as usual approach coupled with further cost reductions and efficiency improvements is not enough to secure our financial future in the long term.

A multi-year special rate variation (SRV) is now proposed to ensure our medium to long term financial sustainability. The proposal for a SRV was included as part of the 2013-2017 Delivery Program and 2014/2015 Operational Plan.

All other options to increase revenue or reduce costs have been considered and our financial modelling confirms that the SRV is the best way to achieve a sustainable operating surplus and address the asset maintenance backlog whilst still maintaining the services and facilities the Newcastle community wants.

Have your say

In October 2014, you will be asked to have your say on the SRV proposal. This will include a survey and community information sessions which will be held at all our branch libraries. We will provide more details in October.

October 2014 MyVoice newsletter article

Road to recovery

In previous MyVoice issues, we have outlined Council's financial position and the Road to Recovery. A booklet outlining this information has also now been distributed to households across Newcastle. We are now collecting feedback from the community regarding preferences for securing Council's financial sustainability via a variety of sources, including the Newcastle Voice survey, a random telephone survey, postal surveys and we are also hosting community drop-in sessions at all our branch libraries.

What happens next?

Feedback from the community on the three funding options will be collated by the Newcastle Voice team next month. This information will form part of a report to council to determine if we should proceed with a special rate variation application to IPART. The report is scheduled for the Tuesday 25 November 2014 Council meeting and if endorsed your feedback will be included in Council's application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a special rate variation. IPART determines whether or not a rate rise above the rate peg of approximately 3% will be granted. The engagement report will also be available on our website.

Have your say!

If you haven't yet had the chance to complete the Road to Recovery resident survey as yet, please take a few minutes to complete this survey as we would like to include as many opinions as possible. The survey closes on 26 October 2014. If you have questions or queries about the survey or Council's Road to Recovery, please stop in on one of the remaining community drop-in sessions:

Saturday 18 October 2014, Beresfield Library, 9:30am-12:00
Monday 20 October 2014, Mayfield Library, 10am-1:00pm
Wednesday 22 October 2014, Wallsend Library, 4:30pm-7:30pm
Thursday 23 October 2014, Lambton Library, 2.00pm-5.00pm
Saturday 25 October 2014, Stockton Library, 9:30am-12:00pm

Email communication to Newcastle Voice members- 3 October 2014



This update outlines Council's proposal to increase rates above the NSW Government's rate peg of approximately 3% p.a by applying to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a special rate variation (SRV).

In update edition we outline the background to this application, a snapshot of the SRV options and information on how to have your say.

Background- Road to recovery

From as early as 2007 we have been talking to the Newcastle community about our finances and how we can secure the long term financial sustainability of Council. During this time we have undertaken a range of service reviews and engagement activities to determine community priorities and services.

The 2013-2017 Delivery Program outlined a plan to move us towards financial sustainability and we have made significant progress. Over the past 12 months we have realised \$12million per annum of ongoing cost savings.

We did this by looking at our organisation structure and staffing to ensure we are operating efficiently as well as identifying services and facilities that were either no longer required, were duplicates of services provided by other agencies or could be provided more efficiently by external service providers. This has been a difficult process but ultimately the organisation is in a much improved position financially.

It wasn't enough

A multi-year special rate variation (SRV) is now proposed to ensure our medium to long term financial sustainability. The proposal for a SRV was included as part of the 2013-2017 Delivery Program and 2014/2015 Operational Plan.

Council considered applying for a special rate variation (SRV) earlier this year, but the application was withdrawn until all other options to increase revenue or reduce costs had been exhausted. Financial modelling confirms that the SRV is the best way to achieve a sustainable operating surplus and address the asset maintenance backlog whilst still maintaining the services and facilities the Newcastle community wants.

All households in Newcastle will soon receive a 'Road to Recovery' booklet outlining three SRV options:

Option 1: Take no action. **Option 2:** Fund financial sustainability. **Option 3:** Fund revitalisation.

Option 1:

Take no action

Taking no action will mean using cash reserves to fund day to day operations such as garbage collection, road and footpath maintenance, the maintenance of sporting grounds, parks, playgrounds and beaches, and library services. Under this option, we will not apply for any increase above the rate peg and within five years, we will not have enough money in reserves to cover costs.

This option includes capped rate increases determined by IPART. This is forecast at 3% per year, a cumulative increase of 15.9% over the five year period. For residential ratepayers, the average increase will be \$34 a year.

Option 2:

Fund financial sustainability

This option, as outlined in the 2013-2017 Delivery Program, will retain and in some cases improve the existing level of services without depleting our cash reserves and ensure our financial sustainability. We will provide all the services we do now. We will be able to improve infrastructure maintenance, reduce our backlog and invest in some asset renewal.

This option includes annual rate increases of 6.5% to 6.8% per year for five years including the 3% rate peg. This is a cumulative increase of 37.9% over five years. For residential ratepayers, the average increase will be \$81 per year.

Option 3:

Fund revitalisation

This option will allow us to improve current service levels into the future. We will be able to accelerate the completion of priority projects as well as make substantial reductions to our infrastructure maintenance backlog.

This option includes annual rate increases of 8% per year for five years including the 3% rate peg. This is a cumulative increase of 46.9% over five years. For residential ratepayers, the average increase will be \$101 per year.

How to have your say

We will be conducting a **survey** on the SRV options with Newcastle Voice members from 13 October 2014. This is your opportunity to nominate your preferred option.

We will also be holding a number of **community drop-in sessions** across Newcastle (dates and locations below). You can drop into these sessions at any point during the hours noted below to ask questions or seek additional information:

When	Where
Thursday 9 October 2014, 4.30pm-7.30pm	New Lambton Library, Regent St, New Lambton
Saturday 11 October 2014, 9.30am-12.00pm	Adamstown Library, Brunner Rd (Cnr Victoria St), Adamstown
Tuesday 14 October 2014, 1.00pm-4.00pm	Hamilton Library, James Street, (Cnr Murray St), Hamilton
Thursday 16 October 2014, 5.00pm-8.00pm	City Library, 15 Laman St, Newcastle
Saturday 18 October 2014, 9.30am-12.00pm	Beresfield Library, Lawson Ave (Cnr Ogilvie St), Beresfield
Monday 20 October 2014, 10.00am-1.00pm	Mayfield Library, Hanbury St, Mayfield
Wednesday 22 October 2014, 4.30pm-7.30pm	Wallsend Library, Bunn St, Wallsend
Thursday 23 October 2014, 2.00pm-5.00pm	Lambton Library, Morehead St (Cnr Elder St), Lambton
Saturday 25 October 2014, 9.30am-12.00pm	Stockton Library, King St, Stockton

More information can be found [here](#)

Kind Regards,

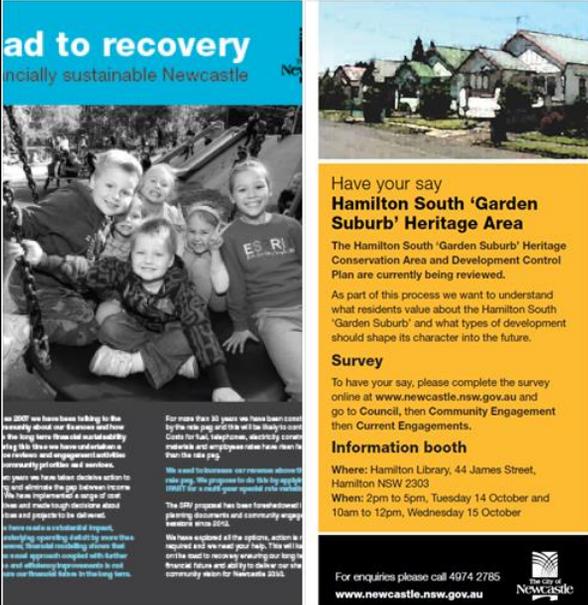
Newcastle Voice

Appendix 1g- Social media posts- Facebook

Newcastle Voice
Posted by Engagement Team [?] · October 14

Have your say:

Newcastle Voice are currently at Hamilton Library, talking about Council's current community engagements. Including the Special Rate Variation and the Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' heritage conservation area surveys. Come and see us from 1pm until 5pm today.



ad to recovery
ncially sustainable Newcastle

Have your say
Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Area

The Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' Heritage Conservation Area and Development Control Plan are currently being reviewed.

As part of this process we want to understand what residents value about the Hamilton South 'Garden Suburb' and what types of development should shape its character into the future.

Survey

To have your say, please complete the survey online at www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au and go to Council, then Community Engagement then Current Engagements.

Information booth

Where: Hamilton Library, 44 James Street, Hamilton NSW 2303
When: 2pm to 5pm, Tuesday 14 October and 10am to 12pm, Wednesday 15 October

For enquiries please call 4974 2785
www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au

Newcastle Voice shared a link.
Posted by Engagement Team [?] · October 16

Have your say:

Newcastle Voice are currently holding a community drop in session at Newcastle City Library, talking about the road to recovery and rate options. Come and see us from 5pm until 8pm today.

Or

Complete the survey here:
http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/council/community_engagement/current_consultations



Which option do you think is best for your city?

Option 1: Take no action

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability

Option 3: Fund revitalisation

Newcastle City Council - Current Engagements
www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au

The City of Newcastle is continuing on the road to financial recovery with a significant improvement being made to the budget deficit over the last 18 months. The Newcastle community is now invited to provide feedback about three rating options to ensure...

Newcastle Voice shared a link.
Posted by Engagement Team [?] · October 18

Have your say:

Newcastle Voice are currently holding a community drop in session at Beresfield Library, talking about the road to recovery and rate options. Come and see us from 9:30am until 12pm today, Saturday 18 October 2014.

Or

Complete the survey here:
http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/council/community_engagement/current_consultations



Which option do you think is best for your city?

Option 1: Take no action

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability

Option 3: Fund revitalisation

Newcastle City Council - Current Engagements
www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au

The City of Newcastle is continuing on the road to financial recovery with a significant improvement being made to the budget deficit over the last 18 months. The Newcastle community is now invited to provide feedback about three rating options to ensure...

Newcastle Voice
Posted by Engagement Team [?] · October 22

Have your say:

Newcastle Voice are currently at Wallsend Library, talking about the road to recovery and rate options.

Come and see us from 4:30pm until 7:30pm today.



Appendix 1g- Social media posts- Twitter



City of Newcastle @CityNewcastle · Oct 22

Don't forget there is a community drop-in session from 4.30pm to 7.30pm today at [#WallsendLibrary](#) to talk about rate [#roadtorecovery](#)



City of Newcastle @CityNewcastle · Oct 11

We are talking about rates at [#adamstownlibrary](#) today. Drop-in and chat about the three options proposed.



City of Newcastle @CityNewcastle · Oct 3

Media release - Road to recovery: Have your say about rating options for the next five years [.shar.es/1aTiHF](#) via [@sharethis](#)

Appendix 1h- Council website

Road to recovery main page- content

Road to recovery



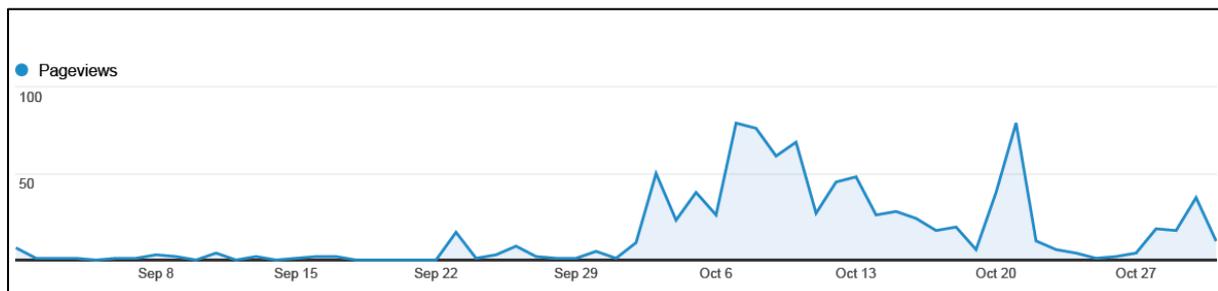
From as early as 2007 we have been talking to the Newcastle community about our finances and how we can secure the long term financial sustainability of Council.

During this time we have undertaken a range of service reviews and engagement activities to determine community priorities and services.

Over the last two years we have taken decisive action to reduce spending and eliminate the gap between income and expenses. We have implemented a range of cost reduction initiatives and made tough decisions about prioritising services and projects to be delivered.

These changes have made a substantial impact, reducing our underlying operating deficit by more than \$10million. However, financial modelling shows that the business as usual approach coupled with further cost reductions and efficiency improvements is not enough to secure our financial future in the long term.

Road to Recovery page views



Appendix 2- Micromex telephone survey / Newcastle Voice survey

Newcastle City Council
Community Survey – Special Rates Variation October 2014

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is _____ from Micromex Research and we are conducting a survey on behalf of Newcastle City Council.

Thank you for agreeing to assist us with this survey, which is being conducted for Council and asks local residents their opinions about Council's options for financial sustainability.

S1. Before we start, I would like to check whether you or an immediate family member work for Newcastle City Council?

SINGLE RESPONSE

Yes 1 No 2 (If yes, terminate survey)

Q1. In which suburb do you live?

DO NOT READ LIST, RECORD SUBURB

IF CODE 2 OR 33, CHECK IF NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL OR LAKE MACQUARIE COUNCIL

SINGLE RESPONSE

Ward 1	Code	Ward 2	Code	Ward 3	Code	Ward 4	Code
Bar Beach	3	Adamstown	1	Georgetown	13	Beresfield	4
Carrington	9	Adamstown Heights (part)	2	Jesmond	20	Birmingham Gardens	5
Cooks Hill	10	Broadmeadow	7	Kotara	22	Blackhill/Lenaghan	6
Islington	19	Hamilton	14	Lambton	23	Callaghan	8
Kooragang	21	Hamilton East	15	New Lambton	32	Elmore Vale	11
Maryville	25	Hamilton North	16	New Lambton Heights (part)	33	Fletcher	12
Mayfield	26	Hamilton South	17	North Lambton	37	Hexham	18
Mayfield East	27	Merewether	29	Waratah	48	Maryland	24
Mayfield West	28	Merewether Heights	30	Waratah West	49	Minmi	31
Newcastle CBD	34	The Junction	44			Rankin Park	38
Newcastle East	35					Sandgate	39
Newcastle West	36					Shortland	40
Stockton	41					Tarro	42
The Hill	43					Wallsend	46
Tighes Hill	45						
Warabrook	47						
Wickham	50						

I do not live in the Newcastle City Council area

51 (TERMINATE)

Appendix 2- Micromex telephone survey / Newcastle Voice survey

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

SINGLE RESPONSE

Less than a year	1
1 - 3 years	2
4 – 10 years	3
11 – 25 years	4
More than 25 years	5

Q3. How satisfied are you with the quality of facilities provided by Council in the local area?

SINGLE RESPONSE

Very satisfied	5
Satisfied	4
Somewhat satisfied	3
Not very satisfied	2
Not at all satisfied	1
Don't know / Not sure (DO NOT READ)	0

Q4. How satisfied are you with the level of service provided by Council in the local area?

SINGLE RESPONSE

Very satisfied	5
Satisfied	4
Somewhat satisfied	3
Not very satisfied	2
Not at all satisfied	1
Don't know / Not sure (DO NOT READ)	0

Q5. How important is it for Council to provide better services and facilities?

SINGLE RESPONSE

Very important	5
Important	4
Somewhat important	3
Not very important	2
Not at all important	1
Don't know / Not sure (DO NOT READ)	0

Q6. Are you aware that Council is investigating a range of options to ensure financial sustainability and maintain current services

SINGLE RESPONSE

Yes	1
No	2

Appendix 2- Micromex telephone survey / Newcastle Voice survey

Don't know / Not sure (DO NOT READ)

3

READ STATEMENT:

Over the last two years, Council has implemented a range of initiatives to reduce operating expenses including prioritising projects and services and reducing staff and management positions.

These changes have made a substantial impact, reducing Council's underlying operating deficit by more than \$10million. However, ongoing cost reductions and efficiency improvements are not enough to secure Council's financial future.

To ensure long term financial sustainability and maintain existing service levels, council needs to take further action. Council is now looking to apply to IPART, an independent government body, for a special rate variation to increase rate revenue above the NSW Government rate peg, for a five year period starting in 2015/16.

Council is examining three funding options and is seeking your input to determine the best option for securing our financial sustainability.

Option 1 is to take no action on rates and continue to erode council's limited cash reserves

Option 2 involves a moderate increase in rates to fund financial sustainability and maintain services

Option 3 involves a more significant increase in rates to fund revitalisation of the whole Newcastle area and improve services

I will now detail each option for you

Option 1: Take no action

No rate increase above the State restricted level of around 3%.

The cumulative increase would be 15.9% over 5 years. On average Residential rate payers would pay around \$34 more each year.

This option is not financially sustainable and, based on current forecasts, Council will not have enough money in reserves to cover the existing level of operating costs within eight years. This will require council to undertake further cost cutting measures in the future, which may include a reduction in, or loss of, services and facilities.

Under this option

- Council will not have sufficient income to cover its expenditure in the future
- Our limited cash reserves will need to be used to fund day to day operations such as garbage collection
- Road and footpath maintenance
- The upkeep of sporting grounds, parks, playgrounds, beaches, and library services.

Appendix 2- Micromex telephone survey / Newcastle Voice survey

Q7: How supportive are you of this option?

SINGLE RESPONSE

Very supportive	5
Supportive	4
Somewhat supportive	3
Not very supportive	2
Not at all supportive	1
Don't know / Not sure (DO NOT READ)	0

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability and maintain services

Increase rates by 6.5% to 6.8% per year for five years, (this includes the 3 % State wide increase).

The cumulative increase would be 37.9% over 5 years. On average Residential rate payers would pay around \$81 more each year.

This increase will allow council to secure its financial future while also maintaining existing levels of service.

This option will allow Council to:

- Retain and in some cases improve existing services *without* depleting cash reserves, and
- Fund improved maintenance of infrastructure such as roads, paths, parks and buildings

Q8: How supportive are you of this option?

SINGLE RESPONSE

Very supportive	5
Supportive	4
Somewhat supportive	3
Not very supportive	2
Not at all supportive	1
Don't know / Not sure (DO NOT READ)	0

Option 3: Fund revitalisation and improve services

Increases rates by 8% per year for five years (this includes the 3% State wide increase).

The cumulative increase would be 46.9% over 5 years. On average Residential rate payers would pay around \$101 more each year.

This option will allow Council to:

- Improve current services and facilities into the future which would include
- Improved footpaths, roads, and bus shelters, modernised libraries, and the repair and restoration of Council's heritage buildings such as City Hall.

Appendix 2- Micromex telephone survey / Newcastle Voice survey

- Allow Council to *accelerate* the completion of priority projects such as the revitalisation of Hunter Street, Blackbutt Reserve, coastal projects and cycleways, as well as
- Make substantial reductions to our infrastructure maintenance backlog.

Q9: How supportive are you of this option?

SINGLE RESPONSE

Very supportive	5
Supportive	4
Somewhat supportive	3
Not very supportive	2
Not at all supportive	1
Don't know / Not sure (DO NOT READ)	0

Q10a: Please rank the three options in order of preference:

Rank (1, 2, or 3)

Option 1: Take no action

Option 2: Fund financial sustainability and maintain services

Option 3: Fund revitalisation and improve services

Q10b: What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

Q11: Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding the SRV?

The following information is used for demographic purposes only.

D1. Please stop me when I read out your age bracket: (PROMPT)

SINGLE RESPONSE

18-24	1
25-39	2
40-54	3
55-69	4
70+	5

D2. Which of the following best describes the house where you are currently living?

SINGLE RESPONSE

I/We own/are currently buying this property	1
I/We currently rent this property	2

Appendix 2- Micromex telephone survey / Newcastle Voice survey

D3. Gender by voice *SINGLE RESPONSE:* Male 1 Female 2

And finally ...

NV1: Are you a member of Newcastle Voice, which is Council's community reference panel?

Yes 1
No 2

Thank you for your time – if you have any questions please contact Natalie D'Arcy, Community Engagement Officer on [4974 2238](tel:49742238)

Appendix 3a: Weighting adjustment (Micromex telephone survey)

Response achieved			% Newcastle LGA / weight applied	Weighted sample n=
n=	%			
Location				
Ward 1	107	26.75%	25.0%	100
Ward 2	107	26.75%	25.0%	100
Ward 3	94	23.50%	25.0%	100
Ward 4	92	23.00%	25.0%	100
Gender				
Male	161	40.25%	49.0%	196
Female	239	59.75%	51.0%	204
Age				
18-24yrs	35	8.75%	16.7%	67
35-39yrs	87	21.75%	26.5%	106
40-54yrs	110	27.50%	24.3%	97
55-69yrs	108	27.00%	18.7%	75
70+yrs	60	15%	13.4%	55

Appendix 3b: Unweighted data, Micromex survey.

Please note: data included in the body of the report has been weighted to be broadly representative of the Newcastle LGA in terms of age, gender and location. Please see appendix 3a for further details

TITLE: topline_micromex telephone survey

S1: Before we start, do you or an immediate family member work for Newcastle City Council?

QUESTION TOTAL: 400
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Yes	0	0.00 %
O2	No	400	100.00 %

Q1_suburb: In which suburb do you live? Please note, if you do not live in the Newcastle council area but own property in the area, please select the suburb that you have owned property in for the longest period of time.

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Adamstown	12	3.00 %
O2	Adamstown Heights	22	5.50 %
O3	Bar Beach	4	1.00 %
O4	Beresfield	7	1.75 %
O5	Birmingham Gardens	1	0.25 %
O6	Blackhill/ Lenaghan	0	0.00 %
O7	Broadmeadow	2	0.50 %
O8	Callaghan	0	0.00 %
O9	Carrington	3	0.75 %
O10	Cooks Hill	4	1.00 %
O11	Elernmore Vale	8	2.00 %
O12	Fletcher	8	2.00 %
O13	Georgetown	9	2.25 %
O14	Hamilton	11	2.75 %
O15	Hamilton East	2	0.50 %
O16	Hamilton North	5	1.25 %
O17	Hamilton South	6	1.50 %
O18	Hexham	0	0.00 %
O19	Islington	2	0.50 %
O20	Jesmond	5	1.25 %
O21	Kooragang	0	0.00 %
O22	Kotara	6	1.50 %
O23	Lambton	18	4.50 %
O24	Maryland	25	6.25 %
O25	Maryville	4	1.00 %
O26	Mayfield	38	9.50 %
O27	Mayfield East	1	0.25 %
O28	Mayfield West	4	1.00 %
O29	Merewether	25	6.25 %
O30	Merewether Heights	13	3.25 %

O31	Minmi	0	0.00 %
O32	New Lambton	31	7.75 %
O33	New Lambton Heights	10	2.50 %
O34	Newcastle (CBD)	1	0.25 %
O35	Newcastle East	9	2.25 %
O36	Newcastle West	1	0.25 %
O37	North Lambton	5	1.25 %
O38	Rankin Park	1	0.25 %
O39	Sandgate	0	0.00 %
O40	Shortland	8	2.00 %
O41	Stockton	14	3.50 %
O42	Tarro	5	1.25 %
O43	The Hill	6	1.50 %
O44	The Junction	9	2.25 %
O45	Tighes Hill	3	0.75 %
O46	Wallsend	29	7.25 %
O47	Warabrook	11	2.75 %
O48	Waratah	9	2.25 %
O49	Waratah West	1	0.25 %
O50	Wickham	2	0.50 %
O51	Dangar	0	0.00 %
O52	I don't live in the Newcastle area and do not own property in the area	0	0.00 %

Q2_years_in_NCC: How long have you lived in the Newcastle City Council area? If you do not live in the Newcastle City Council area, please select the option that best describes how long you have owned property in the area.

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Less than a year	6	1.50 %
O2	1 - 3 years	12	3.00 %
O3	4 - 10 years	78	19.50 %
O4	11 - 25 years	133	33.25 %
O5	More than 25 years	171	42.75 %

Q3_quality_of_facilities: How satisfied are you with the quality of facilities provided by Council in the local area?

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very satisfied	61	15.25 %
O2	Satisfied	201	50.25 %
O3	Somewhat satisfied	106	26.50 %
O4	Not very satisfied	21	5.25 %
O5	Not at all satisfied	11	2.75 %

Q4_level_of_service: How satisfied are you with the level of service provided by Council in the local area?

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very satisfied	51	12.75 %
O2	Satisfied	207	51.75 %
O3	Somewhat satisfied	107	26.75 %
O4	Not very satisfied	25	6.25 %
O5	Not at all satisfied	10	2.50 %

Q5_improvement_importance: How important is it for Council to provide better services and facilities?

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very important	248	62.00 %
O2	Important	124	31.00 %
O3	Somewhat important	18	4.50 %
O4	Not very important	7	1.75 %
O5	Not at all important	3	0.75 %

Q6_awareness: Are you aware that Council is investigating a range of options to ensure financial sustainability and maintain current services, including applying to increase income from rates through a special rate variation?

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Yes	188	47.00 %
O2	No	201	50.25 %
O3	Don't know / Not sure	11	2.75 %

Q7_option_1: Option 1: Take no action Under this option, Council will not increase rates above the State restricted level of around 3%.

The cumulative increase would be 15.9% over five years. On average residential rate payers would pay around \$34 more each year.

This option is not financially sustainable and, based on current forecasts, Council will not have enough money in reserves to cover the existing level of operating costs within eight years. This will require council to undertake further cost cutting measures in the future, which may include a reduction in, or loss of, services and facilities.

Under this option

- Council will not have sufficient income to cover its expenditure in the future
- Our limited cash reserves will need to be used to fund day to day operations such as garbage collection, road and footpath maintenance and the upkeep of sporting grounds, parks, playgrounds, beaches, and library services.

How supportive are you of this option?

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very supportive	50	12.50 %
O2	Supportive	82	20.50 %
O3	Somewhat supportive	88	22.00 %
O4	Not very supportive	90	22.50 %
O5	Not at all supportive	90	22.50 %

Q8_option_2: Option 2: Fund financial sustainability and maintain services Under this option, Council proposed to increase rates by 6.5% to 6.8% per year for five years, including the 3% State wide increase.

The cumulative increase would be 37.9% over five years. On average residential rate payers would pay around \$81 more each year.

This increase will allow council to secure its financial future while also maintaining existing levels of service.

This option will allow Council to:

- retain and in some cases improve existing services without depleting cash reserves, and
- fund improved maintenance of infrastructure such as roads, paths, parks and buildings

How supportive are you of this option?

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very supportive	79	19.75 %
O2	Supportive	129	32.25 %
O3	Somewhat supportive	85	21.25 %
O4	Not very supportive	56	14.00 %
O5	Not at all supportive	51	12.75 %

Q9_option_3: Option 3: Fund revitalisation and improve services

Under this option, Council proposes to increase rates by 8% per year for five years, including the 3% State wide increase.

The cumulative increase would be 46.9% over five years. On average Residential rate payers would pay around \$101 more each year.

This option will allow Council to:

- improve current services and facilities into the future such as improved footpaths, roads, and bus shelters, modernised libraries, and the repair and restoration of Council's heritage buildings such as City Hall.
 - allow Council to accelerate the completion of priority projects such as the revitalisation of Hunter Street, Blackbutt Reserve, coastal projects and cycleways, as well as
 - make substantial reductions to our infrastructure maintenance backlog.
- How supportive are you of this option?

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very supportive	62	15.50 %
O2	Supportive	58	14.50 %
O3	Somewhat supportive	81	20.25 %
O4	Not very supportive	86	21.50 %
O5	Not at all supportive	113	28.25 %

Q10_rank_0: Option 1: Take no action (average yearly increase of \$34)

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Rank 1- most preferred option	119	29.75 %
O2	Rank 2- next most preferred option	102	25.50 %
O3	Rank 3- least preferred option	179	44.75 %

Q10_rank_1: Option 2: Fund financial sustainability and maintain services
(average yearly increase of \$81)

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Rank 1- most preferred option	200	50.00 %
O2	Rank 2- next most preferred option	188	47.00 %
O3	Rank 3- least preferred option	12	3.00 %

Q10_rank_2: Option 3: Fund revitalisation and improve services (average yearly increase of \$101)

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Rank 1- most preferred option	81	20.25 %
O2	Rank 2- next most preferred option	110	27.50 %
O3	Rank 3- least preferred option	209	52.25 %

D1_age: Almost done ... the following questions are used for demographic purposes only Please indicate your age group:

QUESTION TOTAL: 400
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	18-24	35	8.75 %
O2	25-39	87	21.75 %
O3	40-54	110	27.50 %
O4	55-69	108	27.00 %
O5	70+	60	15.00 %
O6	Prefer not to say	0	0.00 %

D2_own_or_rent: Which of the following best describes the house where you are currently living?

QUESTION TOTAL: 400
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	I/We own/are currently buying this property	332	83.00 %
O2	I/We currently rent this property	68	17.00 %

D3_gender: And are you:

QUESTION TOTAL: 400
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Male	161	40.25 %
O2	Female	239	59.75 %
O3	Prefer not to say	0	0.00 %

NV1: Are you a member of Newcastle Voice

QUESTION TOTAL: 400

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Yes	38	9.50 %
O2	No	362	90.50 %

Appendix 4a-Reasons for preferring Option 1- Take no action (Micromex telephone survey)

Council wastes money and is not there for public interest
A rate increase is not preferable.
A rate increase would be a financial burden on residents.
A special rate variation/increase is not a valid solution to current funding and cash reserve issues.
Already pay a significant amount in rates;Council could do more with staff and facilities efficiencies
An increase in the rates would adversely effect older residents.
Any rate rise is unaffordable
As a pensioner It would be difficult to pay such an increase of rates
Based on history with previous rate increases council cannot be trusted on delivering what they set out to do
Because im looking at the cost to people and is concerned the rates may continue to rise
Believe their would be other ways to cut costs instead of charging the residents more
Believes there are better ways to fix the problem
Can not afford a rate rise
Can not afford a rise in rates
Cannot afford a rate increase as the cost of living goes up each year
Cannot afford an increase in rates
Cannot afford any extra costs
Cannot afford anymore rates as they are pensioners
Can't afford a rate rise above the state restricted level
Cant afford a rise in rates
Cant afford higher rates in addition to parking costs and other existing payments to Council
Can't afford to pay any more.
Cant currently afford a rise in rates
Cost of living is high enough as it is without having to pay additional rates above the standard rate peg
Cost of living is struggle enough without additional rate rises
Cost of living is very high and cannot afford any increase
Cost to the household
Cost, does not want to pay any extra rates at all
Council are not providing any more services than they already do;Irresponsible to put Council's debt back onto the ratepayer
Council cannot be trusted to manage extra money effectively
Council has already increased rates enough and cut enough jobs
Council has enough money already and should spend it more wisely
Council needs to be more efficient in its operations rather than slogging the ratepayer.
Council needs to demonstrate what they are going to budget money on; Not financially affordable for families
Council needs to keep financial sustainability.
Council needs to manage current finances better before residents should have a rate increase
Council needs to stop spending so much money as residents pay enough as is.

Council neglects all maintenance regardless of what the communities needs are so therefore any increase in rates is a waste of residents money
Council never done much anyway and do not think it is worth an rate increase
Council should cut more costs before increasing rates
Council should get an auditor in to look at their finances, rather than pass on costs to the residents, they need to start spending their money more wisely.
Council should manage their finances better; Pay enough in rates as it is
Council should not penalise residents for poor financial management
Council spend too much money as it is on things like the bathers way, does not think we should pay higher rates when they cant manage their money properly now
Council wastes too much money and residents are not an endless pit of money, so funding needs to be sourced from elsewhere
Current situation if fine and do not want to pay more than \$50 a year extra
Does not want her rent to go up
Don' t believe the Council spends their money wisely and so residents don't want to give the Council more money
Don't feel that they should have to pay more money with their rates, expensive enough, Council should source money from elsewhere
Don't want rates to increase
Enough resources at the moment, no need for improvement
Feels council wastes a lot of money and does not want to pay extra rates
Financial constraints
Financial restraints being on the pension
Happy to contribute extra but feel Council has constantly mismanaged funds without showing improvement and Council needs a better track before community willing to pay more
I am not supportive of a rate increase.
I don't think facilities and services need to be improved
I live in Merewether and they charge too much money in rates; too many rates; how much they charge for parking is appalling; I think Council should be gone
I think the Council should move out and get other people in who know how to manage properly. Council wastes money on fig trees and lightrail and closing the rail corridor.
I think there are areas of over servicing that could be cut back. I don't think they spend the money wisely enough.
I think we are paying quite enough rates and I can't see that there would be anything that would be any benefit to us
I would love to say option three as my highest preference but unfortunately I can not afford any increases above 3%
If council budgets current income they would be able to improve the services levels
I'm a pensioner and the rate increases are very difficult for me. For example, the last increase was over \$100.
Insufficient information to make an informed decision on rate increases
Least cost to ratepayers
Limited income and don't want to support extra rates
Low income family and cannot afford rate increases
Money gained from higher rates would not be spent in any of the western suburbs
Most people cannot afford a rate rise as we already pay enough rates; Large rate increase is not affordable so not supportive to see the rates rise anymore than the standard rate
No rate rise can be sustained by those of fixed incomes
Not financially affordable for families

Not financially affordable for families
Not financially affordable for residents
Not supportive of a rate increase.
Not supportive of a rate increase.
On a fixed income and unable to pay a great deal more and at over 60 already done my bit in supporting the community
Pay enough in rates at the moment
Paying enough already on a fixed income
Pensioner on a fixed a income and cannot afford an increase
Pensioner on a fixed income and can not afford an increase
Pensioner on a fixed income and cannot afford an increase
Pensioners and retiree's can't afford a rate increase as rates are currently difficult to afford Council needs to take into consideration the aging population and the cost of rates
Pensioners cannot afford to pay any more.
People on the pension cannot afford increases. I feel like we are going backwards on the pension.
Poor management they should get their house in order before they start charging rate payers for their mistakes
Poor past investment strategies should not have to penalise the rate payer with alleged special rate increases
Prices of everything are going up and residents don't have the extra funds to cope with further rate increases
Rate increases above the 3% State Restricted level will be very difficult for pensioners to afford
Rates are already high enough and Council needs to find other ways to raise revenue
Rates are already too expensive; Council need to operate more effectively and pocket less money for themselves
Rates are expensive as is with Council not improving services and facilities in Islington
Rates are high enough as is
Rates are high enough as is
Rates are high enough now for what little we get;Not sure if Council will spend money wisely
Rates have already increased recently and therefore another increase is not preferable to me
Rates would stay at this higher level for the rest of time and I am unable to pay anymore
Refused to rank in order of preference until she finds out more information
Residents already pay enough in rates
Residents pay enough in rates Council should use revenue raised through parking fines to fund their financial sustainability
Residents pay high enough rates already
revitalisation of Newcastle
Stuggling finacially already
The cost of living is tough enough without an additional rate rise
The Council needs to live within there means, rather than ask residents for more money.
The council wastes the finances they receive now therefore they do not need anymore money to waste.
The rates are high enough as is
The rates are high enough as they are
The rates are high enough for the elderly
The tax payers shouldn't need to pay more than they already are

There are other ways to raise revenue rather than increase ratepayers rates. Seems the easy way out and Council should look at other ways to raise money. Appears to be a lot of wastage of money, for example the cutting down of the Fig trees outside the library

There are too many council projects currently under construction at the moment, if they need more money they shouldn't have started so many projects

There is poor management within Newcastle Council and rates should not be increased

There must be other ways to raise funds rather than increase rates. Living on a fixed income I wouldn't be able to pay these increases

They need to sell some of the buildings they own to raise more money instead of raising rates that people cannot afford

Too much of an increase for pensioners struggling as it is

Unable to pay more rates on a fixed income

Waste of money for services that are not required and on a set income that can afford any increase

Would be very worried about the impact a rate increase would have on Newcastle residents too many unemployed people

Appendix 4b-Reasons for preferring Option 2- Fund financial sustainability (Micromex telephone survey)

A certain amount of growth is justified in maintaining what we have; People on a tight budget will be affected more by an extra increase in Option 3
A moderate rate increase is fair considering costs are going up;Private enterprise can pay for revitalisation
Affordability for residents
Affordability; might have to sell up and move Kempsey; they are pricing me out of my area, which I love
Affordable increase which allows our services to be maintained
Agree improvements need to be made in the area, Council needs to look at other revenue streams not pass on costs to the rate payer.
Allow a moderate increase approach to make sure improvements are being done
An moderate increase in rates is needed to alleviate Council's financial problems
Because I would like to see them receive funding from State level rather than rate powers but I understand that we all need to compromise and contribute
Because the incompetence of the Council do not deserve any better unless they stop wasting money on trivial things like fig trigs, surveys on the rail line
Because this is more affordable for residents
Best for the community all round and increase isn't as high as option 3
Best for the community and financial more viable for my family
Best way to go for the future, upgrading services without paying too much
Better balance; Good for everyone
Bit more money but getting more out of Council for services over Option 1
Certain council services need improvement to become more efficient and sustainable.
Commonsense to increase rates for the demands of the populace to maintain services and facilities
Community contribution required to move forward
Cost effective option which promises to maintains the current level of service
Cost of living is going up;People have limited money in what they can spend
Council has not shown that it manages money very well
Council is going broke and they need more money
Council is inefficient when it comes to spending and need to be more wise with money. Residents understand that there needs to be a moderate increase in rates to keep up services and facilities
Council need revenue and this is a reasonable increase
Council need to look at greater efficiency before penalising residents with rate increases
Council needs money to maintain services without to high an increase and allow them fund the projects in place
Council needs more funds;Do not agree with a huge increase and taking more funds from consumers
Council needs to get the revenue from somewhere and services and facilities need to be maintained
Council needs to improve the area but don't want to see rates increase too much as it becomes to unaffordable for most people; Council needs to manage their money better and spend it in the right areas eg. maintaining and improving the roads and footpaths and not spending it on making new transport options that aren't necessary
Council requires a rate increase to maintain its services and infrastructure.
Council services require funding to improve infrastructure and this is a balanced increase in the rate to do so
Council will be able to get more done with this rate increase

Councils previous poor financial decisions keeps me from paying any more the the absolute bare minimum according to Councils alleged projections
Current levels are inadequate; This increase is acceptable
Currently a pensioner already rates are high enough
Development and improvements are always needed but within financial affordability of households
Do not want to see any more staffing cuts done to Newcastle Council
Extra funds are needed for the necessary upgrade of local infrastructure
Extra funds should be coming in for Newcastle from the port
Fair rate increase
Fairer option for Council and Citizens to maintain services without too much of an increase
Fairest increase out of all options
Fairest option for everyone especially residents on a tight budget
Fairest option with a moderate rise for the community
Fairest option with the available choices
Fianically affordable
Financial impact on myself; make Council continue to work to be more efficient
Financial position allows contribution to assist the council maintain services
Financially sustainable whilst improving local infrastructure
For lifestyle wise with a young family its the most affordable.
Give Council a fair chance of operation and growth
Good balance between doing nothing and maintaining services without paying to high an increase
Good middle-ground option
Happy medium between keeping services and rate increase
Happy to pay a little more for benefits, but option 3 is too expensive
Happy to pay a little more to see improvements
Happy to pay extra rates to fund improvements; Council is doing an excellent job as it is so option 3 is not necessary
Happy with the way things are and would like to see facilities maintained at the current level
Has a broader spectrum for rates and improved facilities without paying too mjuchh
Has a reserve next to me and the times it gets mowed and cleaned and its not maintained it is a fire hazard I have phoned council 6 times and its still not been seen too so maybe if the council had more money they could take care of things like this
Have to do something
I can afford to spend a little bit more on rates but not as much needed for option 3.
I have a few rental properties in the area, a small rate increase affects me marginally but a large rate increase starts to eat into my bottom dollar.
I know we need to do something. Reluctant to hand over more money without seeing results
I realise that we have to move with the times and things are more expensive but sometimes I think Council spends money on unnecessary things. Example - the money they spent on the road between Fernlee Loop and Scenic Hwy was excessive on the retaining wall to hold the bush back
I realise they have to have some more money to do the things they want to do but I don't like the third one as it would give them too much money and not confident they would spend it on the right things.
If rates do not rise Council will not have the funds to do what is required in the area
If rates need to be increased in order to maintain services and facilities residents would prefer to pay a moderate rate increase as opposed to a higher increase
Im a single mum who works and i cant afford high rate rises but would like to see the area maintained for my kids

Important that at a minimum our services are maintained; Affordable increase for most people
Improving service is important; More affordable
Increase is moderate and residents would be happy if services and facilities were maintained at the current level Residents feel that it is unnecessary for the projects to move as quick as proposed in option 3
Interested in improvements in the area, so seems the most balanced of options. Would want more explanation of where the money would be allocated for option 3 that's why option 2 is preferred option
It improves the community, and cant afford option 3
It is the fairest in regards to cost versus service
It is the most affordable option for working and non-working people while still providing improvements to services and facilities
It provides the best outcomes with minimal cost
It's a small increase that's not too significant and practical option
It's in the middle; \$101 is too expensive for some people - it's getting up there
It's not as expensive as the third one but it will give them enough to improve services and facilities
It's not going to deplete their cash reserves
Less of an overall increase and still maintaining services and any leftover funds can be used for special projects
Lesser cost for the community with council continuing to further cost reduction.
Like the sound of what it can do for the community
Little increase is acceptable for the community
Local services need improving;A moderate rise in rates will help with this
Lower level of rate increase to keep and maintain services
Maintenance is important and this increase is the most affordable option
Makes Newcastle better with an injection of money, a moderate increase is not too hard to manage
Middle of the road;With more money local infrastructure and services would get the face lift they deserve
Minimal impact on ratepayers whilst upgrading important infrastructure
Moderate increase over five years which makes it easier to budget for the older community
Moderate increase to contribute to the financial sustainability of the area
Moderate increase to keep the existing upheld
Moderate increase will maintain the level of services and facilities
More affordable option for most of the community
More affordable option to ensure essential operations
More financially acceptable
More money to put into New Castle infrastructure without being too expensive
More of a reasonable option
More viable for the community
Most affordable option to ensure sustainability
Most cost effective option according to what the council are promising
Most reasonable option
My money that I get at the moment; I don't have a job
Need the services in the area so need some action but is a pensioner so not able to afford higher rates
Need to have sufficient services and facilities and to do this residents need to pay a bit extra
Need to maintain financial sustainability
Need to maintain services and facilities but hard for some residents to take

Need to maintain the services
Need to maintain the services and facilities and willing to wear a slight increase, but anything above \$100 is to much for the community to absorb
Need to pay for services if we use them and don't mind the user pay system as long it is not extravagant
No one really likes change so a small change is best
Not a huge a increase in rates all at once
Not as costly on the hip pocket; Fairest option
Not as steep an increase and it helps to look after the city
Option 2 allows moderate improvement of services and infrastructure without placing a large burden on rate payers.
Option 2 has a lower rate increase whilst still maintaining services.
Option 2 includes a more gradual rate increase that puts less of a burden on rate payers.
Option 2 is a balanced option between a rate increase and the required infrastructural maintenance.
Option 2 is a balanced option between a rate increase and the required infrastructural maintenance.
Option 2 is a balanced option between a rate increase and the required infrastructural maintenance.
Option 2 is a balanced option for future development of infrastructure without being a burden on rate payers
option 2 is a financially affordable rate increase for me.
Option 2 is a financially balanced option for a rate increase in order to maintain current services and infrastructure.
Option 2 is a good middle ground; Council could make more cutbacks in addition to increasing rates to help it achieve its revitalisation goals
Option 2 is a gradual rate increase to maintain services and improve infrastructure.
Option 2 is a minimal rate increase in order to maintain current services.
Option 2 is an affordable outcome for both Council and residents Rates are high now so although option 3 would be preferable, residents most likely won't be able to afford the higher increase in rates
Option 2 is an appropriate rate increase for the services provided in the area.
Option 2 is more affordable for residents and allows council to undertake more work
Option 2 is the most preferable option Putting the rates up too high will cause issues within the community and possibly backlash from residents
Option 2 makes more sense
Option 2 will allow Council to provide maintenance and guarantee financial sustainability
Option 2's lower rate variation will financially suit me and other older residents more.
Prefer to go with the middle of the road
Prepared to help council get out of the situation they got themselves into with bad choices and redundancies
Rate increase involves paying more money
Rate increase is an affordable amount for most households
Rate increase is more doable over the cumulative period whereas \$101 is pushing too much especially if you do not have enough disposable income
Rate rises are inevitable; Rather see funds available for improvements that let everything stagnate
Rather do something than nothing but don't want to much of a jump as well already pay too much tax
Realise that something has to be done but Council has to take into consideration that young families and pensioners may struggle to afford rate rises
Reasonable amount of money for people to pay to ensure our services are maintained
Reasonable amount of money to pay to ensure our services are maintained
Reasonable community contribution to sucure financial future

Reasonable increase to enable our services to be maintained
Reasonable increase to ensure our services are maintained
Reasonable increase to ensure our services are maintained without depleting cash reserves
Reasonable rate increase and will benefit the community
Residents need for the Council to sustain services and facilities and so residents need to pay a minor increase Bigger Council members should have a cut to their earnings in order to raise more money
Residents need to contribute extra in someway; Council has performed well the last couple of years and needs extra funds to make our area grow
Residents would not support option 3 as they don't believe there should be such a high rate increase Rate increases always occur and residents don't see much of an improvement
Roads and other infrastructure desperately need improving and Council needs to find money somewhere
Seems the most moderate of options, whilst still improving the area
Seems to be more of a sustainable option that fits into my budget
Services need to be maintained but paying more than \$100 extra per year is too much to expect in current financial environment
Services need to be maintained so our area does not go backwards; Reasonable increase that most people can afford
Services should not be reduced and I this option will do that with minimal increase
Small increase is acceptable however Council should be able to manage funds more effectively
Small rise in rates is ok
Some improvements need to be made with community contribution
Special rate increase is necessary to maintain services and facilities according to my standards
Strength of the community being able to rally together to support council to maintain services
The Community is fine the way it is and we don't need to have higher rates than this option will give
The cost of option 3 cost is too high for ratepayers
The Council needs to get more money to do what they need to do
The council requires funding to maintain its services.
The economy is tight at the moment and Option 3 is too much for people; not viable
There has to be some sort of rise in the rates but I don't agree that the third one is the only way to sustain everthing
There needs to be improvement of services
There needs to be increases over time; The most people can afford
There needs to be some sustainability for the council but they need to consider the financial circumstances of all residents so this option would be better than option 3
They could do better in regards to facilities
Things need to be done and the money has to come from somewhere
Think its monetary wise and that it will benefit the community
Think there should be other ways that they can raise money besides rates however I don't want things to deteriorate
This is a affordable option for residents which would help improve services for future generations
This is financially affordable for residents
This is the fairest option for all concerned
This option will keep the wheels turning on sustainability, without the financial burden all falling on the community
This option would finanically affordable for families
This would be an affordable option for all families in the community
To get something we sometimes have to pay a bit more; not in favour of closing swimming pools

To make and see improvements im happy to pay a little more
To support council and give them some money
Too much information to go through it all properly but want services maintained without increasing rates too much
Too much information to take in during a phone survey but we need to maintain services
Understand the need to maintain services
Want to see more proposed work around the entire Newcastle area and not just CBD
We have to have sustainability and we have to have services maintained and upgraded and money is needed for this
We need improvements and we all have to pitch in; I'd pick option but not sure others are going as well as we are
We obviously need a rise but only a gradual one as not everyone can afford it
When I initially heard this option, it seemed the better of the three
Willing to pay more to see services and facilities improved
Willing to put a little more in for services but already paying too much and do not use a lot of Council services
With everybody struggling financially short term community contribution is a fair option while the council and Government sort out a better long term option
Would like Council to improve the services and facilities around the area and this option seems to cover improvements needed
Would like to see council maintain services and have the funds to do so Would also be supportive of Option 3 but with reservations

Appendix 4c-Reasons for preferring Option 3- Fund revitalisation (Micromex telephone survey)

A rate increase is necessary to provide a high quality of services and facilities
Better services and revitalisation is desperately needed
Can see the benefits of council having extra money
City needs to be revitalised as fast possible; \$101 is not a significant amount for households to pay over a period of 12 months
Council can do more with the money
Council needs to be supported for the upkeep of the LGE and rate payers should contribute effectively
Council services and infrastructure need urgent improvement.
Council services and infrastructure urgently need revitalisation.
Do need to improve and invest in all services being beneficial for the whole community
Ensure longevity of the Newcastle area
Growing demands on Local government means council needs more money to maintain and improve services and facilities
Have a great location and great City so is all for raising money to help improve it and raise its profile
Have to continue with doing things such as building cycleways which are important in a city
Have to outlay money in order for Council to have the funds to make necessary improvements
Have to support Council in order for our area to grow
Hunter Street needs to be fixed
I value the facilities and services a great deal and want to see them improved;\$101 is an acceptable amount to improve community facilities and services
I would like too see the improvements listed
If we don't raise rates the council will go into debt and I don't want to live in a area where the council is in debt
Important that Newcastle Council can operate in such manner to provide all the facilities and services required by the community
Improve services would be best and feel it is not too much per year
In a position to support a significant increase in rates to better the communities future
In favour of maximum maintenance
In favour of maximum revitalisation
Increased rates will help maintain the area to a standard that I expect
Infrastructure and services are in need of improving and upgrading
Infrastructure and services need development, revitalisation and certain services need to be re-instated (recycling options).
Infrastructure improvement such as wheel chair access makes this option more appealing
It is important to revitalise the area
It is the best option for maintaining services and facilities
It would benefit the larger community and I would like to see things improve
Its a relatively small contribution from the community to provide the best possible future and create more jobs
Lot of work to be done that needs to be brought up to scratch as so much infrastructure has been let go
Maintenance requires additional funding to preserve the local government area which I am willing to pay over 5 years

Many of these projects should be funded by the state, shouldn't be the current rate payers who have to pay for
Maximum positive impact
More money is needed by Council to put into infrastructure;Upgrading facilities could result in more attendance resulting in money being made
Need better services for future generations
Newcastle definitely needs to be improved especially the Hunter Street Mall and the inner Newcastle beaches and parks
Newcastle has more potential where more cash will ensure things get done quickly
Newcastle is on the move and improving, if it costs extra to keep this growth then happy with the rate increase, as long as they see the physical results from the rate increase and the money is not tied up in politics and not spent.
Newcastle needs more money in order for our area to grow
Newcastle needs the revitalisation as the Council has been in a very poor situation for a long time
Newcastle needs to be revitalised
Newcastle rate payers need to pay a substantial increase in rates to boost Council's ability to provide services to the area;A substantial rate increase is required to get Newcastle Council on par with other local government areas
Nice to see my local area moving forward; Will pay extra to maintain Newcastle; Boost economy in the future
Our community will have a better area, Council have acheived a wonderful job and would like to see it continue
Out of the three options, the Council needs to have the ability to build other services within our region - not good enough just to maintain services
Over the last two years residents have noticed Council making improvements and rate payers would be happy to pay the increase to see further improvements and efficiency within the Council
People should pay to help the Council improve the services and facilities and also to improve the standard of life in the area
Preferable option
Quicker and sooner we take action the better off we will be
Rates are too low in this area and feel the area could manage a increase in rates
Revitalisation across the board will be beneficial to everyone
Services and facilities need to be improved to become a modernised community
Services and infrastructure urgently need improvement.
Services need to be improved
Services urgently need improvement
Something has to be done to improve things and I like the sound of what will happen if they go ahead with option 3
Stockton especially needs improvements as I feel we are neglected
Substantial increase that everyone will benefit from
The City would benefit from the input of funds into the projects mentioned
The community would benefit long term if we can all afford the increase
The current system isn't working so I understand the need for increases
Things need to be improved
Things need to be improved so it would be good for the community
To enable Newcastle to prosper in the future
To see the Newcastle council facilities and services improved and not only maintained
Ultimately balance out the cost of living; In favour of Hunter St maintenance

Upgrading of parks and facilities would be very beneficial and would like mirror what Lake Macquarie has done to their parks and based on the minimal difference between option 2 and 3 would prefer higher level of services

Uses a wheelchair, works in town, not at all happy with the state of the footpaths and feels the more money council has to fix them up, the better

Want to see a revitalised Newcastle for my children

We haven't paid enough in rates for too long and you only get what you pay for. The government cap on rates is too restrictive.

We've got limited services at the moment so might as well have a bigger increase to fund revitalisation

When you break down the increase option three really is affordable

Will increase tourism and benefit the whole community in a flow on affect

Will provide better facilities for my children

Willing to pay the extra rate increase to improve the services and facilities for the community

Would benefit the Newcastle area better

Would like to see improved facilities and services which would benefit the younger generations

You get what you pay for

Appendix 5a: Weighting adjustment (Newcastle Voice survey)

	Response achieved		% Newcastle LGA / weight applied	Weighted sample n=
	n=	%		
Location				
Ward 1	317	37.37%	25.0%	213
Ward 2	239	28.15%	25.0%	212
Ward 3	166	19.55%	25.0%	212
Ward 4	127	14.96%	25.0%	212
Gender				
Male	437	40.25%	49.0%	196
Female	425	59.75%	51.0%	204
Age				
18-39yrs	164	19.32%	43.2%	367
40-69yrs	573	67.49%	43.0%	365
70+yrs	112	13.19%	13.8%	117

* Respondents not providing age and / or gender excluded from calculations.

Appendix 5b: Unweighted data, Newcastle Voice survey.

Please note: data included in the body of the report has been weighted to be broadly representative of the Newcastle LGA in terms of age, gender and location. Please see appendix 5a for further details

TITLE: Topline_Newcastle Voice and broad community

SRVwards:

QUESTION TOTAL: 900
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Ward 1	335	37.22 %
O2	Ward 2	252	28.00 %
O3	Ward 3	178	19.78 %
O4	Ward 4	135	15.00 %

S1: Before we start, do you or an immediate family member work for Newcastle City Council?

QUESTION TOTAL: 900
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Yes	56	6.22 %
O2	No	844	93.78 %

Q1_suburb: In which suburb do you live? Please note, if you do not live in the Newcastle council area but own property in the area, please select the suburb that you have owned property in for the longest period of time.

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Adamstown	21	2.33 %
O2	Adamstown Heights	25	2.78 %
O3	Bar Beach	8	0.89 %
O4	Beresfield	9	1.00 %
O5	Birmingham Gardens	8	0.89 %
O6	Blackhill/ Lenaghan	1	0.11 %
O7	Broadmeadow	9	1.00 %
O8	Callaghan	1	0.11 %
O9	Carrington	18	2.00 %
O10	Cooks Hill	55	6.11 %
O11	Elernmore Vale	15	1.67 %
O12	Fletcher	19	2.11 %
O13	Georgetown	7	0.78 %
O14	Hamilton	22	2.44 %
O15	Hamilton East	21	2.33 %
O16	Hamilton North	4	0.44 %
O17	Hamilton South	32	3.56 %
O18	Hexham	1	0.11 %
O19	Islington	26	2.89 %
O20	Jesmond	8	0.89 %
O21	Kooragang	0	0.00 %
O22	Kotara	23	2.56 %
O23	Lambton	30	3.33 %
O24	Maryland	13	1.44 %
O25	Maryville	18	2.00 %
O26	Mayfield	45	5.00 %
O27	Mayfield East	8	0.89 %
O28	Mayfield West	6	0.67 %
O29	Merewether	90	10.00 %
O30	Merewether Heights	15	1.67 %

O33	New Lambton Heights	11	1.22 %
O34	Newcastle (CBD)	41	4.56 %
O35	Newcastle East	23	2.56 %
O36	Newcastle West	7	0.78 %
O37	North Lambton	10	1.11 %
O38	Rankin Park	8	0.89 %
O39	Sandgate	0	0.00 %
O40	Shortland	8	0.89 %
O41	Stockton	28	3.11 %
O42	Tarro	8	0.89 %
O43	The Hill	23	2.56 %
O44	The Junction	13	1.44 %
O45	Tighes Hill	14	1.56 %
O46	Wallsend	43	4.78 %
O47	Warabrook	3	0.33 %
O48	Waratah	16	1.78 %
O49	Waratah West	6	0.67 %
O50	Wickham	12	1.33 %
O51	Dangar	0	0.00 %
O52	I don't live in the Newcastle area and do not own property in the area	0	0.00 %

Q2_years_in_NCC: How long have you lived in the Newcastle City Council area? If you do not live in the Newcastle City Council area, please select the option that best describes how long you have owned property in the area.

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Less than a year	14	1.56 %
O2	1 - 3 years	44	4.89 %
O3	4 - 10 years	184	20.44 %
O4	11 - 25 years	260	28.89 %
O5	More than 25 years	398	44.22 %

Q3_quality_of_facilities: How satisfied are you with the quality of facilities provided by Council in the local area?

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 2

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very satisfied	47	5.22 %
O2	Satisfied	305	33.89 %
O3	Somewhat satisfied	407	45.22 %
O4	Not very satisfied	103	11.44 %
O5	Not at all satisfied	36	4.00 %

Q4_level_of_service: How satisfied are you with the level of service provided by Council in the local area?

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 11

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very satisfied	38	4.22 %
O2	Satisfied	310	34.44 %
O3	Somewhat satisfied	386	42.89 %
O4	Not very satisfied	122	13.56 %
O5	Not at all satisfied	33	3.67 %

Q5_improvement_importance: How important is it for Council to provide better services and facilities?

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 2

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very important	416	46.22 %
O2	Important	324	36.00 %
O3	Somewhat important	119	13.22 %
O4	Not very important	28	3.11 %
O5	Not at all important	11	1.22 %

Q6_awareness: Are you aware that Council is investigating a range of options to ensure financial sustainability and maintain current services, including applying to increase income from rates through a special rate variation?

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Yes	771	85.67 %
O2	No	102	11.33 %
O3	Don't know / Not sure	27	3.00 %

Q7_option_1: Option 1: Take no action Under this option, Council will not increase rates above the State restricted level of around 3%. The cumulative increase would be 15.9% over five years. On average residential rate payers would pay around \$34 more each year.

This option is not financially sustainable and, based on current forecasts, Council will not have enough money in reserves to cover the existing level of operating costs within eight years. This will require council to undertake further cost cutting measures in the future, which may include a reduction in, or loss of, services and facilities.

Under this option

- Council will not have sufficient income to cover its expenditure in the future
- Our limited cash reserves will need to be used to fund day to day operations such as garbage collection, road and footpath maintenance and the upkeep of sporting grounds, parks, playgrounds, beaches, and library services.

How supportive are you of this option?

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 9

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very supportive	133	14.78 %
O2	Supportive	85	9.44 %
O3	Somewhat supportive	154	17.11 %
O4	Not very supportive	244	27.11 %
O5	Not at all supportive	275	30.56 %

Q8_option_2: Option 2: Fund financial sustainability and maintain services Under this option, Council proposed to increase rates by 6.5% to 6.8% per year for five years, including the 3% State wide increase.

The cumulative increase would be 37.9% over five years. On average residential rate payers would pay around \$81 more each year.

This increase will allow council to secure its financial future while also maintaining existing levels of service.

This option will allow Council to:

- retain and in some cases improve existing services without depleting cash reserves, and
- fund improved maintenance of infrastructure such as roads, paths, parks and buildings

How supportive are you of this option?

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 7

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very supportive	130	14.44 %
O2	Supportive	274	30.44 %
O3	Somewhat supportive	207	23.00 %
O4	Not very supportive	130	14.44 %
O5	Not at all supportive	152	16.89 %

Q9_option_3: Option 3: Fund revitalisation and improve services

Under this option, Council proposes to increase rates by 8% per year for five years, including the 3% State wide increase.

The cumulative increase would be 46.9% over five years. On average Residential rate payers would pay around \$101 more each year.

This option will allow Council to:

- improve current services and facilities into the future such as improved footpaths, roads, and bus shelters, modernised libraries, and the repair and restoration of Council's heritage buildings such as City Hall.
 - allow Council to accelerate the completion of priority projects such as the revitalisation of Hunter Street, Blackbutt Reserve, coastal projects and cycleways, as well as
 - make substantial reductions to our infrastructure maintenance backlog.
- How supportive are you of this option?

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 5

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Very supportive	193	21.44 %
O2	Supportive	124	13.78 %
O3	Somewhat supportive	120	13.33 %
O4	Not very supportive	138	15.33 %
O5	Not at all supportive	320	35.56 %

Q10_rank_0: Option 1: Take no action (average yearly increase of \$34)

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 4

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Rank 1- most preferred option	271	30.11 %
O2	Rank 2- next most preferred option	133	14.78 %
O3	Rank 3- least preferred option	492	54.67 %

Q10_rank_1: Option 2: Fund financial sustainability and maintain services
(average yearly increase of \$81)

QUESTION TOTAL: 900
NO RESPONSE: 4

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Rank 1- most preferred option	337	37.44 %
O2	Rank 2- next most preferred option	550	61.11 %
O3	Rank 3- least preferred option	9	1.00 %

Q10_rank_2: Option 3: Fund revitalisation and improve services (average yearly increase of \$101)

QUESTION TOTAL: 900
NO RESPONSE: 6

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Rank 1- most preferred option	290	32.22 %
O2	Rank 2- next most preferred option	211	23.44 %
O3	Rank 3- least preferred option	393	43.67 %

D1_age: Almost done ... the following questions are used for demographic purposes onlyPlease indicate your age group:

QUESTION TOTAL: 900
NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	18-24	9	1.00 %
O2	25-39	158	17.56 %
O3	40-54	277	30.78 %
O4	55-69	329	36.56 %
O5	70+	117	13.00 %
O6	Prefer not to say	10	1.11 %

D2_own_or_rent: Which of the following best describes the house where you are currently living?

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	I/We own/are currently buying this property	843	93.67 %
O2	I/We currently rent this property	57	6.33 %

D3_gender: And are you:

QUESTION TOTAL: 900

NO RESPONSE: 0

	OPTIONS	TOTAL	PERCENT
O1	Male	437	48.56 %
O2	Female	425	47.22 %
O3	Prefer not to say	38	4.22 %

Appendix 6a-Reasons for preferring Option 1- Take no action (Newcastle Voice survey)

A large number of people do not get enough income to support this increase
A lot of the problem is council's handling and efficiency. They should look internally to improve how the funds they have are used. All the fencing around the figs and King Edward Park are an example of waste.
All ratepayers should suffer the same rate increase. Options 2 and 3 unfairly penalise ratepayers in some suburbs. The services are the same so why not the increases? Pensioners are especially hard hit.
All the money from the port sale needs to be spent here so do not ask ordinary struggling ratepayers to keep funding corrupt developers projects. Start getting the rich to pay their fair share of tax and fund public services for their fellow citizens instead of subsidising corporate greed.
Already pay significantly above average rates for Newcastle. Council can work within budget by cutting unnecessary wastage such as "Newcastle Voice".
Any Idiot can increase fees and charges , and then they end up with more money to waste. Cut waste and live within your means. There is lot more than 10% waste at NCC
as I am on the aged pension we find it very hard to pay our rates now if they were o increase by larger amounts it would make it even harder for us
As a part time worker I cannot afford to budget for any increase in council rates over & above cpi. I don't believe that council is operating as efficiently as it can & I don't trust that additional revenue raised will be spent wisely. More time should be spent consulting with the council workforce regarding efficiency gains & improvements that can be made before asking for more money from ratepayers. In the past year a number of important community services & the staff who deliver them have been cut so as ratepayers we are already receiving less services for our current contribution than we were 12-18 months ago. I am also inclined to be sceptical of the senior management's assessment of the true financial position of the council & their doom & gloom view of the sustainability of the organisation.
as a paye employee my annual salary increase for the next three years is approximately 2%. I have to live within my means to this increase and so should council...
As a ratepayer I am sick of having to prop up activities of council by over the head rate increases due to the incompetence of both councillors, management and staff.
As a ratepayer who pays \$1600 per annum I find it incredible to believe that Council considers a 50% increase on this current rated level to \$2400 per annum or nearly \$50 per week appropriate. This would place a significant financial impost on myself and my family at a time when other services and utilities are becoming increasingly unaffordable with significant increase in power, gas etc. raising the cost of living to an unsustainable level. With my salary not even increasing in line with CPI, any increase n costs beyond that means a drop in real living standards. I'm unable to get an increase in income so why should council? Council must learn to live within its means, as all of us have to.
As an age pensioner I would find a rate rise VERY difficult.

as our current rates are extremley high now. Soon people will not be able to own the home due to the cost of rates. Council has wasted a lot of rate payers money on things like fig tree studes. Council needs to get smarter with how funds are used. why do we currently pay higher rates then some of our neighbouring suburbs.We don't get anything more infact if anything we get less. Over the yrs buses have been cut from our area. Secondly the cost of my bus ticket is the same as a person boarding the train at Swansea . If i go to Blackbut I pay for parking. When I head into town I pay for parking. Over the yrs my rates have increased yet I have not seen the increase of facilities if anything i have seen a decrease.

Because Council FAILS to collect my garbage on time each week so why would I want to pay more and get nothing better . Council does not spend my money wisely .

Because council should prove that they are capable of being able to plan and work within a budget before they ask for more money.

Because council waste money and I don't trust them to do the right thing with money as it is a bureaucracy.

Because council wastes a lot of money and increasing rates will just give them more money to waste.

Because council wastes money / tenders are never competitive / workers take too long to complete a task

Because Council will in time abuse any increase. Council must decide its priorities more carefully and raise funds to as required and write off debts over reasonable time say 25 years.

because I AM A SINGLE PENSIONER AND cannot AFFORD any increases or I will go out baackwards

Because I believe Council could manage money and services better..eg reduce upper level admin staff and salary perks such as cars, keep frontline people who do an excellent job like our previous cleaner at Stockton beach,(dismissed I believe cos of personality issues with his boss). Dont waste money over issues like cutting down the trees in Civic park (and then expect us ratepayers to compensate for foolish decisions and depleted coffers)

Because I believe council to be extremely inefficient with plenty of areas to save money without cutting services.

Because I believe there are redundant positions and corruption within council that needs to be cleared first that would save money. Council staff for example also do not need taxpayer/rates funded motor vehicles provided to them.

Because I don't believe the council is in such a dire financial position.
The Mayor and local members have proved to be dishonest.

Because i see wastage. A friend of mine had new trees planted outside every house in their street - what a waste of money, time and wages. They weren't even consulted - the street owner occupied and beautiful street. This just one example.

Because it costs us less

Because it is council responsibility to manage is budget responsibly. We live in a suburb with high levels of disadvantage and people cannot afford rate increases. Your questions are unfairly loaded towards increasing rates.

Because it is the managers of this council that got us into this mess and it should be them paying to get us out.

Because last time NCC request a special rate variation, the promised art gallery never eventuated. I simply don't support Council's priorities. For example, why are we paying over \$1 million to connect an ANZAC walkway devised by a group of rich businessmen and a corrupt State Member.

Because many people can't afford more increases and because council presumably still has the money raised by the previous special rate increase to fund the expanded gallery. I haven't received a refund, so council must still have it! I'm against any further increases until that money has been used as intended and council proves it can be trusted.

Because NCC are unable to demonstrate their ability to manage the money given to them by the ratepayer now, why should we give them more money to mis-manage!

Because Nuatali Nelmes and Labour will blow it anyway!

because our rates have been mismanaged and wasted for years,and I am not paying you people more of my hard earned cash to waste.

Because the council services have been cut in the past years: what happened to those "savings"?? - it is not up to rate payers to provide council shortfall/mismanagement of funds
Because the council wastes money in high wages to some employees for example the general manager's wage. Wasting money on changing the road to one way from Dixon beach to Merryweather beach and now waisting our money on One way of Shortland Esplanede?. These are some of the my reasons.,
Because the last IPART increase was meant to fund a shovel ready Art Gallery redevelopment. This was shelved because of the action of some councilors including the Mayor, and hard to come by funding from the federal government was sent back. The same mayor who has left Council in a shambles with costly bi elections up and down the coast. While the hand picked by McCloy GM is still running the show I have no faith in this current administration.
Because there is still a lot of waste within the NCC which should be eliminated before the NCC asks for additional increases.
because they only take action on merewethers problems
Because you asked for a special rate variation in 2012 for a variety of projects. If the budget wasn't sustainable, this money should have been used to balance the budget. Every year we get told about a plan to make finances sustainable and yet they never are. How can we believe that this plan will be sufficient? Why should we trust you won't ask for greater increases once these ones are approved? Council has not demonstrated it spends it's money well enough to ask for more, (compared with other much leaner councils in much better fiscal positions eg lmcc). I just don't trust you to spend it wisely
Because you need to do what we do - live within our means. It is NOT a 'take no action' option, as you put it. It is very much a 'take action' option. The option is to stop wasting money and start using it for what it should be used for - services. There are probably 50,000 household managers in this area who could do a better job of it, mainly by setting a budget and then working from there, rather than spending money and then trying to find it. Simple really. If we all have to do it, why shouldn't you? That's what you need to hear. Cheers.
Before trying to increase rates again, Council needs to stop spending on frivolous projects (such as making Shortland Esplanade one way). Concentrate on important stuff (rubbish & roads). We can do without new swing sets and playgrounds for a while!
Cannot afford rate rises every year
can't afford any increase in rates
Can't afford others. I pay higher rates than other ratepayers in million dollar homes in the suburbs. Equal treatment = equal rates
Can't understand why council reserves are so low despite vast increases in rates over recent years. Better budget management might solve some problems ie Don't provide enhancement funding if the budget is unable to cover basic services.
Cheaper
Cheaper for me
Cheapest rate increase- they are high enough already
Cost of living is exorbitant, we are stretched financially as i'm sure many many other families are across the local government area, a rise in rates is an added expense.
Cost of living is high already. There should be other ways of reducing costs. I am also unhappy with water pressure in lambton. I belive there are leaks of water supply underground which is never fixes. In dickson street council has been bandaiding a leak on the road a number of times but noy fixing it properly. Shorely this costs more in the long run. Number of man standing around while the mashinery is operated to dig etc. I wouldlije to see what themoney would be spent on. What would the increases pay for in apacific terms?
Costs could be cut other ways
Council can still do more to. Cut costs
Council can still save on the abnormal yearly salary increases which over past years (according to the papers) have increased by over 5 %. That is well above the CPI by which I have to Budget. High salary's paid are the source of your problems.
Council collects rates of \$1700pa odd from me. If this isn't enough we need a new council

Council does not seem to listen to locals but employs "experts" to suggest things which then turn out to have been a waste of money eg Bogey Hole
Council expenditure waste, e.g. the money wasted on the Dixon Park/ Merewether beach car park, walkway and road changes.
Council has a history of misusing rate payers money. There is no guarantee that if we kick the can for further funding, anything will change.
council has a poor track record of managing money
Council has already taken action - need time for the process and plans to show some impact - reconsider in 12 months when there is a true outcome of what has been done already
Council has eroded the city's finances through its own poor financial management and decision making. The solution is to find alternatives to raising the council's bottom line other than the lazy option of slugging rate payers with increased rates!
council has plenty of money in reserves and if they were to get more money from the rates it would not guarantee it would be put back into each suburb equally as the money is collected. Council treats suburbs differently in the services they provide to them so why should we be charged extra for it to be spent somewhere else. eg roads in Hamilton South and Merewether get completely re-tarred nice and smooth and Streets in Stockton get Sealed with rough noisy pebble cret. Double Standards
Council has sufficient funds and current rates are higher than adjoining LGA's. The supposed shortfall is caused by creative accounting and over inflating the depreciation costs.
Council has wasted rate payers monies over the past five years. Not entitled to any increases for at least next five years. Art Galley is an example.
Council is wasting money. If we had a safe cycle pushbike path system 20 years ago then we wouldn't have all the costly problems that car culture creates. In fill the populated areas and stop urban sprawl is the solution to obesity epidemic, council roads feeding endless urban sprawl, etc. Goto bikelovecorral.blogspot.com for more info
Council keep contracting out services to save money but then want more money from ratepayers to cover losses from poor decisions.
Council must become more efficient, less wasteful and more accountable.
Council needs major staff cut backs all services should be offered to business to service provide their city. this would be a better price point and be more inclusive. Council is untrustworthy and its general manager holds clandestine behavior in high regard
Council needs to better manage the money from the sale of the port and use it and other incomes, including our rates to fix our roads and sport and recreation areas. National Park and its surrounds are a disgrace to its name. People pay a Million \$ to live in this area give them what they paid for!
Council needs to change how it spends money. Needs to be more efficient.
Council needs to get back to basic services and operate with financial responsibility within its actual financial resources. Rate payers cannot continue to be seen as a cash cow to prop up incompetent management and provision of non core activities. It must also look beyond the CBD and attend to urgent issues in many of the suburbs.
Council needs to learn to live within its budget and not continually fleece the ratepayer every time it has not acted with financial responsibility.
Council needs to listen more to the local people
Council raises enough money through rates to fund projects. Money is wasted doing things that shouldn't be done.
Council rates are becoming prohibitively expensive. Council appears to waste money. Council workers standing around in groups not working
Council receives enough money to do most of their planned tasks. Many house owners can't afford higher rates. It's one of the reasons people are losing their homes. I'm referring to people who own their homes, not the ones who have a mortgage. Council wants us to believe they don't have enough money. If so, they are not managing it properly.

Council says that we will go backwards if we don't increase rates at a level greater than inflation. They need to advise in an easily understood way what the true state of affairs is. Not just state that we are in a state of emergency without backing this up, other than by reports put together by people picked by council. If they want my support and approval they need to provide the evidence. They manage to find money to fight legal challenges fund redundancies chop down trees etc. How about the \$10 million dollars that was miraculously found in the accounts ? So what is the true state of affairs ????

Council should be able to fund the services with the money we already provide.
Have a good look at waste by council, could be a saving there!

Council should be able to live within its means and budget accordingly. Everyone else has to do this. Perhaps there should be more user pay - eg Art Gallery which is not greatly patronised but is free yet the majority of the public has to pay to go to other Council amenities, eg swimming pools, etc

Council should demonstrate that it will match any rate increase with a similar cost reduction in operations. There is duplication of services and resources between Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Port Stephens and Cessnock Councils. Amalgamation between these councils would deliver substantial savings for all. Many residents are already struggling with rising living costs. Should Newcastle Council adopt option 2 or 3 before committing to matching internal costs it would be seen as cavalier and impudent.

Council should live within its means

council should lobby the state govt to recompense them for state functions devolved to councils. This would reduce NCC's expenditure. Similar approved rate rises in other LGA's have not markedly improved their finances.

Council should look at alternatives to SAVE money

council should look at more options, rates already high enough

council should provide services without increase above inflation

Council should prune its administration expenses.

Council should stop pandering to the minority of clients and focus on the majority. Too much money is wasted on things that do not concern the majority of ratepayers

Council still needs to get the house in order. I still see more vehicle travelling than parked on the job performing tasks.

Council wastes money giving more just creates more waste. Need to spend what you have wisely before asking for more. Millions wasted on fgs is prime example.

Council wastes more than \$100 million per year compared with best practice industries. Newcastle people from manufacturing and service industries are used to operating with lower income but councils are not. Councillors generally have no experience in corporate governance so GMs and their senior staff need to stomp up and make changes. Lower staff by natural attrition, not redundancies, stop silly programs like traffic calming and building silly and dangerous white islands projecting into our streets, use a universal accounting and facilities information system Statewide, rather than different systems in each council, help people build things rather than putting roadblocks in the way of property development applications, STOP HAVING SO MANY USELESS MEETINGS! work the priorities identified by resident surveys, NOT readjust priorities set by narrow-focussed elected councillors, especially the radical dreamers. Resume publishing simplified budget details, rounded to thousands to stop confusing financially and mathematically incapable councillors. Reduce by natural attrition until you get employment levels below 500. Stand up at meetings to make them finish quicker. Don't have meetings if you already know the answer. Use Skype to save time in meetings. STOP PUSH-POLLING RANDOM RESIDENTS IN SURVEYS SUCH AS THESE THEY PRODUCE SKEWED RESULTS THAT ARE STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT. REPLY TO ME JOHN HESLOP 0412873888 and EMAIL ME on HESLOP@TPG.COM.AU to confirm you are really interested in detailed feedback.. If I don't hear back within a week I propose an op-ed piece in the Herald to oppose rate increases

Councils are grossly inefficient control costs

cut costs by paying underqualified staff less than the salaries they get now..especially at the top. redundancies.

despite recent cost cutting the council is still inefficient and should further reduce staffing numbers and duplicated services

Does so much extensive "renewal" of infrastructure need to be done? It comes down to necessity which involves priorities and needs. More can always be done but is it really needed. Seeing the new beach path in all its glory done over two or three years I wonder whether it was all required and if it was all needed so quickly. Could it have been done a bit more slowly so as to spread the expenditure over more years?

My feeling is that the council is spending more and more all the time and the special rate increases already granted a few years ago weren't enough. If the council wants to spend even more then it may have to ask for even more special rate increases. We might like to get world class beach paths and furniture but if we have to pay extra for them I for one would probably put it off. It seems the council is overextending itself and overspending on "luxury" items which it can't afford. When I read "services" I would probably prefer to think of roads, sewerage, stormwater, garbage and recycling and make sure these are covered before starting to spend what can't be afforded.

I guess it comes down to surveys of ratepayers where special important and expensive developments/renewals could be proposed by the council on a special basis.

Don't want rates to increase at all if possible

Far too much money can be saved from non core responsibilities first or pay per use increase to art gallery etc

Focus on heritage restoration is hardly well thought out the revitalisation strategy is short sighted and marginal. The truth is it appears to focus mainly on employee amenities

how much more money do you want. tell the government to take a pay cut and live off what we earn. it is hard enough to meet the bills now without putting the prices up any more. and this goes for all bills.

I am a rate payer, there are plenty of persons who do not pay rates who get the benefits of council, why do you not have a fund for donations to invest in our wonderful town ? A help our city fund.

I am also a business property owner and their rates are far more than average residential. I also dont trust council as I remember last time you asked for above limit increase to do special projects and then didnt do them. so NO!!!

I am sick of council wasting our rates . Learn to be like a private sector business - work within your means. I pay extremely high rates in comparison to the whole newcastle population and don't see any benefit. If you have more you spend more. The amount of council workers and trucks that " hide" in blackbutt, fort scratchley etc every morning to avoid work is ridiculous . If you added the wages wasted and put that towards your cost savings I wouldn't have to fund incompetences. This is only one example.

I am sure council can manage the accounts better than they have. Rates already increase by 3/ each year, should be enough.

I am unfamiliar with how rates are calculated and have heard negative sentiment from home owners toward rate increases.

I believe council should take more action to reduce costs rather than increase rates. In particular, staff numbers and costs should be reduced in areas other than community services.

I believe council are top heavy and waste money on junkets

I believe Council has not managed it's funds very well and throwing more money it's way will not change the outcome.

I believe it's more a case of council ineptitude rather than lack of funds that's led to budgetary problems.

I believe that our rates have been increasing annually consistently for years with no extra service benefits. As a single person on one income I am finding the quarterly rates are becoming harder and harder to find as do my pensioner parents. I don't see why ratepayers should have to compensate the legacy of a badly run council from previous years. I also think that rates should be pro rata based on need and use of services. I would prefer to have my waste bin picked up fortnightly and other bins monthly as I use very little garbage but I have no choice. Council generate a lot of revenue from parking meters which have gone up per hour AND the new meters allow council to pocket un-used money from the previous motorist who leaves before the meter expires, then council pockets more money from the next motorist. Surely these daily windfalls (as well as other infringement fines) can well compensate council shortcomings instead of fleecing ratepayers once again with a rate rise. I get irate when I see that money is wasted on unnecessary works such as perfectly good community halls being pulled down and replaced with new ones without community consultation. Some of these projects could have been satisfied as a renovation or repair as with the Bathers Way Walk complete rip up, when an upgrade would have been sufficient. Granted, it all looks lovely but at what cost? It would just be nice to see council funds utilised responsibly and with consultation with the community. I think the community has lost faith in Council and it's Councillors working for the people especially when a clear message has been sent that says 'it doesn't matter what you think, we will do what we want anyway', examples such as the Laman Street trees and now the railway line. So I have little faith that these surveys will make any difference to Council's decision on the rate rise and Council will do whatever it wants anyway. I believe that this survey is Council being seen to care about Community opinion for good PR.

I believe that the council is currently running some services that are not core business. Also it doesn't wash with me that the a full range of cost cutting measures had been investigated- a council that can spend so much money on not cutting down fig trees is not to be trusted.

I believe that the issue is revenue from State Government, and the lack of revenue from other sources such as the Port of Newcastle. The huge quantity of exports out of the port is in no way reflected in City revenue.

Also there are many services that should be funded by the State Government before raising rates beyond CPT.

I can't afford high rate increases

I do not believe that the current council is using funds wisely. The current Ipart increase has not been used correctly so I'd doubt the next one would be. Why has the Newcastle Art Gallery redevelopment not gone ahead? Why was there such strong focus on Hunter Street?

I do not have faith in Council to deliver in an efficient way

I do not see why the ratepayers should have to make the shortfall due to mismanagement and squandering of ratepayers money...
EG: Brett Whitley eyesore (Costing \$1m)
Fig Tree Fiasco " m's
along with other bad ideas and blunders.extra fees being charged for improving drainage around city since Pashsa Bulka weekend.....have not seen any changes to any drainage but have seen it on my rate notice

I do not trust that the council will spend an increase in funding wisely.

I do. It prefer ANY of these.

The construct if the survey is such that a result will be held to be bald when in fact it is totally discredited as is the General Manager and the now gone but disgraced former Lord Mayor..

I don't agree where council directs the money it receives eg one example it maintains a high level of spending on upkeep on No 1 & No 2 Sportsgrounds and Townsen Ovals at the expense of other parks and playgrounds in the area. The remaining National Park is a disgrace and needs money spent there to upgrade the grounds and surrounds perhaps a subsidy of entry to swimming pools could be considered. I have only mentioned the parks area there space permitting. Council should also look at work practices at the depot and garbage pickup etc maybe contractors should be considered. So I think council needs to improve where and how it spends money before applying for a rate increase above the normal.

I don't particularly....

But you have given only limited options without the possibility of further discussion of other methods of financial savings and money making options for the council.

I feel NCC has been continually wasting finances with by not doing repairs properly in the first place. EG; footpath in front of my property has been replaced twice over last 5/6 years, needs replacing again due to the ridiculous tree planting many years ago with the roots breaking and lifting the concrete. Do the job ONCE, DO IT PROPERLY!

THIS IS ONE EXAMPLE, NOT JUST STOCKTON, ALL OVER THE CITY! Maintenance on various jobs, patch up work, not done properly in the first place.

Good example, money wasted on the development on Corroba Sports Fields. built a storage shed for over \$200, 000, could have built a big home for that. Don't believe NCC get BEST pricing on contract work.

I feel that a rate hike penalises new people to the council area, and that wise management of funds and resources, including human resources, could work to keep the current levels of services.

I feel that the Council has grossly wasted rate payers money and all those wasted funds need to be repaid by those who wasted the money. Unnecessary legal expenses, unnecessary surveys all of which have been a negative outcome. Gross wage increases to themselves e.g.councillors and Lord Mayors. Unnecessary travel expenses all of which have depleted the City Reserves.

I have attended Council public briefings recommending rate increases over the last many years only to see next year the recommendations did not achieve the expected outcomes. Council must live within its means and I do not recommend going into reserves which should be earning income. Council should stop digging up good roads just because a standard changes etc. maybe look at putting out the garbage service to contractors, stop thinking about art gallery \$7m, become good at achieving grants, stop crating liabilities etc.

I have lived in the same street for 18yrs, except for some patching up it is exactly the same

I have not seen any thing done by council since I came to Wallsend 15 years ago

I pay over \$2700 per annum in council rates and for the services that council provides I think this is more than enough. I don't see why rate payers should continue to pay for the council's mismanagement over the past 20 + years.

I personally feel that if Newcastle council stopped wasting money we would be far better off Newcastle is dead the council has created this problem the Parking Meters deter people from the city the Lamem Street Fig Trees how much did that cost the Rate payers The Veteran Silhouette that are in the process rusty pieces of metal do not serve what our ancestors fought for I'm sure they would feel likewise minded this funding could be more utilised in the area Council Junkets oversea trips and functions are not required put our Rates back into the Community why have we not looked at moving the Cruise liners into port on the town side the \$\$\$ bought into newcastle would more than assist in fundings what must people think when they cruise into Newcastle Harbour to be dumped in Carrington than Bussed back into Newcastle what a let down of our city the Newcastle Rail Line forced closure on Boxing Day how gullible do you think we are What about the Stockton people extra costs in possible relocation of ferry terminal for rail commuters Gladys announces a bus system with a light rail system to be built in 2 years in 2 years time the goverment will announce the busees have been such a success we don't need a rail system Newcastle as a city what is there that is left its too expensive to shop there thanks to parking meters businesses have closed as no patronage the only thing that is left is the beach how do surfers carry their boards on buses it is about time the council pulls it head out of its rear end and start looking serious about what it can do for the ratepayer not at ways to take more \$\$ from the workers we have seen your Parking Police now targeting residential addresses for Parking on Front lawns who maintains these not council but the ratepayer homeowner parking enforcement was to control the flow of traffic it has the actual reverse situation in my street as cars have to allow other to pass befor either entering or leaving council regulates road widths in residential new areas but don't allow widths to take 4 vehicle widths to allow for parked vehicles plus the non interruption of flow of traffic in the street in both directions what we have paid for in fines in our street alone makes up for what council wants to increase our rate levy by !!1

I prefer Option 1 because the current rating structure (involving the maximum 50% base rate) is socially inequitable, and rate rises will hit those least able to afford it. If the rating structure had a greater ad valorem component, I would be quite happy with commensurate rate rises.

I prefer option 4 - start sacking people. Start from the top, and keep going until the required savings are achieved. I'm still furious about the figs, some of this deficit is about that, the final result was unsatisfactory, and it's mostly the fault of senior administrators. They're an ignorant, arrogant lot who need to be replaced by people who might actually care for this city.

I previously supported the last rate rise. It was supposed to fund a list of special projects. This week the media revealed that money had been used to pay down debt.

I find it very frustrating that council is asking for more money when it has not delivered on what it promised in the last extra rate rise. Yet council is still sending delegations overseas for 'fact finding'.

That is appalling cost management and shows council has a very poor understanding of what is important to residents. I have lost a lot of faith in council's financial management.

I really don't think we have seen the benefits of the last add-on rate rise. We all have to live within our means and when residents might be lucky to get a pay rise of the inflation amount, or in some cases even less or none, then it is beholden on the Council and other utilities to likewise make do.

Also the reasoning is a bit contradictory. For Option 2 it states it is needed to maintain roads, footpaths etc. Yet for Option 1 it states "Our limited cash reserves will need to be used to fund day to day operations such as garbage collection, road and footpath maintenance and the upkeep of sporting grounds, parks, playgrounds, beaches, and library services."

The Council could have saved itself money, eg the unnecessary speed bumps down King Street. Also the extensive realignment, widening and relaying of the footpath between Durham and Tyrone Roads, along Howe Street, Lambton. This now provides for a bike lane, however there was an ample wide lane space on Howe Street that made this unnecessary. We are never given the evidence for such decisions.

I see ample evidence of Council spending money on low priority items before high priority items. If this was remedied perhaps there would be sufficient funds.

I struggle now to pay my rates. The old age pension doesn't go far.

I think council needs to restructure in a similar way Maitland Council has. Although they have a special rate variation, the restructure has seen an improvement in cost savings as well as giving improved services to their LGA and to their frontline staff.

I think that Newcastle is growing organically quite nicely already. Savings could be made through managerial salaries, supporting existing assets such as retaining the rail line, reducing household garbage collection etc.

I think the Council should find another way to manage and sustain their delivery of services. Selling off assets and increasing rates impacts everyone in the community, particularly those in lower income households or otherwise marginalised groups who face particular challenges in participating in genuine consultation and shaping the future of this city.

I think there are other ways to increase funding without further impacting the citizens. There are developers falling over themselves to develop in the Newcastle City council area. By increasing their contributions in line with those charged by Lake Macquarie council you will have more than ample to fund the services for the people. The better the services for the people the more that developers can charge for their finished developments in sales and rents. Leave the residents alone!

I think they will be wasting our money, they don't know how to spend it properly.

I work part time and we currently struggle to meet all of our financial commitments. I recently received a tax increase and have not had a pay increase for 18 months and have been told any future pay increases will not meet CPI. So, any financial increase means we are closer to selling our house and moving to another area.

I would like to see the source of calculations regarding Council's financial security etc before supporting any rate rise

I would prefer the council look to operate more efficiently before increasing rates. For example reviewing generous staff employment conditions and align more with private employment conditions. Employees need to provide a higher level of customer service to local community.

Hold volunteer work days for local community members to assist with works/improvements. ask for skilled trades people to assist.

Review the current budget and spend money more effectively.

I would question the amount of revenue that is being raised through parking fines and other spurious activities and wonder why Council is not able to access other sources of money from say State govt. to fund its caretaker roles. It seems to me that it is also the ratepayer footing the bill.

I'd rather see cuts to non-essential services like the Anzac walk and coastal walk.

In 2012 Newcastle City Council received a rate increase of 5% to do 9 projects over 10 years. This is not happening and now you want more. If you had kept faith with the community and done those projects, particularly the art gallery, I might have had more faith in you this time. In your statement you say you have reduced the deficit by \$10 million, this is appalling when you consider there was an \$8 million plus error in the budget in your favor and you apparently used the \$6 million in reserves for the art gallery to pay down your debt. This is \$15 mill without the savings made by sacking 90 staff and the proceeds from selling off or leasing out Council property. This would suggest you are not good managers why would I want to give you more of my hard earned dollars.

In order to sustain revitalisation community must work with the government to cover costs

in the hope that council can manage at this level by not including in their works things that are not necessary

Introduce more efficiency within council. Cannot easily get anyone to talk to me and address issues. Very non rate payer responsive. So why pay more rates? For what!!!!

It has to become more efficient and cut wastage in people and resources .not see rate payers as a bottomless piggybank. Also get out of facilities it has no Buisness in such as child care that's subsidized.

It is cheaper

It is not that I prefer to erode cash reserve, just that I do not support continual rate increases. Why is it that Newcastle Council is in such a bad position? How do other councils manage without special rate increases? Surely there are other options than just increase rates.

It isn't the residents fault that we should have a rate rise, it's that simple. I don't understand why there have been so many rate rises? Inflation cannot effect things that much so what are the council doing? - Pointing to other councils and their higher rate rises doesn't serve as an excuse either- yes I do watch council meetings so I hear what is said...and you just don't get we don't like rate rises...it makes us angry!

its cheaper

Its tough times for everyone and council would be selfish to opt for the quick fix. Time to face the challenges as every household and business has been forced to face and weed out inefficient practices.

Just as householders have to live within their means so should council. NCC should review all contracts of executives (eg Gen Mgr)who have obscenely and unrealistically high termination clauses which are, more often than not, exercised, and cripple Council's finances. Why, oh why does council allow this to happen. Also, Council's investments should be more closely monitored by more than one financial expert to ensure they are not high risk as in the past.

Last time the newcastle cc applied for the IPART it had a list of things to do - i.e. the art gallery. Very few of these things occurred and there have been drastic cuts to staff etc. I frankly do not think the NCC deserves any more money

Least impact on me

less cost

Less costs to ratepayers

Less waste, better money housekeeping, less top brass office.
Live on fixed income: disability pension. The huge rises in utility bills and other basics have left no discretionary spending money and I worry that I will not be able to pay my bills.
Live within your means
look at 2006
Minimum rise in rates preferred. Electricity prices have skyrocketed in last few years. Gas prices are about to rise, costing up to an extra \$400/year. Who can afford a bigger local tax bill?
Money wasted.....Art Gallery etc.
most people are struggling financially. everything costs more however wage increase do not reflect this. There is also a perception that council is not particularly efficient in how they utilise there revenue. Council should consider other means of generating revenue. A pet tax would be a good start.
My income is decreasing. Option 1 provides rate increase in line with cpi. Council should make further efficiency gains. Start at the top level of management. I can't afford the higher rate increases.
N/A
NCC is top heavy with high levels of inefficiency,ie Bar Beach Ave 'progress'. Disgraceful example of NCC engineers ability.
Newcastle council has proven time and time over it is incapable of delivering on its promises. We are still waiting for the art gallery upgrade which was promised in the last rate rise proposal.
Newcastle council wasted millions of \$ over the FIG TREES the indecision by council coat Money why do the community have to suffer for that.
Not enough has been done to eliminate positions and staff who are not performing. Some areas have not been restructured fully and it is top heavy still particularly in the administration areas.
Obviously a cheaper option. I also don't like the fact that because you are a home owner, home owners get to bear a brunt of significant rises in an area of cost of living to improve the city for all. I think the council can get more creative other than giving home owners a forced choice in this matter.
Only options really being presented is to either do nothing or increase rates. Other options such as improved efficiency in the delivery of council services are not considered on the basis of we have done that already but the review has not been externally reviewed. Other considerations such as merger with Lake Macquarie not considered
Other Taxes Have Diminished Finances. Utilities Have Also Impacted.
Our rates are high enough now and we don't need an increase. There are other ways to raise money like sell or rent property and facilities and confiscate and sell property from noisy residents!
pensioner
Pensioner just do not have the money for all these charges ..Rates Parking permits anything they want to do is Pay pay pay. Give something back to the community like I have suggested many times. Coupon books for Maybe the tram in Newcastle 1 free ride for 2 people. That can lead to more people using this...put it out there for different things. But it seems to fall on DEAF EARS
Perhaps you could try removing some of the dead wood in the Council. It seems to me to be top heavy
Present method of collecti9ni rates is unfair . Support ad valorem as fairer system
Ratepayer affordability is a big issue. There needs to be a rationalisation of council owned property, especially those not producing an income. Sell off all that is surplus or not being used sufficiently. Concentrate on bread and butter issues roads, rubbish parks leave welfare to other levels of government. Look to cost recovery on more services and further prune non performing staff.
rates are expensive already
rates are limited for a good reason. council has already reneged on its financial committment to the local community (swimming pools are overpriced and now cannot be revoked due to outsourcing, regular household collections have been suspended). After reading previous council minutes i believe we are being given limited information regarding the financial situation.
Rates are not being spent on the real community needs. Council is ignoring real community concerns.
Rates are too high as it is
rates should not need to increase above 3 percent. council needs to manage costs like all other businesses. trim the fat spend money wisely.

Review operating expenses which you have already done but business must continually review expenses as they can not increase prices to cover inefficient practices
Sick and tired of Council whingeing they never have enough money to even provide basic services. I have seen over many decades great monetary waste and lazy work practices, and I don't want to pay more now for these past issues. Do what us householders have to do, live within your budget.
State government must provide more funding as they have taken over development control. Council should only be required for maintenance services .
Stick to basic services and get rid of things that are not important to the majority of ratepayers
stop council mismanagement
Stop wasting our money eg if a pool is costing us too much ,shut it down and see=ll the land
The basic services that you have indicated funding would be used for is all I require. I have no interest in revitalisation of anything if it cannot be afforded. I would also question as to whether the current funding for library services is required. How many people in the local government area use a library these days? It would seem to me to be a minority. I haven't set foot in a library in about 20 years. I also believe it is the fault of a council for poor management of funds, so why should ratepayers pay the penalty in the household budgets, in this climate of rising costs, for the mistakes of an incompetent council? Council needs to continue to find cost cutting measures to assist its customers (I.E the ratepayers to whom they service)
The cost of living is high and getting higher. We need restraint in spending and to live within our means. The increases above state limits will impact those who can least afford it the most. Please consider those who have the least.
the cost of living now on the family budget is so great that our family is now caving in under the pressure another add cost will be a terrible burden and a struggle to pay
The council has commercial assets that are not required,ie, shops and office areas and general buildings not utilised or sitting idle.
The council has not done enough to improve the suburbs. A waste of time & effort on planting trees, expanding a gallery (that you may only visit once in a life time) & not spending money on priority projects. Such as the west end, cbd & infrastructure planning. Need a council that can really work for the suburbs & not just city central.
The council has plenty of scope to reduce spending before it increases rates. This is particularly true for public works improvements where the council engages in largesse for purely political show, such the \$1.5 million wasted on connecting up the "cliff walk". The council also has very arrogant staff who think they can get away with anything then cost the council in legal expenses. It could also push harder in industrial bargaining since Newcastle has very little job availability at the moment. Increasing rates will drive away potential residents.
The Council has wasted money on cross walks, kerbs and irrelevant signage. Why give the Council more money to waste on roads?
The council hasn't managed its funds and that is what needs adjusting rather than increasing rates. After they sold the pools all the people who bought admission vouchers in books have paid for admission to the pool but are not able to use the vouchers--again the council doesn't manage its funds. they have already ripped off rate payers through such ways and they need to look into where they have been wasteful rather than increasing rates to cover their own mistakes.
The council is bloated. Instead of looking at charging residents more, they should streamline their operations - only then look at increasing rates. Many private companies have to live within their means, council should do the same. Council should make sure bins are collected, parks/roads maintained etc - they should cut all of their costly operations that are not a part of their core purpose to get back in the black.
The council is in this mess due to inaction and should not burden the taxpayer due to mismanagement
The council need to become more efficient and this option may force efficiency to take place.
The council needs to adjust its expenditure to reflect its income. If this means cutting expenses and reduce service delivery times, then do so. Stop thinking rate payers can just keep paying ever increasing rates.

The Council needs to better manage its assets. Install a manager & use more private contractors for it's maintenance.
the council needs to do what i and every household and every business has to do - manage their budget so that the expenses do not go over the income. they should do this by only spending money on the most important things.....and also by being more efficient in the way they spend money. If council needs more income they should be hitting large-businesses and developers and asking them to pay more rather than the residents. i am not keen to see any rate rises until i can be convinced that council is doing a proper job of managing the money they have....there is far too much waste on non-necessary things....eg the walkway from merewether to bar beach and all the changes done there recently....yes it looks nice....but who asked for it and did we really need it.....i surf along that stretch regularly and there was nothing wrong with it the way it was.
The council should be able to manage the rates better, with more residential growth every year equating to more rates paid there should be more funds available to complete projects and improve the Newcastle area.
the council still appears to be over staffed in office areas mainly admin.
The NCC doesn't appear to be very efficient in their use of funds as I see it. Several years ago I suggested that the NCC should place a survey in the rates notice to inquire whether services were needed or not- majority rules or at least considered strongly. This hasn't happened. I cannot contact anyone and get a bigger salary - why should you????
The only service I utilise for my \$2k per annum from council is waste and local roads. Every other organisation on earth has to find efficiencies on an ONGOING basis, and while the most recent council made some great steps, that has to continue, not be a one off exercise. It is unconscionable to say "we have found all these efficiencies so now we are putting the prices up." Please listen more to the rates PAYERS, and less to the residents who do not pay for the services they demand. I am sick of paying for things for someone else to use when they pay nothing. How about a \$20 entry fee for the art gallery? How about putting up the parking fees and making ratesPAYERS exempt with a tag? How about selling off some parks and gardens?
The rates that we pay here in newcastle are close to the same amount Sydney rate payers are charged and yet the services here are way under standard in comparison. But even with this comparison set aside newcastle council have so many assets where they could generate a revenue without having to increase rates! If we allowed some sort of progress rather than opposing all changes in newcastle we could create a better funded council - one for example is using the local baths as a more viable business option with extra paid facilities, e.g cafe/ gift shop. There are business minded council members who could use their knowledge and experience to encourage this type of movement.
the wording of the survey is very emotive, "no increase and we'll continue to erode away councils cash reserves". The wording is biased to guide people to Council's preferred outcome. Council has not being transparent enough on a number of financial matters for me to happily support a fee increase.
There are other cost saving measures that could be taken before rates are increased.eg the expensive maintenance of inappropriate non native non productive street trees
There are still options for Council to review service provision and become more efficient, for example DA tracking like Gosford Council to have all documents available online and reduce phone enquiries, focus on core local government activities instead of seniors housing/ Blackbutt Reserve/ etc.
There is still a lot of waste and a top heavy management across all NCC. We need back to basic services offered then focus on city growth and meaningful city wide transport integration.
This is the most financially viable for most people. The Council should lobby the State or Federal government for funding rather than take it off the residents.
This rise in land rates is only just sustainably to the average family budget.
Tired of council seeking additional rates and then not using it as promised
To keep pace with increasing expenses over which council has no control
TO much money is wasted in both local, state and federal government
To save ratepayers money. If we want nice footpaths or gardens let us do our own or gang together & help each other as volunteers.
unable to pay more

Waste in the council is evident in actions and policies of the council
We are already paying a lot in rates .Compare to other councils we don't have enough facilities so would we like to pay more. We are kinda giving up on council.
We are on a limited income and have not been able to secure part time work only casual which is difficult to plan financially.
We are paying fools like Allan Robinson and previously Jeff McCloy I should say over paying
We had an IPART increase for the Art Gallery . The addition was never built. Most of the increases seem to gravitate toward the CBD. Who had the bright idea to pay shop owners to paint the outsides of their shops.
We pay a considerable amount in rates already. Would need further information before could support higher rates. Understand that significant steps have been taken, but can also see there have been expensive measures I.e. Sustainability review, multiple restructures etc.
We pay enough rates without an increase
Well
When is Council going to stop wasting ratepayers money on infrastructure eg changes to the road between Nobbys and Newcastle Beach and new pathways through King Edward Park...Get back to roads rates and rubbish instead of all of the new projects eg walkway between Strezslecki Lookout and Bar Beach who is going to maintain this or will it be NCC ratepayers
Wholly because this is the cheapest option to me. If all the NCC can consider is these 3 options - then they need a swift re-think. ALL other options should be tabled!!!!
With the savings already made we are sure you will continue along this line with further savings internally.
Without council advising what other options, re further cost cutting, it is difficult to know what the current situation is
You already rip me off.
You have clearly not budgeted properly. I see no reason why we should have to pay more when rates are already quite high.
You should be able to fund services through regular CPI increases as per Local Govt requirements
you should be analysing ways of improving required services by cutting down on non essential services

Appendix 6b-Reasons for preferring Option 2- Fund financial sustainability (Newcastle Voice survey)

\$81 is manageable for me and I can also manage the \$101 extra however the rate increase of \$101 would be very difficult for some individuals and families.
1. The NSW rate-pegging is a ridiculous and democracy-damaging system. 2. The damage to NCC's reputation in recent years & the loss of too many experienced, competent, well qualified officers over the same period, does not inspire one to contribute more than what is essential, until there is greater confidence in the Council's efficiency and effectiveness.
A balance between the 2
A medium approach.
A moderate increase is always most digestible for retirees
A moderate rate rise will gain more public support and not seem greedy.
a reasonable balance to balance budget with service maintenance
Ability to improve, but Council needs also to assess how it spends its funds, There are MANY ways it can save funds through efficiencies so there would be more left over to improve the city (particularly increase heritage vale). Waste less.
Actually take a good look at what you are paying out. Including all wages.
Actually, personally I prefer the third option. \$101 increase seems reasonable to me, but I am concerned that many elderly residents could not afford such an increase - AND are less likely to benefit anyway..
Affordability as all other utilities escalating
affordable
As a pensioner I have received \$9:00 increase fortnightly, so Option 2, possibly would be covered.
As a Pensioner I would be struggling to pay any increase but recognise something needs to be done if we wish to maintain our beautiful city and services. I could not afford option 3 but would be in favour of option 2.
As a ratepayer, I cannot afford more increases. Council needs to become more efficient. Each person who receives an income from council needs to put in a day's worth to that value. Sick of seeing council workers mooching around and projects taking much longer than they should, therefore everything inflated cost. Sick of management giving themselves bonuses, free travel, flights, dinners etc.Don't cut our services, give us value for our money.
As a self funded retiree I have to watch my spending .Council should do the same.
As a senior citizen it will cost me less.
As a v.elderly pensioner with a property that is 114 years and requiring costly maintenance (like me), and in a HIGH rating area, I cannot afford Option 3!
Because a rate increase under \$100 per annum for most ratepayers. My job is due to finish in June 2015 and my future job prospects are murky, at best. Many people face this in the next 12 months and may not sustain a rate rise over \$100.00
Because council waste enough money as it is, I don't think they should be given a 'big bucket of cash' to play with. I think they should be encouraged to spend wisely like the rest of us are told to do.
Because I am not sure that the funds will be spent wisely. I did not want the figs to be cut down and I feel as a rates payer I would not have the say in what council deems important to spend the money on. If I were convinced that money would be spent on projects which increased the sustainability of Newcastle such as connected off road bikeways then I would feel more inclined to back the third option. Council's priorities and mine are often not the same.
Because I believe it is the best option out of the three you have provided.

Because I still can't convince myself that if you give the council more they will spend it more wisely, I'm still discussed by the amount of money spend on the Fig Trees all because council could not make a decision and then STAND BY IT.

Because if council ran their finances properly and made better use of what they have not keep paying monkeys for advice and get RID of those managers who are dead wood the council would save a fortune (to many gofers in council
If the council better managed their finances and got rid of the managers who are dead wood they could save a fortune (to many gofers) stealing community assets which were financially no drain on council and then inefficiently "running those facilities" by donkey council staff in the most uneconomical way so they have little use or income is an example of the incorrect way to save money

Because it is a compromise, providing Council additional revenue while it continues to get it's house in order.

Because our household cannot afford such an increase. We need to see better use of council money that you already have instead of wasting it.

Because the choice is so limited I can see no other reasonable option. Some years ago the council was pressured into abolishing the ad valorem rating system and replacing it with a 50% flat fee and a 50% ad valorem rating system. This amounted to the owners of average and below average value residences subsidising those with high value residences and properties. This current system is the core issue in the financial problem that has arisen. When the high value property owners are prepared to share the profits of the sales of their properties with all other rate payers, I will be prepared to seriously consider the current financial impass as a real one.

Because there are still avenues for Council to save money and fund projects with better management

Because we have a couple of properties as a super fund this would effect us we feel quite a bit financialy.If we had only 1 property then we would probably support the 3rd option as we don't want Newcastle left struggling to carry out maintenance and buildings fall into disrepair.

being on a pension i find option2 the best for my circumstances

Best option available

Better to have a reasonable rate rise now than a large rate rise later

Bills have to be paid

Books back in order with increased services

Business and developers want all the benefits but don't want to contribute. The new Uni building is a prime example.

cant afford the ever increasing rates bill

Clearly the mismanagement by the General Manager needs to be rectified but gouging still more rates is not my preferred option. That said, doing nothing except selling off assets is not an potion.

Conservative but not extreme

Considering that much of Newcastle's financial woes are due to mismanagement by Council, it seems unfair to ask residents to pay a significant increase to fund the shortfall. On the other hand, I don't want to see Newcastle fall by the wayside and become a ghost-town, so a moderate increase would be understandable.

Continued funding of Council is vital to renewing existing infrastructure but not providing any new services. Service deletion / reduction must be considered before any further rate rises after this 'Road to Recovery' proposal.

COST TO THE RATEPAYER

council continues to waste money on speed bumps, narrowing intersections, poor traffic light coordination and the ridiculous idea of light rail running down Scott St.The more Council has the more they waste.

Council financial figures are 'rubbery', and much more could be done to reduce overheads in administration with no effect on services provided. A small increase would be enough for an efficient council

<p>Council has increased rates every year since I moved to Newcastle in 1987 with promises to provide better services etc. All that has happened is that services have been cut, (the option to have council pick up old fridges/freezers from the kerbside has been a major issue for me and a lot of families I know), entry fees to council facilities increased and little or no improvement in other areas.</p>
<p>Council has not delivered in the past what they said would come with the rate variation, so I don't really trust an open cheque book approach. Council has to be kept accountable for expenses and trim the fat where it exists. Council continues to be inner city focused, so people in the western suburbs shouldn't just be funding resources for the already Rick to utilize.</p>
<p>Council has yet to undertake a critical assessment of which services it provides. The recent 10% reductions were a blunt instrument! and failed to assess which services should be performed at all, let alone be increased or decreased. This needs to happen before the larger increase could be justified. The do nothing option would only be taken as a mandate for further blunt cuts without proper assessment.</p>
<p>Council is currently hamstrung financially but has yet to demonstrate that they can be trusted with a great increase in income (option3)</p>
<p>Council must maintain service delivery standards and ratepayers need to assist in funding the standards we expect</p>
<p>Council need to get real work out of employees.....this is not happening in many cases. Private contractors need to be used more to help reduce expenses and make council employees realise they need to be more competitive.</p>
<p>Council needs to be a viable and financially safe to provide the services to the rate payers</p>
<p>Council needs to be financially viable in order to maintain services</p>
<p>Council needs to be present to ability to pay. Whilst keeping Council viable is important, people in Newcastle are doing it tough in many cases.</p>
<p>Council services and facilities are community well-being and a good lifestyle for a city that is the capital of the Hunter Region, without a large sudden increase in the rates burden.</p>
<p>Council should be looking to improve the value for dollar in the services it presently provides</p>
<p>Councils financial background is not impressive. Keep a lif on finances they have</p>
<p>Council's sustainability review of all council services is not yet complete. There are still operational processes that when examined will provide further savings. I feel the continued review of services should be examined before choosing option 3.</p>
<p>Deliver what's needed not what's wanted.</p>
<p>Don't mind paying more rates but do mind paying more if resources are spent on areas not of highest priority eg gallery.</p>
<p>don't trust Council so opt for the middle way</p>
<p>Evens out the financial burden</p>
<p>Facilitate the on-going revival of Newcastle and ensure infrastructure backlog is addressed after years of neglect</p>
<p>Feel the aim is to reach a compromise and this appears the only choice to do that</p>
<p>Financial reasons. Do not want to cut jobs</p>
<p>Generally ratepayers can bear the cost of a moderate increase.</p>
<p>Get things under control. if successful ask for further rate rise</p>
<p>Given the resignation of the Lord Mayor who could trust Council to manage building a surplus of funds for ratepayer's benefit especially since the Layman Street tree and Art Gallery fiasco.</p>
<p>Gives council a chance to demonstrate good financial management but does not lock in a high or low increase if they are to merge</p>
<p>greater efficiency can be easily found with staff operations eg a small hole along side of the footpath Islington Pk/Union St bridge required 1/2 a wheel barrow of soil to fix. No --5 blokes a machine & truck which chopped up the area and required more repair work and then some one decided to lay turf over the repaired area approx 4 times the size of the original hole. give me a break!!!!!!</p>
<p>Have all unnecessary expenses been explored? eg money wasted on consultants, inefficiencies</p>

Hopefully it will supply sufficient funds to improve services without the need to inject the higher option. I think it's a BIG increase over the 'do nothing' option and council should budget within its capabilities,

Hopefully to Sustain a higher level of service and maintenance

How can an informed decision be made in this survey without the benefit of an independent review of Council's revenue and expenditures to ensure the best use is made of current funds?!?

I know the council needs to do something which rules out option 1 .
I picked option 2 because it was the least in cost rises.
I feel the increase per annum is too much.
I could not find a cap on the yearly raises 2 yrs , 5 yrs etc, if it was maintained rates would be unpayable.
I think their needs to be more information.
A cap on increases .
Show what council is going to do on a local level
Fenced dog parks.
Walking trails.
Parks / play equipment

I agree council needs to raise more funds but given projects like the art gallery were supposed to be delivered by the last special rate increase....and council failed to deliver or hang onto the funds for that, I do not trust the current administration to wisely handle another big investment by ratepayers and not waste the money. Council administration can be made more efficient without slugging ratepayers every time.

I agree that Council needs help to reach financial sustainability. I am not convinced that money has been used wisely in the past, and am reluctant to give more than I deem necessary.

I already pay over \$100 per fortnight for my council rates. The Mayor of Newcastle has just resigned in a corruption scandal. I appreciate that this isn't a huge increase, however to be frank, I don't hold a lot of faith in the Council and I'm not convinced that the ratepayers should be footing the bill for past incompetencies. I would need additional information about the council's areas of expenditure so that I can understand WHY another rate increase is required.

I am a pensioner and cannot support too big a rise in rates.

I am hoping more will be seen to be done without major increases to rates. Council needs to become more efficient and productive, show rate payers their money is being used wisely and not putting everything into developers hands or privatising all functions

I am not convinced that council could not raise funds by better management, reducing unnecessary projects or requesting more funds from the port sale. The port sale highlighted the lack of inacial acumen that exists within the council.

I appreciate more could be done with more rate money but I couldn't afford option 3

I beilive this is a compromise that is affordable for rate payers and still improving the LGA

I believe Council could significantly improve work efficiencies especially outdoor staff. All too often I observe very little work being done on various projects usually by too many staff. Outsourcing services would be a good option to improve productivity & reduce costs.

I believe it to be the best option. I have been made redundant and out of work for 4 mths, we now owe the bank money, and my wife's job is very unsecured . The last thing we want is our rates increased. Every thing is increasing but we have had no pay rises for years. How does that work????

I believe it will provide the best outcome and get most support.

I believe that effeciencies and improvements to services can be made without additonal cost via a culture continous improvement

I believe that the Council can make more savings and that expenditure on the City Centre is best left to Private Enterprise with the help of the council by making building heights in the city more acceptable to developers with the right Ideas. Then the Council would have additional funds to use in other areas. I also believe the council is overmanaged and they should have a good look at how top businesses have been able to cut back without loss of services and greater profitability. I am not sure that we can continue living in the 19th Century in this lovely City and expect it to grow without changes to the council culture. Our culture is based on getting easy money from Ratepayers and not doing the hard work which was partly undertaken in the last few years.

I believe there are savings in other areas that have not been explored. yet a small increase in rates is understandable
I believe we have to be covering cost at a minimum. People have to pay for what they get from the council. I do not believe in most of the ideas for spending money on the CBD renewal. Let the CBD die like the other old suburban shopping areas. People are voting with their feet.
I can afford it. I cannot afford option 3 but I do not like the do nothing option at all.
I cant really afford another rate rise but so would prefer none, but it seems that we are losing more and more services in this council that something must be done. If this rise doesn't improve our Council I cannot see residents being able to afford more. I am struggling, like most single mums to pay bills and put food on the table. Any more and I will have to sell my house and move back with my parents.
I consider the annual associated rate increase acceptable to improve spending on facilities and services.
I consider it to be a more sensible and fair option
I do not trust the councils financial management skills, the efficiency of their employees and their morale.
I don't believe or accept what we have been told by this current term of local government - the art gallery fiasco and now McCloy's duplicitous behaviour (ICAC) and heavy handedness with the GM makes me not trust them. Also, what about the "accounting error" that missed a portion of money. Get the council in order in an honest and open fashion, and then talk about priorities for further funding. The last rate rise was not used as it was designated - the projects it was for did not go ahead, and the rate payers feel as though they have been duped
I don't believe we should be penalised for the bad management of funds in the past; if other councils can manage on the set rates, why can't Newcastle council? I am going for the 'middle ground' because doing nothing is not going to get us anywhere but paying overs is not fair.
I don't but it is the lesser of the options provided
I don't mind paying something towards helping Newcastle get ahead
I don't really support any as they are written up but option 3 is far too expensive especially for pensioners and those with little income. Option one implies no change. However I believe there are other options than residents paying it all.
I don't see where any extra costs have come from. Are there new parks? Or new areas to maintain that didn't exist before?
I don't trust council to be efficient in spending any extra income. I have worked with Council on several occasions in a volunteer capacity and have attended countless meetings where I give up my time, pay for parking fees to drive in etc. and then see no action anyway. I don't mind volunteering my time if I see actual outcomes. I am an Artist and Arts Worker and am constantly being asked for my opinions or input, but then see nothing or very little happen in return. Or I see outside consultants brought in from Sydney to run events like City evolutions which as far as I can see has died a slow death. Any interaction I have with council whether it is being a simple resident with action required on a council problem or in my capacity as an arts worker it feels like I am dragging my fingernails down a blackboard each time. So I simply don't trust Council with option 3.
I don't trust that council management will act responsibly regarding where the money is spent and how the money is managed.
I don't trust the administration, nor the elected local councillors, enough to carry out existing plans within existing budgets to support a more ambitious rate rise.
I don't trust the Council to be efficient for even 1 second. I don't trust any long term, or short term plan. I don't believe anything they suggest they would do, for the benefit of the community, until ICAC has gone through it, with a very big broom.
I don't, really. But the format of the survey doesn't allow me to move on to the next question without putting something in the fields of the previous question. I would want to see council's budget and how the money is allocated across the city's services and facilities before deciding how to fund the city in the future. Not enough information to just say 'these three are your only choices'. I am not a child; I am quite capable of assessing the whole budget.

I feel this is more fair option for both the residents and council. I think this option allows the council to obtain more funds to improve financial sustainability and increase services to some extent, but will also encourage Council to improve their account keeping and financial management.
I have doubts about the council wasting funds, so I don't want to give them open slather for option 3. Especially now Jeff McCloy has gone and the council could potentially be controlled by the Labor & Greens parties who have no idea about managing funds.
I have enough trouble paying my rates now and would want to see a lot more done in fixing the wastage in wages of people who just stand around holding shovels and brooms etc. and paying money to consultants and think tank weeks away
I know the Council needs more money, but my wage is not going up
i personally don't agree with any of the options offered here. NCC has had more than adequate funds to keep, maintain and implement many varoius projects and local facilities. Just more examples of Delphi techniques in order to pressure the public into a lesser or evils.
I prefer option 2 because I don't want to see facilities and services further degraded. If I could afford it, I would support option 3, but I can't.
I realise that the Council needs additional funds to improve some services inthe community. However I am coming to the end of my working life so an increase of nearly 50% over 5 years will not be sustainable for me as I try and save as much money as possible for retirement at the same time as the rates are going up.
I recognise that extra funds are needed to improve and maintain council services however I'm still cranky about all the undelivered promises from the last time a rate rise was proposed. I supported it then and was very disappointed it was all lies. I want to see more completed projects before I support the top rise again.
I recognise the need for further funding, but, as a low income earner, will find it harder to accommodate the highest level rate increase.
I recognise the need to build a funding base, but council's recent track record makes me sceptical to trust them with extra funds at this point in time.
I see an \$800-odd increase in rates at the end of the period as unaffordable for many property holders (I presume I read correctly and its eg \$2000+\$101, 2000+101+101, 2000+101+101+101, etc for the period)
I see no value in projected figures base on current disfunction in the present council structure. And believe that council will always be crying poor.base on poor management and fluctuations in thier involvement and the changes in state and federal government funding and the decisions on that expenditure
I support option 2 as it is a way for NCC to survive and to keep quality of services to the people. If I have to wait for infrastructure to be complete so be it (Rome wasn't built in a day). People of Newcastle think that local gov and councils are incompetent as it is (why build art gallery worth millions with the way hospitals, roads, railway crossings are is just one example)Why let them play with more money when they just waste what they already have.
I think council can do more to reduce costs. This questionnaire doesn't explain where the money will be sent. Why did Council recently advertise another executive role? Do we really need another bureaucrat?
I think council has wasted money on too many things, the CBD revitalisation is the main one. I don't want more funds wasted, but I see the need for more necessary expenditure. So I'd like to see the council squeezed a bit so they have little leeway to waste money.
I think council still needs to instigate cost saving measures across the board before any increase in rates is considered. It also needs to encourage private measures to revitalise the area. It also needs to reduce the impost on private ventures and encourage small business to flourish by reducing negative controls (eg small bars in laneways)
I think it is a fairer option for both council and me a s a rate payer.
I think it is a necessary increase, \$81 is spent on coffee and lunches for our family, I would be happy to pay if Newcastle City Council became more rate payer focussed and actually did something rather than in fighting, spend money to beautify our city

I think it is an equitable balance between ratepayers and councils finances.
I think option two would be sufficient to meet councils obligations with enough to complete projects into the future tied to council managing its budget more efficiently and not waste money as it did with the Lamien Street fig debarcle.
I think some revitalisation projects are excessive and unnecessary. Maintenance of what we already have is good, fewer new build projects.
I think that is my preferred option.
I think that the council officers have not been honest in their assessment of what the current situation is. I also have little faith in the current council officers, but most importably of the current general manager who I think has too much control over all of the other council officers.
I think the ratepayers are being slugged enough already. The reason council is short of money is that most of the reserves were lost when they had the funds invested off shore and the market crashed. Now you're expecting us ratepayers to bear the cost.
I think this is the most financially viable for ratepayers and the long term survival of Newcastle City Council
I think we pay enough now for rates. The council seems to do and offer less services. I agree we need to maintain facilities but not at the rates payers exspense. maybe the suburbs that get the most spent on them eg merewether,bar beach could pay more as they take up alot of the money.
I understand doing nothing is not realistic however I have no confidence in NCC spending our ratepayers money efficiently and effectively. There is little to no information provided to the community on what NCC have been spending the 2012 IPART rate increase on. Until detailed information is provided on this (not a 1 page summary in the annual report) I am not happy supporting a significant increase over and above the rate cap. Option 2 is the best of 3 bad options.
I understand need to invest, I just do not trust Council to spend wisely or to allocate to growth outer suburbs.
I understand that council needs the extra funds but we will struggle with paying the extra money with all the current budget.
I understand the NCC needs more money, but don't believe it should be a blank cheque given the waste on projects such as the Anzac Walk.
I want facilities such as the Newcastle baths significantly upgraded. I don't want the emphasis of keeping costs down to be removed and any of the increase to be used for day to day expenses. I don't mind paying extra as long as we can see the direct results and they are communicated.
I want the Council to be sustainable and don't mind spending a bit more on rates, but I think that there should be other ways to raise funds (e.g. through more user pays services) and improve efficiency and prioritisation of spending.
I would be more supportive of providing more money to Council if they managed their finances better, that is had better control of what is spent and by whom. Eg. money wasted on plans and more plans for an art gallery.
I would have put 1 and 2 equal but I do not necessarily agree with so much expenditure on infrastructure in the CBD. I am supportive of only infrastructure expenditure for core services and not for such projects as a new art gallery, youth services, bikeways etc.
I would like to see council re-introduce bulk rubbish pick-up. And I would like to see the Art Gallery extension actually happen! As long as I was convinced that money wasn't being wasted by inefficiencies, I'd be happy to pay a bit more.
I would like to support option 3 but with my income I am struggling to pay the rates as it is
I would love to see the council improve services as outlined in option 3. Except the due to Newcastle Councils poor track record, in my view the money will be squandered. so I think it safest to stick with option 2

<p>ICAC needs to investigate this council before the city is asked to commit to anything major. The suburb of Waratah although home to the largest number of school children in the area and an increasing number of families has been treated less than poorly by the council. We pay quite high rates and get nothing but garbage collection anyway. Dismiss this council and the general manager, run an election campaign that is not funded by a corrupt developer (if that is possible), reinstate democracy and then ask these questions. These people have gotten off lightly indeed</p>
<p>If the money is not wasted, at least council can stop crying poor and get things done.</p>
<p>If you had better financial managers we would not be in this position</p>
<p>I'm happy to pay slightly higher rates however the council needs to look at cutting costs and operating more like a business.</p>
<p>I'm not confident that an increase as large as Option 3 will be efficiently ,managed and result in additional benefit to the community. I acknowledge that there needs to be improved financial sustainability and option 2 presents a reasonable position</p>
<p>Improves services slowly without substantailly effecting the budgets of residence. Council still needs to think carefully to ensure that expenditure is well controlled to avoid wasting rate payers money</p>
<p>Improving services and facilities is important - however, the capacity of ratepayers to pay is not equal. A moderate increase helps ensure equity.</p>
<p>In the current financial situation I think it is unrealistic to ask people to contribute more than they can afford to pay. Wages growth is non existent at the present time.</p>
<p>In three and a half years time I will be a pensioner.</p>
<p>Increase costs- keep swimming pool open and golf course. Councillors need to cut their own spending and think of the outer suburbs</p>
<p>Increases in rates need to work with continued improvement in efficieny and staff productivity.</p>
<p>It allows council to improve services sustainably, while minimising the impact of rate rises on those least able to afford them.</p>
<p>it allows more people to meet their obligations</p>
<p>It can't stay as it is but I don't think rates should be increased too much. I want to know why Council is in this position and assurances that the extra funds won't be wasted. Accountability.</p>
<p>It covers what is essential. Option 3 will only lead to waste and inefficiencies again.</p>
<p>it gives council a substantial increase in funds</p>
<p>It is a happy medium. I feel that some things have been overlooked in this survey and not reported. Yes the recent changes have made some paper savings but the real costs involved in such a big change in staffing numbers and management change haven't been stated. As a result the real impact of these changes could be reported as a negative change as the restructured workforce is struggling to provide the same level of service to the community. When you lose experierenced staff it has been proven that the economic cost of this is in the realm of 1 full years wages for that staff member. These are the figures that have been left out.</p>
<p>It is a moderate, middle level solution that will have less impact on the needy of the community and still provide resources sufficient for continuing services.</p>
<p>It is a reasonable amount to increase rates.</p>
<p>It is a sustainable solution that favors the intelligent use of a limited fund increase instead of the easy option of just charging high rates.</p>
<p>It is clear that option 1 makes for no improvement. Option 3 appears to be necessary, but Council has used this approach previously without delivering. A moderate approach in Option 2 is preferred</p>
<p>It is important to maintain existing services, however alternatives to rate increases should be considered, including amalgamation with neighbouring councils to improve efficiencies with administration and centralised council functions</p>
<p>it is more obtainable.</p>
<p>It is possible for NCC to obtain grants from the State government to improve services.</p>
<p>It is preferable to have some sort of increase which can go towards maintaing services with some improvements. I prefer to see how council can work smart with a modest increase of lashing out on a bigger increase.</p>
<p>It is the best of a bad lot</p>

It is the fairest option for ratepayers. The councillors' payments should be reduced and office staff/senior management employment should be reviewed. Reduce internal waste.
It is the least painful if the council obviously can't balance the books.
it offers reasonable financial sustainability
It provides extra income, but is a modest slug on citizens
It retains the existing level of service and may improve the level in some services without impacting on cash reserves.
IT SEEMS MORE AFFORDABLE FOR RATE PAYERS
It suits my income better. I am elderly and not wealthy in one sense and am not too concerned about services. Councils should be well supported by a fair share of revenue as they are the level of government that is closest to us. I would support a change of policy, or a revolution to get more revenue into councils by way of gov support to do all the work councils are expected to do and the system cant be working very well when councils are finding themselves short of money.
It will allow council to continue operating and make some improvements without overly penalising rate-payers
It will allow for the Council to get back to being level. An injection of too money at this point in time could be spent on projects that are not important. Further studies and strategies need to be undertaken during sustainability mode before a further increase should be permitted.
It would allow project to be started but less financial stress on residences
It would be irresponsible to do nothing, but ridiculous to adopt option 3 which gives council no incentive to work more cleverly, efficiently and effectively. The ratepayers should not be seen as a milking cow forever.
Its balanced approach
It's middle of the road and shouldn't impact family and pensioners budgets too much.
It's only a small increase per household; if it means that current services are maintained or even improved then I support it.
It's reasonable. Need to handle money and wont open floodgates for Council to overtax ratepayers
Least of the other 3 evils.
Less financial impact on rate payers allowing main improvements
less financial impact, but Council gets extra funds
less impact on the lower income group
Library services
Like families and business owners, you have to learn to live within your budget and understand planning and viability for future projects. My husband and I have lived and owned property in the Council area for more than 10 years, and also own a small business in Newcastle West. In this time, we have seen some appalling Council spending. On the street where my husband owns his business, parking signs allow only 2 hour parking along this once very busy street. This once very busy street has no cars parked on it during the working week now. As the business is a automotive shop, cars are in and out all day. Council parking officers come by and harass my husband and his customers if they happen to have their cars on the street for mere moments without paid parking slips when the officers walk by. This project, implemented by the Council as a revenue raiser, has failed miserably as no worker could leave their car for 2 hour blocks. Obviously there was some turnover expected to raise funds for cars using that street to park during the day, but if you happen to walk or drive by, you will see no cars parked on that street. I would expect that the City would've wanted to bring revenue into the CBD area, but this has not worked well. It's initiatives like this that are obstacles to progress, and if I'm going to spend more money funding City projects, I want it to be well-thought out and worthwhile. I appreciate the lovely parks and the clean streets, and am happy to fund these kinds of things, but do not consider projects like parking meters to be of use. Please use surveys such as these for feedback to vet your proposed projects, as I would be very interested in seeing what gets through Council approval gates.
Looking at the printed matter delivered, the financial figures of option 2 make most sense
Maintains current services with a keen eye on costs
maintenance of services is important
wary of councils ability to identify and manage new areas of expenditure

Meets the need even if not the preferred.
middle ground in terms of financial outlay for home owners.
Middle ground. I don't think the council has shown that it can handle the fiscal responsibility but doing nothing isn't the best option
middle of the road option
Middle of the road option , financially
Middle of the road option which I feel would best suit the majority of rate payers...not too much of an impost on the less well off.
Moderate increase in rates and slight improvement in services
Moderate increase in rates will maintain services
Moderate rate increases are probably the only current option.Extra finance should be sourced from state or federal politicians.Please keep libraries and pools open, Thank you.
Money needs to be spent on Newcastle (and Stockton!) but Council needs to live within its means.
more about own personal finances and affordability in family budget.
More affordable
More people may agree to a small increase rather than a larger one. No increase would be a step backwards, with a large increase in the future a possibility, if the infrastructure and services went downhill.
More sustainable options and the current Council has shown an inability to undertake larger projects successfully such as the Newcastle gallery expansion so would be reluctant to provide funds for major projects rather sustain Council services with some improvements such as pools and libraries
Most people are cutting back on everything they can to stay financially viable, and to increase the rates too much would be just to hard
my own income is also continuing to erode as other costs go up my standard of living constantly worsens.
MY WIFE AND MYSELF ARE PENSIONERS. WE HAVE TO WATCH OUR 'PENNYS'
NCC has not demonstrated that it is operating efficiently
Need to improve facilities, but not a too high a cost for those who may not be able to afford it.
Need to improve services but not put too much burden on ratepayers as I think the council should prove that they can manage finances and not waste before option 3 is approved
Need to maintain services at a good level.
need to secure financial sustainability but large increase likely to be hard for many to pay
Newcastle Council has to move forward and I find option 2 will accommodate that.
Newcastle doesn't need "revitalising". We don't need to be another boring central coast. The rail line needs to stay, spend the money on parks and footpaths etc. let's try and keep the character of Newcastle rather than being another cookie cutter town
NO HIGH RISE. Improve not remove.
not confident council would best sue extra funds to best advantage
Not sure I approve of some of the inner-city revitalization as proposed, or of extending cycleways
Not too much of a burden
NSW Councils need to sustain themselves by reducing its cost burden of staffing. Local council is the third tier of Govt and I believe the replication of services needs to be immediately addressed and reduced via Council amalgamations. This will improve the quality of services and accountability. Unless this micro economic reform proceeds business and growth in NSW will stagnate with new business lost to competing Australian states with planning certainty and lower cost bases.
Obviously, Council cannot confidently maintain infrastructure and services without monies to so do and maybe remove some backlog of maintenance etc
Only a slight increase money-wise that would allow some future sustainability
only need to maintain current systems
Optimal cost to maintain services
Option 1 is not an option. Option 2 stretches my budget to the limit. You should be able to obtain option 3 objectives by thinking outside the box, find a way to get private industry involved, as they will also benefit from improved services.

<p>Option 1 seems as if it would lead to more services being cut with only basic ones running. It feels as if many services have already been cut and I don't want to see this happen to any more.</p>
<p>Option 3, whilst it might help implement better services, seems a huge hike for many people in the community. Maybe a more clear idea of where this money would go would help change my mind.</p>
<p>Option 3 is a very steep increase. I am not happy with supporting option 2 either, but I'd rather see something done when compared to option 1 - nothing at all. It is incredibly unfair that council has gotten us into this position. Action should have been taken years ago, before we got to this point. It is very unfair to assume rate payers can afford massive increases in fees. Most of us cannot.</p>
<p>Our wages are not changing and finances are already tight.</p>
<p>Probably most affordable for largest section of society</p>
<p>Probably stupidity</p>
<p>Provides council with an opportunity to prove to the community how that can manage and invest additional funding. An option similar to Option 3 could be considered at a future point in time (i.e. 5 years) once the council has shown it can efficiently and effectively deliver on the promises under Option 2.</p>
<p>Put simply, it is a compromise between the other options. Assuming that NCC is doing ALL it can to improve cost inefficiencies and benchmark itself against world-class councils (and that's a big assumption that most people would find hard to believe), then Option 1 simply isn't an option. On the other hand, Option 3 sounds like NCC isn't / won't strive to attain the maximum cost savings themselves, relying instead on the rate payers themselves to fund improvements. Additionally, Option 3 mentions delivering the same projects, just quicker. I'm not sure that we need projects delivering quicker....lower cost would be better. Hence, all that is left is Option 2</p>
<p>Rates are already very high in my area. We don't get additional services than other residents in suburbs that pay less however we are always hiy with higher cost. I understand additional funding is required vut would like to see other commercial avenues investigated for revitalisation projects eg hubter street mall.</p>
<p>rates are high enough to provide improved services; they need reprioritising</p>
<p>Reasonable increase to get more money into council without overburdening residents</p>
<p>Seems a reasonable compromise. Don't like some of the so called "improvements" that have been done in Newcastle in recent years, so don't want to go for the higher cost option 3 to fund more things that I see as a waste of money. (Eg the curb extensions and traffic calming devices in King St).</p>
<p>Seems best option - to maintain and improve services without costing residents too much</p>
<p>Seems the best option for already stretched household budgets. Council should consider public/private partnerships</p>
<p>Seems to be the fairest option. I don't have much faith in giving any more because you have to ask, how did it end up this dire?</p>
<p>Seems to be the most equitable</p>
<p>Slight increase to encourage Council to be more pro-active in managing finances</p>
<p>Smaller financial impact but with sustainable outcomes...</p>
<p>Some increase is acceptable as long as the money is spent wisely</p>
<p>Some increase is necessary - but I believe that the council made an accounting error in the last 12 months and 'found' a large sum of money.</p>
<p>Something has to be done to help Council maintain services</p>
<p>Something must be done</p>
<p>stop putting stupid humps on roads and spend it on restoring old buildings</p>
<p>Sustainability and maintenance of services seems to make more sense than (1) and (3).</p>
<p>The city needs it</p>
<p>The cost to ratepayers is too high particularly when it will increase year on year.</p>
<p>The council should stop squandering ratepayers money and cut the wastage that is going on and use the funding to provide sensible services without the wastage. Now that the commercial sensibility provided by ex mayor Jeff Mcloy has gone the councils finances will plummet into a shocking mess.</p>

<p>The increase in rates would be MORE affordable to the rate payers. Surely more detailed review of Council operating costs could be put under the microscope and examined for savings in the future.</p>
<p>The increase specified is probably more manageable for a range of people although it is still quite significant. This option does support improvements and is within the budget going forwards rather than backwards which Option 1 would be. Option 3, although the improvements look attractive, is probably too expensive for most people to manage since personal income does not keep up with such high increases in expenditure.</p>
<p>The justification of charging more than the required rates is understandable, but I don't have the trust & confidence in the present NCC & would like to see more evidence of a better controlled, agreeable organisation with local community consultation, not with some dicatorial politicians & supervisors, who don't understand Novocastrian psyche & culture.</p>
<p>The level of increase is about right the maths looks OK</p>
<p>The most realistic. It is doing something rather than nothing. Too many people will complain if the rise is too much.</p>
<p>The streets are rarely swept, and local residents do not clean gutters, so I am concerned about the appearance of Newcastle, and about the possibility of flooding. I am still furious about what has happened at the Art Gallery, and the lack of appropriate senior staff with knowledge and contacts in the world of art to increase and improve the collection and the gallery itself. I hope if rates increase something other than parks and sporting facilities will get a look-in, and be improved.</p>
<p>There needs to be a balance between what I can afford and what I desire. There are numerous funding sources in state and Federal government that can be applied for to assist in maintaining infrastructure. People need to look!</p>
<p>This is a more affordable option for rate payers and enabling services to be provided</p>
<p>This is more appropriate for the next few years, however it needs to be coupled with good administration and management of the increase and never used for any Council members political gain.</p>
<p>This is provided it is spent in the waratah / north lambton area</p>
<p>This option is the best value.</p>
<p>This option will be affordable for the majority of rate payers</p>
<p>To attract local business and continue to keep Newcastle viable we have to do something.</p>
<p>To ensure services are maintained and improved</p>
<p>to maintain and to improve on services and infrastructure which also adds value to privately owned property</p>
<p>To maintain existing services, this is what is required. To improve services, council should seek other ways of reducing cost or financing projects.</p>
<p>TO MAINTAIN SERVICE WITH COMING PRICE RISES</p>
<p>To retain and improve existing services</p>
<p>Too much staff has been taken away from services. Just try calling in regarding a complaint and told that it will take about 4-6 months for someone to get back to you. We're still waiting after 7 months!</p>
<p>Unknown effect of Valuer General's re-evaluations of land value in 2015 & 2018 (both of which years fall within the nominated five years of the NCC rate options).</p>
<p>Very hard on pensioners. Rate increases mean landlords increase their rent.</p>
<p>We can at least maintain the level of service that we have. This seems the most fiscally responsible option.</p>
<p>We can't just go into debt and face the costs later. I support an increase as long as the council addresses the inefficiencies in the system. e.g, the inordinately long time it seems to take the street, footpath and road repair people to finish a job.</p>
<p>We cant stand still</p>
<p>We had a special rate variation just a couple of years ago, and the money has not been used as promised. We were promised a whole suite of cycleways and have got only a few bits.</p>
<p>We have to stay solvent</p>

We need improved services I think council has made good efforts with the budget but probably needs more revenue
We need to continue to revitalise Newcastle without getting into further debt.
We need to do something now, but it really becomes expensive after several years and option 3 is even more expensive. \$101 + \$101 + \$101 starts to become a lot of money after three years
We need to maintain current infrastructure at the very least. I am tired of discussions regarding closure of swimming pools etc. There is enough money raised in this region to justify the maintenance of a basic list of council funded services.
We need to pay for what we get, but not over the top
We own three properties so the increase for us is multiplied and this one seems to be a good compromise.
well i want the filthy drains cleaned out and the road fixed that the railway keeps stuffing up and if i complain too much probably wont ever get done and maybe just maybe the drain is how i got this bloody staph infection when i have cleaned it out ah forget it nobody gives a stuff anyway least ways the council
What is most needed (in a nutshell) is better vision, leadership and management; option 3 is a considerable increase and not viable for many over 5 years (and who will guarantee it won't continue after 5 years?). If council had had the vision to realise where they we headed years ago and the situation better managed at that time, then council wouldn't be in this predicament.
While I accept that there needs to be some increase in funding to support Council activities, Council also needs to focus on core activities and not waste money doing them. I would also prefer Council did not run non-essential activities like childcare facilities, golf clubs, etc
whilst I want our council to be financially sustainable and maintain the services provided I also need to be able to afford the proposed increase in fees for the proposed system to work
With development of new residential towers and other building developments, council will surely experience a substantial increase in revenue.
Without some increase, development will be slow.
Won't mean too much financial strain on households
Would like to see better rationalisation of existing services and also greater use of alternate sources of funding (increased developer levy's, increased State funding from Port Lease etc.) for infrastructure improvements.
Yes. I think there is a lot more council can do, from the inside, to improve your financial position. There seems to be a lot of "dead wood" in council
You need money to do things

Appendix 6c-Reasons for preferring Option 2- Fund revitalisation (Newcastle Voice survey)

\$100 over a year will have minimal impact to rate payers but maximum impact to the city we live in.
\$100 per year is an acceptable incr see if rate payers can see the benefits of new and upgraded facilities
\$100 per year or \$25 per quarter per year seems to me a reasonable increase to pay for improved council services
\$100 sounds worthwhile if used wisely
A catch up is needed and hopefully this will help fund the council's share of the Art Gallery revitalisation.
A commitment to spending the money needed to take advantage of the funding from the port, new University, legal precinct and investment boom is a good investment. Getting rid of corrupt developers like McCloy might mean decisions are made to benefit the city, not Tinkler and GPT. Newcastle can be a truly world class tourist, education, conference, industry and cultural city with vision and clever innovative investment.
A relatively moderate increase in rates should provide a significant improvement in services
accelerate and extend provision of much needed services
All cities need revitalisation and maintenance. Happy to have an increase in rates, provided this increase is the same across all suburbs of Newcastle City Council. We need to look a a fairer distribution of rates (we all have the same services and access to public areas).
All government at any level must raise the revenue necessary to sustain core activities. This includes the Art Gallery, Museum and Library.
All services should be maintained and improved for our future
An additional \$2 a week is not that much.
as a volunteer at blackbutt reserve I would like more suport to blackbutt and parks
As long as funds are being being managed efficiently I'm happy to pay more to assist in seeing a revitalised and more vibrant Newcastle.
As stated, Council needs to reduce the infrastructure backlog, maintain &/or improve services, and bring the city to a preferred tourist region.
Aware council will need additional funding to maintain current level of services and improve
bcause an increase from \$80 to \$100 p/a is insignificant
becasue then you will be accountable to do something and not just moan on about how hard life is
Because better services usually results in fairer (and broader) access to these services, and this greatly benefits those who REALLY need that access (especially those who are disadvantaged).
Because for what appears to be a manageable annual increase in fees we can continue to improve our quality of life by implementing a balance of necessary maintenance and infrastructure alongside improvements to services and facilities.
Because I don't want Newcastle to become a run down city. Good for morale and tourism
Because I feel it is high time that we some significant change to Newcastle, even though I feel that better management of funds would be desirable, and more decisiveness and proactive stance in the implementation of plans. Rather than spending money and more money on endless decision making processes.
Because I hate debt
Because I recognise council is underfunded to do work required of it. I particularly like the promise to have more authentic community involvement in option 3.
Because I want Council to have enough money to do a proper job by employing more people in the areas of service and specifically to make Swimming Pools, Art Galleries and Museums with NO entry fee.

<p>Because if this is the only way to get thing moving in Newcastle Option 3 would be the only way to go.... Mind you I have said it once and I will say it again, A Newcastle Lottery would be the perfect solution, we buy the tickets and the profits go to the city, We have it all here Lets make it work. They had a lottery for the Opera House so why not Newcastle. I has been a big success in the USA where cities were doing it tough and because of the lotteries the cities are now booming. Oh and by the way after the 5 years, I hope the rates fall again.</p>
<p>Because if we don't do it now when the economy is OK we are going to regret it in a few years when the economy is not OK any more.</p>
<p>Because it is clear that council cannot achieve efficiency and make tough decisions to work within the existing budget.</p>
<p>Because it provides Council with appropriate resources.</p>
<p>Because Newcastle should be in better shape. My only concern is that council will waste this money as it has in years past. Council does not have a good track record. Mayfield is very short on parks and green space, curbs and pathways are in shocking repair, you don't support the suburban pools, you prioritise expenditure into the wealthy areas.</p>
<p>Because the increase in rate income has fallen below the increase in cost of living in recent years and, unless there is an increase in income, services and amenities cannot be improved.</p>
<p>Because we need it, but I am worried about your ability to make wise decisions on how to spend the money raised.</p>
<p>Because we need to move the city ahead and this needs to include outlying areas and not just the inner city.</p>
<p>Because we use council assets eg. Merewether Baths, and want to see assets such as these improved and maintained for the future. Maintenance of existing services isn't good enough!</p>
<p>been going backwards for years</p>
<p>Best option for the city</p>
<p>Better facilities and infrastructure will attract people and jobs</p>
<p>better for our community's future</p>
<p>better improvements, in particular cycleways</p>
<p>Better library services, art gallery building, transport, cycleways</p>
<p>better life style makes living in Newcastle more attractive</p>
<p>Building and road repairs would take the city into the 21st century. It looks very run down now. If the council cares for the city then it will attract new businesses.</p>
<p>By supporting this option, I think that Council must be accountable to the ratepayers that this increase was justified. This would include an explanation as to what better services will be/have been increased. I would not like to see such a rate increase just incorporated into normal operating expenses.</p>
<p>City must grow and the council is our local voice. It must represent us in Macquarie St. The direction of growth must be in our hands</p>
<p>City need to improve a lot of facilities.</p>
<p>Community is more important than self</p>
<p>cost is not that much more than maintaining but offers more opportunities</p>
<p>Council has social responsibility for community, needs the resources to just get on with it.</p>
<p>Council has to be responsive economically.</p>
<p>Council is delivering a huge range of services vital to the function of the community on extremely limited funds. Rate pegging is an outdated methodology that is compounded by the state governments cost shifting, both of which are impacting severely on the potential this great city has to offer.</p>
<p>Council needs cash injection to improve amenity concomitantly with the NSW government implementation of the NURS.</p>
<p>Council needs funds to provide services, this includes adequately funding cultural institutions like the art gallery and keeping pools open</p>
<p>Council needs more revenue. Rate-pegging hampers Council's ability to provide adequate services particularly when more services are being devolved to Local Govt by State Govt and Commonwealth Govt</p>

Council needs to upgrade it's facilities and to do so needs more funds.
Council provides valaubale services that would diminish unless maintained by council.
Council services are very important, and I think it is important as a community we invest in services for everyone. The change would need to be communicated careful with reasons explained clearly.
Council services impact directly on my quality of life in Newcastle. I walk, cycle, drive, visit the art gallery, use the ocean pools, use the parks and many other facilities provided and maintained by the council.
Council's infrastructure is getting very run down and needs upgrading. Lambton pool is very old, and looks it, and we need lots more cycleways.
Development of better and more services will improve the value of the area, attract more people and allow more private enterprise to flourish.
Even though we can't really afford it, it seems to make the most sense for long term considerations.
Eventually it will have to be done and it will cost more than now
Everyone can benefit from improved services. the important thing is to ensure that the services promised are actually delivered, and are delivered in such a way that they do not impose an increased financial burden on council into the future.
Everything done to improve our city must be paid for by everyone who lives in it.
Everything is going up and the Council has to cater for many different ratepayers. i would rather NCC have greater flexibility to be able to provide better services. The question I would ask is would the better services be universal over all suburbs?
Expect all services to be maintained. all infrastructure back log to be caught up.
For an addituonal \$20 per year why not. It is important for newcastle's vitality, livelihood & reputation that something is done and soon
For that small amount of money I would prefer sustainability and improved services.
For too long Newcastle has been a run-of-the-mill town where the status quo is accepted, and what's "good enough" has been okay. As an educated Novocastrian who has lived in Sydney and overseas, I cringe at the lack of vibrancy and lost opportunity I see every day I walk around the city. Investing in modern public facilities such as libraries (look at Surry Hills), art galleries, public spaces, markets, community gardens, cycleways and public transport is the only way forward if we are to plan and act sustainably. We need to build Newcastle for the next 100 years, instead of being stuck in the past. Council should partner with interested community members and organisations (such as Transition Newcastle, Newcastle Cycleways Movement, Permaculture Newcastle), and look to successful small cities globally as examples of what is possible, in order to achieve this.
For very little increase in individual rate payments, financial stability and investment in services and revitalization would occur.
Funding is important to ensure that services continue to improve for residents and the city.
Good services, including libraries, maintenance of beaches, parks, sporting grounds are important for the quality of life in the city. I am happy to pay higher rates, rather then see council sell off assets and cut services.
Greater investment is needed to ensure long term sustainability and liveability of the city. The cost premium for this option is modest in comparison to its benefits.
Greater opportunity to revitalise Newcastle.
happy to chip in, especially for libraries and inner city revitalisation
Happy to pay for better amenity, better playgrounds, better open space.
happy to see increased rates if services and outcomes are good. not happy to see a loss of services. also not happy to see an increase in costs but without a corresponding improvement.
Hunter Street is a complete eye sore. As the centre of a potentially thriving city it resembles a poor and un kept sad town giving an image that does not reflect what I believe Newcastle has to offer. I would love to see Hunter Street show off all it has to offer and be the main road into the city that shows the city off with pride. If there funds are not spent here I would NOT support a rate rise
I actually don't think any of the three are good options.
I am a strong believer in local government. It needs more funding to fulfill it's agenda. I can afford to pay

I am keen for the city to continue to grow in the immediate and longer term future. A focus on improved sustainable transport options and recreation facilities are of particular interest to me.

I am prepared to pay for an improvement in services on the assumption that services will actually improve with additional funding

I believe council need funds to continue to build infrastructure rather than just maintain. Newcastle has a lot to offer and with some improvements we are a very attractive city to residents and visitors.

I believe it is important to create a vibrant inner city for us all to enjoy and to encourage investment. I also enjoy many of the public open spaces regularly, especially the coastal walking paths and dog parks. Each household would contribute a relatively small amount for the benefit of our city.

I believe NCC has done a good job of cleaning up its spending waste to get to the point of being able to provide a clear plan for its own sustainability and for future improvements. Accordingly we the ratepayers should support the council but my only reservation is that should there be a return to the days of previous councils, there would again be wastage and stagnation.

I believe that improvements in services help encourage a sense of community, make Newcastle a more attractive place to live and increase property values.

I believe that Newcastle council needs to improve it's services to the community. I support this as long as the councillors and managers of NCC have a firm commitment not to abuse the increase of rates and put it to good use. Unfortunately I have seen many services depleted from our great city and I sincerely hope this will not happen again, I do not believe in the selling off of public land, utilities and the harbour. I believe that've recent ICAC investigation showed the corruption that has had devastating effects on our city and community.

I consider it a worthwhile investment to pay an extra \$100 a year to have parks and facilities which I use all the time that are available for use and properly maintained.

I do prefer option 3 as other options will not significantly improve what needs to be done

I don't trust council to manage our money wisely but am prepared to give them a chance to improve the city

I enjoy a range of services including vital services such as waste disposal and the improvement of streets. However I also enjoy the arts and culture opportunities that a local council can offer and would like to see the continuation or reinstatement of cultural services such as the Loft Youth Pace and Livesites. I believe these kind of services are community building

I expect newcastle to deliver a high standard of living for me and my family and I am happy to pay higher rates if services such as libraries, cycleways, parks and pubic infrastucture are improved.

I have been living in Newcastle for now 14 years and appreciate its gentrification and the numerous upgrades that have been carried out in Honeysuckle, the town center and even the beaches, including benches, shade areas and dedicated paths for pedestrian and cycling access. This needs to continue and I am looking forward to a more cycling friendly town. We were promised a cycle lane in Chatham road and a pedestrian path along Griffiths Road from Broadmeadow Road to Chatham Road. These are not huge undertakings but they would make walking around the suburb easier and safer, including for the numerous customers of the entertainment center and show ground (and even the football stadium) that regularly park in the area. Yet none of this has happened.

Besides, to remain attractive, Newcastle must be proud of its heritage. The loss of the post office to a private party was an absolute shame and emblematic of the neglect the town has suffered. Next is Newcastle's train station?

A key element in improving our lifestyle over the years has been the increasing use of cycling/walking/public transport. Despite living quite close to the town centre and the sea front, we have found relegating the car a difficult option. A month ago, the return train fare to Newcastle went from \$5.00 to \$7.60. I therefore now take my car to go to the gym near Civic in Honeysuckle as it is cheaper to pay for 2hrs worth of parking and more convenient. There's no public transport at all to the beaches. Finally, whilst a few bus lines go past the show ground entrance, none stop there. A bus stop created there would increase the transport options for the Hamilton North residents and serve a key visitor attraction. Enhanced pedestrian paths in the area (as above) would be a good combination. Finally, I have just received DA consent for extending my house. It cost me several thousands of dollars (and it will again for certification) for a very simple project and it took three months. This is not a service but an extortion business that hinders rather than supports development. This needs to change.

I know the money is needed
I like living here and understand that all services facilities have to be paid for.
I like living in Newcastle and I enjoy the amenities and would like to enjoy more of them including cycleways etc. I also believe that the more and sooner the area is revitalised and upgraded the better the value of my property will improve. So I will get a financial and lifestyle return on higher rates. This will also attract more people to Newcastle which would be better for us than a heavy reliance on industries like coal which are cyclical and will failing.
I prefer this option as the city needs some tender loving care to fix up tied infrastructure but on proviso that rate payers have some input into how the monies are expended, in other words be able to contribute to the prioritising of tasks.
I realise costs are. Accelerating both publicly and privately hence rate rises. I object to an over staffed council and a politically biased council
I think this gives council the scope, to employ private enterprises into the the newcastle area. an example is the bins at bar beach were emptied on monday, these bins a filthy when emptied and stunk highly, I would prefer these bins be emptied and in fact CLEANED each week end, they should be exchanged at time of rubbish removal, I believe the walkways are shameful to the point of rubbish being dumped around various parks etc, council donot clean these up it is left to people like me who volunteer to collect this rubbish in my own time, private enterprises shouldbe employed for these tasks, particularly at weekends around well used public areas, and this problem would only get worse at the walkways etc as they are completed and more people use then.
I understand that Newcastle need investment if it is to improve. I support the plans of the council (especially the cycleways and coastal upgrade) and so am prepared to pay a little more in my rates to these accomplished.
I want our city to be well maintained and improved. The other options do not allow for this.
I want to live in a clean well presented city
I want to live in a world class city with good facilities and I'm prepared to pay for it.
I want to see change and improvement. Of course I am also assuming rate increases are not your only option.
I want to see Newcastle looking better and being a better place to be. Only option 3 allows for the city to be revitalised.
I wnat to see a much improved City and I am prepared to pay extra for this. The proviso is that the City takes all necessary action to improve efficiency, curb unneseary costs and focus on core issues (in otherwords don't squander the extra cash)
I would like all the extra services and improvements to the city and not just inner Newcastle but also western Newcastle right out to Beresfield.
I would like my drainage fixed on my street
I would like to see Newcastle as a vibrant attractive city for the community to live and be involved in. Option 3 will allow the city to improve its functions and ensure it is financially secure. The whole community will benefit from this.
I would like to see Newcastle remain a vibrant and beautiful city. It is currently looking very tired and needs work which can't be done without money.
I would like to see the art gallery redevelopment go ahead and a dedicated Gallery Director re-appointed. This needs to be part of the commitment of funds for Option 3. I would like to see better protection of local heritage and extension of the heritage precincts to include more of Hamilton East and Hamilton for starters.
I would like to see the city continue to grow and become more awesome
I would like to see the proposed services in the local area. TBelieve there is a positive benefit to the greater community for the proposed services and infrastructure.

I would love to see further improvements to the City, particularly improvements in our bicycle infrastructure, libraries, and blackbutt reserve.

It annoys me greatly that I supported the previous rate rise which promised these things. The money was taken but the improvements were not delivered. I am very skeptical of the proposal, and I expect residents will be asked to support a further rate rise in the future even though improvements have not been provided.

If Option 3 will not genuinely provide the promised improvements, please be honest with residents, and tell us what it will actually cost to deliver what is promised rather than coming back again and again asking for more.

i would rather pay the extra \$20 each year and see significant changes to services i use such as street paths, blackout and libraries than pay \$80 and see only minor changes.

i would support this option as long as the increased money is not used to invest in dodgy financial instruments instead of using it for legitimate purposes

I'd consider voluntarily increasing my rates to accelerate development and improvements to Newcastle but I think the key issue with this plan would be choice. If people could opt to contribute a little more each year then I'm sure those that can afford to or make the decision to budget for will. Forcing the Option 3 on everyone could cause backlash and negative responses especially for those already struggling financially.

I'd like to see better facilities provided, particularly along the foreshore

I'd rather see more happening in the city for a moderate increase, but I'm well off enough to afford it.

If this is what is required to maintain council viability long term & fast track the upgrade of projects then I am supportive, however the additional money must be spent properly & efficiently. This must be done in a clear & transparent way with the appropriate oversight & accountabilities in place. No more backdoor & underhanded dealings which have been highlighted at the ICAC recently

If you want quality services and facilities you have to pay for it. What is being done around the beaches and in the CBD is fantastic - should be more of it about the city to get people out and about and enjoying where they live.

I'm not sure I am but if funds are managed efficiently and well planned maybe we have to pay more to improve facilities.

I'm sick of Newcastle stagnating.

Improved services would mean a more attractive city, maintenance that keeps up with demand, more services from council that have been outsourced, more attention to green spaces that are so important with an increasing population

Improvements are badly needed

Inflation, wages and on-costs will eat any gains from options 1 or 2

Investment in city to make it a world-class city.

It allows for an increase in services and greater revitalisation of our assets.

It appears to be required on the information presented.

it gets in done in one go, so to speak, council facilities are important and used by most, if handled, correctly it benefits all.

It gets the job done. Rate discounts should be offered to low income & assets (other than existing home) home owners so the rate rise does not impact on them.

It has been great to see the council cut wasteful spending. If they can continue to improve services and facilities it will attract more development and investment

It is important to maintain and enhance services to ensure Newcastle continues to be a great place to live and work.

It is logical

It is most unjust that Newcastle as a regional centre is expected to shoulder the burden of maintaining services such as a reference library and art gallery which are in fact there to benefit the whole region. This is in addition to all the usual facilities and services ratepayers are entitled to expect. However, since it is the interests of all Novocastrians - for sound commercial, educational reasons and for the enjoyment of all - it seems we have little choice but to fund them and make them as relevant to residents as the beaches and sports grounds. What Council needs to do is to ensure these institutions achieve a standard of excellence and to continually make a case for more state funding for these important regional assets.

It makes the council financially viable.

Of course council could also stop providing services that the public don't value - and charge for services that are provided, such as the art gallery (sporting clubs should be free to use council assets or the art gallery should be a paid service - there is too much of a contradiction otherwise).

It may help NSW catch up to the rest of Australia for better infrastructure. Scrap the rate peg

It means that improvements to the City can be done quicker.

It needs to be done - however more needs to be done to obtain state government support for regional assets such as Museums and Art Galleries.

It needs to be done, so do it, but DO IT PROPERLY AND DONT WASTE MONEY

It will enable Newcastle to grow and progress, with services and facilities available where needed.

It will mean that there will be improvements a lot sooner rather than later.

It would allow council to provide a better level of service, better facilities and better programs in the community. I would like to see the council more involved in advocating and supporting creative industries and artists through a number of new grant programs with mentorship. I would like to see the council fund more infrastructure projects too, as the state is currently out of touch with the local community, not delivering the programs or infrastructure that we actually want it need. Council is simply much better at consultation.

It's a moderate difference to achieve what the city needs. My concern is that it will be wasted in red tape and over paying contractors to be honest. Be more efficient and I'm supportive.

Its a relatively small increase compared to the current rates charged. It also a small tax increase when compared to Federal taxes I pay.

Its been LONG overdue for the council to get with the times and modernise Newcastle. Its amazing to see the projects going on and I don't want to lose momentum

It's extremely important that the revitalisation of Newcastle progresses as quickly as possible so that the area can live up to its full potential. It appears obvious that option 1 isn't a real option, so rates are inevitably going to increase above the minimum. In my particular situation, the difference between an average increase of \$81 and \$101 is negligible (although I realise this isn't the case for everyone). In my view, Council might as well go with the more expensive option, provided that the money is actually used in the proposed way.

it's important to provide for the ratepayers and make us proud to live in Newcastle - not just stay in surplus for the sake of it

It's not that much money per year against the benefits provided.

Its the best option outside of starting up revenue generating business.

It's the right thing to do for future generations and is a modest cost.

Let's get the problems fixed, improve infrastructure and ease the overall burdon on Council.

Lets get this city going to ensure a highly presentable safe environment for all to enjoy.

Like to have efficient and well run services and would like to see city improvements

Long term sustainability services improvement

Mad if we don't support our local council to improve at all times. It's common sense we as a community need to help support.

Maintains & improves services

Make all the financial fussing go away and get on with the job.

make Newcastle a better place to live and visit

<p>Many parts of the city are in dis repair. Both roads and buildings especially the city hall. However enough of the manic narrowing the streets with concrete. This will all need to be removed in a few years The one on Northcote Drive is ridiculous. It should have been a pedestrian traffic light. Far safer for children and traffic. Who makes these decisions?</p>
<p>mORE CHANCE OF DELIVERY OF IMPROVEMENTS. eVERYONE IN nEWCASTLE HAS TO WAKE UP TO THAT</p>
<p>More money for city improvements</p>
<p>NCC should be leading city revitalisation (improved amenities, foot paths, street signs, street lighting)</p>
<p>Need to have services in the future.</p>
<p>Need to move into the future in terms of service provision and updating current facilities etc. Treading water does not promote improved lifestyle/services, which in turn does not attract visitors/new residents to Newcastle in years to come.</p>
<p>Newcastle has been stagnant for many reasons for many years. I believe Council has allowed the city to deteriorate. If we increase rates now and get business back to the city the income to Council should improve.</p>
<p>Newcastle has improved markedly in the past 2 years, finally something is happening! Want to see this continue</p>
<p>Newcastle has significant potential for bright future, but getting there will require investment. I see Council service upgrades as a important part of this.</p>
<p>Newcastle has so much "unused" potential- ie BHP unused land etc</p>
<p>Newcastle has so much potential, but revitalisation of the city heart is key. The council has proven it can do good public works with the beach boardwalk renovation and I support more of this style of spending that improves the city for all.</p>
<p>Newcastle is a dump, run down for years Rates are small anyway We need a better city I am highly offended by council management who have chopped down the Laman figs (waste of my rates), lost art gallery redevelopment funds and not rejuvenated Hunter St (which was supposed to have happened with the last rate increase)</p>
<p>Newcastle is a great city that can be greater</p>
<p>Newcastle is a very poor city with a lot of revitalisation needed. It needs tourism, state assistance, and private sponsorship. Increase in rates is limited.D</p>
<p>Newcastle is a world class city and our services, infrastructure etc need to reflect that. For too many years things have gone not maintained, serviced, improved and now we have a back log of areas to get on track. I want to be able to enjoy the city with my kids and visitors.</p>
<p>Newcastle is in desperate need of a good bit of tlc. it's literally crumbling before our eyes. Brig the life and love back to our beautiful newie ❤️</p>
<p>Newcastle is very run down. When I visit Bendigo where I used to live the difference in the facilities is amazingly better there.</p>
<p>Newcastle must have a future. It needs to attract business, grow jobs and promote tourism. Option 3 contributes to this strategy. The only exceptions should be for those on benefit/hardship payments and pensioners.</p>
<p>Newcastle needs improving</p>
<p>Newcastle needs major work done to bring it up to speed with facilities and infrastructure of other large cities around the world. We are, physically, a beautiful city but our potential is being blocked by indecision and old fashion ideas!!!!</p>
<p>Newcastle needs revitalisation. we cannot continue to ignore our crumbling infrastructure</p>
<p>Newcastle needs revitalising as it already has so much to offer.</p>
<p>Newcastle needs the money.</p>

Newcastle needs to be better funded. I would like to see more council jobs created and a better Newcastle for everyone who visits or lives here. We have a great city with fantastic people but a lot of the amenities are old, or non existent. The children of Newcastle deserve great play areas, and everyone deserves great places for recreation. Newcastle has so much to offer everyone, and if all it takes to 'revitalise' this city is an \$100 per year, then what are we waiting for?
Newcastle needs to continue to improve and provide better facilities. Blackbutt and the ocean pathway are excellent examples of great facilities for the enjoyment of citizens and importantly for tourists. Continued renewal of the city should be a priority.
Newcastle needs to get into the 21st Century. Therefore more finances are needed to be spent sensibly as well as reduce debt. Please look at other council areas to see what can be done. e.g. The Strand in Townsville, Airlie Beach waterfront, Burleigh Heads waterfront, Geelong waterfront.
Newcastle needs to go ahead not stagnate
Newcastle needs to have money spent on it to improve services, facilities and its tourist potential
Newcastle needs urban redevelopment
Newcastle needs long term benefits would outweigh the short term pain a significant injection of funds to make it attractive.
No more excuses
No one seems to be happy as things stand, better to charge more and value add to services to give people a visible outcome I think.
Nobody want to pay higher rates, but I understand that to improve services it is essential
number 3 gives the council the ability to achieve an end to projects, as long as the council continues on its current path of not wasting money the way previous councils have. thinking back to civic park trees, the big rock on the coast. council should charge entry fees for the art gallery, user pays. thank you
p
pay a bit more to improve services and make the city more attractive
Prefer to get things done and council to be financial
Pride in our great city
Provision of services are important to the people of newcastle and this cannot be done without adequate levels of funding.
Regardless of the reasons the council is in this current financial state, this is a great city to live in, and I believe that most of its ratepayers can easily fund getting the council back on track based on the three options presented. (I'm sure there are other revenue/cost recovery options that have not been presented in this survey)
Residents should have an obligation to fund the provision of new infrastructure and the maintenance of, for future generations. Newcastle requires funding for revitalisation projects.
Revitalisation, especially in the cbd, is essential for Newcastle to grow.
Rises are necessary to provide better services to rare payers. I have no issue with these rises as long as services continue to improve.
Seems value for money over the second option i.e for an extra \$20 you get improvements
Services and facilities are vital to making Newcastle a dynamic city for the future
Services need to be improved- libraries, roads, footpaths need to be built and the art gallery should be improved.
Services/ facilities are vital and must be funded.
So much needs to be done, NCC needs to get on top of the backlog.
So that the City Of Newcastle can reach its full potential for its residents and for the visitors we will undoubtedly bring in by our improved facilities, services and reputation.
So that the existing facilities can be properly maintained and that new facilities may be built. The only down side is if the council gets the increase and a lot of it is spent on wages and more staff
So that we (Council) does not fall behind again and projects can be completed and service levels can be improved into the future. We need better facilities, including for the Art Gallery, and an environment that makes life more fulfilling.

<p>State government cost shifting has meant deterioration of services we expect as normal being burdened on Council. Newcastle needs to move ahead not sit stagnant and just survive.</p>
<p>The amount of additional rates to be paid is very small and the benefits seem large. But please don't over-develop Newcastle. What makes Newcastle attractive is low-rise and its cultural aspect, in a similar way Dublin is very attractive and has benefitted from not being over-developed. We don't need more expensive apartments, that is not development. Se need to genuinely improve Newcastle.</p>
<p>The better it is to live here, the happier I will be! If services are improved our quality of life improves! Paying \$101 extra is a small price to pay.</p>
<p>The biggest questions here is: do you pay rates? Are you a home owner. In this case I am. I see this rate rise as an investment on my residential investment to ensure longterm growth and success of the city, ultimately increasing real estate prices. Better services and facilities, happier the residents, better the growth</p>
<p>the CBD needs work, and thus funds</p>
<p>The city has needs for additional parklands, and capital works on walking and cycling paths, neglected heritage sights, structures and buildings,substantial extensions to the Art Gallery, improvements to the Museum, completion of renovations to the Ocean Baths, further landscaping and greening of Hunter Street, and other expenditure to maintain existing infrastructure and construct new infrastructure. This will not be achieved without dramatic increase in rates. It is also needed to overcome the disadvantage the city has because of the high incidence in the City of rate concessions for pensioner ratepayers.</p>
<p>The city is a disgrace, the parks are a disgrace, the roads are a disgrace. Council should get off its arse and start by cleaning the streets of accumulated rubbish, get the road sweepers out every day as used to happen years ago, wash the streets down as used to happen years ago. Get rid of the clowns who can only count beans and are "yes" people and stop treating the ratepayers as idiots.</p>
<p>The city is at the threshold of change and Council being in a position to move and cope with the change will leave a legacy for generations to come. The ambivalence and apathy of the last generation should not compromise the opportunity for the next generation if there is a feasible pathway financially and operationally to address the situation.The increase will personally cost me well above the 'average' rate increase but I believe the initiative is justified.</p>
<p>The city is fairly dead after 9pm and while there are many attractions there needs to be continued revitalisation of the centre and suburbs. Im very keen to see a review of licensing laws as the current laws make it difficult for the city to develop.</p>
<p>The city needs a lot of work.</p>
<p>The city needs revitalisation and obviously needs money to do that.</p>
<p>However my support for increased rates is contingent on the railway line remaining open all the way to Newcastle Station.</p>
<p>The city needs revitalization. If higher rates are the only way to do it, then option 3 is the way</p>
<p>The city needs to be maintained for the benefit of the whole city so we can all be proud of where we live.</p>
<p>The Council and the city need to be financially viable. I am willing to pay more for real results</p>
<p>The Council needs every cent of funding to cope with the many improvements and maintenance required. Also, with the planned revitalisation of the City an increase in population both itinerant and permanent is anticipated. At last, there appears to be an impetus for making our City more attractive for residents as well as to tourists.</p>
<p>the entire council area is a disgrace and needs immediate improvement- only achieved by spending money</p>
<p>The improved services for the community.</p>
<p>The level of increase over option 2 is minimal, given the additional benefits it will bring</p>
<p>The rate increase is insignificant compared to the beneficial outcomes for the community as a whole</p>
<p>The services to the community need to be maintained. I DO NOT support cutting the railway or allowing high rise buildings in the heritage areas of the city.</p>
<p>There are still many more things to be completed, so I'm supporting of increasing rates to do so. Preferably, reopen The Loft for youth, and update the art gallery. More bicycle paths are needed, to connect all parts of the city. The current upgrade to footpaths and cycleways are a good start.</p>

There has been so much time spent on talking about the revitalisation of Newcastle so if this means implementing it let's go ahead.
There is a lot to be done. In particular more wastebins in public places to avoid littering. Also to repair the Bogey Hole with a more lasting construction for summer. Would also have liked more shady trees in Nesca Park. I really like the ongoing work to make the coastal walk from Merewether to Nobby's, this is truly great work and a benefit to all Newcastle residents. Thank you for this effort. On issue though, is that there needs to be public toilets somewhere up at Strezslecki lookout as there are so many people camping there, it is disgusting some times after a weekend.
There is no other way. Council has to be more efficient and, hopefully, this is starting to occur.
There is pressing need to maintain current buildings and infrastructure, and also to meet then costs of upgrading the art gallery, upgrading the Regional Library Local History, to improve swimming pools etc there needs to be more work done to improve the urban environment.
There's lots needing to be done. I don't agree with many of Council's priorities and decisions but agree we need the funds to improve Newcastle. If we are going to address climate change and environmental sustainability (which I believe are important priorities) we need funds to address them.
Things will get done, not left on the shelf
This is the strangest survey you could devise. How much did this cost? And how much will the report on non targeted answers cost you to review?
THIS TOWN IS DYING. WE NEED TO SPEND TO REVITALIZE.
This would encourage change in our city and lead to growth. We need this push to activate our city and encourage growth, particularly in employment.
To improve the city's liveability and amenity.
ultimate better outcome for all residents
Very important that public infrastructure and services be maintained, retained in public ownership , and improved where possible.
Want the city to move ahead and provide great services and lifestyles for generations to come.
We all want better services and infrastructure and a better Council. We must be prepared to pay for it.
We deserve much better living environment
We have a great Opportunity to make NEWCASTLE a great and enyoiable city to live in
We have fallen behind because of past inaction when there was money around. Outing it off shifts a greater cost burden to the future local economy needs stimulus now.
We live in a great place. We should fund it properly so that it is even better
We must get Ncle out of the shit
We need better services and better community engagement. Infrastructure needs improvement.
We need continual improvement in Newcastle, although as a ratepayer it would be great to have a choice in how those funds are spent.
We need the city and surrounds of better quality BUT we (the rate payers) need to have a say in where it is spent ie. NOT in increased wages & personnel at Council and get a better grip on tendering as Newcastle Council WASTES SO MUCH MONEY ... look at the Newcastle Baths fiasco and you have NOONE else to blame. You have had cover up on cover up on waste of monies and Novocastrians see it for what it is and that's why they don't like nor trust Council.
We need to become a viable council again and if we are not getting a fair share of the sale of our harbour we have to do it ourselves as usual
We need to improve our great city and this is the best way forward - it will hurt paying more as I have 11 properties in the Newcastle council area but worth it
We need to invest in the future of Newcastle
We need to maintain and improve our existing facilities and provide funding for new facilities and programmes. This will only improve our lifestyle. I am for the increase if I see the dollars working. More community centres offering health and wellness programmes, revitalizing green and other public spaces; providing funds to essential programmes. All of this is needed and we need to raise funds to make this place an even better place to live. I'm all for expanding the free bus zone area to extend to Hunter TAFE, expanding the bike lanes. I will pay more if I see the money being used wisely and I feel and notic the benefits. If nothing is being done with these funds, then we should have the money back.

we need to progress
we should take pride in the city and have decent services
what is there else to do,got to come from some source
Whilst not having any confidence that NCC are capable of steering us down this path either the sustainability or revitalisation options seem the best path.....I do think NCC have other options for cost cutting which involve efficiency rather than hitting the rate payer for more money!!
Will be better at coping with increased population in Newcastle.
Work needs to be done - paying less will reduce the level of service or compromise quality and / or extend the timeframe. Extensions to time will cause delays to future works
work needs to be done & services need to be provided. AS I understand it, the councils main source of income is form rates. Someone has to pay for the services to be provided and the infrastructure work that needs to be completed
would like to see continued re-vitalisation of newcastle, especially the beaches.
Would like to see improved services/ revitalisation activities
You get what you pay for! You can't do the best for Newcastle with no money. And I speak as an aged pensioner.
You need reserves to be able to get a head and deliver change, the covet to my support for option 3 is that the extra money needs to be able to be tied to actual deliverables.

Appendix 7a-Reasons for preferring Option 1- Take no action (feedback slip)

Any business that knows almost exactly what its income will be for the following year should be able to work with these figures
As an aged pensioner I am struggling with ever increase
Bad admin in the financial section was caused the latest developments - no more rate rises
Bring back the administrator
Bring on the by election for mayor
cant afford
Council needs to better manage regular income. Make do with existing facilities (like the Art Gallery)
Council should be dissolved
Council should concentrate on the basics and not get involved in matters for State and Federal. Basics: waste, roads, footpaths, park, ovals, libraries
Council should look at efficiencies rather than unjustified increases in rates
Don't understand why our rates need to be increased due to the incompetence of this council. The money that has been wasted is mind boggling
Don't unnecessary take out the rail, be more efficient with your spending, eliminate top heavy admin and overtime for employee. Change the property levy to developers and don't see assets that generate income
Enough with raising our rate
Further sale of assets to make up cash shortfall. We already pay high rates. Further waste cut back outdoor staff, improve efficiency
I am a widower on one pension it's very hard to pay all the bills and to buy food. I'll have to sell up and rent.
I am extremely disappointed that council does not address residential noise due to cost cutting.
I am on a disability pension and struggle to pay my current rates of \$1,160pa (with rebate). If you increase the amount (by up to 50%) I will not be able to pay it. Council needs to manage its current funds more sustainably the big tree fiasco wasted millions of dollars and currently a no. of councillors including the lord mayor have been stood down for corruption. Don't expect rate payers to throw more money at such an inept and wasteful council.
I cant afford it
I have a casual income and cant afford any increase in cost of living. Council should reduce its services to match its income...same as I do
I have paid Council rates since I was 22yrs old, always owned a property, and have never felt we get our monies worth. So I say leave it, I have paid enough over the years, they have just planted trees in our street. What a waster of money, we have bush all around us.
I pay enough in roundout keeping councils weeds from growing over my back fence
I think council gets enough it needs to control senior management salaries better.
I think I already pay more than enough
If NCC actually demonstrated that it spend money effectively instead of continually asking it on removing fig trees, markets that failed etc etc.
If we cant maintain current services, why are we spending millions on the beach paths
Incompetence we cannot afford
Invest in dividends producing enterprises
Its difficult to think that all the fat has been cut from the present system. Stop the state passing on their expenses

Its robbery and stinks. Ask the government for money or see you at court
Just do not trust council
Keep the rate rise in line with CPI like the Pension
Keep within your own budget
Live with in means
Living on one wage is difficult enough without an increase in our rates. Council needs to plan better and function more efficiently
More should be done in the outer suburbs of newcastle ie (Footpaths, speed humps) instead of worrying about the eastern end of newcastle, which they seem to get all the attention
Ncle Council is a disgrace take a long hard look at our old Lord Mayor Jeff McCloy and politicians- what they have done! Not Happy!!
Need to operate more effciently
Need to rebate pensioners
No move rate increase. Perhaps council should review its internal spending and find cost savings there.
No rate raises, I object to funding e.g. Art Gallerys. If people want outings of this kind they should pay through their wallet, not rate payers.
Our rates paid for Redundancy for 90 people you let go.\
Pensioner
Pensioners are struggling now and under pressure now. We should be cutting costs and waste first.
Priorities are Wrong
Rate payers for 2291 should not have to pay extr for bad management of funds and decisions made over many past years, to much corruption in these important position on our council. Get it righ for god sake
Rates should not ne determined by value of your land. Everyone uses the facilities, everybody should pay the same.
Rather than upping our rates, why not ensdure exacting the proper and fair council contributions from the coal port and other mega-industries + developments - the ones who really place stain on infrastrucute
Rubbish collection is Necessary!!
Same old rhetoric, same old result
See unwanted property and stop wasting money
Sorry but we are on a pension
Spend money wise to benefit the community
Stop wasting and misusing out money you would not need to continually increase our rates
Too many in relation to council waste.
Waste of time
We appreciate what you have done and what you our doing now and in the future.
We appreciate what you have done and what you our doing now and in the future.
We are not getting value for money at current rates. Quote for driveway by council over \$6000, private contractor \$2100
We are on a pension and can't afford any rate rises. Lower rates something something something and we will have to sell our home and rent. You planted trees recently in front of our home and have them watered way too much. What a waste of money> we have the leaves something something driveway for us to clean up (illegible)
We are ready pay more then enough
We would gladly pay more to help our city, because of the economy being in such a state and we are pensioners, we are barly scraping through now.
Where is the option to decrease rates

Why is council spending money to revitalise the CBD? Like all other shopping presints if it cant stand on its wn two feet - the the people don't want it.
Why should the value of my land, which has no impact what so ever on the services that council delivers me, give the council the right to bleed me of cash, through jacked up rate levies
With recent increases how can land owners be expected to pay unacceptable increases
Without providing any detail of what sort of revitalisation will take place, how do you expect to get support for a rate variation. All of the statements are non comital with terms like increase which provides nothing concrete
Work within your budget
Work within your current means, like all of us rate-payers do on a daily basis. There are no payrises for us when we need things done.
Work witin your budget
Yes cut back on services to the wanky Greens and act proactively when making decisions. Stop pandering to the minority.
You bunch of no hopers sell all your proper - ties you have lying around. Eg Post office, doing nothing. You have killed newcastle. Eg shortland esplanade and hunter st a bloody disgrace. Get on with it or get out.
You got rid of the better Lord Mayor we've had in years

Appendix 7b-Reasons for preferring Option 2- Fund financial sustainability (feedback slip)

1. Do not waste money on parking officials 2. Use Assets not disposal 3. Can private business fund Bus shelters 4. Revitalise Hunter St ..what a joke!
2 & 3 will impact heavily on pensioners and those on fixed incomes.
A person with shares or owner of development company should not be allowed to stand for office to become a councillor, politician or mayor. A) corruption B) collusion C) conflict of interest. Full penalties of law should apply to those caught and a ban from being able o engage in politics for five years.
Appreciate the offer of 3 options
costs are head enough now for pensioners.
Don't ignore the other surburbs
Don't make it too expensive to live in Newcastle
Eliminate conflict of interest, collusion and corruption. Involve residents in development planning more.
Forget Hunter Street, its passe. Historical significance only
Have to trust in what you say desoite recent debacles ie ICAC, Rail and Art Gallery
I believe that NCC is still top heavy when it is compared with the structure of 60s and 70s
I think its unfair to incease by a % when we get the same services from council regardless where we live
I would of said yes to no 3 fund revitalisation but I "do not" trust you lot to do the right thing.
If the rate rise goes through, make sure that the first thing we hear about isnt people getting pay rises
Keep rail as is. Build overpass at Stewart Ave.
Keep wage increases to CPI
Maintenance of footpath and roads should be manatory and always included as part of councils maintenance budget each year
Make sure money is spent evenly in all council areas
Make sure the money is evenly distributed throughout the city
My preference would be Option 3, but my uncertainty as to councils effeciency, productivity and ability to monitor revitatisation
Need to be carefully financially for pensioners
Need to manage Council like a small to medium business
Not really much of a choice, rate payers stung again because of previous councils actions
Option 3 out of reach for pensioners
Pensioner
Please look after the Civic Theatre
Please spend our money wisely, for benefits of all residents. Cycleways only cater for vocal minority. Fix traffic problems in Elemore Vale, esp. Croudace Rd
Privatise such things as swimming pools, aged care and child care and any such unprofitable infrastrucutre
Reduce staff levels, we need more volunteers
Revitalisation is too offer destruction of infrastructure, Waste of money moving bus seats, Walk safe sign really a necessary also should read walk safely!
Revitalisation needs to be reviewed in terms of heigh limits in cbd and appropriateness of light rail in hunter st (Hunter St too narrow at its top end)
Seems like a big step between 2 &3, I would have voted for 2 1/2
Spend more time lobbying to gain a fairer share of government funding
Stop wasting money on improving council depot staff car parks and mowing on weekends

Traffic can not get out of Birmingham gardens in peak hours. Big pile ups in newcastle rd and croudance st. Coal dust comes in windows in north lambton, life savers needed and no high rises.

We disagree with selling off valuable assets, management of merewether and Newcastle baths should remain with council

WE need the heavy rail to remian, we don't need the walkway along the coast cliffs...what a waste of money

We the rate payer require you to manage our resources eg. Money as best as you can at the same time reduce waste and become more productuve/efficient

With increasing costs of home isurance, plus other day to day expenses it would be extremely difficult for many families to meet increased costs at any level. Opt 3 must not be implemented

Would like a footpath on coolamin rd and rd resurfed on lambton between coolamin rd and edith st waratah

Appendix 7c-Reasons for preferring Option 3- Fund revitalisation (feedback slip)

1= Drown, 2=Tread water, 3- swim for it. Lets do 3!!!
Any Improvements are better then none
Benefits of rares. Leaflet- no mention of Council staff receiving a living wage. Leaflet does not mention 2015 reevaluation by valuer-general of land
Develop our city wisely
Do not support the rail truncation, massive waste of money to result in travel chaos
Don't out source our waste services. NCC employees are valued by our community. We need our garbo's. I believe we need to pay more as rate payers to sustain, improve and streamline many local government services
Ensure rail corridor is kept
Extra funds must not be wasted and must clearly be allocated to real projects that benefit all Newcastle ratepayers
Fix up sports ovals, especially old wooden Grandstands at Townson Oval merewether
Go for it!
Happy to pay extra rates provided beresfield is revitalised as well
Honest Councillors, no more gross waste of money
Hunter St top end is a disgrace.
If we pay more for our rates, then get rid of 'paying for parking' in the newcastle CBD on Sunday
Im supportive of increasing rates to make newcastle a modern and vibrant city
Improve roads and curbs and gutters in mayfield
It is essential to improve/renew our future infrastrucutre and property maintain them
It would be great to see a clean working city again. Definitely improve local parks
Its time to take Newcastle City forward. Too much in action be self interest groups and labour party members
Keep moving forward Newcastle!
Keep our libraries funded
Labour cap was a labour party folly, I was against it from day 1
Leave the rail line as is
Let's get it done- make sure we don't waste it
Make Newcastle the University city of Australia
Modernize and update Newcastle Libraries very important
More should be done to get a greater share from the sale of the Port
Need a dedicated bike/cycle path along corrido when truncated at Wickham. Athletis track & tennis centre are in need of funding to improve
Newcastle has huge potential, time to look at the big picture and realise this.
Newcastle is a great place that has been managed poorly for years. We need public transport, cycleways, public spaces, revitalizing newcastle city
Newcastle must grow up and embrace change. We need to be know as the city of beaches and gardens
Only if the money is spent on our community and not paying off debts from past mistakes (figtrees, subprime etc)
Option 3 is preferred IF that revitatisation involves restoring youth services such as the Loft, and expanding the Newcastle Art Gallery to protect one of Newcastle's greatest assets
Pain for Gain

Please complete cycle lopp along stockton beach so that you can cycle right around stockton
Please do somehting to makes us proud of Newcastle again. Don't listen to the knockers
Please give priority to building cycle/walkway along the seaside fence of stockton caravan park between the breakwall and surf club.
Pprovide the priority list most important adress the whole community issues. 1. Pedestrian and local traffic projects 2. Implement and extend existng laws where building and land owners complete there projects and improve their assets 3. Listen to the community groups 4. Keep cyclist safe Not on pedestrian footpaths 5. Target the media and stat and federal gvts to focus the city's worth as the 2nd largest city in NSW
Provided this doesn't fund increase beaurocracy
Revitalisation is essential for the future of the city
Revitalise Newcastle, but please don't cut the rail
Seems to be common sense to choose option 3
Strong leadership, do it, don't delay the improvements
Take action - do not cut the rail line into Newcastle
Tell the people the truth, er are not stupid and understand finance
Th long ago move to the stat government to restrict rate rises was a bad move
The light rail must go ahead. What about ferry services to Throsbie creek
The public needs to have input into the way the money is spent
This could be the best city in the world...if the money was spent in the right way
This is for our Children and Grant Children
To take no action means "to regress"
Trusting council will do the right thing is a challenge due to everything that has happened - but I am willing to give it a go
We don't need debt, we do need responsible citizens
We need to fund Newcastle to make it make it into a well maintained, vibrant city.
Work should be done NOW and will cost less in the future. We need to revitalise newcastle from its run down appearance
You must have money to do what needs to be done