



Special Variation Application Form Part B

Blayney Shire Council

Application Form

2024-25

Local Government »



Acknowledgment of Country

IPART acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands where we work and live. We pay respect to Elders both past and present.

We recognise the unique cultural and spiritual relationship and celebrate the contributions of First Nations peoples.

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The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

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Council Information

Please fill out the table below.

Council name	Blayney Shire Council
Date submitted to IPART	2 February 2024.

1 About this application form

This application form is to be completed by councils applying for a special variation (SV) to general income for 2024-25 under section 508(2) or 508A of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act). The application form is in two parts:

1. Application Form [Part A](#) (separate Excel spreadsheet)
2. Special Variation Application Form Part B (this MS Word document)

The SV Application Form Part B collects:

- Description and Context information for the SV
- Evidence against:
 - Criterion 1: Need for the variation
 - Criterion 2: Community awareness and engagement
 - Criterion 3: Impact on ratepayers
 - Criterion 4: IP&R documents
 - Criterion 5: Productivity improvements and cost containment strategies
 - Criterion 6: Other relevant matters
- Council certification and contact information

It also provides a List of Attachments and checklist to assist councils.

When completing this Application Form, councils should refer to:

- The 'Apply for a SV or minimum rates (MR) increase' page of IPART's [website](#)
- The Office of Local Government (OLG) [Guidelines](#) issued in November 2020
- IPART's SV Guidance Booklet – *Special Variations: How to prepare and apply* available on our [website](#).

We encourage Councils to contact IPART early in their preparation to apply, or potentially apply, for an SV.

2 Description and Context

These questions seek information not tied to a specific criterion in the OLG guidelines.

Question 1: What type and size of SV is the council is applying for?

In , please use the checkboxes to indicate the type of SV the council is applying for. In , please provide, rounded to **2 decimal places**:

- the total percentage increase (including the rate peg) and,
- for a section 508A SV, the cumulative percentage increase over the SV period.

Should an SV be approved, the instrument will list the approved percentage(s) and cumulative percentage rounded to 2 decimal places, unless council has specifically applied for a different number of decimal places.

If applying for a Crown Land Adjustment (CLA), please **do not** include the CLA percentage in Table 2. Information about CLAs is collected in Question 2 below.

In Table 3, please explain if the council would like its instrument issued to a different number of decimal places and if it has used an assumed rate peg that is not 2.50%.

Our [Guidance Booklet - Special variations: How to prepare and apply](#) has an example of these questions completed.

Table 1 Type of special variation

What type of SV is this application for?	<input type="checkbox"/> Section 508(2)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Section 508A	
Are you applying for Permanent or Temporary?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Permanent	<input type="checkbox"/> Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/> Permanent + Temporary

Table 2 The council's proposed special variation

	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Is this year in the SV period?	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	no
Percentage increase	4.3%	7.5%	7.5%				
Rate peg	5.7%	2.5%	2.5%				
Cumulative percentage increase over the SV period for s 508A	10.0%	21.0%	33.1%				
Indicate which years are permanent or temporary	Permanent	Permanent	Permanent				

Table 3 Further questions

Question	The council's response
Does the council wish its potential SV instrument to be issued with a different number of decimal places?	No
If the council used an assumed rate peg that is not 2.50%, please briefly justify why it did so.	<p>The assumed rate peg for 2024-25 at the time of community consultation on the SV was 3.50%, this was based on an estimate using the old rate peg methodology.</p> <p>The Long Term Financial Plan model (Part A) and this SV application have since been updated to include the actual 2024-25 rate peg of 5.7% that was announced on 21 November.</p> <p>All years from 2025-26 onward in the LTFP assumes a 2.50% rate peg</p>

Question 2: Is the council applying for a Crown Land Adjustment (CLA) in 2024-25?

Please fill out the table below if the council is also applying for a CLA, otherwise leave it blank.

Is the council also applying for a CLA?	No
If so, by what percentage?	N/A
What is the dollar (\$) value for the CLA?	N/A
Who was the prior owner of the Crown Land?	Click or tap here to enter text.
Briefly outline the reason for the land becoming rateable.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Question 3: What is the key purpose of the requested SV?

In the text box below please summarise the key purpose(s) of the proposed SV.

The purpose of the proposed Special Variation (SV) is to match growing costs, which are currently outpacing revenue growth, so Council can continue providing services at their current levels, as expected by the community into the future.

The SV will respond to the Community Strategic Plan, future direction objective to "Build the Capacity and Capability of Local Governance and Finance" and the identified key challenge of "the impact of mining whilst a significant economic driver has created an expectation of high wages for other businesses and trades which compete for professional and skilled resources" (Attachment 1, pp. 17-18). Therefore, meeting the community's expectations to maintain services and improved asset conditions. It will also enable Council to address ongoing core deficits in the General Fund, ensuring Council is more resilient and responsive to shocks and unexpected events in the future.

Without the SV, there remain core deficits in the General Fund, and without the rate increase, there is also no ability to maintain current service levels and address an increased risk of a growing asset backlog. The SV will ensure Council's ongoing financial sustainability with eventual surpluses in both the consolidated operations and the General Fund.

In its 2024-2027 Delivery Program (Attachment 2, p. 38) Council identified the need to implement improvement opportunities to optimise Council's financial sustainability. This included the finalisation of the financial sustainability review. The review identified options and opportunities for Council to address the operating deficits detailed in the four-year General Fund budget for the Delivery Program.

It was flagged in the Original 2024 - 2027 Delivery Program (attachment 2 (p.8 and p.9)) and 2023-2032 Long Term Financial Plan (Attachment 3, p. 25) the potential need to consider an SV to address the operating deficit issue. Council found that in the case of a reduction in income, the Asset Management Plan would not be achievable without reliance on other compensating measures such as a significant expenditure/service reduction strategy or increases to external funding from grants and contributions or special variation to rates. Capital projects would likely be pared back in this event until Council was to achieve a satisfactory solution.

Council then engaged independent consultants (Morrison Low) to undertake a further financial sustainability assessment, which confirmed Council's unsustainable financial position for General Fund. Consultation with councillors and staff was undertaken, and a revised 2025-2034 Long Term Financial Plan (Attachment 5) was developed, which highlighted the need for an SV to address the issues.

Council resolved to undertake community engagement on the potential special variation on 9 November 2023 (Attachment 15). The community engagement process on the Revised Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan and proposed SV took place during November and December 2023. A final decision to apply for an SV was made by Council resolution on 23 January 2024 (Attachment 16).

The variation in rates will work in parallel with an ongoing program of internal review and productivity improvements, which has already achieved \$690,000 of annual savings, to ensure the organisation's record of financial sustainability will continue into the coming decades.

Question 4: Is the council proposing to increase minimum rates in conjunction with the special variation?

Complete Table 4 if the council proposes to increase minimum ordinary and/or Table 5 if the council proposes to increase special rates in conjunction with the SV for 2024-25. Otherwise, leave it blank. IPART will also use data provided in Application Form [Part A](#) to understand the details of the proposed SV and minimum amounts of rates.

In some situations, a minimum rates increase will be subject to IPART approval. In these cases, councils will need to also complete *Minimum Rate Increase Application Form Part B 2024-25* (Word document) available on our [website](#). Please see Table 2.4 of the [Guidance Booklet - Special variations: How to prepare and apply](#) for further information on when an additional MR increase application may be required. Councils do not need to submit another Application form [Part A](#) (Excel document).

Table 4 Minimum rates increase for ordinary rates

Does the council have an ordinary rate(s) subject to a minimum amount?	No
Does the council propose to increase the minimum rate(s) above the statutory limit for the first time? (If yes, you must complete a separate minimum rate increase application form.)	No
Does the council propose to increase the minimum rate(s) above the proposed SV percentage(s)? (If yes, you must complete a separate minimum rate increase application form, even if the council has been approved to increase its minimum rate above the statutory limit in the past.)	No
Has the council submitted an application for a minimum rate increase?	No

In the text box below, provide the council's proposed minimum rates increase (both in percentage and dollar terms) and to which rating category (or sub-category) the increase is to apply for each year (this can be table form).

N/A

Worksheets 4, 5 and 7 (WS 4, 5 and 7) of the [Part A](#) application form collects more detailed information about the proposed minimum rates increase.

Table 5 Minimum rates increase for special rates

Does the council propose to increase the minimum amount of a special rate above the statutory limit?	No
What will the minimum amount of the special rate(s) be after the proposed increase?	N/A
Has the council submitted an application for a minimum rate increase?	Choose an item.

The council must ensure that it has submitted [MR Increase Application Form Part B](#), if required. No separate Part A is required.

Question 5: Does the council have an expiring SV?

Complete the table below if the council has a temporary SV which is due to expire:

- on 30 June 2024, or
- at the end of any year in the period the requested SV would apply.

To calculate the amount to be removed from general income when the SV expires, Council must follow the terms of the relevant condition in the SV instrument. Councils may find the example in Attachment 1 to the [OLG SV Guidelines](#) useful. The OLG's SV Guidelines also specify that councils must contact the OLG to confirm the calculation of this amount.

Does the council have an SV which is due to expire on 30 June 2024?	No
Does the council have one or more SV/s due to expire during the proposed SV period?	No
If Yes to either question: a. When does the SV expire?	N/A
b. What is the percentage to be removed from the council's general income?	N/A
c. What is the dollar amount to be removed from the council's general income?	N/A
Has OLG confirmed the calculation of the amount to be removed?	Choose an item.

Attachments required:

- Instrument(s) approving any SV which expires at the end of the current financial year or during the period covered by the proposed SV.
- OLG advice confirming calculation of the dollar amount to be removed from general income as a result of the expiring SV.

Question 6: Does the council have an existing (ongoing) section 508A special variation which applies in 2024-25?

Complete this question if the council has an existing section 508A multi-year SV instrument which approves an increase to general income above the rate peg for 2024-25 and future years within the period covered by the council's SV application.

If the council has an ongoing section 508A SV and is seeking additional changes to general income during the term of that existing SV, IPART will need to vary the original instrument if the application is approved, rather than issuing a separate SV instrument to apply for 2024-25 (or later years).

Does the council have a section 508A multi-year SV instrument that applies in 2024-25?	No
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If yes to the above question, in the text box below:

- Specify the percentage increase(s) and duration of the SV.
- Outline the council's actions in complying with conditions in the instrument approving the original SV
- Describe any significant changes relevant to the conditions in the instrument since it was issued.

Supporting documents could include extracts from annual reports or any other publications in which compliance with the terms of the SV has been reported to ratepayers.

N/A

Attachments required:

- A declaration by the General Manager as to the council's compliance with the conditions specified in the SV instrument on the council's official letterhead.

- Supporting documents providing evidence of the council's actions to comply with the conditions in the instrument, e.g. extracts from annual reports or any other publications in which compliance with the terms of the SV has been reported to ratepayers

Question 7: Has IPART ever approved a special variation (including additional special variations in 2022-23)?

Complete this question if IPART has ever approved an SV for the council.

You **do not need** to complete the text box for this question if the relevant information has been provided in the council's response to Question 6.

Does the council have a section 508(2) or 508A SV which IPART has approved?	Yes
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If yes, in the text box below, for each SV approved by IPART, briefly:

- Specify the type of SV and the increase to general income approved.
- Outline the council's actions in complying with conditions in the SV instrument(s) or where the council has failed to comply with the conditions, provide reasons and list the corrective actions undertaken.
- Describe any *significant* changes relevant to the conditions in the SV instrument(s) since it was issued.

Supporting documents could include extracts from annual reports (or webpage hyperlinks to them) or any other publications in which compliance with the terms of the SV has been reported to ratepayers.

A temporary SV was approved for the period 2008/09 to 2017/18 rating years (Attachment 6) for costs associated with the Blayney Community Centre. The SV expired 2 years earlier than planned in 2015/16 and Councils rate income was adjusted accordingly.

On 26 June 2012, IPART approved an SV of 40.7% for 2012/23 under Section 508(2) (Attachment 10). The purpose was to fund a program of infrastructure renewal detailed in the application.

On 4 June 2014, IPART approved under Section 508A(1), a SV of 10.04% for the period from 2014/15 to 2015/16 for the purposes of funding infrastructure renewal for roads, bridges, footpaths and buildings (Attachment 10a).

On 6 April 2022, the Office of Local Government announced guidelines for the Additional Special Variations (ASV) process for 2022-23 under circular 22-07 (ASV guidelines), which Council made an application.

An additional Special Variation for 2022-23 was approved by IPART as follows: "1. The percentage by which Blayney Shire Council (Council) may increase its general income for Year 2022-23 is 2.5%. Refer (Attachment 10b) for a copy of the instrument.

For the General Manager's declaration of compliance for all SV's refer to (Attachment 11).

Council's supporting document evidence of all SV compliance is contained in (Attachment 11a), Annual report extracts from 2008/09 to 2022/23. In addition, the Council resolution to terminate the 2008/09 SV two years early (Attachment 11b).

Attachments required:

- A copy of the relevant instrument(s) approving SVs issued by IPART.
- A declaration by the General Manager as to the council's compliance with the conditions specified in the SV instrument(s).
- Supporting documents providing evidence of the council's actions to comply with the conditions in the instrument(s).
- If applicable, supporting documents providing evidence of the corrective actions undertaken in the event of a failure to comply with the conditions in the SV instrument(s).

Question 8: Does the council have deferred general income increases available to it?

Complete the question box below if the council has decided not to apply the full percentage increases to general income available to it in one or more previous years under sections 506, 508(2) or 508A of the LG Act.

Does the council have deferred general income increases available to it from one or more previous years under section 511 of the LG Act?	No
If Yes, has the collection of this additional income been included in the Council's Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP)?	Choose an item.

In the text boxes also explain:

a. The quantum, rationale and timing of any deferred increases in general income.

N/A.

b. When council plans to catch up on the deferred general income through the catch up provisions and whether this been included in the LTFP.

N/A.

c. How does this deferred income impact on the council's need for the SV and its cumulative impact on ratepayers' capacity to pay? The council may also wish to further expand on this question in of OLG Criterion 1 below.

N/A.

3 OLG SV Criterion 1 – Financial need

Refer to the [OLG SV Guidelines](#) as needed, and section 3 of IPART's [Guidance Booklet - Special variations: How to prepare and apply](#) when preparing consultation strategy and material for completing this section.

In below, please explain how the council met each component of Criterion 1. Please also provide a reference to evidence in the IP&R documents.

The [Part A](#) application form also collects information for this criterion in Worksheets 9 (WS 9 - Financial), 10 (WS 10 - LTFP) and 11 (WS 11 - Ratios).

Table 6 OLG Criterion 1 components

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
<p>The need for, and purpose of, a different revenue path for the council's General Fund (as requested through the SV) is clearly articulated and identified in the council's IP&R documents</p>	<p>The purpose of the proposed Special Variation (SV) is to match growing costs which are currently outpacing revenue growth and to continue providing services at their current levels, as expected by the community into the future.</p> <p>The SV will respond to the Community Strategic Plan (CSP), future direction objective to "Build the Capacity and Capability of Local Governance and Finance" and the identified key challenge of "the impact of mining whilst a significant economic driver has created an expectation of high wages for other businesses and trades which compete for professional and skilled resources." (Attachment 1, pp. 18 & 17).</p> <p>In its 2024-2027 Delivery Program (Attachment 2, p. 38) Council identified the need to implement improvement opportunities to optimise Council's financial sustainability. This included the finalisation of the financial sustainability review. The review identified options and opportunities for Council to address the operating deficits, including different revenue paths, detailed in the four year General Fund budget for the Delivery Program (Attachment 2, p. 50).</p> <p>It was flagged in the Original 2024 – 2027 Delivery Program (attachment 2 p.9) and 2023-2032 Long Term Financial Plan (Attachment, 3 p. 25) the potential need to consider an SV to address the operating deficit issue. Council found that in the case of a reduction in income the Asset Management Plan would not be achievable without reliance on other compensating measures such as a significant expenditure / service reduction strategy or increases to external funding from grants and contributions or special variation to rates. Capital projects would likely be pared back in this event until Council was to achieve a satisfactory solution.</p>	<p>Attachment 1: Community Strategic Plan pp.18 & 17.</p> <p>Attachment 2: Delivery Program 2024-27 pp 38 & 50.</p> <p>Attachment 2 Delivery Program p.9</p> <p>Attachment 3 2023-2032 LTFP p.25</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>In the original 2024-2027 Delivery Program, General Fund has an estimated operating deficit of \$1.27 million for 2023/24 (Attachment 2) and is expected to remain in deficit for future years.</p> <p>Council then engaged independent consultants (Morrison Low) to undertake a further financial sustainability assessment which confirmed Council's unsustainable financial position for General Fund. Consultation with councillors and staff was undertaken, and a revised 2024-27 Delivery Program (Attachment 4) and 2025-2034 Long Term Financial Plan, including The Capacity to Pay Report, (Attachment 5) were developed highlighting the need for an SV to address the issues.</p> <p>The financial sustainability update to the revised Delivery Program identified that <i>"Council now faces the challenge of determining whether to review and reduce service levels so that it can meet the key performance indicator benchmarks prescribed by the Office of Local Government or seek an increase in funding, including by way of a Special Variation"</i> (Attachment 4). It was resolved to consider an SV with the engagement of an independent consultant for Asset Management Plans and the long term financial sustainability, resulting in a proposed estimated SV of 33.1% for community engagement.</p> <p>The revised LTFP detailed the analysis of the financial position of the base case, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An average operating General Fund deficit for a 10-year forecast period of \$1.8 million per annum. • The current General Fund base case has insufficient money to maintain current service levels and asset renewals. • Inadequate funding for infrastructure renewals. <p>The revised LTFP recognised the challenges and opportunities regarding potential additional mining rates, with development consent granted to a new mine and the company progressing post planning approval with the intent of obtaining mining lease.</p> <p><i>"There is always some uncertainty around the longevity and future of these mining operations. Council has made what it considers reasonable assumptions in its long-term financial planning for the rate revenue it should expect from these mines, which is based on the Cadia mine continuing at its current level and the Regis mine receiving approval and commencing operations from mid-way through the 2024-25 financial year."</i></p>	<p>Attachment 2 Delivery Program 2024-27 p.9.</p> <p>Attachment 4 Revised Delivery Program 24-27, pp. 8-9.</p> <p>Attachment 5 Revised 2025-34 LTFP, p. 2.</p> <p>Attachment 5 Revised 2025-34 LTFP, p. 2.</p> <p>Attachment 5 Revised 2025-34 LTFP, p. 2.</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p><i>The proposed special variation only seeks to fund what is required to maintain Council's financial sustainability after the revenue from these two mining operations is factored in. That means that if either the Cadia mine reduces or closes its operations or the Regis mine does not receive approval or is substantially delayed, Council may need to have future discussions with the community about a further special variation or service reductions in the future".</i></p> <p>The revised LTFP details the three SV options Council considered for community engagement being one year of SV 26.5%, a two-year SV of 30.0% and a three-year SV of 33.1%. as part of the solution to the revenue shortfall. Following the Special Rate Variation Community Consultation process, Council resolved to make an application for a three-year SV of 33.1%.</p> <p>The revised LTFP also includes the funding requirements for Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP). The SAMP was adopted on 23 January 2024 (Attachment 8). Council has a combined asset backlog of \$19.35 million (General Fund \$19.06m), this being the estimated cost to bring assets to a satisfactory standard. The SAMP also details asset management improvement plan tasks.</p>	<p>Attachment 8 Asset Management Strategy – p. 7</p>
<p>In establishing need for the SV, the relevant IP&R documents should canvass alternatives to the rate rise.</p>	<p>The revised Delivery Program includes alternative options to the SV in the Financial Sustainability Update section:</p> <p><i>"Over the last few years Council has experienced costs increasing faster than revenue growth, Council has recently completed a financial sustainability review to identify opportunities to address this issue. We are now in the process of implementing the recommendations of this review, but the revenue increases and cost savings identified in the review are not likely to fully address the growing deficits in the Long-Term Financial Plan.</i></p> <p><i>Council now faces the challenge of determining whether to review and reduce service levels so that it can meet the key performance indicator benchmarks prescribed by the Office of Local Government or seek an increase in funding, including by way of a Special Variation."</i></p> <p>The revised LTFP identifies and includes further improvement benefits/savings of \$203,000. It also indicates that the base case scenario is not sustainable and would require significant cost reductions to become financially viable. Achieving such cost reductions would result in significant reductions to Council services.</p>	<p>Attachment 4 Revised Delivery Program, p. 8.</p> <p>Attachment 5 Revised 2025-34 LTFP, pp. 2 & 11 & 22</p>
<p>In demonstrating this need councils must indicate the financial impact in their LTFP.</p>	<p>Council's Revised 2025-34 Long Term Financial Plan (Attachment 5) indicates from the independent financial assessment:</p>	<p>Attachment 5 Revised 2025-34 LTFP p.2 and 23</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An average operating General Fund deficit for a 10-year forecast period of \$1.8 million p.a. • The current General Fund base case has insufficient money to maintain current service levels and asset renewals. • Inadequate funding for infrastructure renewals. <p>The document outlines the extent of the financial sustainability challenge facing Council through the base case scenario and highlights how much the SV and improvement savings and benefits will improve Council's financial position and ability to reduce the asset backlog through the three-year SV scenario.</p>	
<p>Evidence of community need/desire for service levels/projects and limited council resourcing alternatives.</p>	<p>The SV will respond to the Community Strategic Plan (CSP), where the community identified through the SWOT process the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main street of Blayney needs to be enhanced visually to make it more attractive. • Some of the shire roads, pathways, kerb and guttering infrastructure remains in a poor state or below standard and there are villages still with dirt roads. <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a heavy vehicle alternative route to the north of Blayney to link Orange Road to the Mid-Western Highway will remove noisy large transport from the residential area, and main street, in addition to increasing the attractiveness of the Industrial Estate. • The impact of mining whilst a significant economic driver has created an expectation of high wages for other businesses and trades, which compete for professional and skilled resources. <p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road safety is a concern with heavy vehicles and forest logging trucks impacting on the condition of local roads. The speed of passing traffic, driving through villages, and at some busy intersections is creating unsafe pedestrian and traffic management outcomes. <p>Future direction objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Build the Capacity and Capability of Local Governance and Finance. <p>The revised Delivery Program deliverables and LTFP assumptions and financial modelling are based on the delivery of service levels, asset renewals and maintenance and projects that aim to deliver on the CSP outcomes.</p>	<p>Attachment 1 CSP, pp. 15, 17-18</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>In September 2021 and September 2023 (prior to Council resolving to undertake community engagement on a proposed SV), Council engaged the community by undertaking a Council Services Survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The September 2023 survey of the community had approximately 300 responses. • The responses indicated strong support to retain all services at the levels Council currently provides (roads was identified as the highest priority). • The survey also confirmed that the community could not identify any feasible: further efficiencies, areas to reduce the levels of service and/or additional savings opportunities for Council to investigate. 	<p>Attachment 19 2023 Community Survey Summary</p>
<p>Evidence could also include the analysis of the council's financial sustainability conducted by Government agencies</p>	<p>Council engaged Morrison Low to undertake an independent financial sustainability assessment as part of working with Council to prepare the revised Delivery Program and LTFP. Morrison Low used its LTFP forecasting tool to undertake the analysis and assessment, the details of which are included in the revised LTFP document.</p>	<p>Attachment 5 Revised 2025-34 LTFP, pp. 2-5.</p>
<p>If applicable, has the council not applied the full percentage increases available to it in one or more previous years under section 511 of the Local Government Act? If a council has a large amount of revenue yet to be caught up over the next several years, it should explain in its application how that impacts on its need for the SV.</p>	<p>There are no rate increases that have been deferred under section 511 of the Local Government Act.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

3.1 Additional information required for councils with an existing SV applying for an additional percentage increase

If the council has **an existing SV**, then explain the **need for a variation to that SV** to increase the annual percentage increases.

N/A.

3.2 Any other factors that demonstrate the council's financial need (optional)

In the text box please give a brief explanation of any other factors not already mentioned that may be relevant to demonstrate the council's need.

For instance, the council may wish to discuss the impact of **non-rateable** properties.

N/A

Worksheet 12 (WS 12) in the [Part A](#) Excel application form can also be used to provide additional data.

4 OLG SV Criterion 2 – Community awareness and engagement

Refer to the OLG SV Guidelines as needed, and section 4 of IPART's [Guidance Booklet – Special variations: How to prepare and apply](#) when preparing consultation strategy and materials for completing this section. Please also note that section 4 of IPART's [Guidance Booklet – Special variations: How to prepare and apply](#) is the IPART fact sheet referred to in the OLG SV Guidelines under Criterion 2 that provides guidance to councils on the community awareness and engagement criterion for special variations.

4.1 How did the council engage with the community about the proposed special variation?

In Table 7 please provide evidence as to how the councils community engagement met Criterion 2.

Table 7 Evidence of the council's community engagement demonstrating Criterion 2

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents
Evidence that the community is aware of the need for and extent of a rate rise.	<p>The key findings of the Community Awareness & Engagement Report (Attachment 13) evidenced community awareness, need and proposed SV impacts as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's communication, awareness and consultation efforts were considered effective with a large number of engagement tools utilised. A mailout to all ratepayers and email through real estate agents to tenants ensured that the information reached all residents and ratepayers. • By utilising a weekly advertisement in the paper, the Council website and social media, Council was able to provide updates to the community on what some of the key questions and topics of discussion of the week prior were. • Drop-in sessions allowed residents to ask tailored and individual questions and whilst not necessarily being supportive of the SRV, attendees were able to leave with a better understanding of the position Council is in and why the SRV is needed. • Council was receptive to meeting requests from groups who wanted to facilitate greater and targeted discussions with Council. Such meetings included Blayney branch NSW Farmers Association and Lyndhurst Village Committee. 	Attachment 13 Community Awareness & Engagement Report pp. 10-12.

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council received 28 submissions in regard to the SRV – 25 against the proposal, 1 neutral, 2 supportive. • The key themes and issues raised throughout the engagement were; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordability, hardship and cost of living - Impact on farmers - Council efficiencies and cost savings - Extent of proposed SRV amount - Importance of Council services - Importance of continuing current Council service levels <p>In addition to the submissions there were 803 page visits on Councils dedicated SV webpage, 3,456 ratepayers sent SV information, email to 627 subscribers, Facebook total reach of 9,987 along with media releases and print advertisement, 11 drop-in sessions and 5 meetings with community groups.</p>	<p>Attachment 13 Community Awareness & Engagement Report pp13-20.</p> <p>Attachment 13 Community Awareness & Engagement Report pp. 10-12</p>
<p>The council need to communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed SV in percentage terms, and the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer, by rating category.</p>	<p>The full cumulative increases of a one, two and three year SV's were communicated through the revised LTFP and Capacity to Pay report. Council resolved to specifically undertake community engagement on the three-year SV option. The proposed 33.1% cumulative increase was included in Council's community SRV Information Sheet, Business Paper 09.11.2023, Rates Calculator and Frequently Asked Questions (refer dedicated SV website Special Rate Variation (SRV) – Blayney Council (nsw.gov.au)).</p>	<p>Attachment 5 Revised LTFP pp 13-14</p> <p>Attachment 7 Capacity to Pay Report pp25-31.</p>
<p>The Delivery Program and LTFP should clearly set out the extent of the General Fund rate rise under the SV, for the average ratepayer, by rating category.</p>	<p>The Revised Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan were prepared in accordance with the OLG IP&R guidelines and requirements, detailing the proposed funding for services and improvement to asset conditions.</p> <p>The adopted revised LTFP document includes a cumulative rate increase of 33.1% over three years, with expected percentage rate peg increases.</p> <p>The revised LTFP also set outs the impact on average rates by rating category for the three-year SV of 33.1%.</p>	<p>Attachment 4 Revised Delivery Program p9</p> <p>Attachment 5 Revised LTFP pp 13-15</p>
<p>Council should include an overview of its ongoing efficiency measures and briefly discuss its progress against these measures, in its explanation of the need for the proposed SV.</p>	<p>Council undertakes regular reviews to ensure that it is containing costs and implementing efficiency gains, enabling Council to provide value for money to the community. Council has found savings to date of approximately \$0.69 million per year in financial benefits, plus efficiency and productivity improvements.</p> <p>For the SV proposal, Council has identified, and included in the revised LTFP 15 improvement initiatives providing a further annual net benefit of \$203,000.</p> <p>Council also undertook a review of its asset management strategy and plans that identified a range of improvements. The overarching improvement plan and actions is detailed in Council's Strategic Asset Management Plans document.</p>	<p>Attachment 5 Revised LTFP pp 1 and 2.</p> <p>Attachment 5 Revised LTFP p.22</p> <p>Attachment 8 Asset Management Strategy & Plans p.56</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents
	Full details of improvements are contained in the Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan Attachment 14.	Attachment 14 Organisational Sustainability and Improvement Plan pp8-9.
The council's community engagement strategy for the SV must demonstrate an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness and input occur.	Council consulted with residents, businesses and farmers via a variety of engagement mechanisms, as outlined in the Community Engagement Plan. A broad range of ratepayers were consulted, and this included stakeholders within a variety of communities within the Blayney LGA (Attachment 9).	Attachment 9: SV Community Engagement Plan pp 9 12,13.
Explain the action, if any, the council took in response to feedback from the community	The SV Community Engagement Report identified key themes and issues in Section 3 and Councils' responses to each of these (Attachment 13).	Attachment 13 Community Awareness & Engagement Report pp.13 - 20.

In the text box below, provide any other details about the council's consultation strategy, timing or materials that were not captured in Table 7.

N/A

In the text box below, please provide any other details about the community's involvement in, engagement with or support of or opposition to the proposed SV not captured in Table 7.

N/A

Please list out any other Attachments in Table 8 that the council has relied on to respond to Criterion 2 that was not otherwise outlined in Table 7.

Table 8 Other Criterion 2 Attachments

Attachment number	Name of document	Page references
NIL	NIL	

5 OLG SV Criterion 3 – Impact on ratepayers

Refer to the [OLG SV Guidelines](#) as needed, and section 5 of IPART's [Guidance Booklet – Special variations: How to prepare and apply](#) when preparing consultation strategy and material for completing this section. The [Part A](#) application form also collects information for this criterion in Worksheet 7 (WS 7 – Impact on Rates).

5.1 How did the council clearly show the impact of any rate rises on the community?





Please articulate in the text box below how the council demonstrated this question.

In your response, please include references to the Delivery Program, LTFP and relevant community consultation materials to support the council's claims.

Councils revised Delivery Program details the proposed three-year SV accumulated increase of 33.1% (Attachment 4). Council's community engagements provided information on the proposed rate increases for all proposed SV options, namely one, two and three years, with a focus on Council's preferred three-year SV option. The estimated average rate increases for all SV options were communicated through the revised LTFP and Capacity to Pay report (Attachments 5 and 7).

In addition, Councils preferred three-year SV option increases were in Council's community SRV Information Sheet, Business Paper 09/11/2023, Rates Calculator and Frequently Asked Questions refer dedicated SV website [Special Rate Variation \(SRV\) - Blayney Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/special-rate-variation).

The three-year proposed rate increases are detailed below and were included in the above community engagement material.

Residential Rates		Year	Average Rate	Annual Average Increase	Per Week Increase
		Current	\$757		
		2024-25	\$833	\$76	\$1.46
		2025-26	\$916	\$83	\$1.60
		2026-27	\$1,008	\$92	\$1.77
Farming Rates		Year	Average Rate	Annual Average Increase	Per Week Increase
		Current	\$3,323		
		2024-25	\$3,655	\$332	\$6.38
		2025-26	\$4,021	\$366	\$7.04
		2026-27	\$4,423	\$402	\$7.73
Business Rates		Year	Average Rate	Annual Average Increase	Per Week Increase
		Current	\$1,285		
		2024-25	\$1,414	\$129	\$2.48
		2025-26	\$1,555	\$141	\$2.71
		2026-27	\$1,711	\$156	\$3.00
Mining Rates		Year	Rate Charge	Annual Increase	
	<i>Cadia Valley Operations</i>	Current	\$4.87 million		
		2024-25	\$5.36 million	\$487,295	
		2025-26	\$5.9 million	\$536,024	
		2026-27	\$6.49 million	\$589,626	



Note: The average business rates publicised during public exhibition varied slightly to that included in the final documents due to movements within the rate sub-categories associated with mixed development apportionments and updated valuation data, including number of assessments and land values, as advised by the Valuer General.

Note: The Mining category is comprised of 2 ratepayers, one small and one significantly large (being the largest rate payer in the shire (Cadia Valley Operations)). Communicating to the wider public an average increase for the Mining category was considered misleading and potentially confusing for the community. Instead, Council with no objection from Cadia Valley Operations opted to inform the community of the significance of the contribution by Cadia Valley Operations to Council's overall rate base.

5.2 How has the council considered affordability and the community's capacity and willingness to pay?

Please articulate in the text box below how the council demonstrated this question.

In your response, please provide references to the Delivery Program, LTFP and community consultation materials where the council has considered the affordability and the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council engaged Morrison Low to undertake an independent analysis and evaluation of the community's capacity to meet the financial impacts of the proposed SV (Attachment 7), Capacity to Pay report. Following are extracts from the Capacity to Pay Report - Executive Summary pp1-3.

It is apparent, from our analysis, that the LGA has reasonably significant levels of disadvantage, mixed with some pockets of significant advantage. This inequity is highlighted by the grouping and locality level Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SIEFA) rankings, which vary quite substantially. Overall, the LGA is in the 36th percentile for Index of Relative Socioeconomic Disadvantage (IRSD) and 37th for Index of Relative Socioeconomic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD). This is notably comparable with the Regional NSW averages of 36th and 32nd, and Central West Region averages of 38th and 35th. It is important that Council acknowledges the levels of disadvantage within the community, and that it does not significantly marginalise particularly vulnerable individuals and households.

For residential:

- The 'Rural North-East and North-West' area has the highest weekly increase. This area has a significant level of advantage, as demonstrated by high levels of equivalised income, high socioeconomic scores and high levels of home ownership.
- The 'Blayney and Carcoar' area has 49% of the LGA's residential ratepayers. The ratepayers will receive a lower increase in average rates. It is therefore important for Council to consider the impact on individual ratepayers, such as through hardship policies.

For farmland ratepayers, due to higher average land values in 'Rural South', this grouping is likely to see a larger increase in rates. Farmland ratepayers in this area may have a reduced capacity to pay. However, it is important to note that this area has 288 farmland ratepayers, and only 5 farmland ratepayers have been assessed as pensioners. The 'Rural North-East and North-West' area has the largest number of farmland ratepayers at 371, and will see the next highest increase in average rates, due to slightly lower land values.

Business ratepayers of 'Rural North-East and North-West' will see the highest average increase in rates across all SV options, followed by 'Blayney and Carcoar'. These groupings contain 71% of the LGA's business ratepayers.

In assessing the level of outstanding rates, Council was at a very low level of 1.24% for 2022/23 and has been below 2% for the previous 2 years. This is significantly below the NSW benchmark for rural Councils of 10% and the OLG Group 10 Councils average for 2021/22 of 6.8%. Additionally, Council has consistently been significantly below the benchmark percentage for the past four financial years which from Council's perspective is a key indicator and consideration of capacity and willingness to pay.

5.3 How has the council addressed (or intend to address) concerns about affordability?

Does the council have a hardship policy?	Yes
If yes, is an interest charge applied to late rate payments?	Yes

To inform our assessment, Worksheet 12 (WS 12) in the [Part A](#) application form also collects data on overdue rates notices, pensioner concessions and rates notices subject to hardship provisions.

Please provide the council's response in the text boxes below.

a. Explain the measures the council proposes to use to reduce the impact of the proposed SV on vulnerable ratepayers, or alternatively, explain why no measures are proposed.

Council addresses issues of hardship through its Pensioner and Hardship Policy (Attachment 17), which assists in providing financial relief to ratepayers experiencing difficulties in meeting their rate commitments. Dependent on certain circumstances, this may include:

- Periodical payment arrangements for overdue rates and charges.
- Writing off or reducing interest accrued on rates or charges.
- Waiving, reducing or deferring the payment of the increase in the amount of rate payable because of hardship resulting from general revaluation of land in the Local Government Area.
- Waiving, or reducing rates, charges and interest of eligible pensioners.
- Back dating pensioner rebate claims.

b. Indicate whether the hardship policy or other measures are referenced in the council's IP&R documents (with relevant page reference or extract provided).

Council has a documented Pensioner and Hardship Policy (Attachment 17) which provides support for residents who experience financial difficulty. The Hardship Policy is referenced in the Revised LTFP (Attachment 5 p.16) and the Capacity to Pay Report (Attachment 7, pp. 2,15,22,27).

c. Please explain how the council makes its hardship policy or other measures known to ratepayers.

The Pensioner and Hardship Policy is available on Council's website and the Policy is communicated to ratepayers with the issue of rate notices each year. Further, the policy was included in the SV information communicated to ratepayers on Council's SV website – Frequently Asked Questions - [FAQs - Blayney Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/faq).

Council also has an innovative debt recovery process focussed upon early-stage debt intervention (mediation). When there is a failure to respond to Council's correspondence: i.e. missed payment of rates and contact cannot be made, a compassionate visit is organised to enquire on the ratepayer's situation to assist with a payment plan to avoid rates becoming unmanageable.

The process in essence turns the debt recovery cycle upside down with legal action for debt recovery a last resort. This innovative process is also directly attributable to Council having an industry leading low level of outstanding rates (1.24% for 2022/23) and below 2% for the previous 2 years.

5.4 Are there any other factors that may influence the impact of the council's proposed rate rise on ratepayers (optional)?

Describe the impact of any other anticipated changes in the rating structure (e.g. receipt of new valuations), or any changes to other annual ratepayer charges such as for domestic waste management services.

You may also explain how the number of **non-rateable properties** may impact the council's average rates, if relevant to your council.

You can provide additional data using Worksheet 12 (WS 12) in the [Part A](#) Excel application form. For instance, providing the number of non-rateable versus rateable properties.

N/A

6 OLG SV Criterion 4 – Exhibition and adoption of IP&R documents

Refer to the [OLG SV Guidelines](#) as needed, and section 6 of IPART's [Guidance Booklet - Special variations: How to prepare and apply](#) when preparing consultation strategy and material for completing this section.

Table 9 seeks information which demonstrates that the council has met the formal requirements for the preparation, exhibition, adoption and publication of the current IP&R documents.

Table 9 IP&R documents

IP&R Document	Exhibition dates	Link to council minutes that outlines the resolution to publicly exhibit	Adoption date	Link to council minutes that outlines the resolution to adopt	Link to the adopted IP&R document on the council's website
Community Strategic Plan	22 April to 19 May 2022	2023 Business Papers and Minutes - Blayney Council (nsw.gov.au)	7 June 2022	https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/1012/7%20June%202022%20Signed%20Minutes.pdf.aspx	https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/202/Final%20CSP%20-%20April%202022.pdf.aspx?OverrideExpiry=Y
Delivery Program	10 November 2023 to 15 December 2023.	2023 Business Papers and Minutes - Blayney Council (nsw.gov.au)	23 January 2024	https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/council/council-meetings/business-papers-minutes-and-recorded-live-streams/business-papers-minutes-and-recorded-live-streams	https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/1022/8.%20Delivery%20Program%20and%20Operational%20Plan.pdf.aspx
Long Term Financial Plan	10 November 2023 to 15 December 2023.	2023 Business Papers and Minutes - Blayney Council (nsw.gov.au)	23 January 2024	https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/council/council-meetings/business-papers-minutes-and-recorded-live-streams/business-papers-minutes-and-recorded-live-streams	https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/1022/4.%20Updated%20Long%20Term%20Financial%20Plan%202023-24%20v2.pdf.aspx

IP&R Document	Exhibition dates	Link to council minutes that outlines the resolution to publicly exhibit	Adoption date	Link to council minutes that outlines the resolution to adopt	Link to the adopted IP&R document on the council's website
<p>Asset Management Plan (which contain long-term projections of asset maintenance, rehabilitation and replace, including forecast costs).</p>	<p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p>	<p>2023 Business Papers and Minutes - Blayney Council (nsw.gov.au)</p>	<p>23 January 2024</p>	<p>https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/council/council-meetings/business-papers-minutes-and-recorded-live-streams/business-papers-minutes-and-recorded-live-streams</p>	<p>https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/1022/11.%20Strategic%20Asset%20Management%20Plan.pdf.aspx?OverrideExpiry=Y</p> <p>https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/1022/12.%20Transport%20Asset%20Managemnet%20Plan.pdf.aspx?OverrideExpiry=Y</p> <p>https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/1022/13.%20Buildings%20Asset%20Management%20Plan.pdf.aspx?OverrideExpiry=Y</p> <p>https://www.blayney.nsw.gov.au/ArticleDocuments/964/Adopted%20Asset%20Management%20Plan%20-%20Parks%20and%20Recreation.pdf.aspx</p>

7 OLG SV Criterion 5 – Productivity improvements and cost-containment

Refer to the OLG SV Guidelines as needed, and section 7 of IPART's [Guidance Booklet - Special variations: How to prepare and apply](#) when preparing for and completing this section.

7.1 What is the council's strategic approach to improving productivity in its operations and asset management?

Please provide the council's response in the text box below.

Council's strategic approach of sustainability review to the improvement journey is set out in the following objectives:

- Long-term financial and operational sustainability and viability across the organisation with a collaborative approach to solutions.
- Utilising the combined knowledge of the organisation to create a range of productivity improvements.
- Providing an improvement plan for future decision-making that embeds 'sustainability' principles in decisions at all levels.
- Enable engagement with the community on the alternative options and choices to an SV.
- Demonstrate to IPART that Council has considered and consulted on a range of improvements prior to making any application.
- Demonstrate to IPART and the Office of Local Government (OLG) that Council has a prioritised program of ongoing service reviews aimed at continuous improvement and optimisation of its services.
- Cost savings, revenue increases and productivity improvements as a means of reducing the amount of any SV.

The Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan summarises the outcomes of the review and improvement journey process that has been undertaken, what is proposed as part of an SV application and identification of potential future improvements (Attachment 14, pp.8-10).

7.2 What outcomes has the council achieved from productivity improvements and cost containment strategies in past years?

Please provide the council's responses to the questions in in the text boxes below.

a. Explain initiatives undertaken in the past few years to improve productivity and contain costs.

Council has undertaken a variety of improvement initiatives over recent years to contain costs and implement additional efficiency and productivity savings. These are included in section 7.1 of Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan (Attachment 14), and some are detailed below:

- Improved debt recovery procedure.
- Completed transfer pricing review.
- GPS installation in fleet improving fleet operations.
- Reduction online procurement platforms.
- MS Teams content collaboration and communication.
- Online services and e-forms.
- Review cemetery and weed management.
- Review Council's digital services (printers/photocopies).
- Efficiency review of Council operations within footpath construction through benchmarking against contractor performance with a program of works.
- Joint procurement initiative through Council's involvement with: the Central NSW Joint Organisation (CNSWJO) and the Blayney, Cabonne and Orange Alliance (BCO).
- Roll out of the Smart Hub platform to integrate Building Management System (including locking of facilities and introduction of people counters) with potential to inform maintenance regimes.
- Verge maintenance review to identify locations of verge maintenance and to establish principles to mitigate the risk of 'creep or over servicing'.
- Rolling registers of ongoing maintenance for maintenance of sealed and unsealed roads. It helps to inform progress of works undertaken and to respond to customer requests.

Of the identified past improvements, sixteen have increased cost savings, fourteen encouraged productivity and efficiency gains, three increased revenue generation and three improved operational sustainability.

b. Outline the outcomes which have been achieved, including providing quantitative data where possible.

In Attachment 14 p.8, 36 past improvements have been identified, which Council has already completed in order to continually strive for organisational sustainability. These past improvements total \$690,000 per year in financial benefits to Council, one off benefit of \$1 million and a cashflow benefit of some \$4 million in grant funds for asset renewal projects previously allocated in the Long Term Financial Plan to be funded from General Fund revenue, in addition to extensive additional efficiency and productivity gains and improvements in operational sustainability.

Some of the biggest cost savings made by Council have been from the introduction of LED street and facility lighting, which has significantly reduced Council's electricity expenditure by \$60,000 per year, as well as reducing the number of public litter bins and standardising the type, which has reduced yearly recovery costs by \$30,000. Further \$100,000 benefits from using material from Councils quarries rather than external purchasing.

In addition, a Strategic Financial Review was undertaken by external consultants with a particular focus on 2021/22 Budget and Actual results, Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Plans with many recommendations for policy and process improvements that have been implemented, and actions to assist Council's financial sustainability.

7.3 What productivity improvements and cost containment strategies are planned for future years?

The council should provide information that details initiatives planned for the next two years when requesting a one-year section 508(2) SV, or match the duration of the proposed SV.

The response should, wherever possible:

- estimate the financial impact of strategies intended to be implemented in the future
- present these as a percentage of operating expenditure
- indicate whether the proposed initiatives have been factored into the council's Long Term Financial Plan.

In the text boxes below:

a. Explain the initiatives which the council intends to implement and their financial impact.

Council's Organisational Service Review and Improvement Plan (Attachment 14 p.9) identified, costed and prioritised 26 present improvements that are to be implemented and therefore, included in the revised LTFP.

The following improvements were considered to be some of the highest priority for Council and able to be implemented:

- Further review of CentrePoint sport and leisure centre management model and future with current provider.
- Review into additional solar and battery storage facilities at current and new sites.

- Investigate expansion of Council's quarry.
- Ongoing review and assessment of workforce needs.
- Review plant utilisation and dispose of underutilised plant.
- Review how future capital grants are assessed and taken up.

A further thirteen future improvements are incorporated within the improvement plan that require further evaluation and are listed in Section 7.3 (Attachment 14). Council will also undertake the mandatory yearly service review process, as defined by the Office of Local Government, along with further four-yearly whole-of-Council service reviews. There will likely be further long-term benefits from these reviews, although these will most likely be productivity improvements rather than cost savings

b. Indicate whether these have been incorporated in the council's Long Term Financial Plan, if not, explain why.

The present improvements totalling \$203,000 have been allocated a starting year, in the next three financial years, within the LTFP. The future improvements have not been included as those improvements require further evaluation. The present improvement financial benefits have been included in all SV options as detailed in the Revised LTFP (Attachment 5, p. 25).

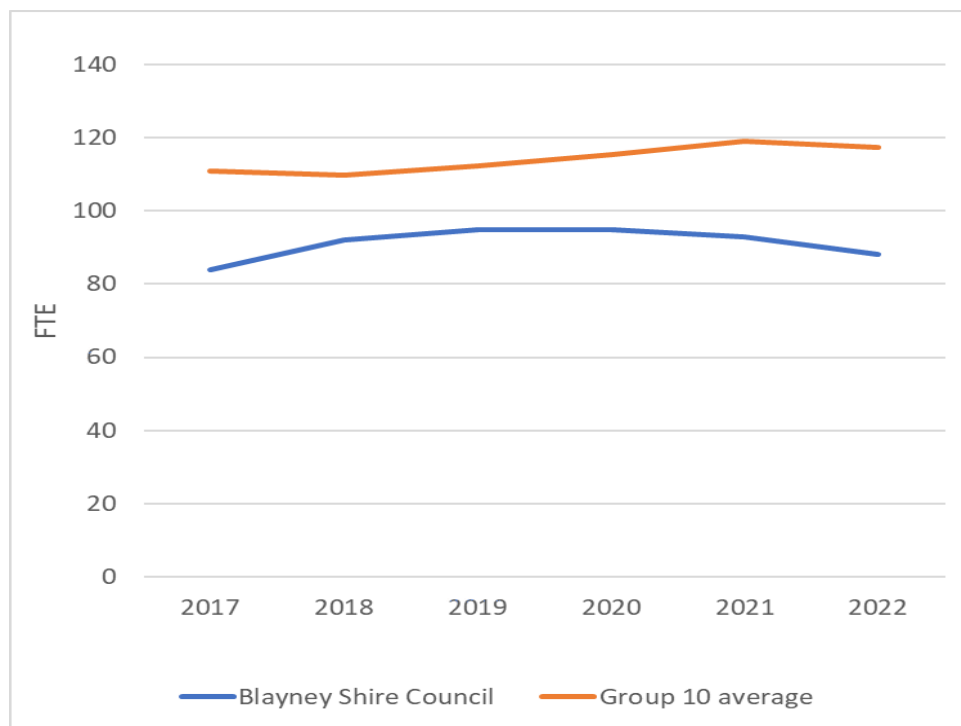
7.4 How has the council's levels of productivity and efficiency changed over time, and compared to similar councils?

In the text box summarise data which demonstrates how the council has improved productivity and indicate its performance against that of comparable councils.

Blayney Shire Council can demonstrate productivity and efficiency in comparison with other similar councils. Blayney is part of the OLG's grouping of large rural Group of Councils, Group 10.

The time series data published by OLG show that Blayney Shire Council has slightly increased staff numbers the six-year period 2017 to 2022, however, remains well below the FTE average for Group 10, as shown in the graph below.

Total Full Time Equivalent staff (FTE)



Blayney Shire Council has kept staff number increases below the group 10 average, while improving the efficiency of residents per FTE relative to the group 10 average, as illustrated in the graph below.

Population per Full Time Equivalent staff (FTE)

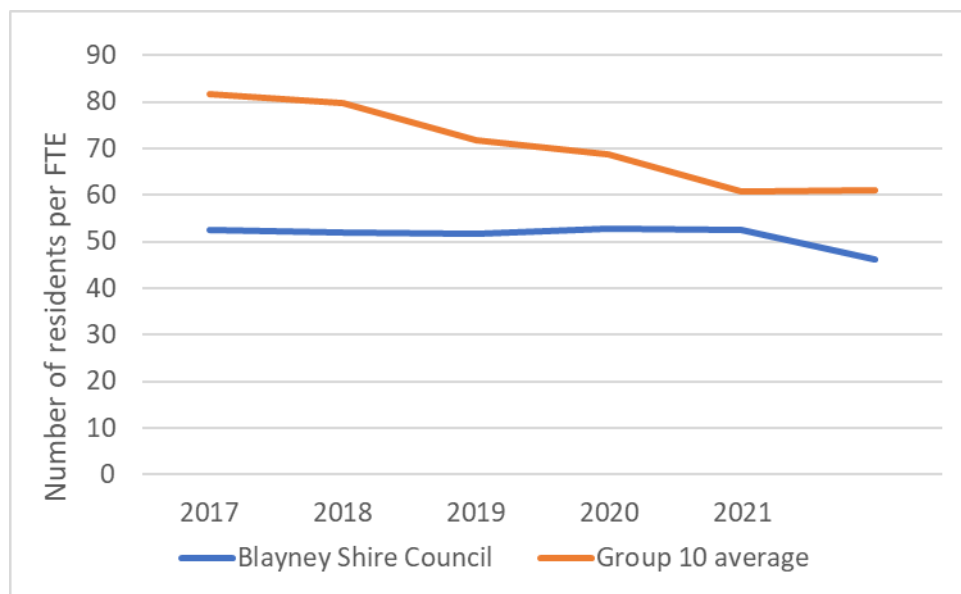


Table 10 Criterion 5 Attachments

Attachment number	Name of document	Page references
Attachment 5	Revised LTFP	p. 26
Attachment 14	Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan	Sections 7.1, 7.2,7.3: pp. 8-10.

8 Council certification and contact information

Councils must submit a declaration in the specified form. It should be completed by the General Manager and the Responsible Accounting Officer.



8.1 Certification of application and declaration

Prepare a document in the form indicated below. Please sign (electronic signature is also acceptable), scan and submit it with your application.

This is to be completed by General Manager and Responsible Accounting Officer.

Name of the council:	Blayney Shire Council
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We certify that to the best of our knowledge the information provided in the Part A application form and this SV Part B application form is correct and complete. We have completed the checklist for the Part A and B application forms and also provided all relevant Attachments as requested (see Table 11, Table 12 and Table 13).

General Manager (name):	Mark Dicker
Signature and Date:	 02/02/2024
Responsible Accounting Officer (name):	Tiffany Irlam
Signature and Date:	 that the link points to the correct file and location. 02/02/2024

Note: These signatures will be redacted before publication of the application.

8.2 Council contact information

IPART's formal contact with the council will be with the General Manager.

During the assessment period, IPART officers are likely to contact the council with detailed queries about the application and supporting documents. Councils should provide details of the primary contact for such inquiries where this person is a council officer who is not the General Manager. Council officer direct contact details will be redacted before publication of this application.

General Manager

Name	Mr Mark Dicker
General Manager contact phone	[REDACTED]
General Manager contact email	[REDACTED]

Note: These contact details will be redacted before publication of the application.

Primary council contact

Name	Mr Anton Franze
Position	Director Corporate Services
Council contact phone	[REDACTED]
Council email for inquiries about the SV application	[REDACTED]

Note: These contact details will be redacted before publication of the application.

Secondary council contact

Name	Mr Andrew Muir
Position	Director Planning & Environmental Services
Council contact phone	[REDACTED]
Council email for inquiries about the SV application	[REDACTED]

Note: These contact details will be redacted before publication of the application.

9 List of required Attachments

To complete (adding rows as necessary):

- Name each document.
- Check the box to indicate that it is being submitted with the application.

Table 11 Required Attachments checklist

Name of Attachment	The document is included	The document is not applicable
Mandatory forms/Attachments:		
Application Form Part A (Excel spreadsheet)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Application Form Part B (this Word document)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Council resolution to apply for the special variation Attach 16	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Completed certification and declaration (see 8.1)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
If applicable, to support the responses provided in Question 5 of Description and Context (see section 2) provide:		
Instrument for expiring special variation/s	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OLG advice confirming calculation of amount to be removed from the council's general income	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If applicable, to support the responses provided in Questions 6 AND/OR 7 of Description and Context (see section 2) provide:		
Declaration of compliance with conditions in past instruments (if applicable) Attach 11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant instrument(s) for past special variations (if applicable) Attach's 6, 10, 10a, 10b.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of compliance with conditions in past instruments (if applicable) – Attach 11a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory public supporting material (i.e. to be published on IPART's website):		
Community Strategic Plan- Attach 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Delivery Program- Attach's 2&4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Long Term Financial Plan – Attach's 3&5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Asset Management Plan(s) (required if a key purpose of the SV is related to assets and capital expenditure) – Attach 8	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Attachment	The document is included	The document is not applicable
Consultation materials, e.g. copies of media releases, notices of public meetings, newspaper articles, fact sheets used to consult on rate increase and proposed special variation (combined into one document) – Attach 9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Community feedback (including surveys and results) – Attach 13	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Willingness to pay study (if applicable) – Attach 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardship policy – Attach 17	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Other public supporting materials:		
Government agency's report on financial sustainability e.g. NSW Treasury Corporation (if applicable) – Part of Attach 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(List the additional documents)	X	
Attach 12 SV Information Sheet Flier	X	
Attach 15 Council business paper 9 Nov 2023	X	
Attach 18 Media Release-Community Engagement for SV	X	
Attach 19 2023 Community Survey Summary	X	
Confidential supporting material (i.e. not to be published on IPART's website):		
(List the documents)		

10 Checklists

We provide these checklists to ensure that submitted applications meet a minimum standard.

Meeting the requirements of these checklists **does not** guarantee a council will be approved for the SV it has applied for.

Table 12 Part A Application Form Checklist

Checklist items	Please indicate whether the items have been actioned
Data provided in Part A application (i.e. proposed SV%, rates amount etc) are consistent with those contained in Part B application.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Table 1.2 of "WS1-Application" lists all the tables in worksheets 1 -12 that council must complete, based on the nature of council's application. Please confirm that all the data requirements, as listed in table 1.2, have been completed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
All completed tables (values and units – i.e. \$ or \$'000) have been completed correctly and verified to source. Please pay attention to the units specified for each table in each worksheet.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
WS 10 - LTFP agrees to the council's provided LTFP.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Dollar numbers provided in "WS10 – LTFP" are in dollars (\$) not thousands (\$'000) or millions (\$M)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If the council has an expiring or existing SV, it has incorporated this when filling out WS 2.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Annual and cumulative percentages are rounded to 2 decimal places.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ensure that figures provided in WS 9 – Financials, WS 10 – LTFP and WS 11 – Ratios are at the General Fund level and <i>not</i> consolidated.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If the council proposes a combined SV, the council has discussed the relevant data and modelling requirements prior to submission.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Indication whether optional tables in WS 12 has been completed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Table 13 SV Part B Application Form Checklist

Checklist items	Please indicate whether the items have been actioned
All required text boxes and tables have been completed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
All applicable documents per the List of Attachments (Table 11) have been provided.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The council has declared all SVs (including ASVs) approved since 2011-12 and provided annual reports that show compliance with the instrument reporting conditions, or explaining divergences.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The council's LTFP includes both the baseline (no-SV) and the SV scenario it is applying for.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The proposed SV annual and cumulative percentages agree to those used in community consultation, or if they differ, the reason has been explained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If applying for a multi-year SV, the council has correctly calculated the cumulative percentage and dollar impact of the proposed SV using compounding.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The council has referenced community consultation materials that <i>at minimum</i> show the cumulative percentage of the SV and average total dollar increase (cumulative) per rating category.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Figures presented in Application Form Part B are consistent, as relevant, with those in Application Form Part A.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The council has submitted a Minimum Rates Part B Application Form, if required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
For OLG Criterion 5 (section 7), the council has provided concrete evidence and plans for past and future cost-containment and productivity strategies, as far as practicable.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>