

Patterson Lakes Precept Ratepayer Survey – Brief Summary of Results for Quiet Lakes

In July/August 2011 Melbourne Water (MW) engaged Evaluation Solutions to facilitate a consultation survey with precept ratepayers in Patterson Lakes. The survey was designed to seek feedback about the preferred basis for calculating precept rates, the customer service charter, the importance of and priorities for current services, and interest in additional services.

A total of 344 ratepayers from the Quiet Lakes were invited to complete the survey. Forty-eight responses were received, giving a response rate of 14%.

This one page document provides only a brief summary of results. Refer to the complete report for full details of the survey results.

Basis for Calculating Precept Rates

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. 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.

Customer Service Charter

Respondents were asked to indicate their three most important purposes for the customer service charter, from a list provided. The highest priority 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%).

Importance of Current Services

The service rated most highly in terms of importance 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.

In terms of respondents' highest priorities across all of the current services, the service which appeared in the top 3 priorities for the highest number of respondents was beach maintenance. Nearly two thirds (63%) of respondents included this in their top 3 service priorities 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.

Additional Services

At least two thirds of respondents were interested in each of the additional services that Melbourne Water could provide, 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.

General Comments

General comments were received from 24 respondents and the following themes emerged:

- The standard of the lakes, and requests for this to be improved
- The need for action around water quality
- The current consultation survey, including whether any action would be taken
- The precept rate, including comments on rate increases, and requests that residents without access not pay the precept rate