



SURVEY RESULTS

Bass Coast Ratepayer and Residents Association 2020 Survey

BCRRA conducted an online survey between 21st May and 21st June 2020 to gauge the community's current feelings about Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

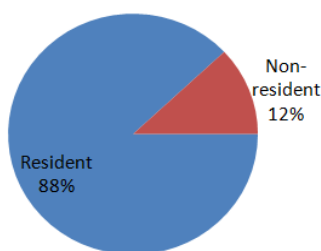
Responses were received from across Bass Coast Shire. The main areas of concern are the perceived value received for rates paid, the quality of Council's community engagement, rate relief, and Council's financial discipline. Other significant areas of concern include coastal erosion, waste management, the condition and maintenance of roads, and the appropriateness of planning decisions leading to reduction in amenity and uniqueness of township character. Respondents expressed support for works undertaken so far to mitigate coastal erosion, with Council's rejection of the Maher's landing residential proposal, with improvements to recreational and sports facilities and with the pandemic support response.

DETAILED FINDINGS

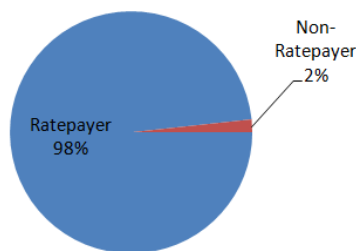
Below are the detailed findings from the analysis of the survey.

A snapshot of the survey respondents

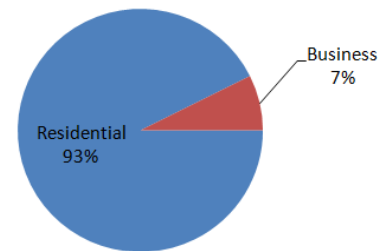
How many are Residents?



How many are Ratepayers?



How many operate a Business?



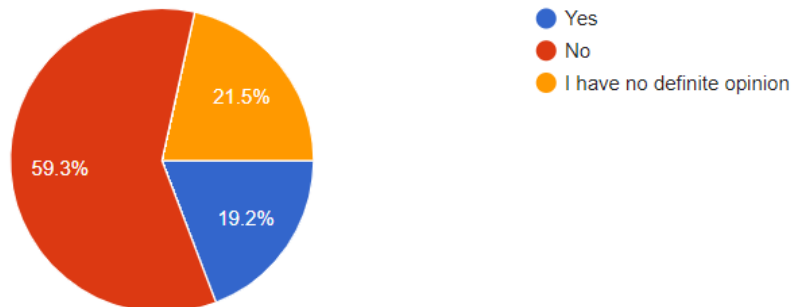
A total of 176 responses were received.

Where are they from?

The sample represented a good cross-section of the Shire with respondents from Inverloch (33.1%), Phillip Island/San Remo (21.7%), Wonthaggi area (14.3%) and the Waterline area (21.7%) well represented. Only 8.5% of respondents gave their postcode as outside the Bass Shire area.

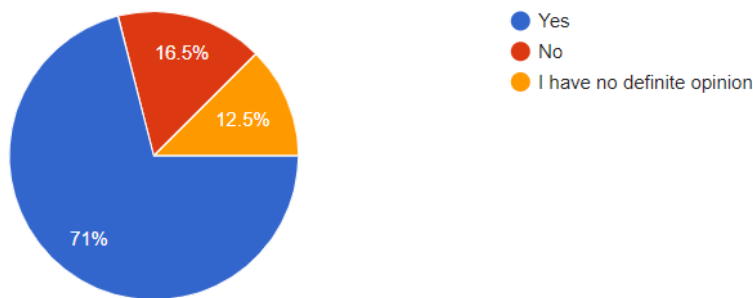
How respondents feel about Council

1. Do you believe Bass Coast Shire Council delivers you value for the rates that you pay?



Less than a fifth of respondents felt they received value for money for their rates.

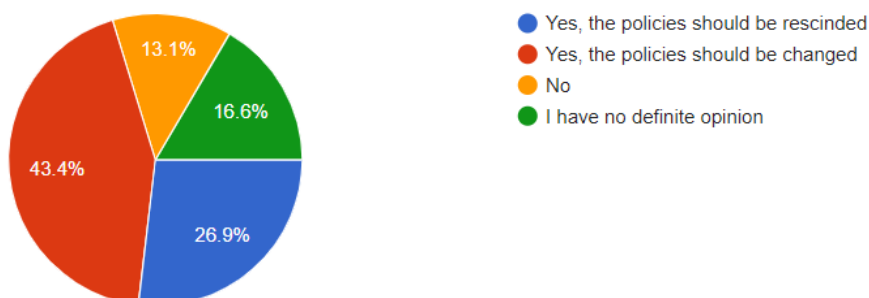
2. Do you believe that Councillors, as your elected representatives, should be allowed to freely express their reasonable personal opinions about Council decisions or policies?



Over 70% of respondents support the rights of Councillors to express reasonable opinions.

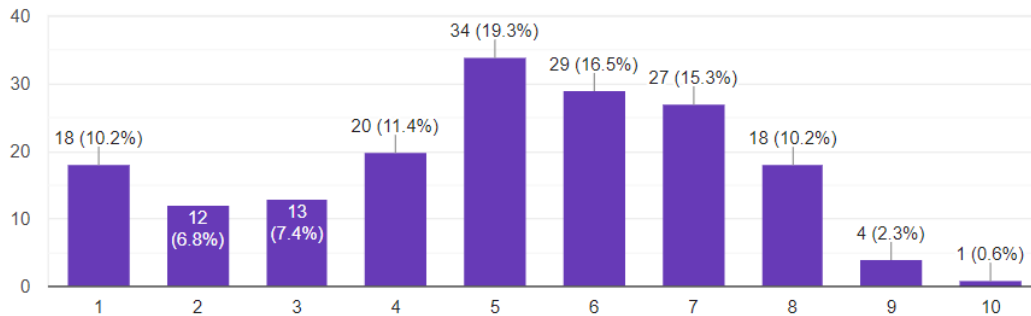
(Links to these policies were given to respondents to allow them to download them directly from Council's website for review)

3. Do you believe that BCSC's Media Engagement and Social Media policies should be rescinded or at least be changed to allow Councillors to express reasonable criticism of Council decisions and policies?



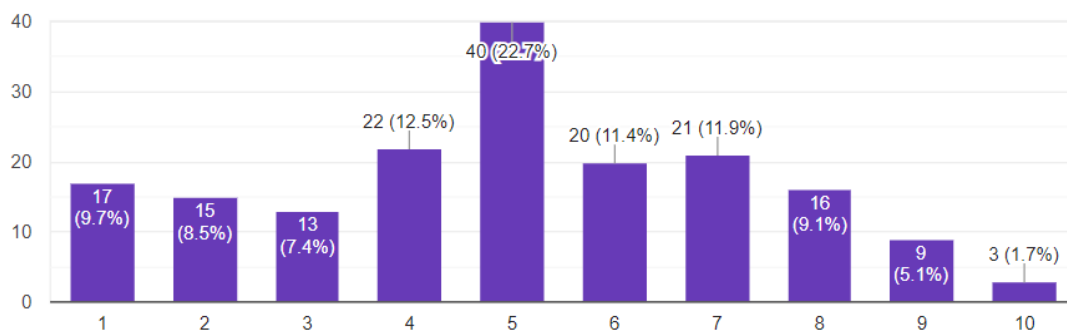
Over 70% of respondents believe that this policy should be rescinded or changed

4. On a scale from 1 to 10 how do you rate the current Council with regard to transparency
(Please note in the following charts 4,5 & 6, 1=low rating and 10=high rating)



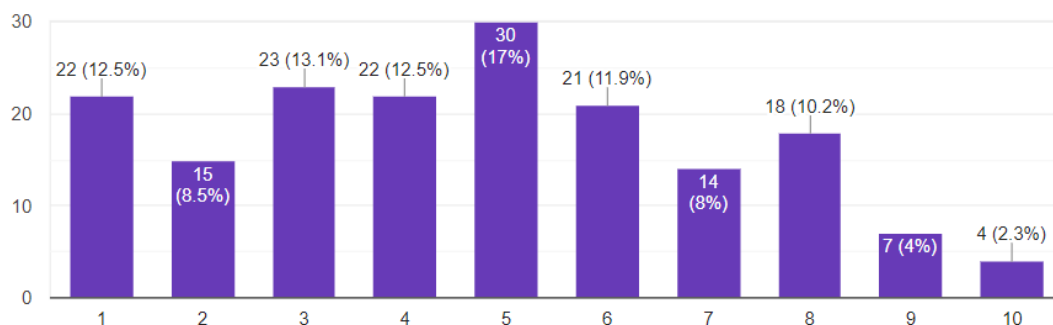
Nearly a quarter of respondents rated BCSC transparency as less than average (i.e. ratings of 3 or less) compared to 13% rating it above average (ratings of 8 or more). This indicates that there is scope for improvement.

5. On a scale from 1 to 10 how do you rate the current Council with regard to financial discipline?



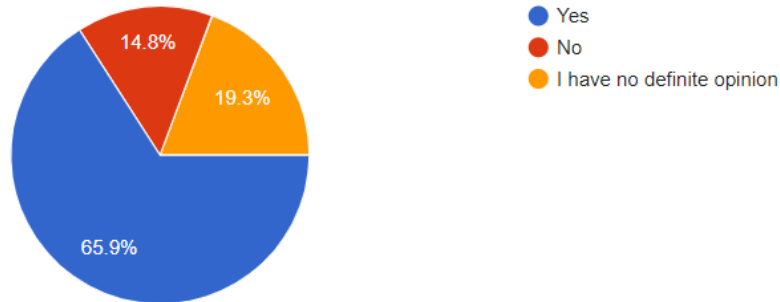
Again, the spread of responses indicates there remains scope for improvement.

6. On a scale from 1 to 10 how do rate the current Council with regard to community engagement?



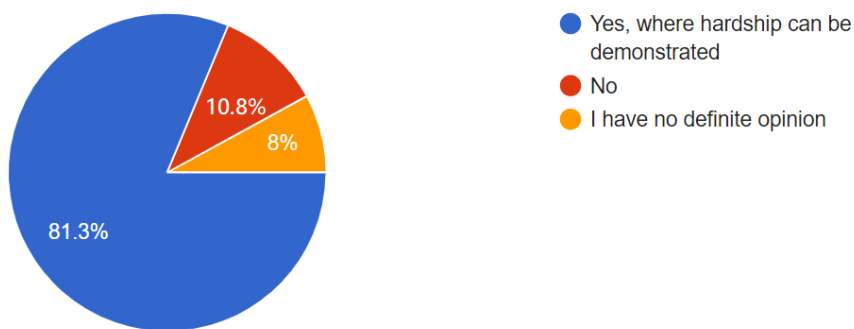
A third of respondents rate council's engagement as below average, this is twice the number that rate council's engagement as above average. Here, responses indicate clearly there is much scope for improvement.

7. Do you feel the introduction of live streaming will improve transparency and community engagement from Bass Coast Shire Council?



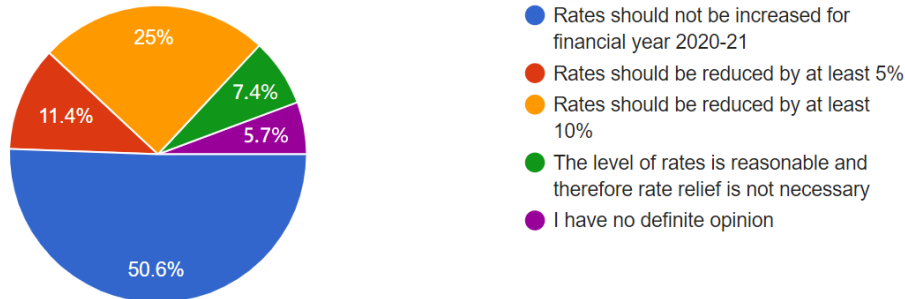
Respondents clearly perceive that live streaming will improve transparency and engagement.

8. Do you feel that Council should offer formal rate reduction to ratepayers as part of its Community and Business recovery plan?



Respondents clearly support BCSC providing rate reduction as part of its recovery plan where hardship can be demonstrated.

9. Which of the following statements best describes your position in regard to any general rate relief by Council?

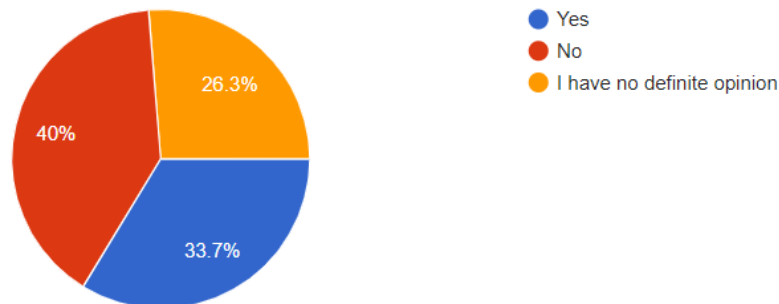


Respondents were provided with an option to comment on this point if they wished. Forty-one respondents made comments. The majority took the opportunity to comment in regard to rate relief or deferral, with most favouring some form of rate relief.

Representative comments

- *There should be rate relief for all residents at this stressful time!! Facilities are not available & nothing extra has been offered to rate payers or residents.*
- *Where business hardship can be clearly demonstrated rate relief should be a temporary option*
- *Systems need to be in place to review the genuine need for residents to have rates relief. After all there are some people who's wage has doubled thanks to the government payments*
- *Can be considered if letter in writing by someone experiencing financial hardship and Council should consider each on their merits.*
- *No business can afford a loss in revenue. Bass Coast Council is a business. Just do not increase them*
- *People under proven hardship from the coronavirus should have rates waived for this year. That would be unprecedented but so is this pandemic.*

10. Is there something that the Bass Coast Shire Council has done recently that you have been pleased about?



Respondents were provided with the opportunity to comment on this resulting in 55 responses *N=55*. These fell into the following categories, ordered by frequency of comment received (with repeated themes shown for each category)

- ▶ Environment *N=20* (Foreshore Erosion *N=8*; Rejection of Maher's Landing proposal *N=7*; Climate Emergency *N=4*)
 - *A professional measured response to the beach erosion at Inverloch*
 - *Council is working to improve response to coastal vegetation destruction*
 - *Refused the Mahers landing development.*
- ▶ Recreation facilities *N=13* (Sporting Facilities *N=8*; Footpaths *N=4*)
 - *A number of great recreation projects continuing on and will be available for when sport can resume*
- ▶ Response to COVID19 *N=9*
 - *Support for business affected by covid restrictions*
- ▶ Provision of Grants *N=7*
- ▶ Maintenance *N=6*
 - *Cape Paterson stairs repair*
- ▶ Projects *N=6*
 - *Cancelled the development of a skate park at Grayden's Reserve, Newhaven*
 - *Roundabouts being built*
- ▶ Engagement *N=4*

11. Do you have any other comments or issues with or about Bass Coast Shire Council?

66 respondents took the opportunity to comment; the vast majority (94%) the responses were critical. They fell into these categories, ordered by frequency of comment received (with repeated themes shown for each category)

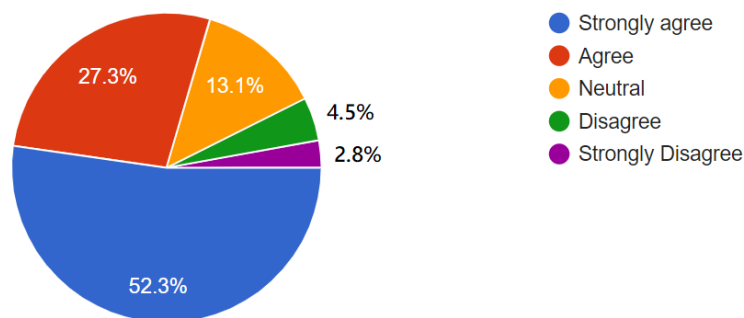
- ▶ Environment *N=16* (Erosion *N=9*)
 - *Erosion is a big problem in Bass Coast shire.*
 - *More respect for our wildlife*
- ▶ Engagement *N=13* (Poor response to queries *N=5*)
 - *Council needs to become more community focussed and less concerned about outside business interests and grandiose plans*
 - *Much of the public engagement seems to be a tick-box process with council simply presenting what they have already decided to do rather than listening to residents and making plans based upon feedback from the whole community that is affected.*
 - *I do not believe that there is sufficient community and stakeholder consultation taking place before major projects are undertaken.*
 - *I phoned twice and my calls were never returned.*
- ▶ Waste Management *N=10*
 - *Cost of waste removal is exorbitant*
- ▶ Finances *N=8*
 - *To spend \$19m on a new Community/Civic Centre during a pandemic with businesses closed and struggling and coastline lost to erosion is ridiculous.*
- ▶ Maintenance *N=8* (Roads *N=5*)
 - *We are living with substandard roads*
 - *There is not enough focus on fixing potholes in roads and then they are patched and reappear again very quickly*
- ▶ Rates *N=8*
 - *Over the 29 years I have lived here we seem to be charged more and more rates for less and less services.*
 - *Certain parts of the Shire seem to get little, if any, benefit from rates*
- ▶ Planning *N=6*
 - *The approval of so many new residential housing developments needs to be addressed. Not only is there no infrastructure to support them but they are fundamentally changing the character of local townships for the worse.*
- ▶ Recreation *N=5*

Other responses indicate that there is a lack of understanding about the division of responsibilities between Council and other government agencies, and that Council lacks focus on core responsibilities (waste, roads)



How respondents feel about BCRRA

12. Please choose which of the following best describes how you feel about the need for BCRRA to continue its efforts to improve Bass Coast Shire Council performance



Nearly 80% of respondents agree that BCRRA needs to continue its efforts to improve Bass Coast Shire Council performance.

- *Oversight of council activities is needed. Thanks BCRRA*
- *Keep up the good work!*

86% of respondents would like to see more frequent communications from BCRRA about Council, with Facebook being the medium preferred by the majority.

BCRRA's RECOMMENDATIONS to BCSC

- ▶ Improve transparency by increasing feedback to the community and publishing criteria and KPI's used to make decisions on council website.
- ▶ Continue live streaming of meetings after the trial period.
- ▶ Consider rate relief in lieu of deferral for extreme hardship.
- ▶ Continually review the quality and the method of community engagement.
- ▶ Maintain a focus on basic services
- ▶ Ensure ratepayers receive best value available for money
- ▶ Continue strong advocacy for urgent government assistance to remediate coastal erosion

If you would like to review all respondents' comments, as received, please contact us by email and request a copy to be sent to you – email: BassCoastRRA@gmail.com