



Final Report to:
Nambucca Shire Council

**From: James Parker
Jetty Research Pty. Ltd.**

Project:
**Customer Satisfaction Survey
Conducted November 2007**



Report dated: December 21st 2007

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Front cover picture: Nambucca Heads street mosaic. Photo used with permission of mosaic's sculptor, Guy Crosley

Executive Summary

In September 2007 Nambucca Shire Council commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a customer satisfaction survey of residents within the Local Government Area (LGA).

The survey was designed to help Nambucca Shire Councillors and management understand the local community's satisfaction towards, and importance of Council-run facilities and services. Other goals included assisting Council plan future service priorities, and allowing it to benchmark customer satisfaction for internal management purposes. (For full list of objectives, see page 6).

The survey, carried out between November 5th and 19th from Jetty Research's Coffs Harbour call centre, was conducted as a random phone poll of 400 adults who had lived in the shire for a minimum of one year. (For breakdown of respondent characteristics, see pages 7-8)

Based on the Shire's adult population of 13,741¹ and a random survey sample of 400 people, results for the poll should reflect the behaviour and attitudes of the overall adult population of the Shire to within a margin for error of +/- 4.8 per cent at the 95 per cent level of confidence.

Among the major findings of the survey:

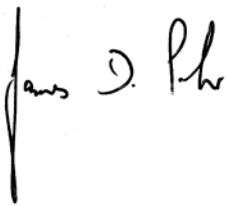
1. When 26 Council-run services and facilities were measured on a matrix of satisfaction vs. importance, seven were judged as "high importance, low satisfaction". These comprised: sealed roads, estuary management, environmental monitoring and protection, public toilets, footpaths and cycleways, youth activities, and bridges. A further four fell into the low importance, low satisfaction quadrant: unsealed roads, development applications, economic development and investment attraction, and weed control. The remaining 15 facilities and services were deemed "high" in terms of satisfaction levels. **(Pages 9-11)**
2. When queried on their overall satisfaction with Council's performance, respondents provided a mean score of 3.08 on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 was very dissatisfied and 5 was very satisfied.) Overall 34 per cent were satisfied (i.e. scoring 4 or 5) against 26 per cent who were dissatisfied (i.e. scoring 1 or 2) and the rest being neutral. When asked to explain their low scores, those critical of Council's overall performance struggled to articulate a clear reason for their dissatisfaction. **(Pages 12-13)**
3. Some 69 per cent of respondents had had contact with Council over the previous 12 months either through a personal visit to the administration centre, written communication (excluding rates and water notices etc.), phone or Internet.² Satisfaction levels with Council staff - again using a 5-point scale - were high across all forms of contact, ranging from 3.48 for written communication to 4.09 for personal visits. **(Pages 14-20)**
4. When asked in an unprompted, open-ended question how they would spend a hypothetical \$5 million general use grant, major Community priorities included roads (with 128 mentions), youth services (76), bridges (56), estuary and/or break wall (49), skate park (48), and footpaths (36). The emphasis on youth services is significant given that almost half the survey sample was aged 60 or more. **(Page 21)**

¹ ABS Census 2006

² In fact the actual figure would be higher than this, as the "visits to NSC administration centre" question covered a 6- rather than 12-month period.

5. Over three-quarters (76 per cent) of respondents agreed that Council should allocate resources to lowering local unemployment. Major methods by which respondents thought this should be done included attracting employers to the region, assisting local businesses expand and grow, encouraging further tourism and retail, and assisting new business start-ups. Respondents were more uncertain about the merits of encouraging further population growth, or attracting developers. **(Pages 22-23)**
6. There was a wide range of attitudes on the desirability of further development in the Shire. On a 10-point scale of support or opposition to development, 25 per cent of respondents collectively classed themselves as pro-, with 39 per cent saying they were anti-. Respondents were more likely to be extremely opposed than extremely supportive, with 18 per cent giving scores of 1 or 2 against just 3 per cent scoring themselves as 9 or 10 on the development spectrum. **(Page 24)**
7. Conversely there was strong community support for initiatives designed to improve the state of local roads. Some 90 per cent of those surveyed agreed Council need to spend more on roads, and on a "lowest rates vs. best roads" spectrum, 49 per cent placed themselves on the "roads" side against just 15 per cent on the rates side (the balance being neutral). As further evidence of this commitment, just over three-quarters of respondents said they were prepared to pay a special rate levy to fund road and bridge maintenance. **(Pages 26-28)**
8. Some in the community are confused about the differing responsibilities of each level of government. This was displayed in general comments **(Pages 35-39)** seeking Council activity in areas such as health, policing and the Pacific Highway/Macksville Bridge. While such confusion would hardly be unique to the Nambucca Shire, there may nonetheless be further work required in educating residents as to the extent and limitations of Council responsibilities.

The survey indicates clearly that the community believes Council needs to do more about local infrastructure (in particular roads, bridges and footpaths/cycleways), environmental protection, estuary management and youth services. Beyond that residents appear moderately satisfied with Council's performance, and there were no glaring issues that arose as causes of resident dissatisfaction.

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

James Parker, B. Ec. Grad Cert. Applied Science (Stats)
Managing Director, Jetty Research
December 19th 2007

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Introduction

Objectives

The Nambucca Shire Council 2007 Customer Satisfaction Survey was commissioned by Councillors and management in August 2007 with the following objectives:

1. To measure the importance of, and satisfaction with services and facilities provided by Council;
2. To assist Council in identifying future service and infrastructure priorities for the community;
3. To benchmark Council service levels for internal management purposes;
4. To identify community attitude towards a 2 per cent special rate variation to fund ongoing maintenance of roads and bridges;
5. To measure community attitudes towards local government action regarding environmental, social and/or economic change.

Methodology

The survey was conducted using a random phone poll of 400 residents aged 18+ who had lived in the Shire for at least one year. Respondents were selected using a random number generator from phone prefixes 5654-, 5658- and 5659-. A survey form was constructed collaboratively between Council management and Jetty Research (see Appendix 1), based on satisfying Council's objectives and allowing limited benchmarking with similar surveys conducted by other regional Councils.

The survey was conducted between November 5th and 19th from Jetty Research's Coffs Harbour Call Centre, with a team of five researchers calling Nambucca residents Monday to Thursdays from 3.30 to 8pm. Where phones went unanswered or diverted to answering machines, researchers phoned on up to three occasions at different times of the afternoon or evening. The poll was conducted on a purely random basis, with no quota sampling applied.

The survey incorporated a wide range of question-types to maximise both usefulness and respondent interest. These included rating style questions (typically using a 5-point Likert scale), "yes/no" or "agree/disagree" questions, semantic differentials (i.e. questions that force a choice between opposing priorities), an unprompted hypothetical question, and questions seeking open-ended comments.

Survey length was budgeted at 15 minutes per completed questionnaire. Actual survey time varied from 9 to 22 minutes, with an average of 16.5 minutes. Response rate was excellent, with approximately 40 per cent of those households reached agreeing to participate.

Completed surveys were checked for consistency and then entered into statistical database software SPSS for analysis. Ten per cent of forms were subsequently audited for data entry accuracy.

Sampling error

According to the 2006 ABS Census the total adult population of the Nambucca Shire Local Government Area was 13,741 people. A random sample of 400 residents aged 18 or above hence implies a margin for error of +/- 4.8 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level.

(This means that if we conducted a similar poll twenty times, results should reflect the views and behaviour of the overall survey population to within a +/- 4.8 per cent margin in 19 of those 20 surveys.)

Margin for error obviously rises as sample size falls. Hence cross-tabulations within the overall sample will typically create much higher margins for error than the overall sample. Using the above population sizes, a sample size of 200 exhibits a margin for error of +/- 6.8 per cent (again at the 95 per cent confidence level).

Sample characteristics

As shown below, the random survey sample represented a healthy mix of ages, genders and locations. Population benchmarks against the 2006 ABS Census are described briefly on the following page, and in more detail on pages 28-32.

Table A: Breakdown of respondents by age, gender and location

Residence * Age * Gender Crosstabulation

Count			Age			Total
Gender			18-39	40-59	60+	
Male	Residence	Bowraville	0	5	1	6
		Eungai	2	5	3	10
		Nambucca	7	21	40	68
		Macksville	5	12	14	31
		Scotts Head	2	5	1	8
		Taylors Arm	0	1	3	4
		Valla	6	8	9	23
		Other	2	9	7	18
	Total		24	66	78	168
Female	Residence	Bowraville	4	6	8	18
		Eungai	0	6	2	8
		Nambucca	11	31	59	101
		Macksville	5	23	19	47
		Scotts Head	1	5	10	16
		Taylors Arm	0	1	3	4
		Valla	6	10	9	25
		Other	4	6	3	13
	Total		31	88	113	232

A breakdown of respondents shows the following demographic profile, against ABS 2006 Census benchmarks (where applicable):

Table B: Breakdown of survey population, benchmarked against 2006 Census data

Characteristic	Survey	2006 Census (where applicable)
Age	14% aged 18-39 38% aged 40-59 48 % aged 60+	23% aged 18-39 39% aged 40-59 38% aged 60+
Gender	42% male, 58% female	49% male 51% female
Urban vs. rural	49% urban 32% rural 19% village	(Self-described, hence ABS benchmark not applicable)
Ratepayers	79% ratepayers	73% owner-occupiers
Employment Status	36% in some form of paid employment	37% in some form of paid employment
Area of residence	42% Nambucca 20% Macksville 12% Valla 6% Bowraville 20% Other	35% Nambucca 22% Macksville 13% Valla 11% Bowraville 19% Other
Number of dependents	66% had none 26% had 1 or 2 8% had 3 or more	64% had no children living at home (i.e. excludes other types of dependents)
Aboriginal/TSI	3%	6%
Time living in shire	71% had lived in the Shire 5+ years	83% had lived in the Shire for 5+ years

Younger residents, those living in Bowraville and Aboriginals appear to have been slightly under-represented in the survey. Likely reasons for this are:

Younger residents	Lower penetration of telephone landlines among this age group;
Bowraville residents	Lower proportion of 5654- prefix numbers in use, leading to a higher ratio of unassigned numbers being called;
Aboriginals	As per Bowraville, given that indigenous residents make up 17 per cent of this town's population against 6.7 per cent for the LGA as a whole.

Although the survey was not designed as a quota-sample (i.e. designed to replicate the actual demographic profile of the survey population), and subject to the above considerations, I am nonetheless confident the sample chosen provides a healthy and largely representative mix of the overall Nambucca Shire LGA population.

Questions 1 and 2: Satisfaction with, and importance of various Council-run facilities and services

The survey began with researchers asking respondents to rate their satisfaction with 26 selected Council facilities or services, on a scale of 1-5 (where 1 was very poor and 5 was excellent). They were then asked how important the same Council facilities or services were to them, again using a 5-point scale (where 1 was very unimportant and 5 was very important).

Table 1.1: Mean scores of 26 selected facilities and services, ranked by customer satisfaction

	Satisfaction	Importance
Pool	4.20	3.89
Libraries	4.06	4.15
Water supply	4.00	4.63
Garbage/recycling	3.89	4.46
Sewage	3.84	4.41
Parks, reserves, playgrounds	3.52	4.14
Sporting facilities	3.50	3.84
Cleanliness	3.39	4.29
Saleyards	3.33	3.41
Public halls	3.28	3.77
Street Lighting	3.22	4.28
Dog control	3.13	3.97
Elderly services	3.08	4.30
Tourism promotion	3.06	4.00
Stormwater drains	3.01	4.29
Bridges	2.95	4.29
Footpaths/cycleways	2.80	4.28
Weed control	2.74	3.94
Economic development	2.73	4.00
Sealed roads	2.65	4.57
Development applications	2.62	3.86
Environ monitoring/protection	2.62	4.37
Public Toilets	2.52	4.29
Estuary mgmt	2.51	4.41
Unsealed roads	2.36	3.86
Youth activities	2.30	4.12

Table 1.2: Mean scores of 26 selected facilities and services, ranked by importance

	Satisfaction	Importance
Water supply	4.00	4.63
Sealed roads	2.65	4.57
Garbage/recycling	3.89	4.46
Sewage	3.84	4.41
Estuary mgmt	2.51	4.41
Environ monitoring/protection	2.62	4.37
Elderly services	3.08	4.30
Cleanliness	3.39	4.29
Stormwater drains	3.01	4.29
Bridges	2.95	4.29
Public Toilets	2.52	4.29
Street Lighting	3.22	4.28
Footpaths/cycleways	2.80	4.28
Libraries	4.06	4.15
Parks, reserves, playgrounds	3.52	4.14
Youth activities	2.30	4.12
Tourism promotion	3.06	4.00
Economic development	2.73	4.00
Dog control	3.13	3.97
Weed control	2.74	3.94
Pool	4.20	3.89
Development applications	2.62	3.86
Unsealed roads	2.36	3.86
Sporting facilities	3.50	3.84
Public halls	3.28	3.77
Saleyards	3.33	3.41

Graph 1.1: Matrix of satisfaction vs. importance

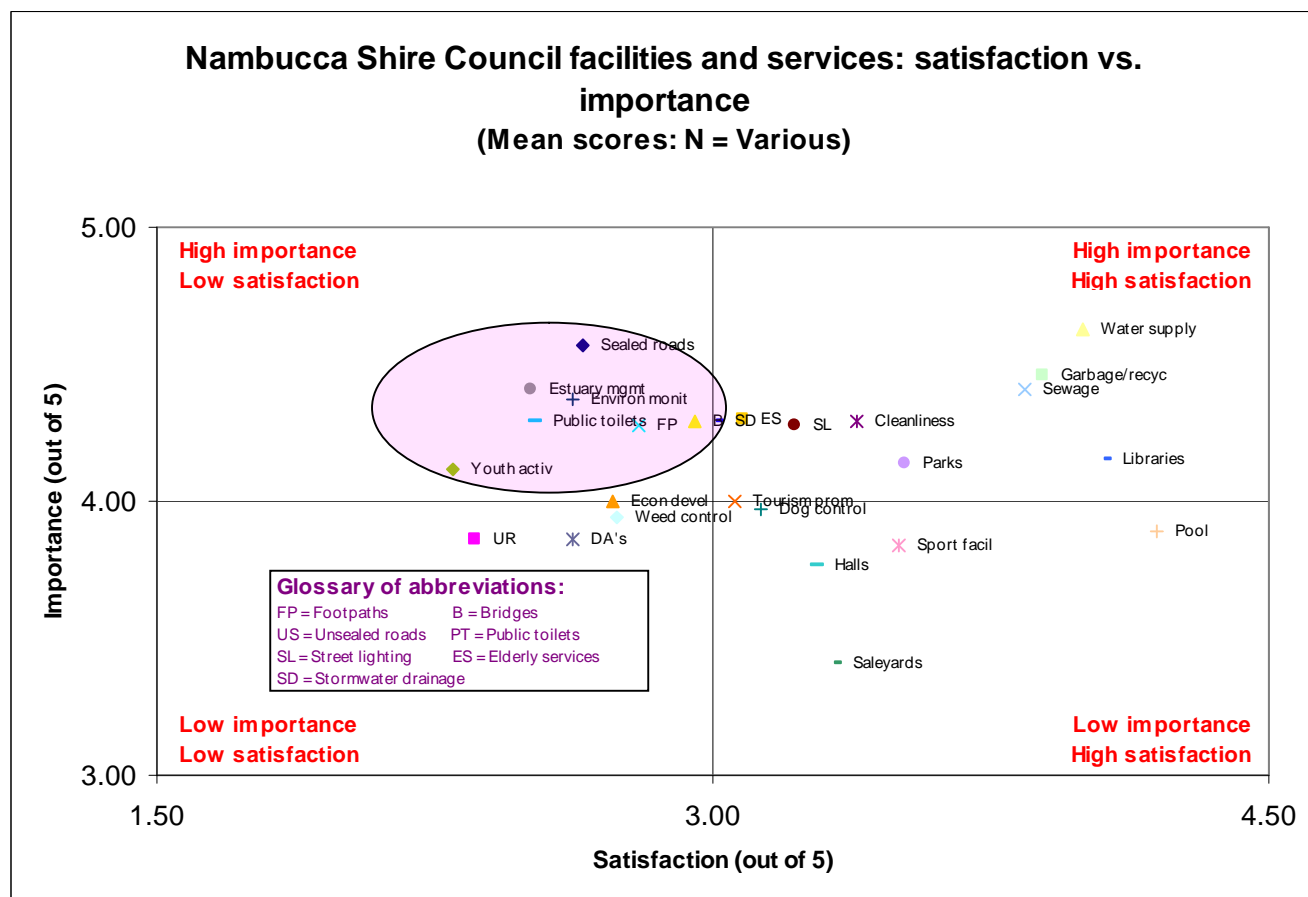


Table 1.3: Summary of satisfaction/importance matrix

High Importance, low satisfaction	High importance, high satisfaction
Sealed roads	Water supply
Estuary management	Garbage/recycling
Environmental monitoring	Sewage
Public Toilets	Cleanliness of streets
Footpaths/cycleways	Parks, reserves and playgrounds
Youth activities	Libraries
Bridges	Street lighting
	Elderly services
	Stormwater drains
Low importance, low satisfaction	Low importance, high satisfaction
Unsealed roads	Pool complex at Macksville
Development applications	Public halls
Economic development and investment attraction	Tourism and tourism promotion
Weed control	Dog Control
	Sporting facilities
	Saleyards

Table 1.4: Major differences between urban and rural residents in terms of satisfaction

Rural residents more satisfied	Net difference
Youth activities	0.31
Parks, reserves, playgrounds	0.30
Public Toilets	0.21
Sport facilities	0.21
Bridges	0.20
Stormwater drains	0.17
Cleanliness	0.15
Dog control	0.14
DA's	0.14
Saleyards	0.14
Urban residents more satisfied	Net difference
Weed control	-0.11
Unsealed roads	-0.19
Sewage	-0.20
Garbage/recycling	-0.20
Water supply	-0.20
Sealed roads	-0.27

Table 1.5: Major differences between urban and rural residents in terms of importance

Rural residents more important	Net difference
Saleyards	0.54
Weed control	0.43
Unsealed roads	0.39
Environmental protection	0.15
Bridges	0.11
Urban residents more important	Net difference
Street Lighting	-0.10
Libraries	-0.10
Garbage/recycling	-0.14
Youth activities	-0.14
Water supply	-0.18
Sport facilities	-0.20
Parks, reserves, playgrounds	-0.20
Halls	-0.20
DA's	-0.22

Comment:

On a matrix measuring mean (i.e. average) scores for satisfaction and importance (graph 1.1), seven of the 26 services and facilities mentioned emerged as potential trouble spots for Council. Sealed roads, estuary management, environmental monitoring and protection, public toilets, footpaths/cycleways, youth activities and bridges all lay within the “high importance, low satisfaction” quadrant, implying that these are issues of greatest community concern.

Conversely Council scored well in the “high satisfaction, high importance” areas of water, garbage/recycling, sewage, cleanliness of streets, parks, reserves and playgrounds, libraries, street lighting, elderly services and stormwater drains.

Overall the Macksville Pool complex scored the highest satisfaction score (at 4.20) while youth activities ranked lowest at 2.30. In terms of importance, water supply unsurprisingly sat at the top of the list with Council sale yards at the bottom (though this obviously doesn't imply that sale yards aren't of high importance to those who use or rely on them.)

Generally there weren't huge differences between priorities and satisfaction levels for urban and rural residents. However as tables 1.4 and 1.5 show, urban residents appear happier than their country colleagues with the state of roads, while rural residents were relatively happier with youth services, parks, reserves and playgrounds, public toilets and sports facilities.

Questions 3 and 4: Satisfaction with Council's overall performance

Respondents were asked to rank Council's overall performance on a scale of 1-5, where 1 was very dissatisfied and 5 was very satisfied. Those giving a score of 1 or 2 were then asked to briefly explain why they gave a low score.

Graph 3.1: Overall satisfaction scores

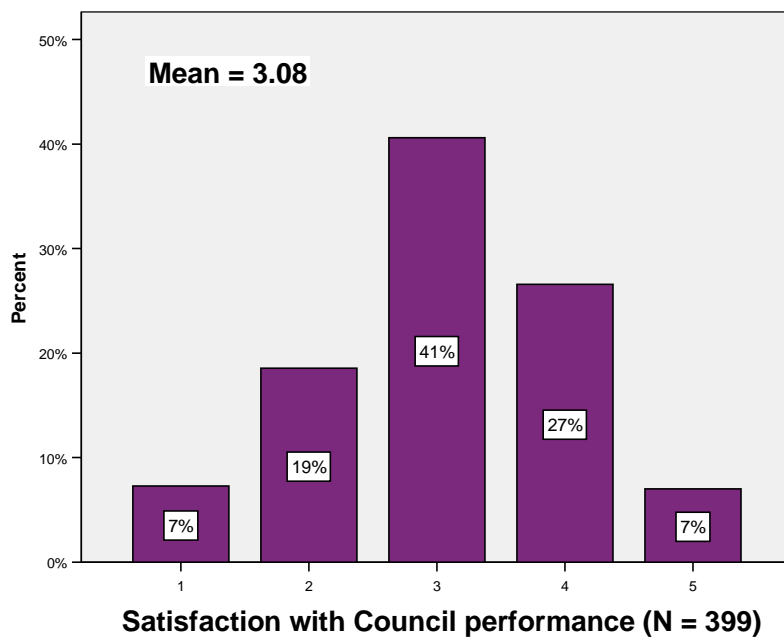


Table 3.1: Mean scores by area

Satisfaction with Council performance * Residence

Satisfaction with Council performance

Residence	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Bowraville	2.63	24	.824
Eungai	3.17	18	1.295
Nambucca	3.04	169	1.046
Macksville	3.29	77	.901
Scotts Head	2.88	24	1.262
Taylors Arm	3.38	8	1.188
Valla	3.17	48	.859
Other	3.00	31	.894
Total	3.08	399	1.010

Table 3.2: Mean scores by age

Report

Satisfaction with Council performance

Age	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
18-39	3.00	55	1.106
40-59	2.91	154	.938
60+	3.23	190	1.018
Total	3.08	399	1.010

Table 4.1: Main reasons given for low scores

Issue	Times mentioned
Council not doing enough	18
Condition of roads	17
Don't listen to community	17
Council's performance	12
Bridge conditions	11
Communication with community	9
Lack of footpaths	6

Comment:

Council achieved a mean score of 3.08 on the question of overall resident satisfaction. Similarly those who were generally positive (i.e. scoring Council as 4 or 5) outnumbered those who were generally negative (i.e. scoring it 1 or 2) by 34 per cent to 26.

Bowraville and Scotts Head residents were the only ones with a mean score of less than 3 (table 3.1), although these figures need to be treated with caution due to the much smaller sample sizes. There was, however, a statistically significant difference in satisfaction levels among different age groups (table 3.2), with older residents appearing the happiest with Council's performance.

When those who rated Council 1 or 2 were asked why they had offered a low score, they were hard-pressed to come up with anything too specific (Table 4.1). Apart from some infrastructure concerns (i.e. state of roads, bridges and footpaths, mentioned by 17, 11 and 6 respondents respectively) the main gripe surrounded communication and consultation. While such issues would hardly be confined to the Nambucca Shire, they may nonetheless deserve some further consideration by Council.

Questions 5-7: Visits to Council administration centre

Respondents were asked if they had visited the Nambucca Shire Council administration centre during the past six months. Those who had were asked the purpose of their most recent visit. They were also asked to rate the service they received on their most recent visit on a scale of 1-5, where 1 was very unsatisfactory and 5 was very satisfactory.

Graph 5.1: Have you visited the Nambucca Shire Council administration centre in the past six months?

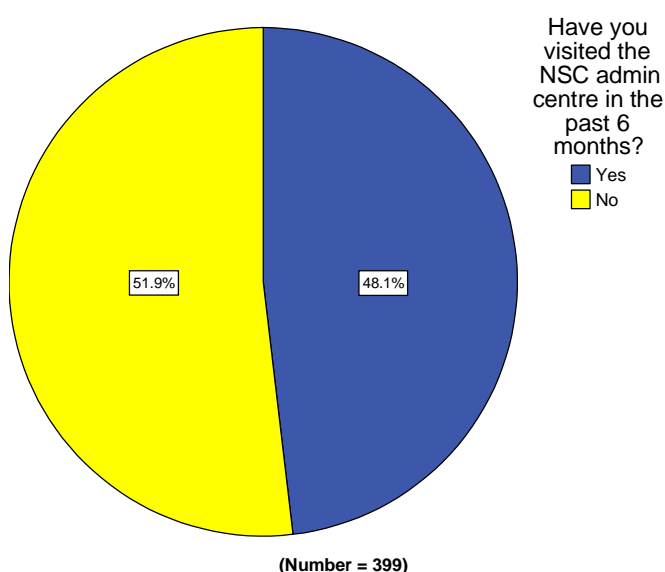
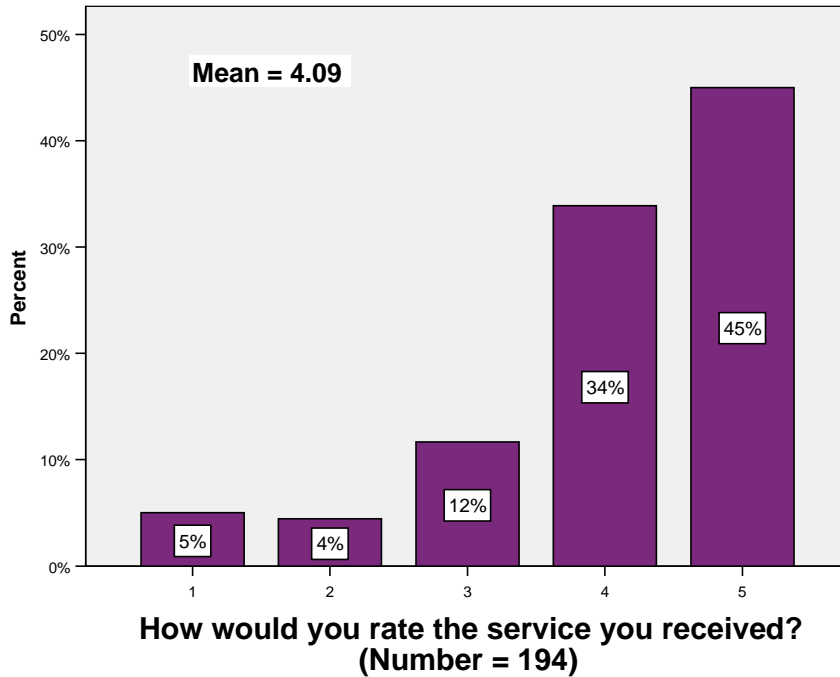


Table 6.1: Purpose of visits

What was the purpose of your last visit?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Pay rates	72	18.0	37.1	37.1
	Lodge or check progress of a DA	31	7.8	16.0	53.1
	Register an animal	2	.5	1.0	54.1
	Make a property inquiry	10	2.5	5.2	59.3
	Lodge a complaint	8	2.0	4.1	63.4
	Obtain a map	3	.8	1.5	64.9
	Submit a quote or tender	1	.3	.5	65.5
	Attend a meeting	18	4.5	9.3	74.7
	Other	49	12.3	25.3	100.0
	Total	194	48.5	100.0	
Missing	System	206	51.5		
Total		400	100.0		

Graph 7.1: Satisfaction levels for visitors to Council administration centre



Comment:

Just under half (48 per cent) of those surveyed had visited the Shire's administration centre over the past 12 months. Of these, most had come to pay rates (37 per cent of visitors) followed by those lodging or checking on the progress of a development application (16 per cent).

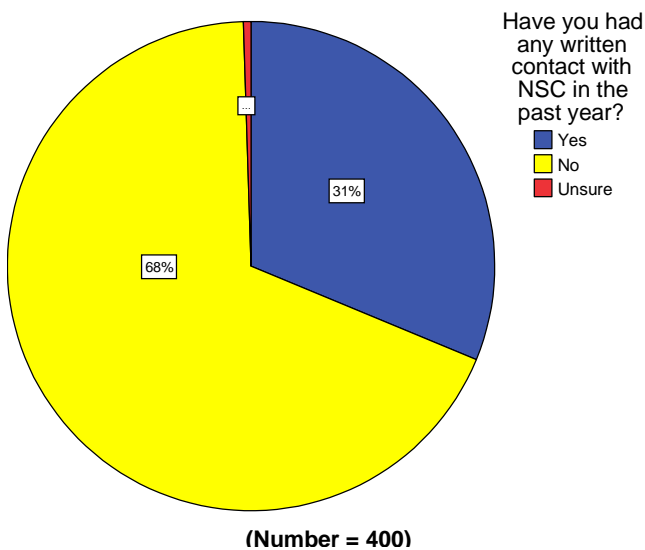
There were no significant differences in visitation levels between ages or genders.

When asked how satisfied they were with the service levels on their most recent visit, respondents were largely enthusiastic about the performance of Council staff (graph 7.1). With a mean rating of 4.09 and some 89 per cent offering a score of 4 or 5, this implies that front desk staff are doing an excellent job of serving customers and/or managing expectations.

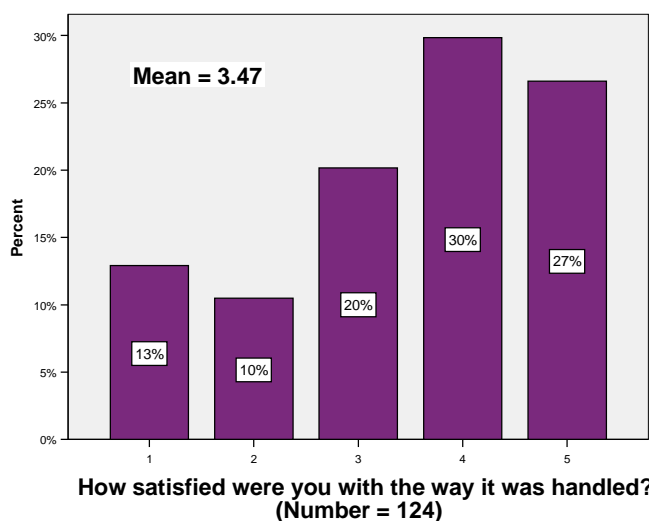
Questions 8 and 9: Written contact with Nambucca Shire Council

Respondents were then asked whether they had had written contact with Council over the previous 12 months, and if so how satisfied they were with the way their most recent communication had been handled. This was on a scale of 1-5, where 1 was very dissatisfied and 5 was very satisfied.

Graph 8.1: Have you had written contact with Nambucca Shire Council over the past year?



Graph 9.1: Satisfaction levels with written contact





Comment:

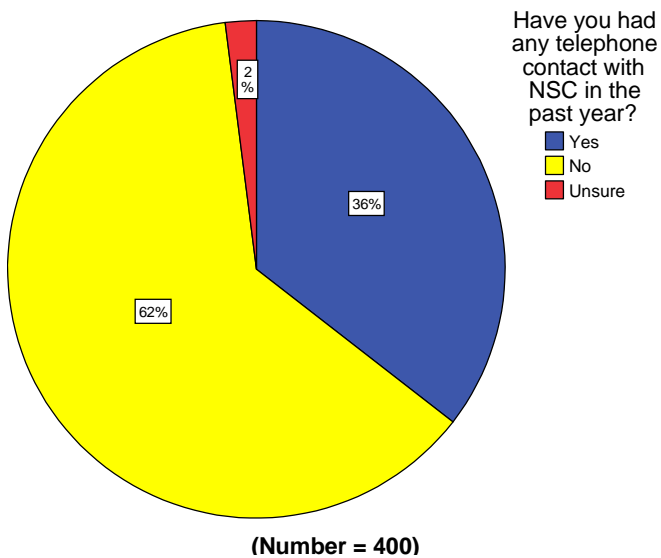
Just under one-third of residents claimed to have had written contact with Nambucca Shire Council over the past year³. While we didn't ask the purpose of such communication, satisfaction levels with the way it was handled were again high. Over half (57 per cent) rated it a 4 or 5, against 23 per cent scoring it as a 1 or 2. The overall mean rating was 3.47.

³ Where respondents asked, researchers told them that this excluded the issuing of rates or water notices. While it is possible that some who didn't ask may have assumed this was a form of written contact, I believe the number of such people would be fairly low. However if asked again in future the question should nonetheless be re-phrased slightly.

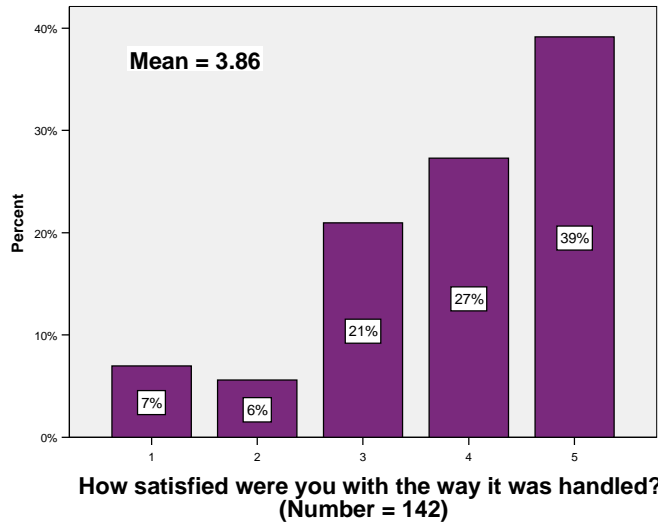
Questions 10 and 11: Telephone contact with Nambucca Shire Council

Similar to previous questions, respondents were asked whether they had telephoned Council over the past year and, if so, their satisfaction levels with the most recent contact.

Graph 10.1: Have you had telephone contact with Council over the past year?



Graph 11.1: Satisfaction levels with telephone contact



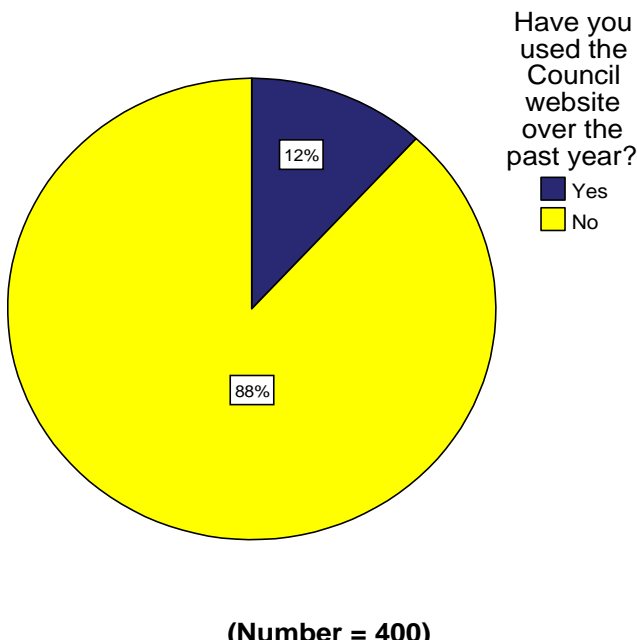
Comment:

Some 36 per cent of those surveyed had called Council within the past year. Once again satisfaction levels with the service encountered appears high. Two-thirds of respondents rated the service as a 4 or 5, against just 13 per cent giving it a 1 or 2. The mean rating was 3.86.

Questions 12-14: Use of, and improvements to Council website

Respondents were asked whether they had used the Council website over the past 12 months. Those who had were then asked why they had used it, and what improvements they could suggest.

Graph 12.1: Have you used the Council website over the past year?



Comment:

Only 46 respondents, or 12 per cent of the total, had accessed the Council website over the past year. Of these, the largest proportion (12 people) had used it for research, with six printing documents and five paying their rates online.

Given the low level of website usage it's not surprising that there were few ideas on how the site could be improved. However constructive suggestions included:

- Contact names – who looks after what?
- Add yearly temperature and weather data
- Update statistics more regularly
- Clearer labelling and direction on contentious issues
- More information on Council and what it does
- Making DA application forms easier to find
- More logical headings and links
- S149 certificates able to be purchased online
- Cultural and community elements need improving.

Question 15: Priorities for future funding

In an effort to identify desired spending priorities, respondents were asked how they would spend a hypothetical \$5 million general use grant to Council. The question was unprompted.

Major themes to emerge were:

Suggestion	Times mentioned
Roads	128
Youth services	76
Bridges	56
Estuary and break wall	49
Skate park	48
Footpaths	36
Tourism promotion	16
Hospital/healthcare	14
Aged care	14
Environment	13
Water supply	13
Security	13
Lighting	11

Comment:

While it is predictable that road spending (with 128 mentions) would dominate in a “top-of-mind” question such as this, the emphasis on youth services (76) and skate park (48) is perhaps surprising given that over 85 per cent of respondents were aged 40 or more. This strong unprompted outpouring suggests the high importance placed on giving younger residents more structured activities and/or reasons to remain within the Nambucca community.

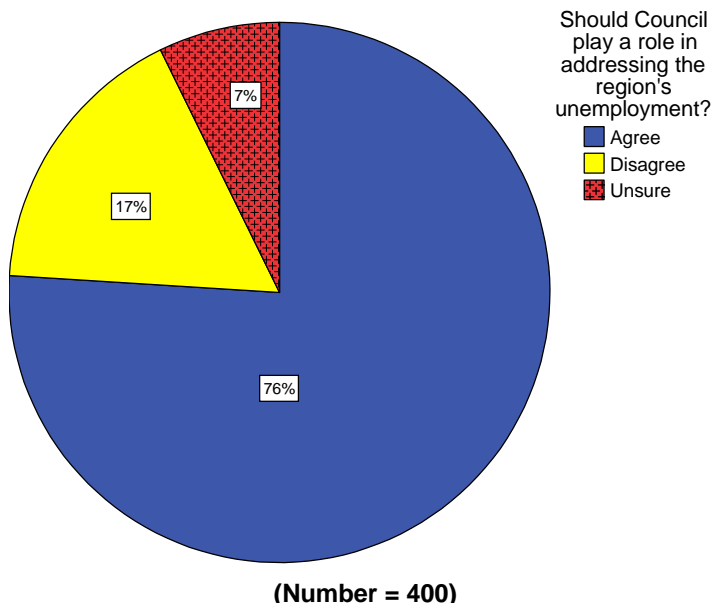
Other spending priorities to poll strongly include bridges (56 mentions), the estuary and/or break wall (49) and footpaths (36).

On the other hand, one might have expected aged care (14 mentions) and security (13) to rank higher given the Shire’s older demographic and concerns about law and order issues such as vandalism.

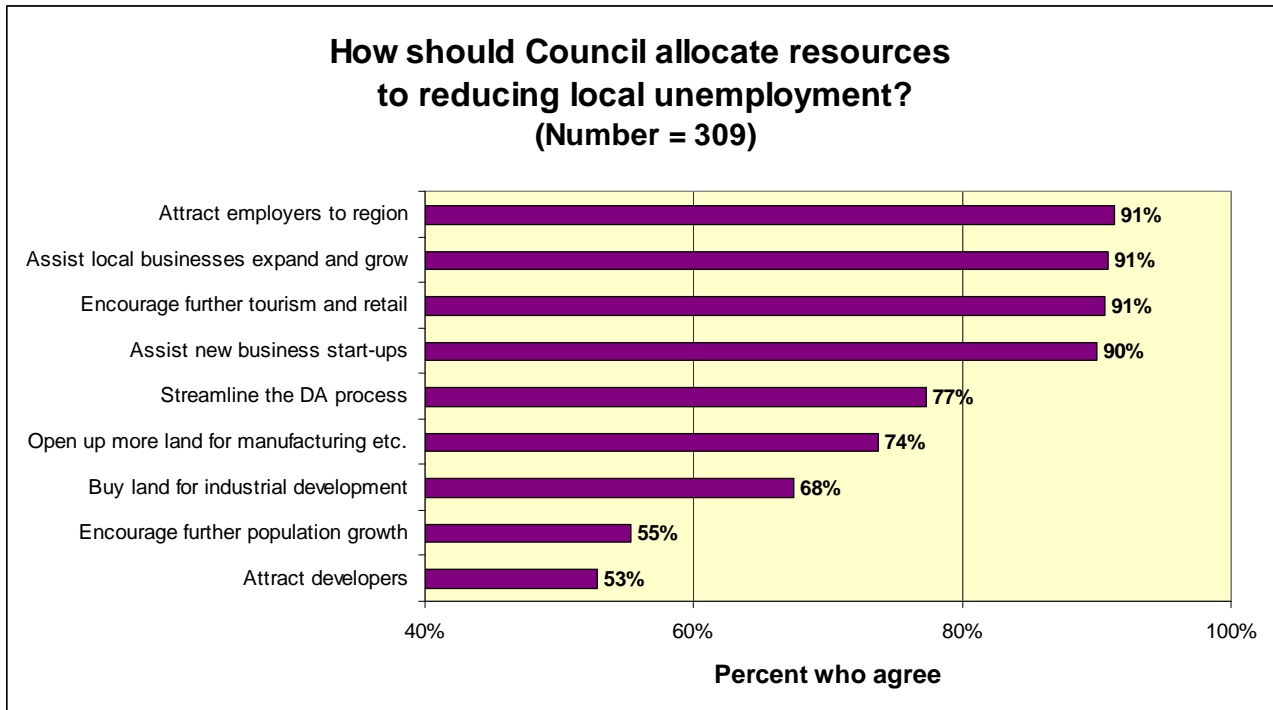
Questions 16 and 17: Council's role in helping lower unemployment

Respondents were asked in light of relatively high local unemployment whether Council should play a role in addressing this issue. Those who agreed that Council had a role to play were then asked whether they agreed or disagreed with Council allocating resources to a number of different employment-generating initiatives.

Graph 16.1: Do you agree Council should play a role in lowering local unemployment?



Graph 17.1: Proportion who agreed with different ways Council could allocate resources to reduce local unemployment



Comment:

Just over three-quarters of all respondents (76 per cent) agreed that Council should be playing a role in helping to reduce unemployment, while 17 per cent disagreed and the balance were unsure.

When given a range of prompted options on how Council should allocate resources to this (graph 17.1). greatest support (among those who agreed with the above) came for attracting new employers to the region, assisting local businesses grow and expand, encouraging further tourism and retail and assisting new business start-ups – all at 90 per cent agreement or more.

Conversely just over half (55 per cent) agreed that Council should encourage further population growth, with many respondents either not seeing a link between population growth and jobs, or else preferring to see the number of Nambucca Shire residents remain stable for other (i.e. non-economic) reasons. And opinion was likewise split on the merits of attracting developers to the region, with 53 per cent agreeing that Council should play an active role here.

Question 18: Attitudes towards development

In an effort to establish how “pro-” or “anti-” development the community might be, respondents were asked: “Some people are very pro-development, while others are primarily concerned with maintaining or enhancing the existing natural environment, and the rest lie somewhere in the middle. How would you describe yourself on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is primarily interested in maintaining the existing natural environment, and 10 is extremely pro-development?”

Graph 18.1: Community attitudes towards development

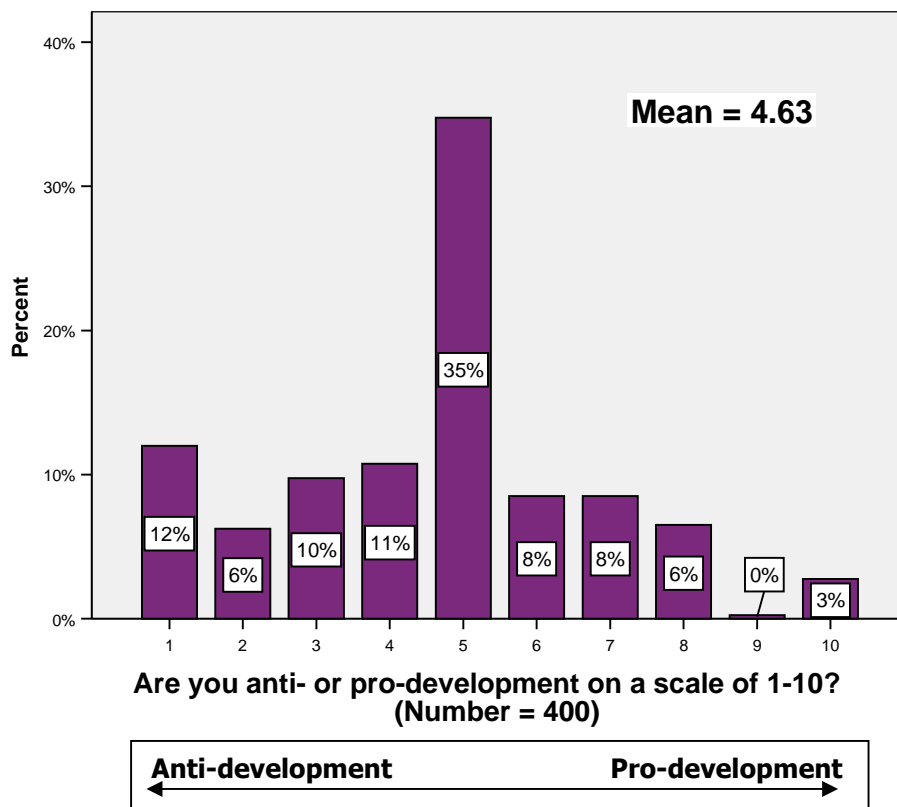


Table 18.1: Difference in development attitude by length of residence

Report

Are you anti- or pro-development on a scale of 1-10?

How long have you	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
1-2 years	4.07	14	1.685
2-5 years	4.49	53	1.948
5-10 years	4.33	73	1.922
10+ years	4.77	260	2.253
Total	4.63	400	2.142

Table 18.2: Difference in development attitude between urban and rural residents

Report

Are you anti- or pro-development on a scale of 1-10?

Rural vs. urban	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Urban	4.89	195	2.205
Rural/Village	4.38	205	2.056
Total	4.63	400	2.142

Comment:

While opinion on this often-controversial topic was predictably widespread, the largest proportion of respondents (35 per cent) saw themselves as right in the middle of the development spectrum. The mean score was just less than this, at 4.63, with 39 per cent to the left of the median score against 25 per cent to the right. Around one in eight respondents were implacably opposed to any development, offering a score of 1.

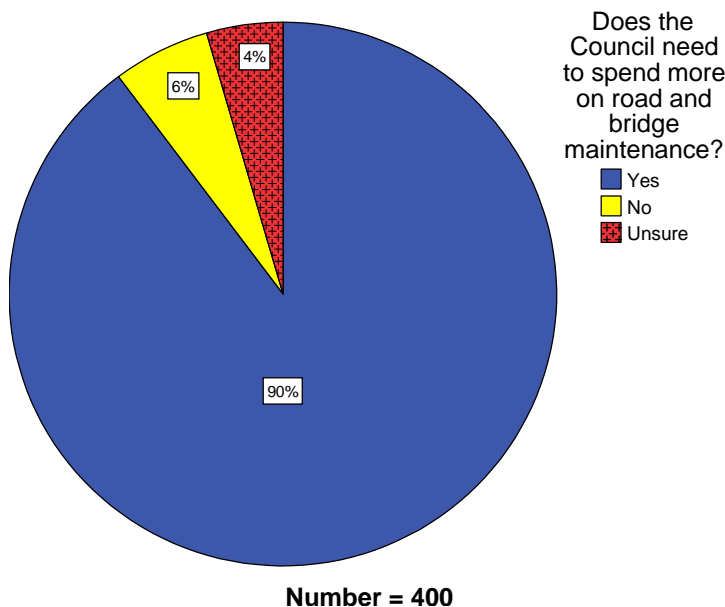
Apart from the most recent residents (numbering only 14) being slightly more anti-development, there was no significant difference between attitudes depending on length of stay in the Shire (Table 18.1). However there was a statistically significant difference between urban and rural dwellers (Table 18.2) with urban residents slightly more likely to favour development than their counterparts in rural or village locations.

In coming to terms with the intent of this question, many of those surveyed expressed support for “sympathetic” development. However there was equally widespread opposition to so-called “Gold Coast” development in the Nambucca Shire.

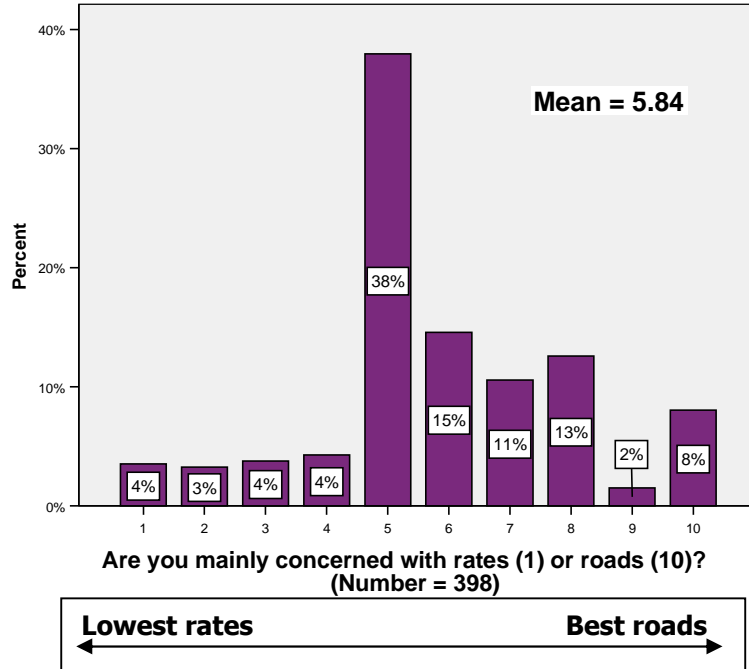
Questions 19-21: Funding for roads and bridges

Respondents answered a series of questions regarding their attitudes towards road and bridge funding. First they were asked whether Council needed to spend more on roads and bridges. They were then asked where they sat on the “excellent roads versus low rates” spectrum (similar to question 18). Finally, they were informed that Council had applied to the relevant Minister for a rate variation to fund improvements in Council-controlled roads and bridges, and asked what they’d be prepared to pay in additional weekly rates for such improvements: prompted options were “Nothing”, “Up to 50 cents”, “Up to \$1”, or “Up to \$1.50”.

Graph 19.1: Does Council need to spend more on road and bridge maintenance?



Graph 20.1: Community attitudes towards rates versus roads funding



Graph 21.1: Tolerance to rate levy to fund road and bridge maintenance

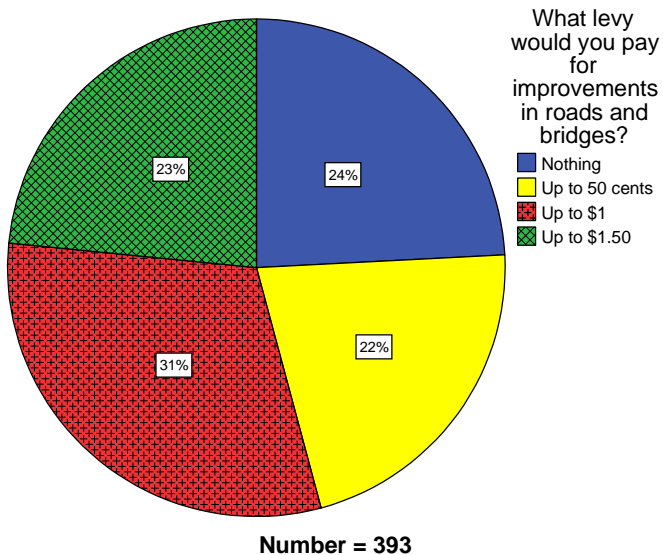


Table 21.1: Attitude towards rate levy by urban vs. rural

What levy would you pay for improvements in roads and bridges? * Rural vs. urban Crosstabulation

			Rural vs. urban		Total
			Urban	Rural/Village	
What levy would you pay for improvements in roads and bridges?	Nothing	Count	57	38	95
		% within Rural vs. urban	29.5%	19.0%	24.2%
	Up to 50 cents	Count	38	47	85
		% within Rural vs. urban	19.7%	23.5%	21.6%
	Up to \$1	Count	56	65	121
		% within Rural vs. urban	29.0%	32.5%	30.8%
	Up to \$1.50	Count	42	50	92
		% within Rural vs. urban	21.8%	25.0%	23.4%
Total	Count	193	200	393	
	% within Rural vs. urban	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 21.2: Attitude towards rate levy by ratepayer vs. non-ratepayer

What levy would you pay for improvements in roads and bridges? * Ratepayer? Crosstabulation

			Ratepayer?		Total
			Yes	No	
What levy would you pay for improvements in roads and bridges?	Nothing	Count	74	19	93
		% within Ratepayer?	23.8%	23.8%	23.8%
	Up to 50 cents	Count	66	19	85
		% within Ratepayer?	21.2%	23.8%	21.7%
	Up to \$1	Count	95	26	121
		% within Ratepayer?	30.5%	32.5%	30.9%
	Up to \$1.50	Count	76	16	92
		% within Ratepayer?	24.4%	20.0%	23.5%
Total	Count	311	80	391	
	% within Ratepayer?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Comment:

There was widespread agreement that Council need to spend more on maintaining local roads and bridges, with 90 per cent of respondents concurring with this proposition (graph 19.1). This backs up the unprompted question 15, which saw roads emerge as the number one priority should extra funding ever become available.

This sentiment became more evident when seeking to discover how residents perceived themselves in the rates versus roads debate. While the largest share of respondents again placed themselves in the middle of the spectrum, graph 20.1 shows that the proportion on the “excellent roads” side outweighed those on the “low rates” side by 49 per cent to 15 per cent (for a mean score of 5.84).

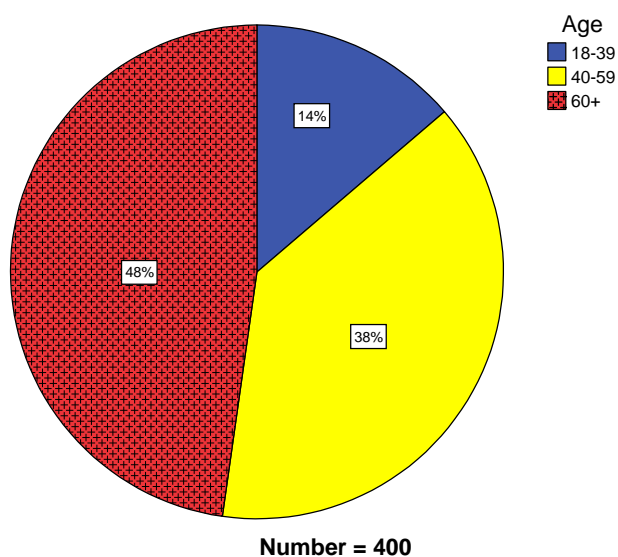
The willingness to encourage better roads is most starkly seen in graph 21.1: when asked to nominate one of four acceptable weekly rate levies to fund improved roads and bridges, only 24 per cent nominated “nothing”. The rest were relatively evenly spread between the three other amounts, with \$1 per week the most popular option. The weighted average amount among all respondents was 77 cents, which rose to \$1.01 when restricted to those agreeing to some form of rate levy.

As table 21.1 shows, rural residents were slightly more willing to fund road and bridge improvements through a special levy than urban residents. There were no major differences between ratepayers and non-ratepayers (table 21.2). – if anything, those paying rates preferred slightly higher levies.

Questions 22-30: Demographics

Respondents were finally asked some information about themselves, primarily to benchmark against ABS Census data, but also to assist with any subsequent cross-tabulation of results.

Graph 22.1: Age



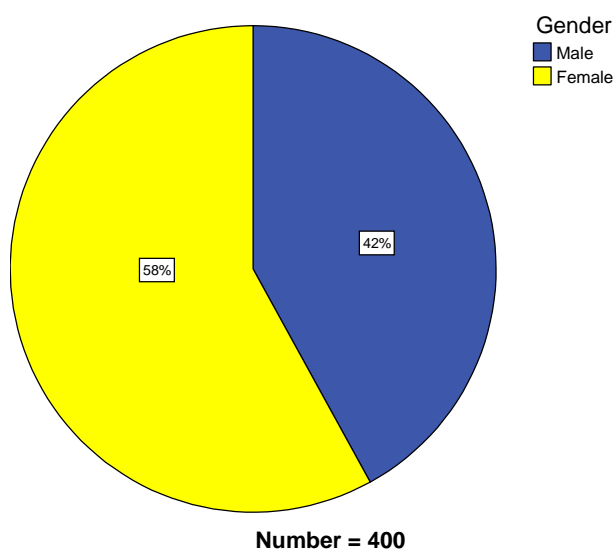
Benchmark:

Age	Census	Survey
18-39	22.9%	13.8%
40-59	38.7%	38.5%
60+	38.4%	47.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Comment:

As this was not a quota-based sample, we did not attempt to match ages against the 2006 Census. The survey under-represents younger residents by 9 per cent, while over-representing those aged 60+ by the same amount. (This is not unusual given the higher prevalence of fixed phone lines among older residents.)

Graph 23.1: Gender



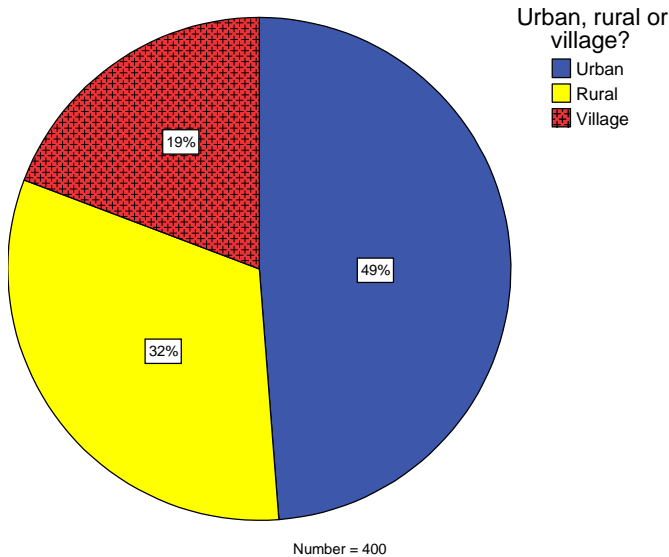
Benchmark:

Gender	Census	Survey
Male	49.0%	42.0%
Female	51.0%	58.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Comment:

The sample slightly under-represented males, but not to the extent that it risks adversely affecting the integrity of the survey.

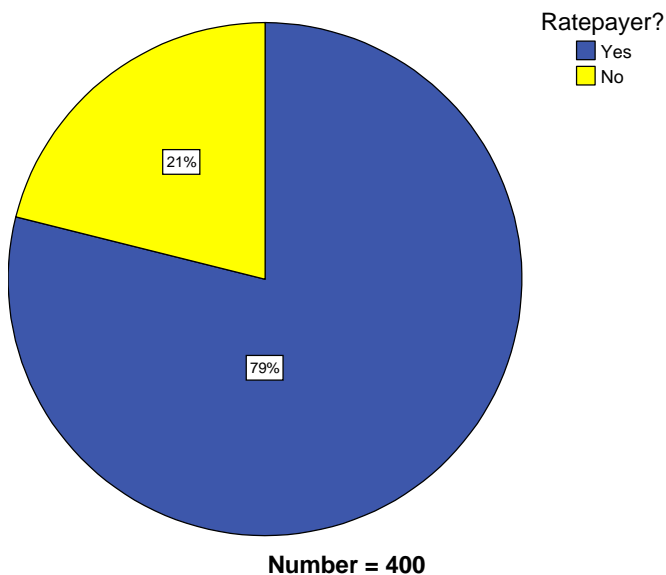
Graph 24.1: Urban, rural and village



Comment:

Just under half of all respondents claimed to live in urban areas, against 32 per cent living rurally and 19 per cent in villages. The rural and village figures have been combined to create a “country” assessment in some questions.

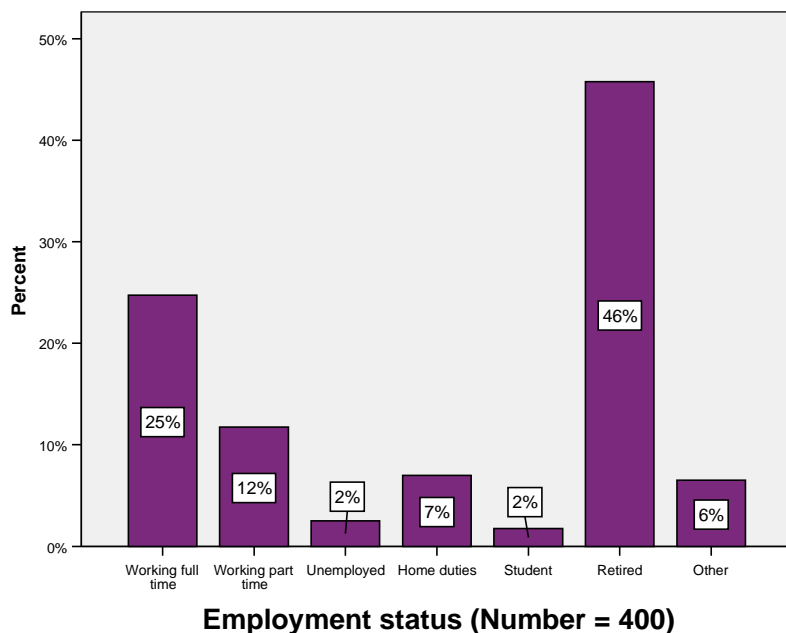
Graph 25.1: Are you a ratepayer within the Nambucca LGA?



Benchmark/Comment:

According to 2006 Census data, 73.4 per cent of residences within the Nambucca Shire were owner-occupied. While that statistic is not strictly comparable with this question, it does imply that our survey is at least representative of the proportion of adult residents being ratepayers.

Graph 26.1: Employment Status



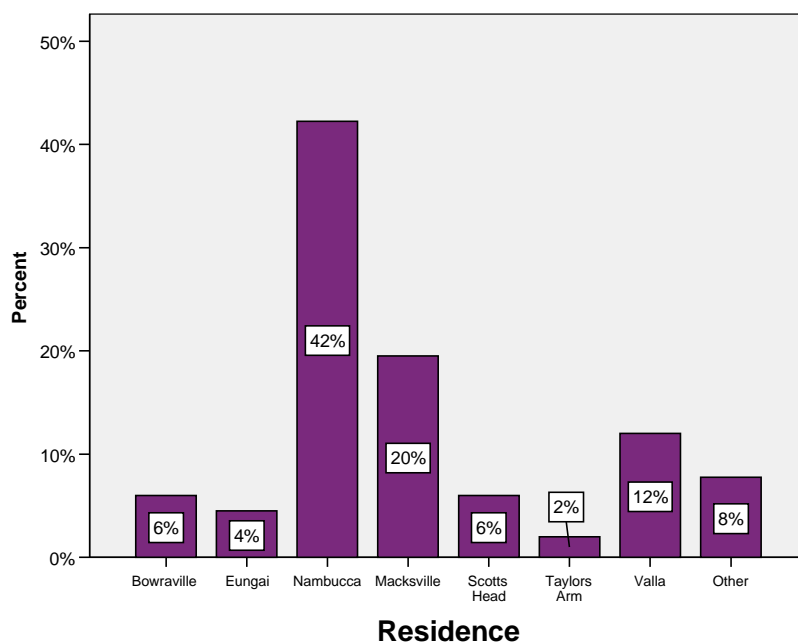
Benchmark:

Status	Census	Survey
Employed F-T	21.4%	24.8%
Employed P-T	15.7%	11.8%
Employed (other)	2.7%	
Unemployed	7.1%	2.5%
Not in Labour force	53.2%	60.9%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

Comment:

Those surveyed appear to comprise a representative sample based on Census employment data. You would expect a degree of under-reporting among the unemployed, which may explain why that is lower than the Census figure.

Graph 27.1: Area of residence



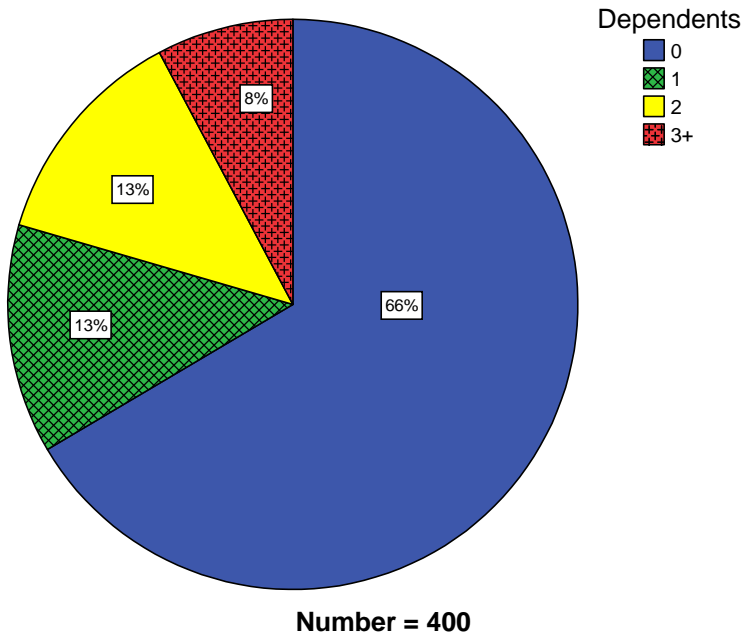
Benchmark:

Region	Census	Survey
Bowraville	11.1%	6.0%
Eungai	4.2%	4.4%
Nambucca	35.1%	42.3%
Macksville	22.4%	19.5%
Scotts Head	6.5%	6.0%
Taylors Arm	3.2%	2.0%
Valla	12.5%	12.0%
Other	5.0%	7.8%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

Comment:

Bowraville residents appear to have been slightly under-represented due to the random number prefix system employed. Apart from this the survey presents an accurate snapshot of the Shire by locality.

Graph 28.1: Number of dependents

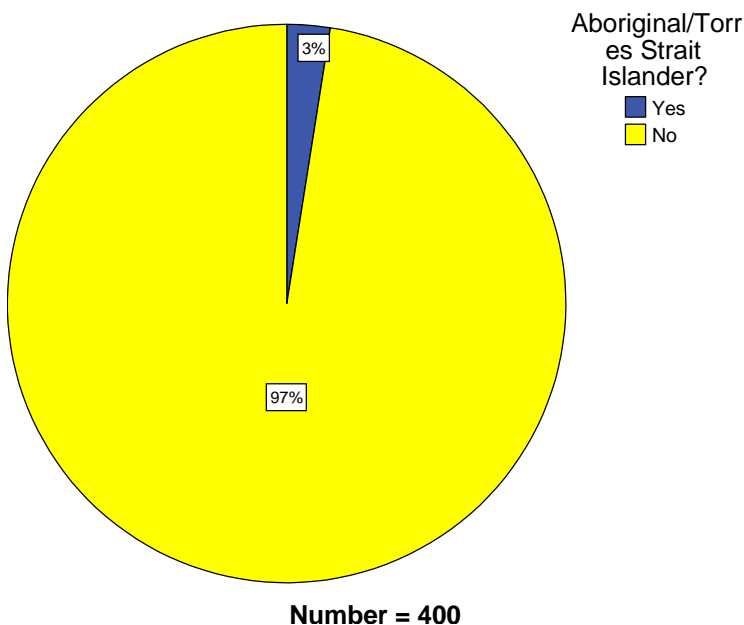


Benchmark/Comment:

Two-thirds of respondents claimed to have no dependents living at home. Thirteen per cent had one dependent, another 13 per cent had two, with 8 per cent having three or more.

According to 2006 Census data, 64 per cent of Nambucca Shire residences did not include dependent children. However this figure excludes other forms of dependents.

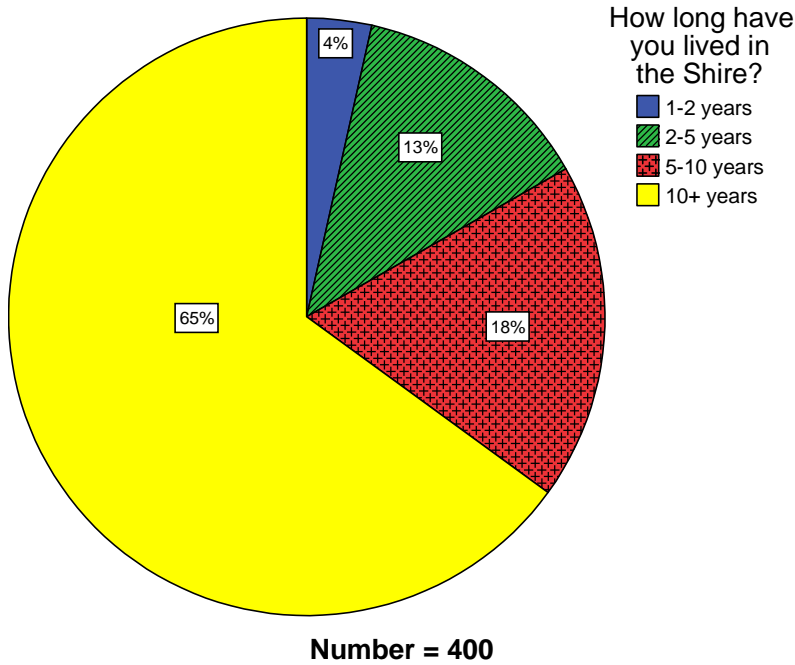
Graph 29.1: Aboriginality



Benchmark:

According to the 2006 ABS Census, 5.7 per cent of Nambucca Shire residents were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.

Graph 30.1: Length of residence in the Nambucca Shire



Benchmark/Comment:

According to the 2006 Census, 71 per cent of Nambucca residents lived within the Shire five years previously. This would imply that the survey over-represents long-term residents (i.e. those living in the shire for 5+ years) at the expense of newer arrivals to the area.

Question 31: Other Comments

Nambucca Shire Council Survey (Additional comments and suggestions)	
ID	Comments
1	Don't want over-development. Need a buffer zone.
2	Open up skate park for the kids.
3	Head in parking in main street.
7	Council should assist people to install water tanks.
13	Look after the river as that's what brings the money in.
14	Bring news letter back. Advertise web site more. Try to maintain upgrades to footpaths etc.
17	Footpaths for disabled people. Good clean disabled toilets.
19	Dredge the river.
24	Don't let the rates go up too much.
44	Lift up the causeway to stop flooding.
50	Contract crews rather than council workers. Improve roundabouts and put more in.
51	Fix vandalism problem. Better law enforcement in area.
52	Why don't residents in Grassy Rd in Bowraville get garbage collection when they pay rates.
55	Maintain flexibility for new things / alternatives.
56	Council waste money patching roads rather than fixing properly. Use money wisely. Be audited by outside business.
57	Try to keep young people in the area.
60	Keep council proactive with environment. Have a community garden.
64	Improve the hospital.
65	Fix corrugated country roads. Remove dead trees to prevent them falling on roads.
69	Restriction of 4WD's and motorbikes on the beach.
70	Less development. Maintain heritage.
75	New blood in council.
79	Need to get to know councillors better personally, informal chatting days.
83	Revamp the council. Try to get more younger members to get a better spectrum of what people want.
94	More security at night. Very upset about the roads.
96	Pay the highest rates in the whole valley.
102	Promote area for tourism.
103	Fix up river.
105	Council to have more control over developers
106	Need better dog control. Big problems with dogs.
111	Get rid of bark in playground areas. Should have rubber tar stuff.
113	Main St more parking. More buses for elderly. Footpaths wider, streets clean.
120	Quite happy.
122	Fix potholes
124	No unemployed people to move into area.
127	Chronic shortage of accommodation for elderly. Put in skate park.
135	Have a tree society. Keep planting.

139	Pay for garbage collection in rates as well as paying for private service that council doesn't provide.
141	Industrial estate out of town. More cycle ways in tourist areas.
142	Red bin weekly.
149	Spend on other roads not just main St. Spend money on youth.
153	Kesby St Eungai needs fixing as it is in really bad condition.
156	Don't like money wasted on pot plants in streets which are not looked after.
157	Very impressed with the community running the halls but council needs to improve their efforts with maintenance.
158	Encourage more people to attend council meetings.
161	Find a balance between development and environment.
164	Amalgamate councils.
168	Be open with expenses-where money has gone from rates.
169	Stop cutting down trees. Especially by private developers
170	Open governments. Need to be less secretive with the community.
171	Assist business stabilization not so much expansion.
173	Keep parks cleaner and more bins.
174	More recycling at Nambucca it should be free.
176	Assist new businesses during start up.
177	Great place to live.
179	More police and security.
184	Council are great.
185	Catch up with other councils. Help areas with new housing. Neglecting rural areas.
186	Macksville needs new bridge. More money from higher level government.
187	Fresh blood in council. New ideas more forward thinking.
188	Look after elderly people.
193	Keep up the good work.
194	Stop buying cars use money for something else.
195	Look after local business regarding infrastructure and developments. Shire should have more input in Chamber of commerce.
200	Fix unemployment problem.
202	Listen to the community and less to the developers.
203	Pool should be open longer. Trees put back in Main St.
204	Toilet block at Valla sporting field.
207	Pool is too expensive. Make it more accessible for families from lower economic status.
211	People doing the gardens at Macksville are doing a great job. More dog control. Use sporting fields as dog runs.
214	4WD's off Valla beach.
215	Too much dog control. Increase policing and youth activities. Put in skate ramp.
216	Fix the river. Minimise high rise developments, spoils the town.
218	Don't spoil the river.
219	Dredge the river.
220	Be more transparent.Nambucca is different to Macksville. Embrace the youth.
221	Fix the river.
223	Instances where people have had DA's strictly enforced whereas others in same situation don't.
227	Like development if done the right way.
229	Red bin should be weekly. Green bin fortnightly. More dept stores in Nambucca.
233	Elected members need to show more support for youth.
234	Council saleyards need to be cleaned up. Roads and bridges should be concrete.

241	Keep natural beauty of area. Keep the area clean.
243	Council does a good job.
244	Support residents against RTA for Macksville people.
249	Need footpaths.
255	Council should be open minded and listen to rate payers.
256	Stop river silting up. Build the skate park.
262	Scotts Head Rd needs fixing.
265	Wedgewood Drive Macksville has terrible pot holes.
266	Footpaths need fixing.
267	Talk more with local business. Need more businesses in area. Tidy up River St.
272	DA's should be handled better, costs too high.
273	Stop putting up ugly buildings.
275	Build skate park. Continue to work on environment issues with the aboriginal community and developers.
277	Organise DA's. Had shed here since 1949, it burnt down. It took 5-6 months for DA approval
281	Council struggles to do the job required of them. I agree with council amalgamation.
283	Get the highway done between Macksville and Nambucca.
288	Skate park. Too many drug and alcohol problems plus vandalism.
290	Dog control is too strict. Not enough youth activities. Put more effort into river it needs fixing.
291	Council needs to do better quality public works. Complete entire roads rather than sections.
294	Don't be so negative.
301	Library should stay near the school. Upgrade of Main St not good.
303	Rural people should have access to tip 1 or 2 free of charge. Septic inspections should be reduced to 1 in 5 years.
305	They need to facilitate for young people to stay in the area, to be trained for jobs.
307	Need to improve drainage in the hill area of Macksville. Should have a local to evaluate the plan for the river.
313	Maintain the v wall to the golf club walkway.
316	More things for youth eg. PCYC or boxing. Generate more tourism.
318	More visible policing. Estuary management needs work.
322	Stop vandalism.
323	Build Nambucca skate park. Stop listening to Ken Winton.
325	Skate park and DA's slow.
330	Councillors good but staff not good in regards to councils overall performance. Need development/tourism.
331	No curb and guttering in area. Had rate increase and no improvements.
333	Too much money going into office and administration.
336	Be more open with people. Dont let developers have all.
338	Council should deal with things quicker.
342	More police in district.
350	Need better paths and roads for wheelchair etc.
352	Don't turn town into Gold Coast.
355	Halls should get better support. Council needs to generate more interest in the area from developers.
363	Council should be more approachable.
364	Rearrange where the money is spent. More important areas are roads and bridges.
366	DA's should be streamlined, made simpler and not take so long.
368	Not a footpath in the whole Eungai Rail. Children walking on the road.

370	Concerned with closure of Missaboti bridge. Nambucca entertainment centre should be retained and enhanced.
371	Not in favour of weed control.
372	Inconsistency with DA process and delays. Industrial estate needs to be more attractive and presentable.
375	Blackbutt Lane needs garbage removal.
376	Cost for garbage too high. No need for three bins.
377	Too many vacancies in Main St shops.
386	Cycleway from Nambucca to Macksville. Free waterpark like in Cairns would be great for tourism.
387	Road at Gumma needs fixing not just temporary fixing. Prices too expensive at Macksville pool complex.
392	Worried about the roads, facilities etc. Parking at Scotts Head a problem.
394	Nambucca doing a good job.
395	Control drinking in the street.
398	Street lighting. Roads and bridges.



Appendix 1: Survey Form