



## GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

13 October 2009

**GM6 NAME CHANGE SURVEY**  
**FILE: 129 MRB {Folio No. \*}**

### SUMMARY:

Reporting on the results of the survey carried out to gauge the community's preference for either the "Macleay Valley Coast Council" or "Macleay Valley Council" as the proposed new name for the Shire (*per resolution 2009. 664, 11 August 2009*).

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### DESCRIPTION:

This report has been prepared with a view to give Councillors an accurate and realistic representation of the responses received to the Name Change Survey conducted with the community between 20 August and 17 September 2009.

#### Overview of results

Total number of responses was 535, representing 1.95% of shire population.

Initial analysis of the results showed that 273 people voted for Macleay Valley Council; 137 voted for Macleay Valley Coast Council; and 125 voted to maintain the status quo. Further analysis, however, taking into account the comments made by respondents, showed a different outcome. The table below lists the number of outright responses, their percentage of the total responses, and the scaled results based on the intent of the comments received.

Preference	Outright responses	Outright responses as % of total responses	Intent of comments
Macleay Valley Council	273	51%	232 (43%)
Macleay Valley Coast Council	137	26%	129 (24%)
Maintain Status Quo	125	23%	174 (33%)

Verbal feedback from several community members which was passed on to various staff indicated that: some people chose not to participate in the survey because they felt they did not have the option to keep 'Kempsey Shire Council'; and others felt that there was no point because the decision to change had already been made. These sentiments are reflected, somewhat, in the poll results.

There were 101 respondents (19%) across all categories that commented on the fact that the survey should have included an option for no change or that a decision had

already been made (7 in Macleay Coast; 16 in Macleay Valley; and 76 in Maintain Status Quo).

There were 48 respondents (9%) across all categories that commented on the fact that the change was a waste of money and Council should spend its money on more important things (0 in Macleay Coast; 19 in Macleay Valley; and 39 in Maintain Status Quo).

### Response Locations

Responses came from a wide range of locations within the Shire. The table below gives a breakdown of the responses received by location:

Place	MVCC	MVC	No change/ keep KSC or other	Total Responses
<b>Kempsey area</b>				
West Kempsey	22	51	24	97
Kempsey	11	29	8	48
East Kempsey/Old Station Rd	9	18	12	39
Aldavilla/Yarravel	9	22	8	39
South Kempsey/Kundabung	3	10	2	15
Euroka/Dongdingalong/ Pipers Creek	5	16	1	22
Frederickton/Collombatti	5	17	7	29
<b>Lower River area</b>				
Gladstone/Austral Eden/Belmore River	6	6	17	29
Smithtown/Bellimbopinni	3	9	5	17
<b>Coastal area</b>				
South West Rocks/ Jerseyville	31	41	12	84
Crescent Head	13	11	5	29
Stuarts Point/Grassy Hd/ Clybucca	5	13	4	22
Hat Head/Kinchela	3	9	3	15
<b>Upriver area</b>				
Willi Willi/Wittittrin/ Dungay Crk/Yessabah	3	1	7	11
Willawarrin/ Mungay Crk	1	5	3	9
Temagog/Turners Flat/ Mooneba/ Deep Creek	-	5	3	8
Millbank/Hickeys Creek	3	1	1	5
Bellbrook	1	4	-	5
<b>Other</b>	4	5	3	12
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>535</b>

### Macleay Valley Coast Council

Of the **137 respondents** who preferred Macleay Valley Coast Council 103 supported it outright with no comment to add. Below is a synopsis of the comments of remaining 34 respondents:

- Combination of the valley and the coast better reflects the diversity/beauty of the area. Link to coast is a positive step - it promotes the best the shire has to offer. Kempsey has a bad name and the Shire no longer revolves around it. The entire Shire is not located in the Macleay Valley. (12)
- The Macleay Valley Coast logo is already paid for and in place; take advantage of this, save time and money – good move to brand under one entity (8)

- Option to keep Kempsey Shire Council should have been included. Not sure we need name change but given no choice. What about Kempsey? Has any market research been done to test if people know where Macleay area is?(6)
- Macleay Valley Coast has already proven successful for Macleay Valley Tourism Association (and is preferred by them). Name 'Kempsey' is dull while Macleay Valley means nothing to visitors– signifying 'coast' may attract more tourists (5)
- Retain the name 'Kempsey Shire Council' but change to Macleay Valley Coast logo (1)
- Positive image will help us redefine ourselves when the highway bypass happens (1)
- Macleay Valley & Coast Council would be more logical (1)

### **Macleay Valley Council**

Of the **273 respondents** who preferred Macleay Valley Council 165 supported it outright with no comment to add. Below is a synopsis of the comments of the remaining 108 respondents:

- 'Coast' too restricting - we are more than just a coastal council - the whole valley is beautiful not just the coastal bits - Macleay Valley Council is more encompassing. Name needs to reflect whole valley. (38)
- Macleay Valley Coast is not appropriate - too long, is ambiguous (coast & valley) and is more a tourism name than an official designation for our Shire - Macleay Valley Council sounds better (26)
- Keep Kempsey Shire Council – change under protest - don't be ashamed of Kempsey - it is our heritage. (14)
- Too costly and unnecessary – a waste of money, time and resources. (13)
- Spend time and money on more important things. Get on with the Job you were elected to do. (6)
- Name of principle town needed to avoid confusion (eg Macleay/ Maclean; Port Macquarie now included in Hastings Council name) – name change will cause Council to lose identity (6)
- Survey a waste of time as you have already decided on Macleay Valley Coast – community should have been consulted to find out if we wanted a name change. Option for no change should have been included. (2)
- Perhaps a name change would be a good thing for Kempsey – it would give us a chance to move forward into a better future for the town – have to upgrade before bypass. (2)
- Macleay Valley Coast logo is great - could easily be used with this name. (1)

### **Maintain Status Quo**

The most common reasons given amongst the **125 respondents** who did not mark a preference for either Macleay Valley Coast Council or Macleay Valley Council, and/or did not want a name change, were:

- Keep Kempsey Shire Council - change unnecessary. (40)
- Spend money on more important things eg roads. (21)
- Too costly - a waste of ratepayers' money. (18)
- Pointless taking part in survey (like rate variation poll) because it appears decision has already been made, regardless of how other people think - We should have been given option to leave it as it is. (15)
- When Municipal and Shire amalgamations occurred here the name 'Kempsey' was chosen because there was less confusion between Macleay and Maclean. Hospital used to be Macleay District Hospital but it was changed to Kempsey because of confusion with Maclean. Learn from the past and keep Kempsey in the name and keep our identity. Macleay has low recognition rate for people outside our area. Kempsey is a distinct identifiable location not a geographic feature. (15)
- People know, and relate to, where Kempsey is - changing name will not remove stigma - proud of Kempsey - Hastings Council added Port Macquarie to its name for clearer locality. (11)
- Keep Kempsey Shire Council but incorporate Macleay Water within it/Keep Kempsey Shire Council but use Macleay Valley Coast logo. (5)

### **Alternative Suggestions**

Among the alternative names suggested by some respondents were: Dunghutti nation Council, Macleay Valley Shire, Kempsey Macleay Valley Council, Macleay Kempsey Council or Kempsey Macleay Council, Macleay District Council, and Macleay Shire Council, Macleay Council and Macleay Valley & Coast Council.

### **Promotional Campaign**

The consultation on the proposed name change received extensive media coverage and was widely advertised.

Interviews on the proposed name change were given to ABC Radio and Tank radio. Prime Television did two interviews on the topic. Regional Publishers ran editorial stories about it in: the Macleay Argus on 14 August (pg 5), 1 September (pg 9), 15 September (pg 2) and 18 September (pg 2); the Macleay Happynings (pg 4) and the Mid Coast Observer (pg 3) both ran stories on 2 September 2009.

The name change survey was also mentioned twice in the Mayoral column in the Macleay Argus and Macleay Happynings during the weeks commencing 17 August and 14 September 2009.

Council also promoted the survey, and actively sought community input to it, during its attendance at Celebrate the Macleay on 30 August 2009.

The survey form, itself, was made available to the public in a variety of ways during the poll:

- online and downloadable through Council's website.
- hard copies available at Customer First and the Libraries in Kempsey, South West Rocks, Hat Head and Stuarts Point.

- hard copies available at general stores in Willawarrin, Bellbrook, Smithtown and Gladstone, as well as the Crescent Head Country Club.
- emailed to people participating in Council's Central Community Consultation register.
- letters and forms sent to all chambers of commerce, ratepayers and progress associations.
- attached to staff payslips.
- printed in advertising in the Mid Coast Observer (2 September), Macleay Argus (25 August, 1 September, 8 September and 15 September) and in the Macleay Happynings (26 August, 2 September, 9 September and 16 September).

The cost of the paid advertising to promote the name change was approximately \$1,650.

The mediums through which responses to the survey were received can be broken down as follows:

Medium used to respond	Percentage of total responses
Survey Forms (hard copy)	54%
Online forms & submissions	34%
Macleay Valley Happynings	7%
Macleay Argus	3.5%
Mid Coast Observer	1%
Letters	0.5%

NB: Even though there was only a small volume of survey forms received via the newspaper mediums, the exposure given to the poll through them, without doubt, contributed to the high percentages achieved by the hard copy and online forms.

**RECOMMENDATION IMPLICATIONS:**

- **Environmental**

*Nil*

- **Social**

*Revitalising Council's image through a name change may have a positive influence on social attitudes in the community.*

- **Economic (Financial)**

*The transitional introduction of a name change is intended to minimise the cost to Council.*

- **Policy or statutory**

*The ability of Council to change its name is dependent on the Governor's requirements for making such a change.*

- **General Manager's Review**

*Nil*

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**Council proceed with change to Macleay Valley Coast Council.**

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**D L Rawlings**  
**GENERAL MANAGER**