



## SURVEY RESULTS

### Bass Coast Ratepayer and Resident's Association 2018 Survey "Issues of Importance to the Community"

BCRRA conducted an online survey between 24<sup>th</sup> February and 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018 to gauge the community's current concerns about Council. The results of this survey were reported at an open meeting held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall the survey appears to be representative of residents living in the wider BCSC and who have lived here for a number of years (on average), indicating that respondents would be well-informed of matters. The main concerns for residents were a perceived lack of council transparency, Council salary bill and lack of meaningful engagement resulting in the community feeling significantly disenfranchised. Other significant areas of concern include the adverse effects of changes in the waste contract and appropriateness of planning decisions leading to reduction in amenity and uniqueness of township character.

Below are the detailed findings reported following the survey analysis.

#### Type of Respondent

- ▶ 80 responses received.
- ▶ 81.6% are permanent BCSC residents
- ▶ 15.8% are Holiday Homeowners
- ▶ 2.6% other
- ▶ 94.7% are Ratepayers
- ▶ 93.3% have been ratepayers for 3+ years demonstrating that respondents were long term ratepayers with good experience of the Shire

#### Where do they pay rates?

- ▶ A good cross-section of the Shire was represented in the sample with Inverloch 39.47%, PI 35.52%, Wonthaggi 19.74%, San Remo, Kilcunda and Dalyston 2.63% and Cape Pat and Pioneer Bay 1.32% all represented.

#### Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the Bass Coast Shire Council?

- ▶ Over half 53.3% were somewhat or very dissatisfied (33% and 20% respectively)
- ▶ Just over a third were somewhat or very satisfied (28% and 6.7% respectively)
- ▶ i.e. the community is far more dissatisfied than satisfied with council



### Rate Concerns

- ▶ 90.8% of respondents felt council should abide by a recommended rate cap in future. Only 9.2% disagreed.
- ▶ 79.9% believe general rates should be held at or below CPI, 11.84% disagreed and 9.21% feeling that this could vary depending on:
  - special circumstances which need to be clearly articulated to the community,
  - concerns over a yearly CIV rating affecting rates more than they do today,
  - possibly freezing rates for a number of years to recoup excessive rises of past decade,
  - matching of CPI over a rolling 3 year period.

### Do you believe the BCSC CEO should be automatically re-appointed?

- ▶ The vast majority (94.6%) believe that the CEO should not be automatically reappointed.

### Issues of importance

Respondents were asked to rank the following issues in order of importance

- A. Transparency of Council decision making
- B. Council executive salaries and performance
- C. Planning issues
- D. Cowes car ferry proposal
- E. Council road repair and sealer issues
- F. Waste Management
- G. Quality/quantity of council engagement with the community
- H. Maintaining town boundaries
- I. Management of dogs and horses on beaches
- J. Obtaining good value for money from contracts awarded
- K. Council activity to stimulate employment in area
- L. Coastal Erosion
- M. Council Advocacy/Engagement with VicRoads

### Top 5 Issues in order of importance were:

1. Transparency of council decision making was in top 5 concerns for 76.55%
2. Quality/quantity of council engagement with the community was in top 5 concerns for 63.3%
3. Waste Management issues were in top 5 concerns for 59.11%
4. Council executive salaries and performance were in top 5 concerns for 55.39%
5. Planning issues were in top 5 concerns for 46.98%



## Qualitative themes related to Top 5 issues

Respondents also provided explanatory comments about their most important issues. This enabled us to identify a number of themes associated with the various areas of concern. The following direct quotes from responses received are not exhaustive but are provided to illustrate these themes.

### Theme 1 – Council performance

- ▶ Transparency of decision making
- ▶ Making council more accountable
- ▶ Publish performance criteria to the public.
- ▶ Inability to objectively evaluate council performance

### Theme 2 – Executive performance and salaries

- ▶ Out-of-control salary bill.
- ▶ The lack of transparent KPI's makes it difficult for people to understand if council officers' performance is fulfilling contractual requirements
- ▶ Concern about the quality of staff and their ability to perform their jobs
- ▶ Too many senior managers
- ▶ Too many consultants employed

### Theme 3 - Engagement with community

- ▶ Council engagement was not being undertaken in a meaningful way and that any engagement undertaken was often disregarded or dismissed.
- ▶ Resident felt they were not being listened to and that their needs were of less importance to council than those of tourists

### Theme 4 – Waste Management

- ▶ Waste collection schedules do not fit resident requirements especially at peak times
- ▶ Tip services must be available.  
*Notably this is the only 'service' area that was identified in the top concerns.*

### Theme 5 – Planning

- ▶ Poor quality or inappropriate planning decisions are damaging, or destroying, local amenity and the unique character of the various townships.
- ▶ The type of development being approved is resulting in a built landscape that could be found in any city.



### **'Other' issues**

A freeform area was included in the survey to express 'Other' issues. Those raised included:

- ▶ Council needs to act to protect the environment
- ▶ Concern over road maintenance and pedestrian safety:
- ▶ Improve town presentation
- ▶ Need for action re Aquatic centre for Phillip Island (x 3)
- ▶ Increase Advocacy on behalf of residents e.g. BCH hospital (x 3) and Phillip Island
- ▶ Concern over relationship between PINP and BCSC
- ▶ Allocate more resources to Phillip Island to cater for tourists etc in line with rates collected from the area
- ▶ More public events and street decorations (Xmas)
- ▶ Allow dogs on beaches
- ▶ Ensure budgeted capital works are carried out
- ▶ Creation of employment opportunities for residents.
- ▶ Limited long term council vision
- ▶ CEO and Council employees should live in Shire

## **BCRRA's recommendations**

- ▶ Improve transparency by increasing feedback to the community and publishing criteria and KPI's used to make decisions on council website.
- ▶ Improve accessibility to meetings and ability to monitor council. This could be addressed relatively easily by Live streaming or podcasting meetings via mp3 files.
- ▶ Test open market to ensure the best CEO appointee and publish the KPI's that the CEO and management team are to meet to reassure residents that they are receiving value for money.
- ▶ Review waste management contracts especially with regard to frequency of landfill collection including community feedback