



Patterson Lakes Precept Ratepayer Survey

Report on the results of the
Community Consultation Survey
conducted in July – August 2011

Prepared for Melbourne Water

by

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Table of Contents

- Table of Contents2
- 1. Introduction 3
 - 1.1. Background to Survey3
 - 1.2. Survey Design3
 - 1.3. Methodology3
 - 1.4. Participation and Response Rates.....4
- 2. Results 5
 - 2.1. Basis for Calculating Precept Rates.....5
 - 2.1.1. Quiet Lakes5
 - 2.1.2. Tidal Waterways6
 - 2.2. Customer Service Charter7
 - 2.2.1. Quiet Lakes7
 - 2.2.2. Tidal Waterways9
 - 2.3. Importance of Current Services 11
 - 2.3.1. Quiet Lakes 11
 - 2.3.2. Tidal Waterways 13
 - 2.4. Additional Services..... 16
 - 2.4.1. Quiet Lakes 16
 - 2.4.2. Tidal Waterways 17
 - 2.5. General Comments 18
 - 2.5.1. Quiet Lakes 18
 - 2.5.2. Tidal Waterways 18
- Appendix 1: Online Patterson Lakes Precept Ratepayer Surveys .. 20
 - Quiet Lakes 20
 - Tidal Waterways..... 24

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to Survey

Melbourne Water provides maintenance services in Patterson Lakes, including in the Quiet Lakes and Tidal Waterways areas, many of which are funded by the precept rate.

In 2011 Melbourne Water engaged Evaluation Solutions, an independent research company, to facilitate a community consultation survey with precept ratepayers from the Quiet Lakes and Tidal Waterways areas. The survey was designed to seek feedback from precept ratepayers about methods for calculating rates, priorities for services and the development of a customer service charter.

The purpose of this report is to describe and summarise the feedback provided by ratepayers in the survey. This report has been prepared independently by Evaluation Solutions, and is not intended to outline Melbourne Water's response to the feedback.

1.2. Survey Design

The survey was designed to obtain feedback from precept ratepayers in several areas, which would inform Melbourne Water's future activities. The survey covered four areas:

1. Basis for calculating precept rates – Melbourne Water is considering different methods for calculating the precept rate. This section asked ratepayers to indicate their most preferred method, from options provided by Melbourne Water. Options included the current method and two new methods. Respondents were also able to suggest another preferred method, and to comment on the options proposed by Melbourne Water as well as the method they selected.
2. Customer service charter - Melbourne Water has undertaken to develop a customer service charter relating to the services it provides to precept ratepayers in Patterson Lakes. The second section of the survey sought feedback from precept ratepayers about their understanding of the main purposes of the charter, and the topics they would like to see included.
3. Current services – Melbourne Water was seeking to understand the importance placed on the various services it provides in Patterson Lakes, in order to prioritise expenditure. Respondents were asked about the importance of current services, and which services are their highest priorities.
4. Additional services – From time to time members of the community have requested different services that are not covered by the precept rate. This section of the survey sought to understand the level of interest for these services, and whether ratepayers were prepared to pay more for these services.

Sections three and four of the survey differed slightly for ratepayers in the Quiet Lakes and Tidal Waterways areas, because there are differences in the services provided in each area due to their unique requirements (e.g. operation of the bore pump in the Quiet Lakes; jetty maintenance in Tidal Waterways).

1.3. Methodology

The survey for precept ratepayers was primarily conducted online, with the option for ratepayers to request a paper-based survey. Residents of the retirement village on Lake Illawong in the Quiet Lakes were sent a paper-based survey at the outset, and had the option to complete the survey online.

A letter was sent to each precept ratepayer on 26 July 2011, using mailing information originating from South East Water, the entity who collects the precept rate on behalf of Melbourne Water. The letter included details about the consultation survey, and provided a web address and unique login code to access the online survey. Ratepayers were able to phone Evaluation Solutions to request a paper-based survey, which was mailed out on the same or the following business day. Melbourne Water placed notices on the community noticeboards in Patterson Lakes to remind ratepayers about the survey; individual reminder letters were not sent to each household.

The survey was open online until 15 August 2011, and paper-based surveys were accepted up until 17 August 2011 to allow for reply-paid mail to be received (no further surveys were received after this date.)

Only one survey response was permitted for each property. In addition to providing access to the survey, the unique property code was utilised to validate survey responses ensuring only one response per household was received.

1.4. Participation and Response Rates

A total of 344 ratepayers from the Quiet Lakes and 900 ratepayers from the Tidal Waterways were invited to complete the survey. The response rates are shown below:

Table 1. Response Rates by Location

Location	Invited	Submitted	Percentage
Quiet Lakes	344	48	14.0%
Tidal Waterways	900	87	9.7%
TOTAL SURVEYS SUBMITTED	1244	135	10.9%

In responding to the survey, ratepayers were able to answer as many or as few questions as they wished, and not all respondents answered all questions. Throughout this report the results and percentages for each question have been calculated based on the actual number of respondents who completed that question.

The majority of surveys were completed online. The numbers of surveys received via each method is shown below:

Table 2. Response Rates by Response Method

Response Method	Quiet Lakes	Tidal Waterways	Total
Online	35	80	115
Paper/postal survey	13	7	20
TOTAL SURVEYS SUBMITTED	48	87	135

The response rates for this survey were substantially lower than those seen in the Quiet Lakes community survey in 2009, and the Quiet Lakes ballot in 2010. However these projects saw substantial resources dedicated to promotion, follow-ups and reminders, including door-knocking of individual households.

It is important to note that the results of the current survey cannot be generalised to the wider population of precept ratepayers in Patterson Lakes. The reason for this is that the survey was self-selecting, in that ratepayers could choose whether or not to participate. In this situation, it is generally accepted that people who have strong opinions or are particularly interested or concerned about the subject matter are more likely to respond, and those who are indifferent are not as likely to participate. High participation rates would assist to allay this concern, however the low response rates of the current survey mean that the results can only be taken to represent the opinions and perceptions of the 10% of ratepayers who responded, and should not be generalised more broadly.

2. Results

2.1. Basis for Calculating Precept Rates

The first section of the survey asked respondents to select, from a list of options, their preferred method for calculating the precept rate in the future. Respondents were then given the opportunity to comment on the methods proposed by Melbourne Water, and the method they selected. The results are discussed below.

2.1.1. Quiet Lakes

As shown in Table 3 below, around half of the respondents (49%) preferred that precept rates are a fixed percentage of 1990 land values for all precept ratepayers, which is how rates are currently calculated. This means that the other half (51%) of respondents were advocates for change, preferring a calculation method that is different to that currently employed. However, these respondents were divided between a single flat rate, and variable rates based on cost of service provision.

Respondents selecting "Other" all described variations on the "single flat rate" concept.

Table 3. Most preferred method of calculating precept rates – Quiet Lakes.

Methods for Calculating Precept Rates	Count	%
Rates are a fixed percentage of 1990 land values for all precept ratepayers (i.e. the higher your land value, the more rates you pay).	23	49%
A single flat rate is charged for all precept ratepayers. Small properties such as high rise units and retirement villages would pay a proportionate share of the flat rate.	13	28%
Different categories of property (e.g. water front, non-water front, mooring allocation, key access) pay different amounts based on the cost of service provision.	8	17%
Other (please describe)	3	6%
TOTAL	47	100%

Comments from Quiet Lakes ratepayers who selected "a fixed percentage of 1990 land values" generally suggested that those with better access should pay more than those who do not have waterfront properties. Many suggested this is the fairest method for calculating rates, and that it is "fine as is".

There were few comments from Quiet Lakes ratepayers who preferred a single flat rate, but those comments generally suggested that, as ratepayers do not have exclusive access to the area in front of their property, and as maintenance includes aspects such as water quality which benefit many, all residents who have the ability to use the lakes should pay the same amount.

Comments from Quiet Lakes ratepayers who preferred different types of properties pay different amounts based on the cost of service provision generally suggested that residents who do not have waterfront access should not have to pay as much as residents who do.

2.1.2. Tidal Waterways

As shown in Table 4 below, just under half of Tidal Waterways respondents (44%) preferred that precept rates are a fixed percentage of 1990 land values for all precept ratepayers, which is how rates are currently calculated. As with Quiet Lakes, this means that the majority (55%) of respondents were advocates for change, but again, these respondents were divided between a single flat rate, and variable rates based on cost of service provision.

The respondent selecting "Other" suggested a combined approach, based on the width of water frontage and a flat fee for general maintenance.

Table 4. Most preferred method of calculating precept rates – Tidal Waterways

Methods for Calculating Precept Rates	Count	%
Rates are a fixed percentage of 1990 land values for all precept ratepayers (i.e. the higher your land value, the more rates you pay).	37	44%
A single flat rate is charged for all precept ratepayers. Small properties such as high rise units and retirement villages would pay a proportionate share of the flat rate.	25	29%
Different categories of property (e.g. water front, non-water front, mooring allocation, key access) pay different amounts based on the cost of service provision.	22	26%
Other (please describe)	1	1%
TOTAL	85	100%

Comments from Tidal Waterways ratepayers who selected "a fixed percentage of 1990 land values" generally suggested this option is the fairest way to calculate rates and is consistent with the way other types of rates are calculated.

Comments from Tidal Waterways ratepayers who preferred a single flat rate suggested that all residents (and even non-residents) benefit in some way from the canals, and receive the same services regardless of whether they have a water view property or not, and therefore all residents should pay the same rate. Furthermore, some respondents felt this method was fairer and easier to understand for ratepayers.

Comments from Tidal Waterways ratepayers who preferred different types of properties pay different amounts based on the cost of service provision suggested that those who get better access or are regular users of the waterways should pay more than those who do not have direct access and do not tend to use the waterways.

2.2. Customer Service Charter

Melbourne Water has undertaken to develop a customer service charter relating to the services it provides to precept ratepayers in Patterson Lakes. The second section of the survey sought feedback from precept ratepayers to inform the drafting of the customer service charter.

Ratepayers were first asked to indicate the most important purpose(s) of the customer service charter by selecting up to three options from a list provided by Melbourne Water. Respondents were also able to suggest other purpose(s). A small number of respondents commented that they found more than three options to be important purposes; however the design of this question limited the selection to three options, to enable priorities to be ranked.

Ratepayers were then asked to comment on the sorts of topics they would like to see in the customer service charter, under some broad concept areas. The results are discussed below.

2.2.1. Quiet Lakes

As can be seen in Table 5 below, the highest priority for respondents in the Quiet Lakes was for the customer service charter to clearly define the services that Melbourne Water provides to ratepayers; almost three quarters of respondents (74%) selected this. More than a third prioritised achieving mutually agreeable outcomes for ratepayers and Melbourne Water (36%), and providing information to assist ratepayers to assess whether they receive value for money (34%).

Table 5. Most important purposes of the customer service charter – Quiet Lakes

Purposes of the customer service charter	Count	% *
To clearly define the services that Melbourne Water provides to ratepayers	35	74%
To provide ratepayers with information to assist them in assessing whether they receive value for money	16	34%
To set out the community's roles and responsibilities in helping to protect the waterways at Patterson Lakes	9	19%
To provide information around the way rates are calculated and reviewed	12	26%
To clarify the channels of communication between Melbourne Water and the Patterson Lakes community	5	11%
To achieve mutually agreeable outcomes for ratepayers and Melbourne Water	17	36%
To clarify service level expectations	12	26%
To clarify areas of enforcement e.g. boating access, illegal moorings, unauthorised access to the waterways and lakes	4	9%
To create a clear understanding of Melbourne Water's use of maintenance access easements across Patterson Lakes	3	6%
Other (please describe)	8	17%

* A total of 47 Quiet Lakes respondents answered this question. As respondents were able to select three options, percentages add up to more than 100%.

Respondents who selected "Other" suggested aspects including:

- that Melbourne Water take full responsibility to maintain the amenity
- allowing greater involvement for residents in deciding what is done and in solving problems

Some respondents also commented that they want Melbourne Water to adhere to the 1973 agreement.

Respondents were asked to comment about the sorts of topics they would like to see in the customer service charter, under the broad areas of maintenance services, other services, the way Melbourne Water engages and communicates, and other topics.

A summary of the feedback is shown below for each concept area.

Maintenance services

Overall, 26 respondents commented about the topics to be covered under "Maintenance Services" and four themes emerged. The most common theme was that the charter should provide details about the specific services that Melbourne Water provides. The majority of comments (85%) referred to some aspect of this.

Other themes that emerged included (in order of prominence):

- Service levels should be defined
- Performance of services provided should be monitored and evaluated and action should be taken if performance is not up to standard
- A schedule/timeline of services should be provided including the frequency at which they are to be delivered

Other services we provide

Overall, 22 respondents commented about the topics to be covered under "Other Services". Although no clear themes emerged, individual comments related to the following topics:

- More information about what "other services" are provided by Melbourne Water (some comments made by respondents indicate that they are not currently aware of any other services provided by Melbourne Water)
- Maintenance of water quality

The way we engage and communicate

Overall, 27 respondents commented about the topics to be covered in relation to the way Melbourne Water engages and communicates with ratepayers. The only theme that emerged suggested that communication from Melbourne Water should be more honest, transparent and consultative.

Other comments included a mixture of opinions on communication methods. Some respondents asked to continue receiving the newsletter. Some requested more regular updates, others suggested they are happy with the current communication methods/approach. Some respondents preferred communication via mail or letterbox drop, others requested communication via email. Some respondents wanted more updates and information on the website, others wanted the notice board kept up-to-date. Some respondents suggested Melbourne Water should be communicating more about their performance and whether performance targets are being met.

Other topics to be included

Sixteen respondents commented about others topics they would like to see in the customer service charter. Although no clear themes emerged, comments generally related to:

- Medium to long term goals and plans about how to get the lakes back to their original standard
- Restrictions/laws and how they are enforced
- Where the precept rate money is going, and what services it covers

2.2.2. Tidal Waterways

Priorities for Tidal Waterways respondents were generally similar to those indicated in the Quiet Lakes, and the top three priorities were the same.

As can be seen in Table 6 below, the highest priority for respondents in Tidal Waterways was for the customer service charter to clearly define the services that Melbourne Water provides to ratepayers; three quarters (75%) of respondents selected this. Close to half (44%) prioritised achieving mutually agreeable outcomes for ratepayers and Melbourne Water. Around one third prioritised providing information to assist ratepayers to assess whether they receive value for money (35%) and providing information around the way rates are calculated and reviewed (34%).

One difference between Tidal Waterways and Quiet Lakes was the level of interest in clarifying areas of enforcement, which was a priority for 28% of Tidal Waterways respondents compared to 9% in Quiet Lakes.

Table 6. Most important purposes of the customer service charter – Tidal Waterways

Purposes of the customer service charter	Count	% *
To clearly define the services that Melbourne Water provides to ratepayers	64	75%
To provide ratepayers with information to assist them in assessing whether they receive value for money	30	35%
To set out the community's roles and responsibilities in helping to protect the waterways at Patterson Lakes	20	24%
To provide information around the way rates are calculated and reviewed	29	34%
To clarify the channels of communication between Melbourne Water and the Patterson Lakes community	10	12%
To achieve mutually agreeable outcomes for ratepayers and Melbourne Water	37	44%
To clarify service level expectations	19	22%
To clarify areas of enforcement e.g. boating access, illegal moorings, unauthorised access to the waterways and lakes	24	28%
To create a clear understanding of Melbourne Water's use of maintenance access easements across Patterson Lakes	6	7%
Other (please describe)	8	9%

* A total of 85 Tidal Waterways respondents answered this question. As respondents were able to select three options, percentages add up to more than 100%.

Respondents who selected "Other" suggested other purposes, including clarifying the role/use of the original agreement, and increasing understanding of customer expectations. Some respondents also commented that they want Melbourne Water to adhere to the 1973 agreement.

Respondents were asked to comment about the sorts of topics they would like to see in the customer service charter, under the broad areas of maintenance services, other services, the way Melbourne Water engages and communicates, and other topics.

A summary of the feedback is shown below for each concept area.

Maintenance services

Overall, 60 respondents commented about the topics to be covered under “Maintenance Services” and five themes emerged. The most common theme was that the charter should provide details about the specific services that Melbourne Water provides. Nearly half of all comments referred to some aspect of this.

Other themes that emerged included (in order of prominence):

- Service levels should be defined
- A schedule/timeline of services should be provided
- Performance of services provided should be monitored and evaluated
- Transparency and disclosure around the precept rate (i.e., where is precept rate money going to, what proportions are spent on services)

Other services we provide

Overall, 38 respondents commented about the topics to be covered under “Other Services”. The only theme that emerged suggested that details should be included about any other services Melbourne Water provides. Other comments related to the following topics:

- Clearly defined roles for residents and Melbourne Water
- Provision of advice/assistance for residents and out of hours contact details
- Clarify rules (e.g. public/private access to waterways) and areas of enforcement
- A schedule/timeline of other services/projects should be provided
- Melbourne Water should be self-accountable for their performance and show how the services they provide are value for money
- Transparency around the precept rate (i.e., what does the precept rate cover)

The way we engage and communicate

Overall, 47 respondents commented about the topics to be covered in relation to the way Melbourne Water engages and communicates with ratepayers. The most common theme was that respondents were happy with the newsletters they are currently receiving and would like this to continue as a form of communication; around half of all comments referred to some aspect of this.

Other comments suggested that communication should be more honest, transparent and consultative. Some respondents indicated that they would prefer communication via mail or letterbox drop, others requested communication via email. Some respondents requested more relevant and up-to-date information on the website. The suggestion was also made that a 24 hour/7 day point of contact should be provided.

Other topics to be included

Twenty-four respondents commented about others topics they would like to see in the customer service charter. Although no clear themes emerged, comments related to:

- Jetty replacements
- Beach cleaning/replenishment
- Restrictions/laws and how they are enforced
- Transparency around rates and any increases in rates
- Penalties for poor performance by Melbourne Water
- Seaweed collection

2.3. Importance of Current Services

The third section of the survey sought to understand ratepayers’ perceptions of the importance of current services, in order to prioritise expenditure based on ratepayer needs.

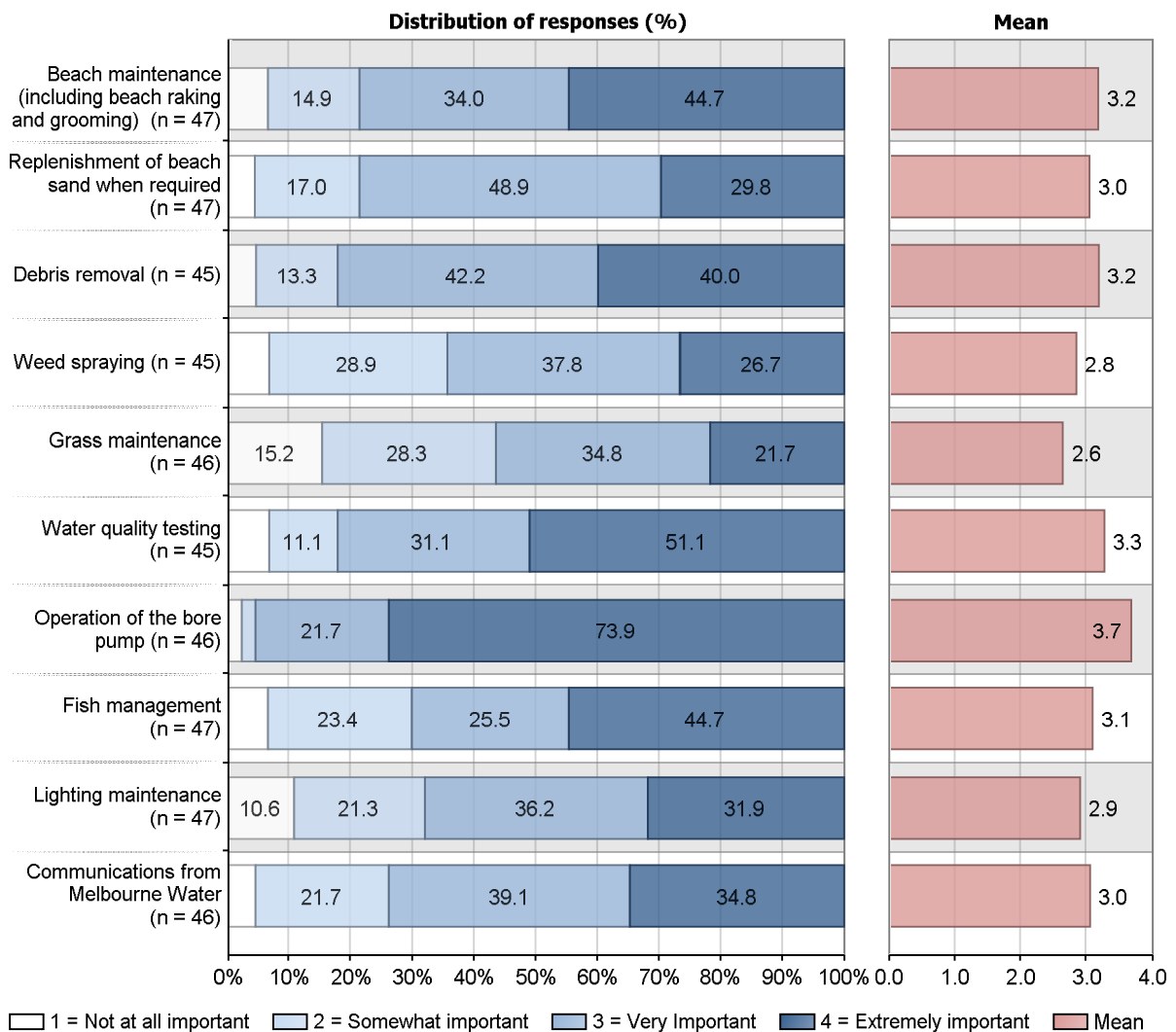
Respondents were first asked to rate the importance of a series of current services, and were then asked to indicate which three services are their first, second and third highest priorities. Only three services could be ranked in this second question. While it is acknowledged that many services may be important, the design of this question was intended to ensure that the highest priorities were identified.

2.3.1. Quiet Lakes

As can be seen in Chart 1 below, the service rated most highly in terms of importance by Quiet Lakes respondents was operation of the bore pump. Almost three quarters (74%) of respondents gave this the highest possible rating. Water quality testing was the next most highly rated service.

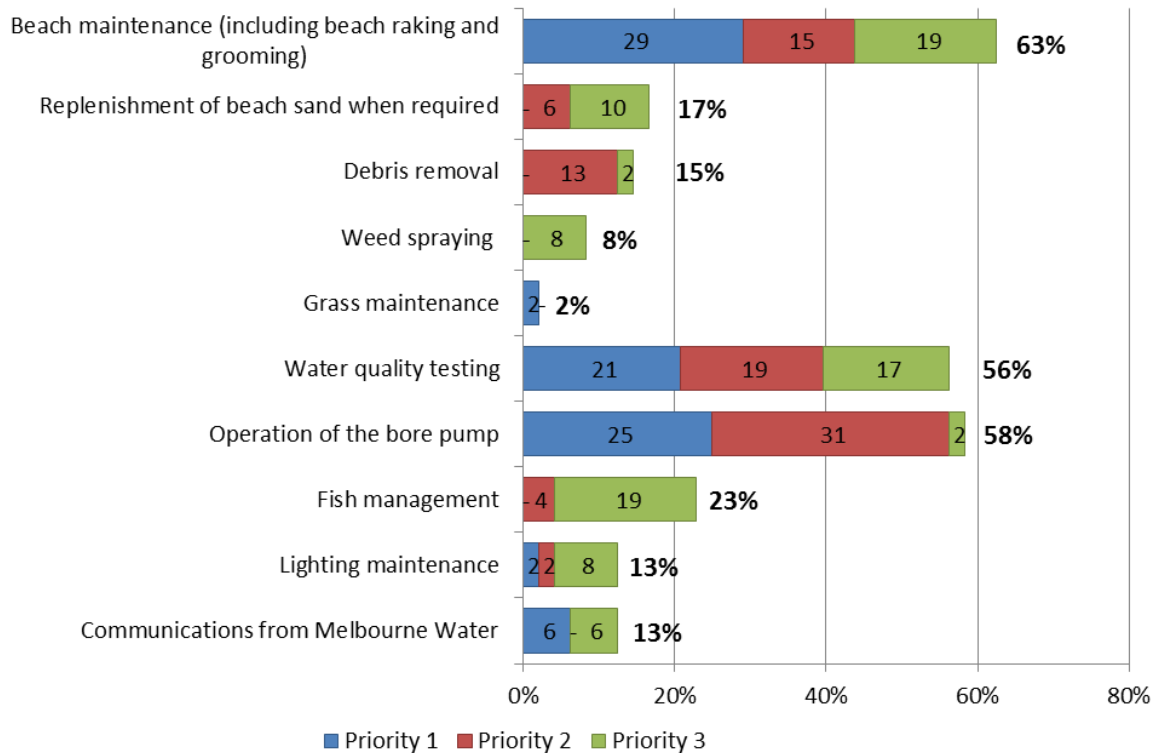
The lowest rated service in terms of importance was grass maintenance, although more than half (56%) of the respondents rated this as very important or extremely important.

Chart 1. Importance of current services –Quiet Lakes



In terms of respondents' highest priorities for current services, the service which appeared in the top 3 priorities of the highest number of respondents was beach maintenance (refer Chart 2, below). Nearly two thirds (63%) of respondents included this in their top 3 most important services, and nearly one third (29%) rated this as their number one priority. Operation of the bore pump and water quality testing were the services of next highest priority. These services were the same two that received the highest importance ratings in the previous question.

Chart 2. Top three priorities for current services – Quiet Lakes



Note: the numbers on each bar indicate the % of respondents who ranked a service as priority 1, 2, or 3. The number at the end of each bar indicates the total % of respondents who included a service in their top 3 rankings.

Respondents were asked to comment on their top 3 priorities, and what was important about these services. Comments about each service are summarised below.

- **Beach maintenance:** the majority of respondents who prioritised beach maintenance indicated that the aesthetic aspect was most important; some mentioned the positive appearance of a clean beach. The ability to walk safely around the lake was also important. Some respondents mentioned that maintaining the beach keeps rubbish out of the lakes.
- **Operation of the bore pump:** this is seen as an important contributor to water quality maintenance, through increasing water flow and circulation, as well as increasing water levels. Some respondents indicated that additional operation of the bore pump was needed at times.
- **Water quality testing:** many respondents who prioritised water quality testing did so because they want to be able to swim in the lakes. Some mentioned the importance of monitoring the health of the lakes, and others saw this as a way to monitor the effectiveness of Melbourne Water's maintenance activities.
- **Fish management:** this was seen primarily as a contributor to water quality management, through the reduction of nutrients that support blue-green algae.

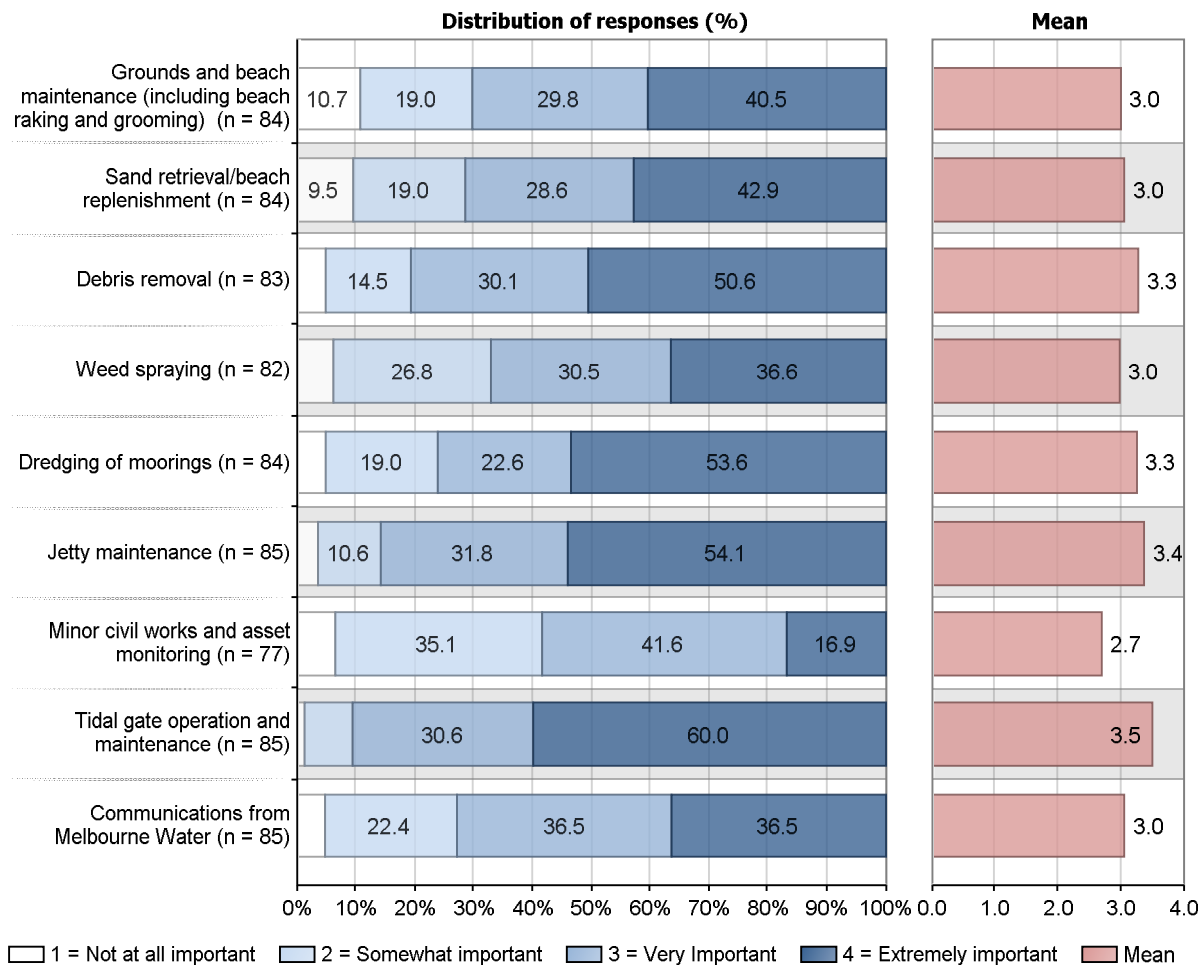
- Replenishment of beach sand: comments about replenishment of beach sand included requests that it be done more frequently, and that sand be excavated from the lake and used to replenish the beach, thereby also contributing to deepening the lakes.
- Debris removal: respondents who prioritised debris removal mentioned the visual aspect, safety, preventing drains from becoming blocked, and preventing vermin.
- Lightening maintenance: this was seen to be a safety and security issue.
- Communication from Melbourne Water: comments mentioned the importance of knowing what is going on and receiving information about water quality. Honesty in communications was mentioned, as well as communications that are not “bossy”.
- Weed spraying / Grass maintenance: comments mentioned the importance of maintaining the beaches, and keeping the water clear.

2.3.2. Tidal Waterways

As can be seen in Chart 3 below, the service rated most highly in terms of importance by Tidal Waterways respondents was tidal gate operation and maintenance, with 60% of respondents giving this the highest possible rating. Jetty maintenance, dredging of moorings and debris removal were also rated as extremely important by more than half of Tidal Waterways respondents.

The lowest rated service in terms of importance was minor civil works and asset monitoring.

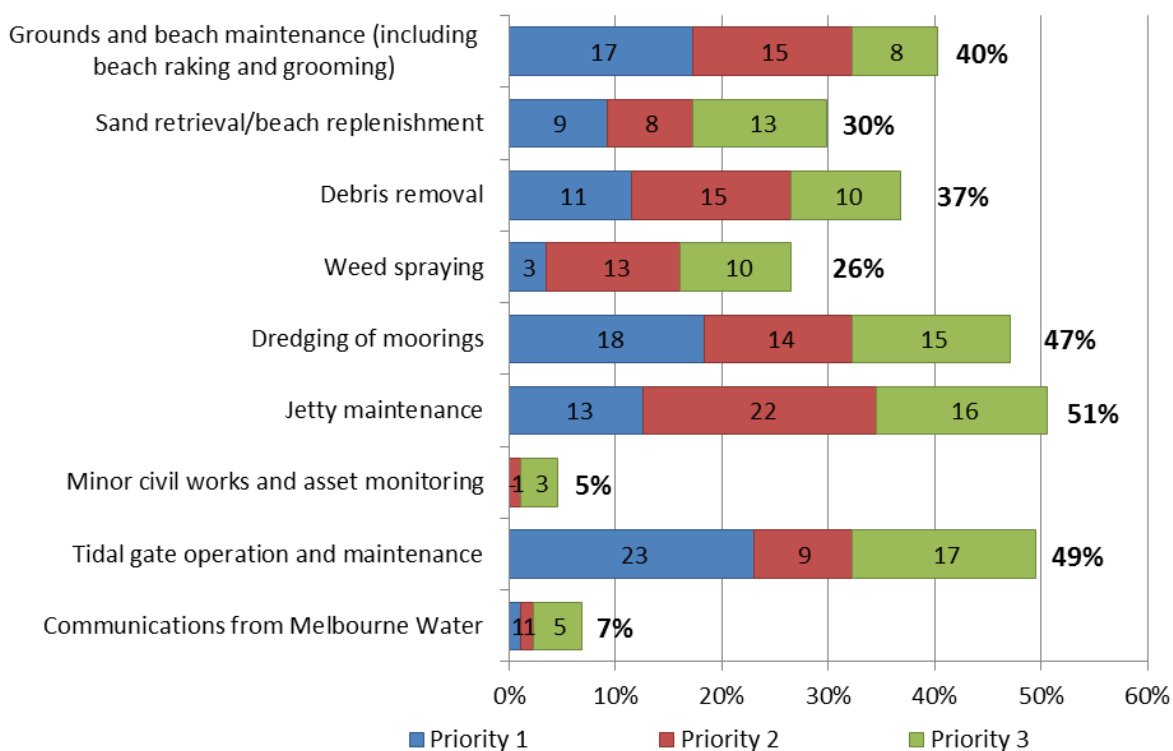
Chart 3. Importance of current services – Tidal Waterways



In terms of respondents' highest priorities for current services, the service receiving the most mentions overall was jetty maintenance (51% of respondents included this in their top 3 rankings), followed closely by tidal gate operation (49%) and dredging of moorings (47%) (refer Chart 4, below); tidal gate operation was the service receiving the highest proportion of "first priority" mentions (23%). These services were the same three that received the highest importance ratings in the previous question.

The fourth most mentioned service was grounds and beach maintenance (40% of respondents included this in their top 3 rankings), although this service was not one of the most highly rated in the previous question. This indicates that, while respondents don't consider beach maintenance to be of high importance per se, when asked to prioritise, a relatively high proportion do not want to forego this service.

Chart 4. Top three priorities for current services – Tidal Waterways



Note: the numbers on each bar indicate the % of respondents who ranked a service as priority 1, 2, or 3. The number at the end of each bar indicates the total % of respondents who included a service in their top 3 rankings.

Respondents were asked to comment on their top 3 priorities, and what was important about these services. Comments about each service are summarised below.

- Jetty maintenance: many respondents who prioritised jetty maintenance suggested this was a safety concern for users, with some concerned about access to and from boats, or the potential for damage to boats. Some respondents indicated that jetty access was their main reason for purchasing in Patterson Lakes, and some mentioned the unattractiveness of poorly maintained jetties.
- Tidal gate operation and maintenance: the majority of respondents discussed the importance of protection against flooding from extreme high tides. Some mentioned the importance of access to the bay, and that gates are maintained in working order at all times.

- Dredging of moorings: respondents mostly mentioned the issue of moorings being too shallow at low tide, and the subsequent issues of boat access and potential for damage. Some respondents were concerned that boats under the maximum permitted size were not able to be accommodated; value for money was also questioned.
- Grounds and beach maintenance: the majority of respondents who prioritised grounds and beach maintenance did so because of the aesthetic aspects; some mentioned safety and hygiene, including the issue of broken glass or needles on the beach. Some respondents felt the approach to beach maintenance was inconsistent, with some areas receiving regular maintenance and others not.
- Debris removal: respondents who saw this as a priority were mostly concerned about the unsightly appearance if debris and rubbish accumulate in the canals and around beaches and rocky areas. Public safety was also mentioned, and the potential for damage to boats. Some respondents mentioned the need for debris removal to maintain the health of waterways and reduce the impact of pollution.
- Sand retrieval/ beach replenishment: this was seen as important from an aesthetic perspective, and to enable residents to enjoy the beach area. Some respondents mentioned the impact on property values if replenishment is not carried out. Others suggested that this was done too infrequently, or that they had never seen this done, or it was done inconsistently, with some areas receiving more maintenance than others.
- Weed spraying: this was seen as important from an aesthetic perspective, as well as to avoid the build-up of rubbish and odours. Some respondents mentioned the need to ensure that the correct sprays were being used so as to avoid any impact on the waterways from inappropriate chemicals.
- Communication from Melbourne Water: the few respondents who saw this as one of their top 3 priorities mentioned the need to know what is going on, and understand Melbourne Water's plans and commitments.
- Minor civil works: the few respondents who prioritised minor civil works and asset monitoring suggested timely maintenance would increase safety and reduce the cost of maintenance in the long term.

2.4. Additional Services

The fourth section of the survey sought to understand the level of ratepayer interest in various additional services that have been raised from time to time by members of the community; these services are not currently covered by the precept rate.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of interest in each service and whether they would pay for the services, and were also able to suggest other services of interest. Respondents were then asked to expand on what they wanted to see from such services.

The list of services for Quiet Lakes and Tidal Waterway differed slightly, as appropriate to the different areas. The results are discussed below.

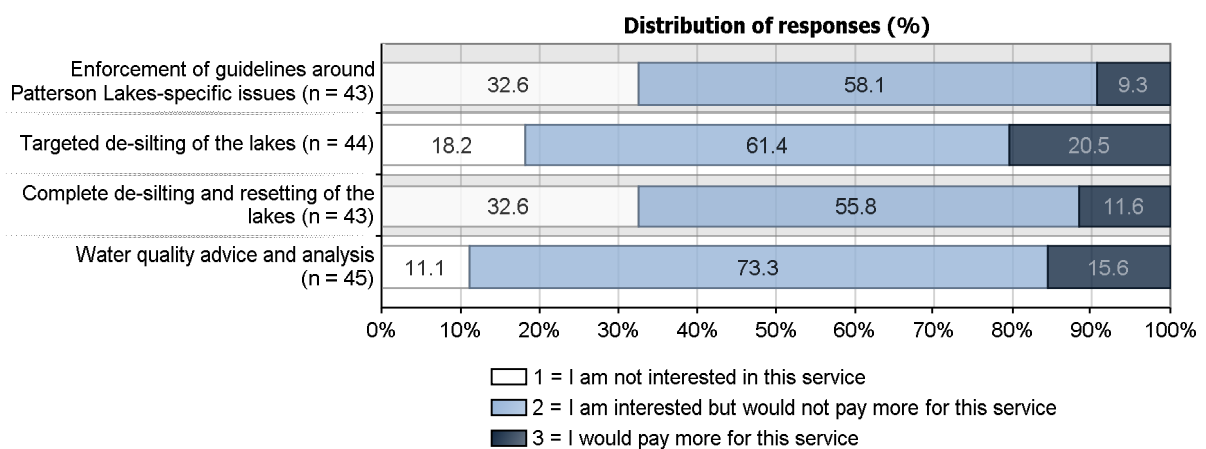
2.4.1. Quiet Lakes

As can be seen in Chart 5 below, at least two thirds of Quiet Lakes respondents were interested in each of the additional services that Melbourne Water could provide (selecting either “I am interested but would not pay more for this service” or “I would pay more for this service”), but the majority would not pay more for these services.

The service of most interest was water quality advice and analysis, with almost 90% interested in this service; however 73% of respondents indicated they would not pay more.

Of note, one in five respondents indicated that they are willing to pay specifically for targeted de-silting of the lakes.

Chart 5. Interest in additional services – Quiet Lakes

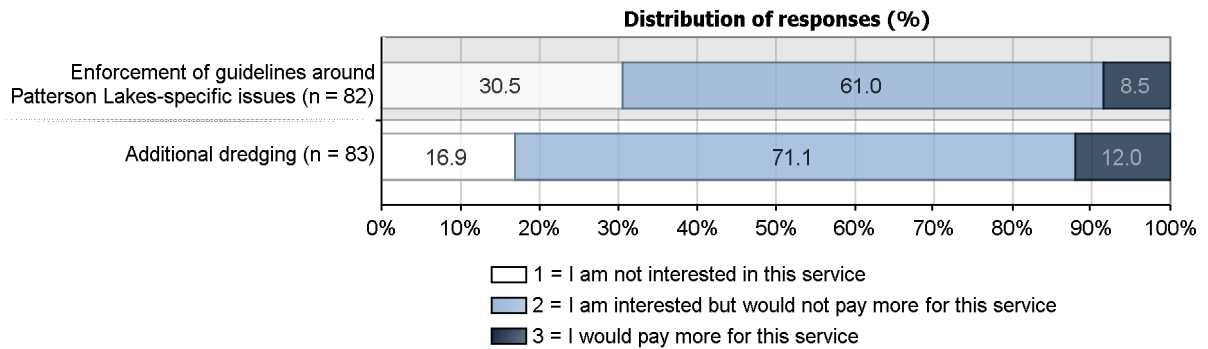


Other additional services listed by Quiet Lakes respondents included more attraction for birds and the removal of fish/carp from the lakes.

2.4.2. Tidal Waterways

As can be seen in Chart 6 below, more than four out of five Tidal Waterways respondents (83%) indicated they are interested in additional dredging, and more than two thirds (70%) are interested in enforcement of guidelines by Melbourne Water. However only a small proportion of those interested would pay more for these services.

Chart 6. Interest in additional services – Tidal Waterways



Other additional services mentioned by Tidal Waterways respondents included (in no particular order):

- Lighting of waterways at night
- A local representative
- Beach maintenance
- More policing of waterways
- Dredging
- Weed control

2.5. General Comments

The final section of the survey invited ratepayers to comment on any areas covered in the survey, or provide any other feedback. A summary of the themes that emerged in comments are shown below. Given the overall number of comments received, it is important to note that a single theme may represent the views of only a small number of individuals.

2.5.1. Quiet Lakes

General comments were received from 24 Quiet Lakes respondents and four themes emerged, which are described below in order of prominence.

- Standard of the lakes: some respondents requested that the lakes be returned to the standard of 20 years ago, that Melbourne Water adhere to the original agreement, restore original infrastructure, and implement the “back to basics” action plan proposed by Quiet Lakes residents.
- Call for action: some respondents suggested Melbourne Water needs to start acting and showing residents that they are doing something about the water quality.
- Comments on the current consultation survey: included suggestions that the survey is biased towards Melbourne Water’s interests, is a public relations exercise, and a waste of money. Some respondents questioned whether any outcomes/actions would result from the survey.
- Precept rate: respondents requested that precept rates are not increased any further, and that the precept rate be removed for residents who do not have direct access to the lakes. Respondents also want to see value for money.

Other general comments were received from respondents but no other clear themes emerged.

2.5.2. Tidal Waterways

General comments were received from 34 Tidal Waterways respondents and six themes emerged, which are described below in order of prominence.

- Restrictions and enforcements: respondents raised issues about activities they would like to see restricted, including cleaning fish, disposing of waste in the waterways, and dogs off leash in the waterways area. Some comments mentioned the need for clear signage of private property and areas where public access is restricted, and suggested some level of privacy for residents should be enforced. Enforcement of restrictions on fencing to the water’s edge was also mentioned.
- Maintenance requests: suggestions included trimming or removing trees at risk of falling or losing branches during bad weather; attending to sand levels and fixing rocks so that sand can’t run into the waterway; more beach maintenance including raking and seaweed removal; and more regular emptying of rubbish diverters. Other comments suggested all ratepayers should receive equal levels of maintenance services, and that the efficiency of maintenance services could be improved.
- Positive feedback for Melbourne Water: some respondents indicated they thought Melbourne Water was genuinely trying to communicate with the Paterson Lakes community, and felt that the survey was a good avenue for allowing the community to participate, and improves communication. The use of an online survey was seen to be cost effective. Others suggested that Melbourne Water generally provides a good service.

- Precept rate: respondents requested clarification about what services are provided for the rates that are paid. Others suggested the precept rate should be a one-off charge so that rates can't continue to increase, or that increases to precept rates should be within reason. It was also mentioned that the precept rate for Paterson Lakes is inconsistent with the way other Melbourne ratepayers are charged.
- Improved management of projects and finances: respondents indicated the need for improved financial management (i.e. reduce the financial waste and provide services that are necessary and fully costed), better management of the impact of works/projects on residents and the value of their properties, and better time management in maintenance and project work.
- Jetty Replacement Program: some respondents were critical of the jetty replacement program. Complaints included the suggestion that some decisions about jetty placement would adversely affect the value of some properties; that decisions (about mooring poles) were inconsistent and therefore unfair; and that where jetties are not capable of being upgraded from seven to nine metres, they should be left as is rather than relocated. It was also suggested that major projects such as this should require a community vote.

Other general comments were received from respondents but no other clear themes emerged.

Patterson Lakes Precept Ratepayer Survey - Quiet Lakes

In this survey, you are invited to have your say about:

- Future precept rates
- Your priorities for services Melbourne Water provides at Patterson Lakes
- The development of a customer service charter for Patterson Lakes.

To maintain your anonymity and ensure independence, the survey is being conducted and analysed by Evaluation Solutions Pty Ltd, an independent research company based in Melbourne. The survey is entirely confidential, and at no time will Melbourne Water have access to your individual survey responses.

The survey is optional, but we welcome your feedback and encourage your participation.

Instructions for completing the survey:

This survey has two pages. The questions are optional, and you can complete as much or as little as you wish.

You may save a draft and return to the survey at a later stage if necessary, by clicking Save Draft at the bottom of this page. To retrieve your draft, you will need to enter your unique code again at the address: www.e-valuate-it.com/survey/pattersonlakes/2011

**** Important Note**** If you are called away from the survey at any stage, please be sure to save a draft response. If you close your internet session before saving, your answers may be lost.

Please complete this survey by midnight on Monday evening, 15 August 2011.

Basis for Calculating Rates

Melbourne Water provides maintenance services in Patterson Lakes, many of which are covered by the precept rate. Currently, your precept rates are a fixed percentage of 1990 land values (that is, the higher your land value, the more rates you pay). Melbourne Water is seeking feedback about the most fair and equitable manner for calculating rates, and we welcome your input to this discussion.

1. Please indicate below, the method you would most prefer in terms of calculating the precept rate in the future:

(Select only one)

- Rates are a fixed percentage of 1990 land values for all Quiet Lakes precept ratepayers (ie. the higher your land value, the more rates you pay). This is how your rates are currently calculated.
- A single flat rate is charged for all Quiet Lakes precept ratepayers. Small properties such as high rise units and retirement villages would pay a proportionate share of the flat rate.
- Different categories of property within Quiet Lakes (e.g. water front, non-water front, key access) pay different amounts based on the cost of service provision.
- Other (please describe)

2. Please feel free to provide comments about the methods suggested above. If you have suggested an alternative, please indicate why you think this method is preferable. Are there other considerations that you think should influence Melbourne Water's decision?

Melbourne Water will soon be preparing a customer service charter that sets out the mutual obligations of Melbourne Water and the community, and the principles for the way Melbourne Water provides services to precept ratepayers in Patterson Lakes.

3. What do you think are the most important purposes of this customer service charter?

(Select up to three)

- To clearly define the services that Melbourne Water provides to ratepayers
- To provide ratepayers with information to assist them in assessing whether they receive value for money
- To set out the community's roles and responsibilities in helping to protect the waterways at Patterson Lakes
- To provide information around the way rates are calculated and reviewed
- To clarify the channels of communication between Melbourne Water and the Patterson Lakes community
- To achieve mutually agreeable outcomes for ratepayers and Melbourne Water
- To clarify service level expectations
- To clarify areas of enforcement e.g. boating access, illegal moorings, unauthorised access to the waterways and lakes
- To create a clear understanding of Melbourne Water's use of maintenance access easements across Patterson Lakes
- Other (please describe)

To help Melbourne Water to develop the customer service charter, we are seeking your feedback under each of the headings below. This will assist in deciding what concepts and principles should be covered by the charter.

Reading the headings below, please indicate the topics you would like to see included in a customer service charter:

4. Maintenance services

(e.g. should the customer charter detail specific services? Should it detail service levels?)

5. Other services we provide

6. The way we engage and communicate with you

7. Other topics to be included

Importance of Current Services

Below is a list of the services that Melbourne Water provides in Quiet Lakes, many of which are covered by the precept rate. In order to prioritise expenditure based on ratepayer needs, we would like to understand how important these services are to you.

Some of these services must be done in order to comply with our maintenance responsibilities and to preserve our assets. However, your feedback can help determine the level of priority or frequency of these services.

For each service, please indicate how important it is to you:

(Please select one response on each row)

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Very Important	Extremely important	Don't Know
8. Beach maintenance (including beach raking and grooming)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Replenishment of beach sand when required	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Debris removal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Weed spraying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Grass maintenance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Water quality testing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Operation of the bore pump	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Fish management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Lighting maintenance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Communications from Melbourne Water	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Which services would you say are your top three priorities?

Please write the numbers from 1 to 3 against your three highest priorities in the list below, where 1 is the most important, 2 is the second most important, and 3 is the third most important.

- Beach maintenance (including beach raking and grooming)
- Replenishment of beach sand when required
- Debris removal
- Weed spraying
- Grass maintenance
- Water quality testing
- Operation of the bore pump
- Fish management
- Lighting maintenance
- Communications from Melbourne Water
- Other (please specify)

19. You indicated that Beach maintenance (including beach raking and grooming) is your highest priority. What is important to you about this?

20. You indicated that Replenishment of beach sand when required is your second highest priority. What is important to you about this?

21. You indicated that Debris removal is your third highest priority. What is important to you about this?

Potential for Additional Services

From time to time members of the Patterson Lakes community have suggested additional services that they would like to see provided by Melbourne Water, that are not currently covered by the precept rate. If provided, these services would attract additional costs, which would be reflected in a rise to the precept rate.

At this stage, Melbourne Water is seeking your feedback to gauge the level of interest for these services within the community. Before any service would be implemented at an additional cost to precept ratepayers, further consultation would take place around the level of service and costing.

For each of the suggested additional services, please indicate your level of interest below:

(Please select one response on each row)

	I am not interested in this service	I am interested but would not pay more for this service	I would pay more for this service
22. Enforcement of guidelines relating to Patterson Lakes-specific issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Targeted de-silting of the lakes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Complete de-silting and resetting of the lakes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Water quality advice and analysis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. Other (please specify) <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. If you have indicated you are interested in, or would pay more for, any of the above services, please briefly describe what you would like to see from this service:

As some of these service areas are quite broad, we're interested to understand what is specifically of interest to you.

General Comments

28. If you have comments about any of the areas covered in the survey, or wish to provide further feedback, please do so below:

Patterson Lakes Precept Ratepayer Survey - Tidal Waterways

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- The development of a customer service charter for Patterson Lakes.

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1. Please indicate below, the method you would most prefer in terms of calculating the precept rate in the future:

(Select only one)

- Rates are a fixed percentage of 1990 land values for all Tidal Waterways precept ratepayers (ie. the higher your land value, the more rates you pay). This is how your rates are currently calculated.
- A single flat rate is charged for all Tidal Waterways precept ratepayers. Small properties such as high rise units and retirement villages would pay a proportionate share of the flat rate.
- Different categories of property within Tidal Waterways (e.g. water front, non-water front, mooring allocation, key access) pay different amounts based on the cost of service provision.
- Other (please describe)

2. Please feel free to provide comments about the methods suggested above. If you have suggested an alternative, please indicate why you think this method is preferable. Are there other considerations that you think should influence Melbourne Water's decision?

Customer Service Charter

Melbourne Water will soon be preparing a customer service charter that sets out the mutual obligations of Melbourne Water and the community, and the principles for the way Melbourne Water provides services to precept ratepayers in Patterson Lakes.

3. What do you think are the most important purposes of this customer service charter?

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- To clearly define the services that Melbourne Water provides to ratepayers
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- To create a clear understanding of Melbourne Water's use of maintenance access easements across Patterson Lakes
- Other (please describe)

To help Melbourne Water to develop the customer service charter, we are seeking your feedback under each of the headings below. This will assist in deciding what concepts and principles should be covered by the charter.

Reading the headings below, please indicate the topics you would like to see included in a customer service charter:

4. Maintenance services

(e.g. should the customer charter detail specific services? Should it detail service levels?)

5. Other services we provide

6. The way we engage and communicate with you

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Importance of Current Services

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For each service, please indicate how important it is to you:

(Please select one response on each row)

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Very Important	Extremely important	Don't Know
8. Grounds and beach maintenance (including beach raking and grooming)	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Sand retrieval/beach replenishment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Debris removal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Weed spraying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Dredging of moorings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Jetty maintenance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Minor civil works and asset monitoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Tidal gate operation and maintenance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Communications from Melbourne Water	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Which services would you say are your top three priorities?

Please write the numbers from 1 to 3 against your three highest priorities in the list below, where 1 is the most important, 2 is the second most important, and 3 is the third most important.

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- Debris removal
- Weed spraying
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- Jetty maintenance
- Minor civil works and asset monitoring
- Tidal gate operation and maintenance
- Communications from Melbourne Water
- Other (please specify)

18. You indicated that Grounds and beach maintenance (including beach raking and grooming) is your highest priority. What is important to you about this?

19. You indicated that Sand retrieval/beach replenishment is your second highest priority. What is important to you about this?

20. You indicated that Debris removal is your third highest priority. What is important to you about this?

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For each of the suggested additional services, please indicate your level of interest below:

(Please select one response on each row)

	I am not interested in this service	I am interested but would not pay more for this service	I would pay more for this service
21. Enforcement of guidelines relating to Patterson Lakes-specific issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Additional dredging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify) <input type="text"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. If you have indicated you are interested in, or would pay more for, any of the above services, please briefly describe what you would like to see from this service:

As some of these service areas are quite broad, we're interested to understand what is specifically of interest to you.

General Comments

25. If you have comments about any of the areas covered in the survey, or wish to provide further feedback, please do so below: