



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 24 January 2024

Council to Proceed with Special Rate Variation Application

Blayney Shire Council at the ordinary council meeting held on the 23 January 2024 has resolved to submit an application for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) of 10% per annum for 3 consecutive years to the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

At the meeting, Council was presented with a Community Awareness and Engagement Report following the 35 days of community engagement over November – December 2023.

The report summarises the community engagement process, with Council receiving 28 submissions on the proposed SRV; 25 against, 1 neutral, 2 supportive.

The key themes and issues raised throughout the engagement were; affordability, hardship and cost of living pressures, financial impact on farmers, Council efficiencies and cost savings, extent of proposed SRV amount, importance of Council services and the importance of continuing current Council service levels.

Blayney Shire Mayor Scott Ferguson acknowledged that it was not an easy decision to make, but unfortunately a necessary one.

‘This has been a very difficult decision for Councillors who are being proactive in seeking to address Council’s forecast deficits as early as possible.’

‘The increase will ensure Council has ability to continue providing services at the current standard to the community and be able to fund renewal and maintenance on Councils assets, particularly the road network and is in response to significant cost pressures borne by Council recently.’ Mayor Ferguson continued,

Following the community engagement process and detailed in the report, Council has identified additional opportunities and activities which can be actioned to create greater financial resilience for the entire Blayney Shire community.

'Following this process we are planning to do a lot more advocating to both the both state and federal governments.'

'We'll be advocating the need that further support is provided to Councils as well as ensuring that the Councils impacted by mining operations and renewable energy are compensated fairly.'

'The recent discontinuation of the NSW Resources for Regions program has hit us hard. This was a grant program which returned approximately 2% of the \$5 billion in mining royalties raised by the NSW Government back to 28 Councils impacted by mining. This program alone provided Blayney Shire with \$21.4 million which was used for community assets and maintenance, in particular roads over the last 4 years.'

General Manager Mark Dicker said that internally there will continue to be a number of efficiencies and improvements reviewed on an ongoing basis.

'Council has already found and implemented annual ongoing savings of \$690,000 per year. Additionally, The Improvement Plan identifies a further 26 efficiencies to be investigated and considered' said Mr. Dicker.

Council will now proceed to submit an application to IPART who will complete their own community consultation in February – March before releasing its final decision in May 2024.

The SRV includes the annual rate peg set by IPART and any increase would not commence until 1 July 2024.

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Please contact

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