



Special Variation Application Form Part B

Griffith City 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.

Contact details

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The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

IPART's independence is underpinned by an Act of Parliament. Further information on IPART can be obtained from [IPART's website](#).

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Council Information

Please fill out the table below.

Council name	Griffith City Council
Date submitted to IPART	11/01/2024

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	10.50%	10.50%	10.50%				
Rate peg * assumed	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%				
Cumulative percentage increase over the SV period for s 508A	10.5%	22.1%	34.9%				
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.	In the preparation of its 2023/24 Operational Plan and Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review, an assumed Rate Peg of 3.00% was used in all financial modelling. Community consultation in relation to the Special Variation (SV) proposal commenced in May 2023 and referred to an assumed Rate Peg of 3.00% in line with Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting documents. IPART was consulted with prior to preparation of the Long Term Financial Plan in relation to the assumed rate peg percentage to be used for modelling.

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?	0.00%
What is the dollar (\$) value for the CLA?	\$0
Who was the prior owner of the Crown Land?	Not Applicable
Briefly outline the reason for the land becoming rateable.	Not Applicable

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 key purpose of the proposed SV is to ensure financial sustainability of Council's General Fund and to maintain existing services. SV income will be used to address the operational budget shortfalls as forecasted in the Long Term Financial Plan and to ensure Council can continue to deliver the activities and actions outlined in our Integrated Planning & Reporting suite of documents. The SV will ensure that Council's income is sufficient to provide essential services and maintain current service levels.

Sound financial management and sustainability has been a high priority of this Council. Council's Senior Management Team (SMT) continually monitors Council's financial position to ensure that services are delivered for the community in accordance with the Community Strategic Plan and the Delivery Program/Operational Plan. Council has worked diligently to ensure the finances are managed appropriately and that best use of public funds are always at front of mind.

In 2011, it was apparent that Council's Reserves were very low at \$14M and the annual financial results were deteriorating. Council took steps commencing in 2012 to restructure the organisation in order to reduce operational costs as far as possible without unduly compromising important services to the community. This action resulted in annual cost savings of approximately \$2M which allowed Council to increase the level of cash backed reserves.

In addition to cost savings, additional revenue sources were identified to supplement income within the General Fund. As a consequence of Council's cost saving initiatives and additional revenue raising, the financial position of Council has been sustained for a substantially longer period than it would otherwise have been.

Whilst building Cash Reserves, Council has undertaken significant capital projects in recent years which have been partially funded by operating surpluses. These include St Vincent's Private Community Hospital, Griffith Regional Sports Centre, 50 metre outdoor pool, Griffin Green Affordable Housing project, CBD Upgrade (Yambil and Kooyoo Streets), Flood mitigation infrastructure, Griffith Industrial Link Road, two new CBD car parks, Jubilee Oval amenities block, new playgrounds, two community outdoor performance stages, Griffith Regional Theatre upgrade, Skate Park and Pump Track, CBD Festive Lighting, over 70 CCTV cameras installed and numerous Shared Path Ways projects.

Council's General Fund operational budget is now under pressure mainly due to rate pegging not aligning to higher annual inflation rates, cost shifting from NSW Government, diminishing operational grants from the Federal Government, effect of natural disasters and ageing infrastructure. Based on the current Long Term Financial Plan, Council's General Fund will see ongoing deficits and will be unsustainable if no corrective action is taken.

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 9 May 2023, Council endorsed in principle its intention to make application to IPART to implement a SV to address the decline in Council's General Fund operational budget. This issue was highlighted by the trend in Council's Long Term Financial Plan, which indicated that the current rate income levels would not sustain the organisation into the future without an uplift in rate revenue above the rate peg limit. Council resolved to conduct extensive community consultation regarding the proposed SV in accordance with IPART Guidelines.

Council acknowledges that the financial sustainability of the General Fund should not be achieved solely by increasing ordinary rates. From the outset of this SV proposal process, Council took the proactive decision to nominate annual operational cost savings / additional alternative revenue targets to supplement additional ordinary rate revenue from the SV proposal.

Council's Senior Management Team has committed to implementing operational savings and additional income initiatives to the amount of \$300,000 in FY2023/24, then \$1M annually from FY2024/25 onwards. The savings target for the current financial year, FY2023/24 has already been achieved as at December 2023.

Council conducted community consultation from May to August 2023 on the proposal to increase ordinary rates by 10.50% (inclusive of the assumed 3.00% rate peg) each year for three consecutive years from 2024/25 to 2026/27 (a cumulative total increase of 34.90%). The increase would be retained permanently in Council's rate base.

Following the consultation phase, Council considered the community feedback at its Ordinary Meeting held 24 October 2023 whereby Council resolved to apply to IPART under Section 508(A) of the Local Government Act 1993, for a permanent SV of 10.50% inclusive of the assumed 3.00% rate peg each year for three consecutive years from 2024/25 to 2026/27.

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).

Not Applicable

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?	\$0
Has the council submitted an application for a minimum rate increase?	No

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?	Not Applicable

b. What is the percentage to be removed from the council's general income?	Not Applicable
c. What is the dollar amount to be removed from the council's general income?	Not Applicable
Has OLG confirmed the calculation of the amount to be removed?	No

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.

Not Applicable

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

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.

Council applied for an Additional Special Variation (ASV) for 2022/23 under the Guidelines for the preparation of an application for a special variation to general income, issued by the Office of Local Government. The ASV was available for the 2022/23 financial year only. Council demonstrated the need for a Special Variation to meet the obligations set for 2022/23 in its 2021/22 IP&R documentation. Council applied for and was granted an additional 1.30% Special Variation above the rate peg of 0.70% for the 2022/23 financial year.

IPART assessed the application against the three criteria set by the Office of Local Government (OLG) being:

1. Council had planned for a 2.00% increase in income,
2. Council supported the proposed increase in income, and
3. Demonstrated financial need.

IPART found that Griffith City Council's ASV application fully met all assessment criteria.

This decision meant that Council could increase income by 1.30% above the rate peg. This was estimated to be around \$240K in additional income in 2022-23 which could be retained in the rate base permanently.

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)?	No

In the text boxes also explain:

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

Not Applicable

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.

Not Applicable

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.

Not Applicable

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>Council's IP&R suite of documents was developed through extensive community consultation to ascertain the community's priorities and values. The 2023/24 Delivery Program/Operational Plan and Long Term Financial Plan identify financial sustainability as one of Council's key priorities.</p> <p>The 2023/24 operational budget for the General Fund (excluding Waste Fund) is forecasted to be a deficit of \$4.94M. The main factors driving the continued deterioration of the General Fund are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate pegging of Council Rate income – this has been calculated on the rate set by IPART which is 3.7%. (2023/24) • Inflation on Materials, Services & Utilities - over the twelve months to the March 2023 quarter, the Consumer Price Index rose 7.0%. However, it should be noted that many of Council's major expenses (eg. Energy, Insurance, IT, Contractors & General Supplies) have increased by 10-20%. • Employee Costs have been calculated based on a 5% increase commencing FY2023/24. This increase aligns with the Local Government State Award increase of 4.5% effective from July 2023 plus changes to staff Grades / Steps and increases to Superannuation Guarantee Contributions from 1 July 2023. • Depreciation – new major assets such as the Griffith Regional Sports Centre & Griffith Community Centre contributed to approximately \$560K of additional depreciation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Rate Variation section in the adopted Delivery Program/Operational Program 2023/24 pages 129-130 • Special Rate Variation section in the adopted Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review 2023/24 pages 4 – 6 • Draft Delivery Program/Operational Plan 2023/24 presented 9 May 2023 Council Meeting

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>Management continually monitors Council's financial position to ensure that services are delivered for the community in accordance with the Community Strategic Plan, the Delivery Plan and Operational Plan (budget). However, the current rate pegging framework in NSW is unsustainable with rate pegging limits falling short of the combined impacts of actual cost increases, "cost shifting" by other levels of government and net reduction in real terms of untied operating grants.</p> <p>Council's General Fund operational budget has been under significant pressure for several years. Council's previous Long Term 10 year Financial Plans have indicated that the General Fund (net of Waste Fund) has been in deficit since approximately FY2016/17. The catalyst for this SV application was primarily the financial impact of COVID-19 pandemic and post pandemic inflation rates.</p> <p>An alternative to this scenario is to reduce service levels. Council has taken a very close look at its Long Term Financial Plan and has taken the decision to make application to IPART for a SV commencing from the 2024/25 financial year.</p> <p>Council's Ten Year Long Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2032/33 and Delivery Program 2022/23 – 2025/26 & Operational Plan 2023/24 make reference to a proposed SV to be implemented in 3 stages as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10.5% increase 2024/25. (Inclusive of rate pegging increase assumed at 3.0%) • 10.5% increase 2025/26. (Inclusive of rate pegging increase assumed at 3.0%) • 10.5% increase 2026/27. (Inclusive of rate pegging increase assumed at 3.0%) <p>This equates to a cumulative total increase of 34.9%. The increase would be retained permanently in Council's rate base.</p> <p>The above SV if approved by IPART will enable Council's General Fund to return to a long term financially sustainable level.</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
<p>In establishing need for the SV, the relevant IP&R documents should canvass alternatives to the rate rise.</p>	<p>Council's Delivery Program/Operation Plan and Long Term Financial Plan demonstrate that without a SV rate rise, Council will not be financially sustainable and will be forced to significantly cut services to achieve annual savings of more than \$4 million, in addition to the \$1 million annual savings mentioned above.</p> <p>The documents also clearly state that an alternative to this scenario is to significantly reduce service levels. Feedback received from Councillors and the broader community did not support the reduction of any service levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Rate Variation section in the adopted Delivery Program 2022-2026 and Operational Plan 2023/24 pages 129-130 • Special Rate Variation section in the adopted Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review 2023/24 pages 4 – 6 • Draft Delivery Program 2023/24 (presented to Council 9 May 2023)
<p>In demonstrating this need councils must indicate the financial impact in their LTFP.</p>	<p>At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 9 May 2023 Council considered a number of financial modelling scenarios in the draft Delivery Program/Operational Program & Draft Long Term Financial Plan as follows:</p> <p>Scenario 1: 23% increase FY2024/25. (Inclusive of rate pegging increase limit assumed at 3.0%).</p> <p>Scenario 2: 14% increase FY2024/25. (Inclusive of rate pegging increase assumed at 3.0%) 13% increase FY2025/26. (Inclusive of rate pegging increase assumed at 3.0%)</p> <p>Scenario 3: (Resolved) 10.5% increase FY2024/25. (Inclusive of rate pegging increase assumed at 3.0%) 10.5% increase FY2025/26. (Inclusive of rate pegging increase assumed at 3.0%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Delivery Program/Operational Program 2023/24 and Draft Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review 2023/24 - Financials pages page 7 – 20, presented to Council Meeting 9 May 2023 – 4 scenarios.

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>10.5% increase FY2026/27. (Inclusive of rate pegging increase assumed at 3.0%)</p> <p>Scenario 4:</p> <p>Rate pegging increase only FY2024/25 (assumed at 3.0%). ie No Special Rate Variation.</p> <p>At the 9 May 2023 Ordinary Meeting, Council endorsed the draft Ten Year Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review FY2023/24 to FY2032/33, draft Delivery Program FY2022/23 – FY2025/26 & draft Operational Plan FY2023/24 (Scenario 3) and resolved to place the draft documents on public exhibition. Council also resolved at this time to endorse in principle, its intention to make application to IPART to implement a SV from FY2024/25 for three years, and to undertake extensive community consultation in this regard.</p> <p>Council consulted with the community regarding the draft IP&R documents and considered feedback received.</p> <p>Council adopted the Delivery Program FY2023/24 – FY2025/26 and Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review FY2023/24 (Scenario 3) at the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 27 June 2023.</p> <p>The below table shows the General Fund Operating Performance Ratio at 2.67%. Whilst this is above the benchmark set by the OLG, the FY2022/23 financial year ratio includes 1.25 years equivalent of the Financial Assistance Grant. On 28 June 2023, Council received a forward funded payment for the Financial Assistance Grant for the amount of \$2.472M which was recognised as revenue. As can be seen from the below table, the operating performance ratio for the General Fund has deteriorated in recent years. Had Council not received the revenue on 28 June 2023, the ratio would be lower than the table below indicates.</p> <p>In addition, the General Fund Operating Performance Ratio is improved by the surplus made by the Waste Fund. If the Waste Fund contribution was removed from the calculation to truly measure the performance of the General Fund excluding Waste, the ratio would be lower again.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopted Delivery Program/Operational Plan 2023/24 and Adopted Long Term Financial Plan 2023/24

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents																																						
	<p>G5-2 Statement of performance measures by fund</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="465 411 1691 555"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">\$ '000</th> <th colspan="2">General Indicators ³</th> <th colspan="2">Water Indicators</th> <th colspan="2">Sewer Indicators</th> <th rowspan="2">Benchmark</th> </tr> <tr> <th>2023</th> <th>2022</th> <th>2023</th> <th>2022</th> <th>2023</th> <th>2022</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="8">1. Operating performance ratio</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions less operating expenses ^{1,2}</td> <td>2.67%</td> <td>4.14%</td> <td>3.19%</td> <td>(4.06)%</td> <td>22.72%</td> <td>19.90%</td> <td>> 0.00%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions ¹</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The financial impact of the need for a SV is demonstrated in Council's adopted Long Term Financial Plan FY2023/24. The financial modelling indicates that Council's General Fund is in decline and requires intervention to remain financially sustainable.</p>	\$ '000	General Indicators ³		Water Indicators		Sewer Indicators		Benchmark	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	1. Operating performance ratio								Total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions less operating expenses ^{1,2}	2.67%	4.14%	3.19%	(4.06)%	22.72%	19.90%	> 0.00%	Total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions ¹								
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Total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions less operating expenses ^{1,2}	2.67%	4.14%	3.19%	(4.06)%	22.72%	19.90%	> 0.00%																																	
Total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions ¹																																								
<p>Evidence of community need/desire for service levels/projects and limited council resourcing alternatives.</p>	<p>Griffith City Council uses a variety of engagement methods and activities which aim to provide the community with a broad range of opportunities to engage with Council about the services and facilities that are important to them.</p> <p>Extensive consultation was held during the development of the Community Strategic Plan 2022 – 2032, refer to CSP Community Engagement Report – What our community said, for detailed description.</p> <p>At this time, community priorities included improved footpaths, roads, economic growth, events & tourism, parks and gardens, Lake Wyangan, Youth and Housing. These priorities are reflected in the Community Strategic Plan, Council's key strategic planning document, which maps out the strategies and actions Council will take to achieve the community's long-term vision for the City.</p> <p>Council has undertaken an extensive program of capital works in recent years. In accordance with priorities identified in the Community Strategic Plan and the Long Term Financial Plan, these projects contribute to the development and ongoing liveability of the City for both the community living in and around Griffith but also those who visit the LGA whether for work, tourism or recreation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032 • CSP – Community Engagement Report "What our community said", • SRV Community Engagement Summary September 2023, • Submissions Received during SV consultation period, • Delivery Program & Operational Plan 2023/24 • Annual Report 2022/23 																																						

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>During the planning phase for the development of the Griffith Regional Sports Precinct, including the 50 m Pool, Griffith Regional Sports Centre and amenities at Jubilee Oval, significant consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders, community groups and members of the public. During the consultation phase, members of the community indicated their desire for improved sporting and recreational facilities for our City to a standard that would attract regional and State events.</p> <p>Despite Griffith's enviable regional lifestyle, consultation undertaken for the Economic Development Strategy and Affordable Housing Strategy suggested that a shortage of low to medium cost housing is a major constraint on economic development for our City. This is an economic constraint on our capacity to attract business investment and skilled labour. A key priority for Council is to address the City's housing issues. Council has partnered with Argyle Housing to develop affordable housing in the City, namely through the Griffin Green project. On completion, Griffith Green will provide 20 new townhouses and 42 vacant housing lots. Other housing initiatives are progressing, including the provision of land for development of affordable housing.</p> <p>Consultation was held during the proposed SV exhibition period from May to August 2023 – refer to SRV Community Engagement Summary September 2023 for detailed description. The methods of communication and outcomes of this consultation is expanded further in Section 4 - OLG SV Criterion 2 – Community awareness and engagement – of this application. In general, feedback from the community indicated that a reduction in services, service levels and access to facilities was not acceptable.</p> <p>Evidence of the community's desire to maintain or improve current service levels have also been conveyed to Council through ongoing consultation. Council holds quarterly Community Opinion Group (COG) meetings and monthly Council Cafes to engage with our community. Council attends large community events such as the Riverina Field Days to capture feedback from a wide cross-section of our community.</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>Council has been in a position to be able to maximise grant funding to enable a number of major infrastructure projects to be completed. However, Council's resources have become constrained and if action is not taken to improve the financial sustainability of the General Fund this will result in significant pressure. This would require a detailed review of the service levels that can be delivered within the financial resources.</p> <p>Rate pegging, diminishing grants for operational purposes and other income sources are not keeping up with the current level of inflation. Other factors including cost shifting and the effect of natural disasters and ageing infrastructure have impacted the funds available in Council's General Fund.</p> <p>In the document titled Cost Shifting 2023: How State Costs Eat Council Rates, released by Local Government NSW, LGNSW states the burden is now valued at more than \$1.36 billion per year, up 78% from \$820 million in just over five years. That's the equivalent of more than \$460 per ratepayer annually.</p> <p>Council has made the decision to respond early to improve its financial sustainability. This includes a commitment of \$300,000 savings in FY2023/24 and \$1M per year commencing in FY2024/25.</p> <p>Although Council has limited resourcing alternatives, Council's Senior Management Team has implemented cost efficiencies initiatives to achieve operational savings including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Undertaking a program of Service Reviews within the General Fund - Weekly meetings to workshop cost saving initiatives that do not impact service levels. These are reported to Council on a quarterly basis. - A detailed energy audit has been conducted for high energy consumption facilities to identify operational improvements and tariff review. - Installation of solar panels on high energy consumption facilities (note this will require capital investment). - Improved management of staff overtime and excess leave entitlements. - Review of Council systems and processes. <p>In addition to cost saving initiatives, Council is investigating methods to increase revenue that would be considered acceptable by the community. Examples of these include:</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"> - Paid parking to be introduced at Griffith Airport (this will require capital investment) - Reviewing current lease arrangements to ensure commercial terms are being charged. <p>These efforts reflect Council's dedication to maintaining and improving service levels despite challenges posed by funding limitations and external factors.</p>	
<p>Evidence could also include the analysis of the council's financial sustainability conducted by Government agencies</p>	<p>Audit, Risk & Improvement Committees have a role in reviewing and providing independent advice on Council's financial management processes and Council's financial position and performance.</p> <p>Griffith City Council's Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee has considered Council's financial management processes, position and performance on a number of occasions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ARIC Meeting held 7 December 2023 – Annual Financial Statements, Management Letter and Engagement Closing Report ▪ ARIC Meeting held 1 November 2023 - the Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee endorsed Council's decision to apply to IPART for a SV to ensure the financial sustainability of Council's General Fund. ▪ ARIC Meeting held 28 June 2023 - The Committee discussed the risks of long term financial sustainability in the General Fund if the SV is not implemented. ▪ ARIC Meeting held 17 May 2023 – Endorsement of Draft Delivery Program & Operational Plan & Long Term Financial Plan 2023/24 and Financial update Report ▪ ARIC Meeting held 14 December 2022 – Draft Annual Financial Statements <p>Council's annual financial statements are externally audited by the NSW Audit Office providing an independent opinion on the validity of Council's financial statements.</p> <p>One of the key performance measures and benchmarks set by the Office of Local Government (OLG) is the Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio. This measures the Council's fiscal flexibility and the degree to which it relies on external funding sources. The benchmark set by the OLG is greater than 60%. The Own Source Operating Revenue Ratios for Griffith City Council are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FY2019/20 – 76.9% ▪ FY2020/21 – 67.3% ▪ FY2021/22 – 61.8% ▪ FY2022/23 – 61.6% 	<p>Agendas and Minutes Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee (Minutes available on Council's website)</p> <p>Annual Report 2022/23 Annual Financial Statements 2022/23 available on Council's website</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>Council's Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio is steadily decreasing and very close to the minimum OLG benchmark of 60%.</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>In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in May 2020, Council implemented a number of initiatives to assist residents and businesses during this time.</p> <p>Council applied the 2.60% rate peg for FY2020/21 in the Making of the Rates, however, to provide ratepayers with financial relief, Council resolved to grant a once off rebate equal to the full amount of the rate peg. Whilst this resulted in reduced revenue in FY2020/21, the long term impact to ordinary rate income was not adversely impacted in future years.</p> <p>In addition, to the above rebate, Council adopted provisions for rates deferral for some property owners, removal of interest on overdue rates and charges, rental subsidies and increased provision for community grants to assist local organisations.</p> <p>The full resolution of the Council Meeting held 5 May 2020 is as follows: That Council provide the following rate relief and strategies to residents and businesses severely affected by the Covid 19 pandemic;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) A rebate of the 2.60% increase for 2020/21 rating year for all Griffith City Council ratepayers. (b) Rates deferral for all business-rated properties for the next six (6) months backdated to 1 April 2020. This will apply where the property owner runs a business from the premises or provides a rent deferral period for business tenants. (c) Rates deferral for all property owners who have lost employment or been stood down due to the Federal Government's enforced business closures for the next six (6) months. Three (3) year repayment period provided. (d) Removal of all interest charges on existing overdue rates and charges (including water and sewer) for a period of 12 months backdated to 1 April 2020. (e) Provision of rental subsidy for six (6) months for Council-owned properties which are occupied by a small business or organisation impacted by the Federal Government's enforced business closures. 	<p>Council Meeting Minutes 5 May 2020 available on Council website</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>(f) Provision of a 50% fee reduction for all outdoor dining areas, materials on footpaths and environment and health inspections backdated to 1 April 2020 for a period of six (6) months.</p> <p>(g) Council to suspend all existing debt recovery actions on outstanding rates and charges until the pandemic has passed.</p> <p>(h) Council place \$100,000 into a Community Grants reserve to be available to community groups, not-for-profit organisations and sporting bodies for a maximum of \$5,000 each for eligible projects aimed at assisting those organisations affected by the Covid 19 lockdown for the 2020/21 Financial year.</p> <p>These measures did not have a material impact on the financial sustainability of Council's General Fund.</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.

Not Applicable

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.

The 2023/24 operational budget for the General Fund (excluding Waste Fund) is forecasted to be a deficit of \$4.94M. The main factors driving the continued deterioration of the General Fund are:

- Rate pegging of Council Rate income – this has been calculated on the rate set by IPART which is 3.7%.
- Inflation on Materials, Services & Utilities - over the twelve months to the March 2023 quarter, the Consumer Price Index rose 7.0%. However, it should be noted that many of Council's major expenses (Eg. Energy, Insurance, IT, Contractors & General Supplies) have increased by 10-20%
- Employee Costs have been calculated based on a 5% increase commencing FY2023/24. This increase aligns with the Local Government State Award increase of 4.5% effective from July 2023 plus changes to staff Grades / Steps and increases to Superannuation Guarantee Contributions from 1 July 2023.
- Depreciation – new major assets such as the Griffith Regional Sports Centre & Griffith Community Centre contributed to approximately \$560K of additional depreciation.
- Emergency Services Levy - during 2019, the NSW Government introduced legislative reform to workers compensation for volunteer and career fire firefighters suffering from work related illnesses. This reform caused a substantial increase in the annual Emergency Services Levy all Councils are required to pay. In the first 3 years since the reform, the NSW Government provided a rebate such this additional cost impost on Councils would not occur. On Friday 28 April 2023, all councils in NSW received advice from the NSW Government that this rebate would cease as from July 2023. The removal of the rebate will result in an additional cost to Council in 2023/24 of \$233,000. This additional cost alone will consume approximately 1.2% of the 3.7% rate peg increase.

- Crown Lands Reserves Plans of Management - Crown Reserves are owned by the NSW Government but many of these reserves are managed by councils on behalf of the Crown. A new Crown Reserves Management Act in 2016 introduced an obligation for councils to prepare a Plan of Management for every Crown Reserve. In 2016, the NSW Government allocated a grant of \$70,036 which it claimed would be sufficient to undertake this task. This onerous task is still being implemented and Council has had to contribute an additional funding to complete.
- The Crown Reserves referred to above need to be maintained and the cost for this work has been shifted from the NSW Government to councils without compensation. For example, Scenic Hill is an important public space in Griffith. During recent discussions with Crown Lands Department, Council was advised that it could not relinquish the trusteeship of this reserve and therefore the maintenance responsibility without the approval of the Minister. Further, even if this approval was granted, the Crown would not be contributing funds for the maintenance of the site and future access to the reserve by the public "could not be guaranteed".
- Council's response to the housing crisis - Council has been proactive in looking for opportunities to address the housing crisis in Griffith. The Griffin Green Affordable Housing project is one example where Council is working in partnership with Argyle Housing to deliver additional housing stock in the City. The land upon which this development is located was originally to be vested in Council by the then Minister for Housing. Unfortunately, NSW Treasury insisted that the Government receive market value for this land. For the last 18 months Council has engaged with Crown Lands seeking their concurrence to take ownership of two other blocks of unused Crown Land near the CBD for the purpose of constructing more affordable housing stock. The Crown Lands Office have been cooperative but Treasury have mandated that Council must pay market value for this land. Such a requirement will essentially quash the potential for this project unless significant grant funding can be secured.
- Impact of the new Risk Management and Internal Audit Guidelines and External Auditing Requirements - The NSW Government has introduced a new regime of Risk Management and Internal Audit obligations on councils. Compliance with the new Guidelines will be onerous and significant additional expense will be required. Over the last decade, the Audit Office of NSW has steadily increased the scope of the External audit. The Australian Auditing Standards Board has recently revised auditing standards and from the 30 June 2023 will now perform a more comprehensive risk assessment over Council's use of IT to identify IT related risks. External audit fees have more than doubled from 2013 to 2023.

Council's Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review FY2023/24 currently makes provision for the construction of a new Art Gallery in FY2026/27 (\$ 7.5M) and FY2027/28 (\$7.5M).

At the Council Meeting held 24 October 2023, Council resolved to prepare the draft Delivery Plan FY2022/23 – 2025/26, draft Operational Plan (Budget) FY2024/25 and the draft Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review FY2024/25 on the basis of removing the Art Gallery project. This Art Gallery was to be 50% funded by the implementation of a temporary SV commencing in FY2026/27 for a period of 7 years.

When assessing the long term financial sustainability of the General Fund, it should be noted that the SV relating to the Art Gallery improved the forecasted operating result in Council's Long Term Financial Plan for the General Fund by approximately \$1M per year.

In accordance with Council's resolution this item will be removed from the Long Term Financial Plan when Council next considers the draft IP&R documentation in April 2024.

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
<p>Evidence that the community is aware of the need for and extent of a rate rise.</p>	<p>Council provided all critical information about the proposed SV in accordance with the OLG Guidelines for the preparation of an application for a SV to General Income. Council developed a Community Engagement Plan specifically for the SV consultation.</p> <p>The Special Rate Variation (SRV) Community Engagement Plan provided the framework within which Council engaged with the community. The Plan ensured that Council clearly communicated the full impact of the proposed rate increases to ratepayers, used an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness and input into the SV process and made the community aware of the need for and extent of the rate rise.</p> <p>Community consultation commenced 12 May 2023 and concluded on 31 August 2023.</p> <p>Engagement methods included:</p> <p>Online, email and other submissions Council offered an online submission form for ratepayers and residents. The form was promoted through social media, Council's website, Council Catch Up newsletter and email. In addition, residents were invited to make submissions via email or post. A QR Code was provided to attendees at SV engagement events with a</p>	<p>"SRV Community Engagement Summary"</p> <p>"SRV Community Engagement Plan"</p> <p>"Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2023/24"</p> <p>"Long Term Financial Plan 2023/24"</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents
	<p>link directly to Council's SV page, allowing ratepayers to make a submission.</p> <p>Website A dedicated Special Rate Variation page was launched on 5 June 2023 with a slider directly linking from Council's homepage. The SV page served to provide information throughout the consultation process and following the community engagement period. The page was updated throughout the community engagement period in response to questions raised. A Rates Estimator was made available on the webpage to assist ratepayers to estimate the impact of the proposed SV on their rates.</p> <p>Flyer to ratepayers A flyer was sent to all ratepayers in the July 2023 Rates Notices informing them of Council's intention to apply for a SV and encouraged them to have their say. The flyer included the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SV options being proposed and SV timeline • Information on how ratepayers could provide feedback • Average residential yearly rates under the SV • Overview of what general rates pay for. <p>Mailing List Over 2,000 people received emails throughout the community engagement period encouraging them to attend meetings and information sessions and to have their say. These included separate SV specific emails as well as Council Catch Up e-newsletters containing SV articles and advertisements.</p> <p>Media releases Media releases were distributed on 17 May 2023, 2 June 2023, 8 June 2023, 22 June 2023, 13 July 2023, 25 July 2023, 8 August 2023, 21 August 2023 and 1 September 2023. These media releases informed the media and community of community consultation for the proposed SV. Further media releases were distributed advising key dates for meetings, encouraging submissions, the launch of the rates estimator and an update on the progress of the consultation.</p> <p>Advertising and Council Catch Up Newsletter Council purchased 40 x 30 second radio ads in prime time 6am – 7pm across 963 Triple M (AM) and Hit 99.7 (FM) – June to August 2023. In addition, 10 x Monday with the Mayor interviews were held on Hit 99.7 Breakfast with Matt Collins.</p> <p>Council also placed advertisements in the local newspaper, the Area News. The advertisements included Council's proposal, contact details and information on how people could provide input into the decision.</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents
	<p>Advertisements and articles were also placed in Council's weekly newsletter, Council Catch Up. 500 copies of this inhouse publication are distributed to over 22 local venues as well as distributed on Council's website, social media and emails.</p> <p>Social Media Council has an active social media audience with more than 10,000 users engaging with Council's Facebook and Instagram accounts. The social media SV community engagement included a series of SV posts and SV event posts for community engagement activities. SV community engagement opportunities were published as events on Facebook and appeared as posts at the same time throughout. When permitted posts were also shared to Griffith Community Noticeboard Facebook Group (17,500 members).</p> <p>Community meetings and information sessions Council held seven information sessions. These included two Community Opinion Group (COG) Meetings in Yoogali and Hanwood. Five Council Café Information Sessions were held in Kooyoo Street, Griffith Central Plaza and the Council Chambers. Residents and ratepayers were invited to attend to learn about the SV proposal and to provide feedback.</p> <p>Council also attended 10 community group meetings where the GM and Mayor gave presentations on the proposed SV. These groups included Griffith Business Chamber, U3A, Rotary Club, Griffith Ladies Probus, Yenda Progress Association & Yenda Rotary, Griffith Lions Club, NSW Farmers, Griffith Rotary & Griffith East Rotary, Griffith Business Group and Griffith Sikh Community.</p> <p>More than 230 people attended the community group meetings with over 500 attending in person sessions overall.</p> <p>For those community members unable to attend an in person information session, an online video presentation was provided where the GM provided an overview of the SV proposal. This was available on social media and Council's website.</p>	

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	<p>Community consultation sessions held:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="379 461 1182 1413"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Type</th> <th>Venue</th> <th>Time</th> <th>Numbers</th> <th>In person / online</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>17-May-23</td> <td>SRV Presentation</td> <td>Facebook online video</td> <td>5:00 PM</td> <td>325+</td> <td>Online presentation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25-May-23</td> <td>Griffith Business Chamber</td> <td>Gemini Hotel</td> <td>6:00 PM</td> <td>20</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5-Jun-23</td> <td>U3A</td> <td>Senior Citizens Hall</td> <td>10:00 AM</td> <td>22</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6-Jun-23</td> <td>COG Meeting</td> <td>Yoggali Club</td> <td>7:00 PM</td> <td>39</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8-Jun-23</td> <td>GCC Staff</td> <td>Council Chambers</td> <td>1:00 PM</td> <td>70</td> <td>Online and in person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15-Jun-23</td> <td>Council Café</td> <td>Kooyoo Street Kiosk</td> <td>10 am - 12 pm</td> <td>22</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>22-Jun-23</td> <td>Rotary Club</td> <td>Griffith</td> <td>7:00 AM</td> <td>23</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>27-Jun-23</td> <td>Information Session</td> <td>Griffith City Council</td> <td>5:00 PM</td> <td>1</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>27-Jun-23</td> <td>Griffith Ladies Probus</td> <td>Coro Club</td> <td>10:30 AM</td> <td>25</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3-Jul-23</td> <td>Yenda Progress Association & Yenda Rotary</td> <td>Yenda Diggers Club</td> <td>6:00 PM</td> <td>30</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4-Jul-23</td> <td>Griffith Lions Club</td> <td>Leagues Club</td> <td>6:30 PM</td> <td>20</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5-Jul-23</td> <td>NSW Farmers</td> <td>Griffith</td> <td>5:00 PM</td> <td>10</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6-Jul-23</td> <td>Information Session</td> <td>Griffith Central Plaza</td> <td>11:30 am - 1:30 pm</td> <td>15</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20-Jul-23</td> <td>Council Café</td> <td>Kooyoo Street Kiosk</td> <td>10 am - 12 pm</td> <td>20</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26-Jul-23</td> <td>Griffith Rotary and Griffith East Rotary</td> <td>Exies Sports Club</td> <td>7:00 PM</td> <td>27</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>28-Jul-23</td> <td>Griffith Business Group</td> <td>La Cantina</td> <td>12:30 PM</td> <td>25</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1-Aug-23</td> <td>COG Meeting</td> <td>Hanwood Catholic Club</td> <td>7:00 PM</td> <td>80</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4-Aug-23</td> <td>Information Session</td> <td>Griffith Central Plaza</td> <td>10 am - 12 pm</td> <td>30</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16-Aug-23</td> <td>Griffith Sikh Community</td> <td>Sikh Temple</td> <td>7pm</td> <td>20</td> <td>In person</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Staff and Councillor Communication Councillor Workshops were held to discuss the budget and proposed Special Rate Variation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 March 2023 • 13 April 2023 • 24 April 2023 • 8 June 2023 <p>An all-staff breakfast barbecue was held on 27 April 2023 where staff were advised the SV proposal for engagement would be going to Council. All staff received an email from the GM on 10 May 2023 following the Council Meeting which resolved to consult the community on the proposed SV. Follow-up meetings with all staff were held in Council Chambers and online on 8 June 2023 to provide an update on the process.</p>	Date	Type	Venue	Time	Numbers	In person / online	17-May-23	SRV Presentation	Facebook online video	5:00 PM	325+	Online presentation	25-May-23	Griffith Business Chamber	Gemini Hotel	6:00 PM	20	In person	5-Jun-23	U3A	Senior Citizens Hall	10:00 AM	22	In person	6-Jun-23	COG Meeting	Yoggali Club	7:00 PM	39	In person	8-Jun-23	GCC Staff	Council Chambers	1:00 PM	70	Online and in person	15-Jun-23	Council Café	Kooyoo Street Kiosk	10 am - 12 pm	22	In person	22-Jun-23	Rotary Club	Griffith	7:00 AM	23	In person	27-Jun-23	Information Session	Griffith City Council	5:00 PM	1	In person	27-Jun-23	Griffith Ladies Probus	Coro Club	10:30 AM	25	In person	3-Jul-23	Yenda Progress Association & Yenda Rotary	Yenda Diggers Club	6:00 PM	30	In person	4-Jul-23	Griffith Lions Club	Leagues Club	6:30 PM	20	In person	5-Jul-23	NSW Farmers	Griffith	5:00 PM	10	In person	6-Jul-23	Information Session	Griffith Central Plaza	11:30 am - 1:30 pm	15	In person	20-Jul-23	Council Café	Kooyoo Street Kiosk	10 am - 12 pm	20	In person	26-Jul-23	Griffith Rotary and Griffith East Rotary	Exies Sports Club	7:00 PM	27	In person	28-Jul-23	Griffith Business Group	La Cantina	12:30 PM	25	In person	1-Aug-23	COG Meeting	Hanwood Catholic Club	7:00 PM	80	In person	4-Aug-23	Information Session	Griffith Central Plaza	10 am - 12 pm	30	In person	16-Aug-23	Griffith Sikh Community	Sikh Temple	7pm	20	In person	
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	<p>Outcomes from the community consultation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 141 online submissions received • 16 other submissions received • 1604 web page views • 254 views Rates Estimator • 325 views SRV online video presentation • Approximately 10,000 flyers mailed to ratepayers in July 2023 • 2,159 emails sent to local business owners • 9 media releases • Radio and newspaper advertising • 24 SRV articles in Council Catch Up newsletter • 31 posts Council's social media channels • Total Facebook and Instagram post reach: 59,500. • 10 community presentations • Seven community information sessions • 4+ Councillor Workshops • 3+ Staff meetings. <p>The engagement materials and presentations explained why a SV is the most appropriate option to maintain the current levels of service, in line with the community's expressed priorities. An alternative to the SV would mean that Council would have to look at options to reduce the levels of services to the community. For example, some community facilities may have reduced hours such as the Griffith Regional Aquatic Leisure Centre, Griffith Regional Theatre, Pioneer Park Museum, Griffith Regional Sports Centre and Griffith City Library. In addition, service levels would be reduced in areas such as our roads, parks and gardens, strategic planning and storm water drainage.</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>Council developed a specific webpage for the Special Rate Variation proposal providing information including the proposed SV in percentage terms and the total increase in dollar terms for the average rates (residential, business, farmland) from FY2023/24 to 2026/27.</p> <p>This information was also included in presentations, newsletters, emails, flyers, media releases, rates notices and social media channels.</p> <p>Example of printed material:</p>	<p>Council Website</p> <p>Details in the SRV Community Engagement Summary and SRV Engagement Plan</p>

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	<p> WHAT'S PROPOSED</p> <p>Council is seeking the community's view on a proposal to apply for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) starting in July 2024.</p> <p>An application would be made to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for approval to raise Ordinary Rates by 10.5% (inclusive of the assumed 3.0% IPART rate peg) each year for three consecutive years starting 2024/25. This is a total cumulative increase of 34.9%. The base rate increase would be retained permanently.</p> <p>The proposed rate rise will only affect the Ordinary Rate. Waste, recycling, sewerage, stormwater and water charges will not be affected by the SRV.</p> <p>TWO OPTIONS</p> <p>We have two options to show you what it will look like with or without the proposed SRV.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%; padding: 5px;"> <p>OPTION 1 - WITH SRV Maintain current services</p> <p>Increase rates by 10.5% (inclusive of the assumed 3.0% rate peg) each year for three consecutive years starting 2024/25 with a total cumulative increase of 34.9%.</p> <p>This option, plus \$1 million in cost saving initiatives maintains current services and asset renewal. Community facilities, footpaths and roads will continue to be maintained.</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%; padding: 5px;"> <p>OPTION 2 - WITHOUT SRV Significant reduction of services</p> <p>Retain the IPART rate pegging limit only. This option, plus \$1 million in cost saving initiatives, will not fully fund current Council operations and will require a plan to find additional savings of \$4 million each year by cutting services.</p> <p>Examples of community facilities that may have reduced hours are the Griffith Regional Aquatic Leisure Centre, Griffith Regional Theatre, Pioneer Park Museum, Griffith Regional Sports Centre and Griffith City Library. In addition, service levels will be reduced. Some examples of these include our roads, parks and gardens, strategic planning and storm water drainage.</p> </div> </div> <table border="1" data-bbox="379 1240 1034 1406" style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #4a7ebb; color: white;"> <th colspan="4">Average Rates - Residential</th> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #d9e1f2;"> <th>2023/24</th> <th>2024/25</th> <th>2025/26</th> <th>2026/27</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>3.7% Rate Peg</td> <td>10.5% includes assumed 3% Rate Peg</td> <td>10.5% includes assumed 3% Rate Peg</td> <td>10.5% includes assumed 3% Rate Peg</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$1,106</td> <td>\$1,222</td> <td>\$1,350</td> <td>\$1,492</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Information provided on Council's website:</p> <p>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 was depicted on Council's website as follows:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>What level of rate rise is Council considering? The proposed rate increase is based on Council's funding requirements.</p> <p>Griffith City Council is seeking the community's view on a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for approval to raise ordinary rates through a Special Rates Variation (SRV) by 10.5% (inclusive of the assumed 3.0% rate peg) each year for three consecutive years from 2024/25 to 2026/27 (a cumulative total increase of 34.9%). The increase would be retained permanently in Council's rate base.</p> </div>	Average Rates - Residential				2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	3.7% Rate Peg	10.5% includes assumed 3% Rate Peg	10.5% includes assumed 3% Rate Peg	10.5% includes assumed 3% Rate Peg	\$1,106	\$1,222	\$1,350	\$1,492	
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<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>At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 9 May 2023, Council considered a report in relation to the Draft Delivery Program FY2022/23-2025/26 & Draft Operational Plan FY2023/24 and Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review.</p> <p>The Council report highlighted the effect of the proposed rate rise for the average ratepayer by rating category as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>RESIDENTIAL</th> <th>777 sqm</th> <th>Enskine Road GRIFFITH NSW 2680</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="3">SRV Option 3 - 10.5% Increase for 3 years starting in FY2024-25</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Levy Details</th> <th>2022-2023 Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)</th> <th>2023-2024 3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2022 Land Values)</th> <th>2024-2025 10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg</th> <th>2025-2026 10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg</th> <th>2026-2027 10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Ordinary Rates</td> <td>\$ 833</td> <td>\$ 905</td> <td>\$ 72</td> <td>\$ 1,000</td> <td>\$ 95</td> <td>\$ 1,105</td> <td>\$ 105</td> <td>\$ 1,221</td> <td>\$ 116</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Domestic Waste</td> <td>\$ 341</td> <td>\$ 376</td> <td>\$ 35</td> <td>\$ 387</td> <td>\$ 11</td> <td>\$ 399</td> <td>\$ 12</td> <td>\$ 411</td> <td>\$ 12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Domestic Recycling</td> <td>\$ 112</td> <td>\$ 124</td> <td>\$ 12</td> <td>\$ 128</td> <td>\$ 4</td> <td>\$ 132</td> <td>\$ 4</td> <td>\$ 135</td> <td>\$ 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Storm Water Levy</td> <td>\$ 25</td> <td>\$ 25</td> <td>\$ -</td> <td>\$ 25</td> <td>\$ -</td> <td>\$ 25</td> <td>\$ -</td> <td>\$ 25</td> <td>\$ -</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Rates</td> <td>\$ 1,313</td> <td>\$ 1,430</td> <td>\$ 119</td> <td>\$ 1,540</td> <td>\$ 130</td> <td>\$ 1,660</td> <td>\$ 130</td> <td>\$ 1,792</td> <td>\$ 132</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>RESIDENTIAL</th> <th>828 sqm</th> <th>Ortella Street GRIFFITH NSW 2680</th> </tr> <tr> <th colspan="3">SRV Option 3 - 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Levy Details	2022-2023 Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)	2023-2024 3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2022 Land Values)	2024-2025 10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	2025-2026 10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	2026-2027 10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																					
Ordinary Rates	\$ 1,348	\$ 1,389	\$ 41	\$ 1,535	\$ 146	\$ 1,696	\$ 161	\$ 1,874	\$ 179																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
Domestic Waste	\$ 341	\$ 376	\$ 35	\$ 387	\$ 11	\$ 399	\$ 12	\$ 411	\$ 12																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
Domestic Recycling	\$ 112	\$ 124	\$ 12	\$ 128	\$ 4	\$ 132	\$ 4	\$ 135	\$ 4																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
Storm Water Levy	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
Total Rates	\$ 1,826	\$ 1,934	\$ 108	\$ 2,075	\$ 161	\$ 2,251	\$ 177	\$ 2,445	\$ 194																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
RESIDENTIAL	4,589 sqm	Zappacosta Crescent, YOOGALI NSW 2680																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								
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Ordinary Rates	\$ 1,881	\$ 1,898	\$ 7	\$ 2,086	\$ 198	\$ 2,305	\$ 219	\$ 2,547	\$ 241																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
Domestic Waste	\$ 341	\$ 376	\$ 35	\$ 387	\$ 11	\$ 399	\$ 12	\$ 411	\$ 12																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
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Total Rates	\$ 2,359	\$ 2,413	\$ 54	\$ 2,626	\$ 213	\$ 2,861	\$ 235	\$ 3,119	\$ 258																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
RESIDENTIAL	1,097 sqm	Leaver Street, YENDA NSW 2661																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																								
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Ordinary Rates	\$ 731	\$ 777	\$ 4	\$ 803	\$ 76	\$ 888	\$ 84	\$ 981	\$ 93																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
Domestic Waste	\$ 341	\$ 376	\$ 35	\$ 387	\$ 11	\$ 399	\$ 12	\$ 411	\$ 12																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
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Total Rates	\$ 1,209	\$ 1,252	\$ 43	\$ 1,343	\$ 91	\$ 1,443	\$ 100	\$ 1,552	\$ 109																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	

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During this time the Council Report, specifying the extent of the General Fund rate rise under the SV, for the average ratepayer, by rating category was available along with the Draft Delivery Program FY2022/23-2025/26 & Draft Operational Plan FY2023/24 and Draft Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review documents on the public exhibition web page.</p>	Levy Details	2023-2024			2024-2025			2025-2026			2026-2027			Current Rates (Based on 2023 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2023 Land Values)	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	Ordinary Rates	\$ 2,599	\$ 2,367	\$ 233	\$ 2,616	\$ 243	\$ 2,890	\$ 275	\$ 3,134	\$ 303	Waste Management - 243L	\$ 953	\$ 699	\$ 254	\$ 627	\$ 18	\$ 646	\$ 10	\$ 665	\$ 10	Commercial Capital Loan	\$ 31	\$ 30	\$ 4	\$ 36	\$ 1	\$ 37	\$ 1	\$ 38	\$ 1	Storm Water Levy	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	Total Rates	\$ 3,208	\$ 3,096	\$ 172	\$ 3,304	\$ 268	\$ 3,598	\$ 295	\$ 3,922	\$ 324	Levy Details	2023-2024			2024-2025			2025-2026			2026-2027			Current Rates (Based on 2023 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2023 Land Values)	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	Ordinary Rates	\$ 1,678	\$ 1,954	\$ 276	\$ 2,159	\$ 205	\$ 2,386	\$ 227	\$ 2,636	\$ 251	Waste Management - 660L	\$ 1,454	\$ 1,000	\$ 445	\$ 1,646	\$ 48	\$ 1,697	\$ 48	\$ 1,748	\$ 51	Commercial Capital Loan	\$ 31	\$ 30	\$ 4	\$ 36	\$ 1	\$ 37	\$ 1	\$ 38	\$ 1	Storm Water Levy	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	Total Rates	\$ 3,188	\$ 3,614	\$ 426	\$ 3,868	\$ 254	\$ 4,145	\$ 277	\$ 4,448	\$ 303	Levy Details	2023-2024			2024-2025			2025-2026			2026-2027			Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2023 Land Values)	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	Ordinary Rates	\$ 2,515	\$ 2,580	\$ 65	\$ 2,851	\$ 271	\$ 3,150	\$ 299	\$ 3,481	\$ 331	Total Rates	\$ 2,515	\$ 2,580	\$ 65	\$ 2,851	\$ 271	\$ 3,150	\$ 299	\$ 3,481	\$ 331	Levy Details	2023-2024			2024-2025			2025-2026			2026-2027			Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2023 Land Values)	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase From Previous Year	Ordinary Rates	\$ 2,449	\$ 2,485	\$ 36	\$ 2,746	\$ 261	\$ 3,034	\$ 288	\$ 3,353	\$ 319	Total Rates	\$ 2,449	\$ 2,485	\$ 36	\$ 2,746	\$ 261	\$ 3,034	\$ 288	\$ 3,353	\$ 319	
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<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 maintains continuous efficiency measures to guarantee the delivery of services aligns with the priorities established in the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program/Operational Plan and remains within budget constraints. These ongoing measures are integral to sustaining the City's long-term vision and ensuring effective governance.</p> <p>Council has identified the following service reviews to be conducted with a view to improving operational efficiencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water and Sewer FY2023/24 - Roads Services FY2023/24 - Griffith Regional Aquatic Leisure Centre FY2024/25 - Parks and Gardens FY2024/25 - Developer Services FY2024/25 - Compliance FY2025/26. <p>Council has commenced cost efficiency initiatives to achieve operational savings including the following:</p>	<p>Delivery Program/ Operational Program 2023/24 pages 129-130</p> <p>Long Term Financial Plan Annual Review 2023/24 pages 4 – 6</p>																																																																																																																																																																																																																																				

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senior Management Team are committed to achieving a \$300,000 cost saving/revenue improvement in FY2023/24 and \$1 million annually thereafter. This will be achieved by meeting weekly to workshop cost saving initiatives that do not impact service levels. These are reported to Council on a quarterly basis. Examples of initiatives that have been already implemented include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed energy audit has been conducted for high energy consumption facilities to identify operational improvements and tariff review. • Council is investigating the installation of solar panels on high energy consumption facilities (note this will require capital investment). • Management of overtime and excess leave entitlements. • Review of Council systems and processes. <p>In addition to cost saving initiatives, Council is investigating methods to increase revenue that would be considered acceptable by the community. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paid parking Griffith Airport (this will require capital investment) - Reviewing current lease arrangements to ensure commercial terms are being charged. <p>Council informed the community during the consultation phase that despite the above ongoing efficiency measures, a SV is still required to be able to meet the community’s long term objectives and aspirations for the City as outlined in our Community Strategic Plan. Without the proposed SV, Council would need to identify an additional \$4M per year in savings, resulting in significant cuts to services and facilities, as well as job losses and deterioration of current service levels.</p> <p>The additional funds received through the SV will increase the funds available to address and correct Council's operating position and enable sufficient funds to be available for renewal and maintenance of assets and the continuation of current service levels.</p> <p>The SV proposal highlights the importance of Council generating a sufficient surplus in order to maintain current levels of service and provide required infrastructure, which are key ingredients for social and economic wellbeing. Local government services contribute significantly to the social and economic health of our City, and thereby assist with worker attraction, retention and business confidence.</p> <p>Council’s improved financial sustainability through a SV will also enable Council to maximise Federal and State funding opportunities, which often require co-contributions.</p>	<p>Additional service reviews adopted by Council 24 October 2023.</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents
<p>The council's community engagement strategy for the SV must demonstrate an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness and input occur.</p>	<p>Council's Special Rate Variation Community Engagement Plan provided the framework within which Council engaged with the community through a variety of methods to ensure community awareness and input occurred.</p> <p>The document set out the levels and methods of engagement that Council was to undertake regarding the proposed SV. The Community Engagement Plan outlined the approach, key messages and timeline for community consultation on the potential SV. The Plan was developed to ensure that it met the SV assessment criteria set out by the NSW Office of Local Government. It was also developed in compliance with Council's Community Engagement and Communications Strategy, as well as the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Australasia Quality Assurance Standard.</p> <p>The SRV Community Engagement Plan involved the community, explained the need for the SV, sought input, and facilitated a collaborative decision-making process that was transparent and responsive to the concerns and needs of the community. Key components of the plan included:</p> <p>Dedicated SRV webpage Develop a webpage dedicated to the Special Rate Variation that provides information on the proposed increase, the infrastructure and services it will fund, and how it will affect ratepayers. Website to outline community information session details, fact sheet, background, online SRV presentation, frequently asked questions and will provide a mechanism for ratepayers to submit feedback and questions. Web page to include Rates Estimator for ratepayers to assess the impact of the SRV on their respective properties.</p> <p>Informational flyers Informational flyer developed to be mailed to all ratepayers of Griffith. The brochure will provide information on the special rate variation, its benefits, and how ratepayers can provide feedback.</p> <p>Council Newsletters Council Catch Up, Council Capers (staff newsletter)</p> <p>Advertisements Radio advertisements during consultation phase and regular interviews with Mayor Local Newspaper advertisements</p> <p>Community meetings/information sessions Hold a series of community meetings (Community Opinion Group (COG), Council Cafe and other) to inform ratepayers about the Special Rate Variation, answer questions, and gather feedback. The meetings should be held at various times and locations to ensure maximum participation.</p>	<p>"SRV Community Engagement Plan"</p> <p>"SRV Community Engagement Summary"</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents
	<p>In addition to COG Meetings and Council Café/Information Sessions, Mayor, Councillors and General Manager available to present SV proposal to community organisations on request.</p> <p>Social Media Use social media channels, such as Facebook and Instagram, to promote the community meetings and encourage ratepayers to provide feedback. Social media should also be used to share updates on the progress of the consultation process.</p> <p>Online presentation of SV proposal An online presentation to be available on Council’s website and social media.</p> <p>Council meetings & workshops Provide regular updates on the consultation process at Council meetings to ensure that Councillors are informed and can respond to any questions or concerns raised by the community.</p> <p>Electronic Direct Mail (EDM) marketing to advise subscribers of information and updates. Internal email to Councillors and staff to inform them of the proposed SRV process.</p> <p>Consultation summary report Develop a summary report that outlines the feedback received from the community during the consultation process. The report should be made available to the public and be transparent about how the feedback was used to inform the final decision.</p> <p>The Community Engagement Plan also provided guidance on reporting back to Council and closing the loop.</p>	
<p>Explain the action, if any, the council took in response to feedback from the community</p>	<p>Council utilised a wide variety of communication methods, as outlined in the SRV Community Engagement Plan during the engagement period to raise awareness in the community of Council’s intention to apply for an SV.</p> <p>During the engagement period, Council encouraged ratepayers and residents to join the conversation and provide feedback on the proposal.</p> <p>The outcomes of the community consultation are summarised in the SRV Community Engagement Summary.</p>	<p>SRV Community Engagement Summary</p> <p>Council Report 24 October 2023</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents																						
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	Staff and Councillors	<p>Councillor Workshops were held on a number of occasions to discuss the budget and proposed Special Rate Variation. An all-staff breakfast barbecue was held on 27 April 2023. All staff received an email from the GM on 10 May 2023 following the Council Meeting which resolved to consult the community on the proposed SRV. Follow-up meetings held on 8 June 2023 to provide an update on the process.</p>																																																				
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	<p>Council Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Hardship Policy - Council acknowledges that some ratepayers may experience difficulty with these planned increases, and a Financial Hardship Policy is in place to help them. On 24 October 2023, Council resolved that the Policy be reviewed to ensure adequate assistance is provided to ratepayers experiencing genuine financial hardship. Pensioner Concession Rebate - Ratepayers who qualify for pensioner concessions receive an annual concession of up to \$250 per property for ordinary rates and domestic waste charges. The NSW Government funds 55% of the pensioner rebate whilst Council funds 45%. Council currently offers the pensioner concession rebate to 12,037 ratepayers. At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 24 October 2023, Council resolved to increase the pensioner rebates on Ordinary Rates by the following amounts for the 3 year implementation of the Special Rate Variation. At the completion of the SV implementation the Pensioner Concession Rebate will revert back the level prior to SV. <table border="1" data-bbox="384 1055 1217 1263"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Additional Pensioner Rebate per Assessment</th> <th>Additional Annual Cost to Council</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Year 1</td> <td>\$100</td> <td>\$123,700</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 2</td> <td>\$75</td> <td>\$92,775</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year 3</td> <td>\$50</td> <td>\$61,850</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Total</td> <td>\$278,325</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council delivers water and utilities services to the community. These services are not subject to rate pegging legislation. Council received feedback during the consultation period that it should look closely at every opportunity to limit water and sewer charge increases at least during the SV implementation period. In response to these concerns, Council, at its Ordinary Meeting held 24 October 2023, resolved to cap increases Water and Sewer charges by the assumed 3% annual rate peg (per the SRV) for the period of the 3 year implementation of the SRV. Council has spread the SV increase across three years in an endeavour to provide ratepayers opportunity to plan for future increases. Some services delivered by Council incur a user pay charge. These charges are intended to relieve the pressure on the general rates and place more responsibility on those directly utilising the service. Council does review the Revenue Policy on an annual basis which sets the user pay charges. 		Additional Pensioner Rebate per Assessment	Additional Annual Cost to Council	Year 1	\$100	\$123,700	Year 2	\$75	\$92,775	Year 3	\$50	\$61,850		Total	\$278,325	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed rate increase will also affect local businesses and farmers. Following consultation with these industry groups there was an understanding that operating costs have risen significantly in recent years. For Council finances to remain sustainable, rates must be increased to reflect the changes in operational costs. <p>Issue: Smaller increase / fewer years / supported by reduced operational costs and other revenue streams / other alternatives in combination with the SV</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SV increase identified is the minimum amount required to bring Council's financial position in the General Fund to a sustainable level without reducing service levels. Council is committed to exploring operational efficiencies and alternative revenue streams to limit the SV increase to that which is proposed. <p>Issue: Do not want to cut services / lose jobs</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should a SV proceed, Council will not need to cut services or reduce jobs in the organisational structure. <p>Issue: Reduce Councillor numbers and Councillor costs</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council has resolved as from September 2024, to reduce the Councillors from 12 to 9. Many conferences now allow remote attendance. Council is exploring this option to help reduce costs. Councillors review the fees payable to Councillors on an annual basis in line with the prescribed minimum and maximum amounts set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal. The Tribunal makes annual determinations on the categorisation of each Council and Mayoral office for the purpose of determining the minimum and maximum fees payable to Councillors and Mayors in each category. <p>Issue: Review current spending / services, Council efficiency, cost saving initiatives / streamline processes</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council intends to undertake several service reviews as identified previously in this application. Council is committed to exploring operational efficiencies and alternative revenue streams (FY2024/25 onwards \$1M 	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents
	<p>per annum) in order to limit the SV increase to achieve financial sustainability.</p> <p>Issue: Review senior positions and staffing levels</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The organisational structure of Council is reviewed within 12 months of an ordinary election of Council. The next review will occur following the 2024 Council election. The level of staff resources required reflects the level of services expected by the community and to meet regulatory requirements. <p>Issue: Concentrate on essential infrastructure projects</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council reviews its Delivery Program & Operational Plan and Long Term Financial Plan (including capital works budget) on an annual basis. These documents are exhibited for public comment to ensure the works proposed meet community expectations. <p>Issue: Concerns about the new Art Gallery proposal</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> While Council has included in its Long Term Financial Plan the construction of an Art Gallery, any further action in regard to this matter will be the subject of further deliberation and resolution of Council. At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 24 October 2023, Council resolved that Council staff prepare the next draft Operational Plan (Budget) 2024/2025, draft Delivery Plan and the draft 10 year Financial Plan on the basis of removing the Art Gallery project from the financial modelling. <p>Issue: Affordability of Housing (higher rents)</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council has implemented a number of strategies to assist with providing affordable accommodation in Griffith. Eg. Griffin Green Affordable Housing project – 20 dwellings plus 42 building allotments. Donation of land to Argyle Housing Corner of Wakaden and Crossing Streets. 4 x 2 bed affordable dwellings. Adoption of new Residential Control Plan providing various concessions for affordable housing. <p>Summarised Submission from the Griffith Business Chamber</p> <p>Issue: "The Chamber submits that:</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents
	<p>a) Council should consider alternatives in combination with the proposed SRV, including measures to reduce operational costs and further revenue streams; and</p> <p>b) If Council does determine to apply for the SRV, that a substantially lower increase be introduced (supported by reduced operational costs and further revenue streams) and over a single year rather than compounded over three years."</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <p>Council is committed to identifying \$1M per annum in savings or additional revenue sources to supplement the SV proposal. SV options were modelled at levels to achieve financial sustainability and the options presented at the 9 May 2023 Council Meeting achieved the required result.</p> <p>These options ranged from one to three years for the implementation of a SV. Any reduction in the SV percentage will require review of service levels in order to achieve additional savings required.</p> <p>Issue: "Chamber has received feedback from members proposing the following ways in which it could reduce operational costs and raise further operational revenue:</p> <p>a) Introducing renewable energy infrastructure, e.g. solar panels on government-owned buildings, carparks etc, solar-powered light-poles etc;</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <p>Council already has solar panels on some facilities. An energy audit has been conducted on the 5 largest sites for energy consumption. Council will consider in future budgets and grant funding opportunities will be explored, providing funding to install solar panels and associated infrastructure on these facilities. This would require significant upfront capital investment which would need to be funded from unrestricted cash reserves.</p> <p>Issue:</p> <p>b) Increasing rent for leases and licences of Crown land to commercial rates (if possible);</p> <p>c) Increasing rent for leases and licences for Council-owned land to commercial rates, considering more commercial uses of such land, and the sale of land which is not required for current or future Council services;</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents
	<p>Council Response to (b) and (c):</p> <p>Council increases lease and licence fees on an annual basis in accordance with the lease and licence agreements. Future leases or renewal of current leases will be examined closely to ensure the revenue return to Council is in line with commercial rates where appropriate.</p> <p>Issue: d) Harnessing Council's skilled workforce to provide services to other councils on a fee-for-service basis, including civil, plumbing and electrical services;</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <p>Council currently provides services support to other local government areas eg Environmental Health Officers services. Most industry sectors including local government are experiencing severe skills shortages, consequently Griffith City Council's capacity to outsource services on a fee for service basis is limited. In some cases, Council has engaged contractors to undertake service provision as it has been unable to recruit staff.</p> <p>Issue: e) Introducing paid parking for the Griffith City Airport.</p> <p>Council Response:</p> <p>Council is currently investigating technology solutions to introduce paid parking at Griffith City Airport.</p> <p>It is anticipated that additional revenue will be generated by introducing paid parking, however in initial years, this additional revenue will be offset by the capital cost of implementation.</p>	

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.

Additional Information including engagement principles, examples of materials utilised, timing and such is presented in the attached SRV Community Engagement Plan and SRV Community Engagement Summary documents.

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.

Additional Information is presented in the attached SRV Community Engagement Plan and SRV Community Engagement Summary documents.

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
1.	SRV Community Engagement Plan	
2.	SRV Community Engagement Summary	
3.	Submissions Received	
4.	Council Report & Minutes 24 October 2023	
5.	Council Report & Minutes 9 May 2023	

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.

Council ensured that the impact of any rate rises upon the community were clearly communicated.

- During consultation on the Draft Delivery Program/Operational Plan FY2023/24 and Long Term Financial Plan FY2023/24 consultation materials provided information about the proposed SV including Council Report, draft IP&R documents, online budget presentation. The Council report included examples of the estimated increase in general rates for typical properties in the Griffith LGA in the Residential, Business and Farmland categories.
- Council developed an online Rates Estimator which allowed ratepayers to enter their assessment number to see the impact of the proposed SV on Ordinary Rates for their property.
- The following tables summarise the estimated increase in general rates for typical properties in the Griffith LGA using the recommended option (Scenario 3).
- Note: the FY2023/24 Ordinary Rates estimates are based on land values as determined by the NSW Valuer General as at 2022. Ordinary rates are subject to IPART rate pegging limits which have been based on 3.70% for FY2023/24 and assumed to be 3.00% for FY2024/25 and onwards.

Residential Comparison

RESIDENTIAL		777 sqm		Erskine Road GRIFFITH NSW 2680					
SRV Option 3 - 10.5% increase for 3 years starting in FY2024-25									
Levy Details	2022-2023	2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-2026		2026-2027	
	Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2022 Land Values)	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year
Ordinary Rates	\$ 833	\$ 905	\$ 72	\$ 1,000	\$ 95	\$ 1,105	\$ 105	\$ 1,221	\$ 116
Domestic Waste	\$ 341	\$ 376	\$ 35	\$ 387	\$ 11	\$ 399	\$ 12	\$ 411	\$ 12
Domestic Recycling	\$ 112	\$ 124	\$ 12	\$ 128	\$ 4	\$ 132	\$ 4	\$ 135	\$ 4
Storm Water Levy	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -
Total Rates	\$ 1,311	\$ 1,430	\$ 119	\$ 1,540	\$ 110	\$ 1,660	\$ 120	\$ 1,792	\$ 132

RESIDENTIAL		828 sqm		Ortella Street GRIFFITH NSW 2680					
SRV Option 3 - 10.5% increase for 3 years starting in FY2024-25									
Levy Details	2022-2023	2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-2026		2026-2027	
	Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2022 Land Values)	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year
Ordinary Rates	\$ 1,348	\$ 1,389	\$ 41	\$ 1,535	\$ 146	\$ 1,696	\$ 161	\$ 1,874	\$ 178
Domestic Waste	\$ 341	\$ 376	\$ 35	\$ 387	\$ 11	\$ 399	\$ 12	\$ 411	\$ 12
Domestic Recycling	\$ 112	\$ 124	\$ 12	\$ 128	\$ 4	\$ 132	\$ 4	\$ 135	\$ 4
Storm Water Levy	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -
Total Rates	\$ 1,826	\$ 1,914	\$ 88	\$ 2,075	\$ 161	\$ 2,251	\$ 177	\$ 2,445	\$ 194

RESIDENTIAL		4,589 sqm		Zappacosta Crescent, YOOGALI NSW 2680					
SRV Option 3 - 10.5% increase for 3 years starting in FY2024-25									
Levy Details	2022-2023	2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-2026		2026-2027	
	Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2022 Land Values)	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year
Ordinary Rates	\$ 1,881	\$ 1,888	\$ 7	\$ 2,086	\$ 198	\$ 2,305	\$ 219	\$ 2,547	\$ 242
Domestic Waste	\$ 341	\$ 376	\$ 35	\$ 387	\$ 11	\$ 399	\$ 12	\$ 411	\$ 12
Domestic Recycling	\$ 112	\$ 124	\$ 12	\$ 128	\$ 4	\$ 132	\$ 4	\$ 135	\$ 4
Storm Water Levy	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -
Total Rates	\$ 2,359	\$ 2,413	\$ 54	\$ 2,626	\$ 213	\$ 2,861	\$ 235	\$ 3,119	\$ 258

RESIDENTIAL		1,097 sqm		Leaver Street, YENDA NSW 2681					
SRV Option 3 - 10.5% increase for 3 years starting in FY2024-25									
Levy Details	2022-2023	2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-2026		2026-2027	
	Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2022 Land Values)	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year
Ordinary Rates	\$ 731	\$ 727	\$ 4	\$ 803	\$ 76	\$ 888	\$ 84	\$ 981	\$ 93
Domestic Waste	\$ 341	\$ 376	\$ 35	\$ 387	\$ 11	\$ 399	\$ 12	\$ 411	\$ 12
Domestic Recycling	\$ 112	\$ 124	\$ 12	\$ 128	\$ 4	\$ 132	\$ 4	\$ 135	\$ 4
Storm Water Levy	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -
Total Rates	\$ 1,209	\$ 1,252	\$ 43	\$ 1,343	\$ 91	\$ 1,443	\$ 100	\$ 1,552	\$ 109

Business Comparison

BUSINESS		784 sqm	Yambill Street, GRIFFITH NSW 2680						
SRV Option 3 - 10.5% Increase for 3 years starting in FY2024-25									
Levy Details	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027				
	Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2022 Land Values)	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year
Ordinary Rates	\$ 2,599	\$ 2,367	-\$ 232	\$ 2,616	\$ 249	\$ 2,890	\$ 275	\$ 3,194	\$ 303
Waste Management - 240L	\$ 553	\$ 609	\$ 56	\$ 627	\$ 18	\$ 646	\$ 19	\$ 665	\$ 19
Commercial Capital Loan	\$ 31	\$ 35	\$ 4	\$ 36	\$ 1	\$ 37	\$ 1	\$ 38	\$ 1
Storm Water Levy	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -
Total Rates	\$ 3,208	\$ 3,036	-\$ 172	\$ 3,304	\$ 268	\$ 3,598	\$ 295	\$ 3,922	\$ 324

BUSINESS		1,833 sqm	Hams Street, GRIFFITH NSW 2680						
SRV Option 3 - 10.5% Increase for 3 years starting in FY2024-25									
Levy Details	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027				
	Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2022 Land Values)	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year
Ordinary Rates	\$ 1,678	\$ 1,954	\$ 276	\$ 2,159	\$ 205	\$ 2,386	\$ 227	\$ 2,636	\$ 251
Waste Management - 660L	\$ 1,454	\$ 1,600	\$ 146	\$ 1,648	\$ 48	\$ 1,697	\$ 49	\$ 1,748	\$ 51
Commercial Capital Loan	\$ 31	\$ 35	\$ 4	\$ 36	\$ 1	\$ 37	\$ 1	\$ 38	\$ 1
Storm Water Levy	\$ 25	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -	\$ 25	\$ -
Total Rates	\$ 3,188	\$ 3,614	\$ 426	\$ 3,868	\$ 254	\$ 4,145	\$ 277	\$ 4,448	\$ 303

Farmland Comparison

FARMLAND IRRIGABLE		21 ha	Thompson Road, HANWOOD NSW 2680						
SRV Option 3 - 10.5% increase for 3 years starting in FY2024-25									
Levy Details	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027				
	Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2022 Land Values)	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year
Ordinary Rates	\$ 2,515	\$ 2,580	\$ 65	\$ 2,851	\$ 271	\$ 3,150	\$ 299	\$ 3,481	\$ 331
Total Rates	\$ 2,515	\$ 2,580	\$ 65	\$ 2,851	\$ 271	\$ 3,150	\$ 299	\$ 3,481	\$ 331

FARMLAND		214 ha	McCann Road WARBURN NSW 2680						
SRV Option 3 - 10.5% increase for 3 years starting in FY2024-25									
Levy Details	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027				
	Current Rates (Based on 2019 Land Values)	3.7% Rate Peg (Based on 2022 Land Values)	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year	10.5% Inc 3% Rate Peg	Increase from Previous Year
Ordinary Rates	\$ 2,449	\$ 2,485	\$ 36	\$ 2,746	\$ 261	\$ 3,034	\$ 288	\$ 3,353	\$ 319
Total Rates	\$ 2,449	\$ 2,485	\$ 36	\$ 2,746	\$ 261	\$ 3,034	\$ 288	\$ 3,353	\$ 319

- Presentations by the General Manager and Mayor were made to ten community organisations. The presentations included slides showing the impact of rate rises on average rates by category.
- Seven community information sessions were held. These included two Community Opinion Group Meetings and five Council Café sessions held at various locations and times across the City and villages.
- An online presentation by the General Manager explaining the process, demonstrating the impact of the proposed rate rise on ratepayers and encouraging participation, was available on Council's website and Council's Facebook page.

- Council mailed out over 10,000 flyers to all ratepayers with the Rates Notices, informing them of the proposed SV including options, how the SRV rate rise would affect ratepayers, proposed average rates increases and timeline, as well as encouraging community participation and feedback.
- Emails were sent to 2,159 community members to advise of community information sessions, provide information about the proposed SV including examples of proposed average rate increase and to encourage participation in the engagement process.
- Media releases and advertisements were distributed to local media outlets, placed in Council's Catch Up newsletter, placed on the website and social media providing information about the proposed SV.
- Council's newsletter, Council Catch Up, printed and distributed to over 20 locations in Griffith and outlying villages. Regular advertisements and articles were featured in the Council Catch Up.
- Website – information was provided on Council's website including the proposed average rates for Residential, Business and Farmland from FY2023/24 to FY2026/27, with an SRV of 10.50%.

Website information included the following:

How much will rates change?

Average Rates - Residential				
	2023/24 3.7% Rate Peg	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
With SRV 10.5% includes assumed 3% Rate Peg	\$1,106	\$1,222	\$1,350	\$1,492
No SRV assumed 3% Rate Peg	\$1,106	\$1,139	\$1,173	\$1,209

Average Rates - Business				
	2023/24 3.7% Rate Peg	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
With SRV 10.5% includes assumed 3% Rate Peg	\$2,968	\$3,280	\$3,624	\$4,005
No SRV assumed 3% Rate Peg	\$2,968	\$3,057	\$3,149	\$3,243

Average Rates - Farmland				
	2023/24 3.7% Rate Peg	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
With SRV 10.5% includes assumed 3% Rate Peg	\$4,184	\$4,623	\$5,109	\$5,645
No SRV assumed 3% Rate Peg	\$4,184	\$4,310	\$4,439	\$4,572

Based on Office of Local Government Performance comparative data FY2020/21 - average Griffith

Council also developed a Rates Estimator so that ratepayers could assess the impact of the SV on their properties:

Special Rate Variation Estimator here Ratepayers are encouraged to assess the impact of the SRV on their respective properties by using this estimator.

Council's Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan also provided information to the community regarding the proposed SV including why a SV is required, details about the proposed SV including percentage increases, cumulative increase and the fact that the increase would be retained permanently in Council's 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.

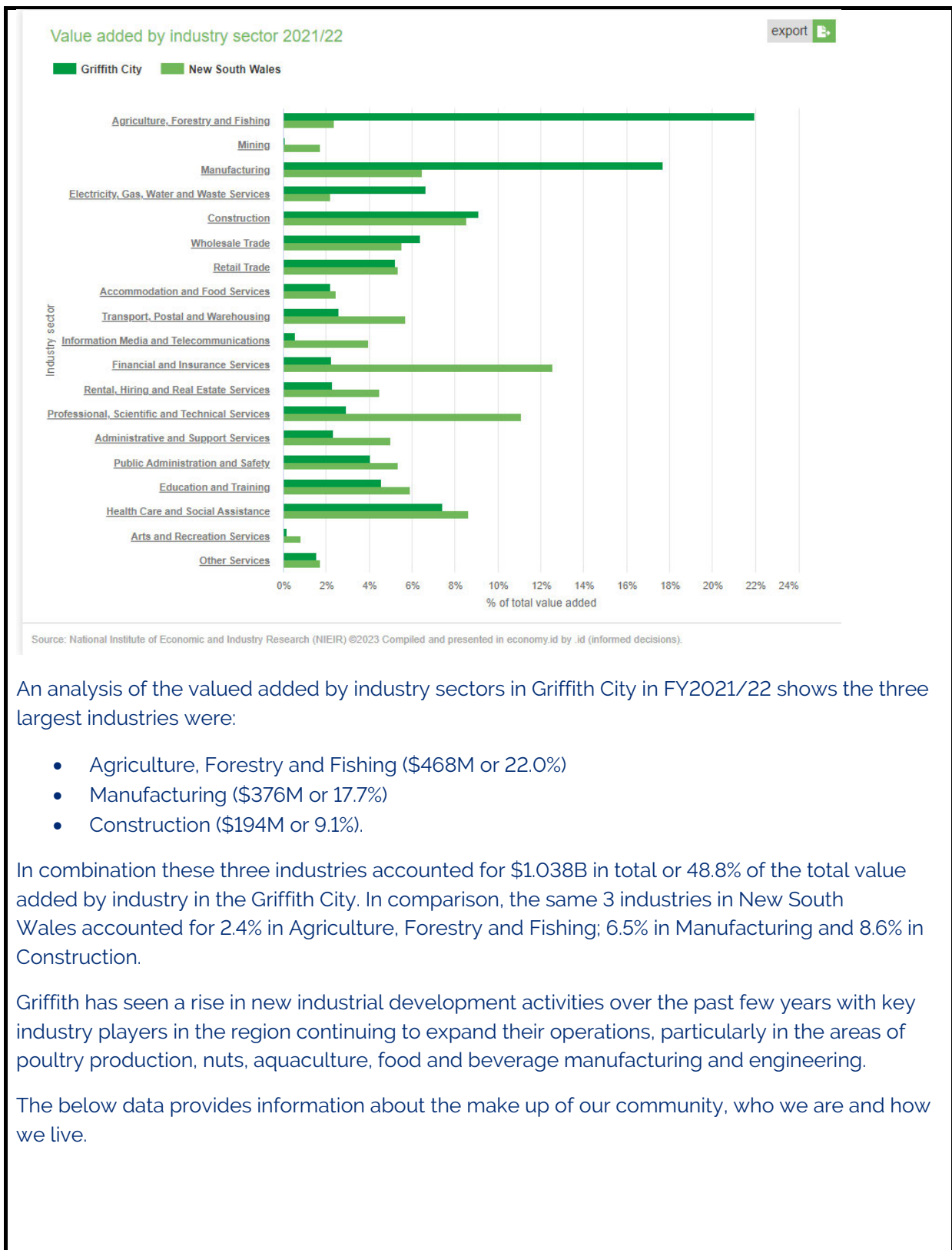
In assessing the impact and affordability of the proposed special variation as well as the community's capacity and willingness to pay, Council considered demographic data sourced from [id community](#), the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) data for the Griffith LGA ([Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021](#)) (ABS) as well as comparative council data available on the OLG website.

The local government area of Griffith City Council is a regional city in the Western Riverina. The Griffith LGA has an estimated resident population of 27,014.

Griffith's key strengths are access to water and a thriving agricultural and manufacturing industry. Griffith was identified as one of Australia's Top Ten Affordable Areas by PRD Chief Economist, Dr Diaswait Mariasmo and is the location of choice for the headquarter to some of Australia's most innovative and sustainable industry leaders.

Griffith leads the way in agricultural innovation and value-adding and is leveraging advanced and automated technologies to maximise agribusiness diversification. Griffith's thriving agricultural industry, advanced agritech solutions, freight network, access to the export market and water provide advantages in setting up additional value-adding manufacturing businesses.

As can be seen in the table below, the primary industry is agriculture and the gross regional product (GRP) for the area was \$2,127 Billion in FY2021/22.



An analysis of the valued added by industry sectors in Griffith City in FY2021/22 shows the three largest industries were:

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (\$468M or 22.0%)
- Manufacturing (\$376M or 17.7%)
- Construction (\$194M or 9.1%).

In combination these three industries accounted for \$1.038B in total or 48.8% of the total value added by industry in the Griffith City. In comparison, the same 3 industries in New South Wales accounted for 2.4% in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; 6.5% in Manufacturing and 8.6% in Construction.

Griffith has seen a rise in new industrial development activities over the past few years with key industry players in the region continuing to expand their operations, particularly in the areas of poultry production, nuts, aquaculture, food and beverage manufacturing and engineering.

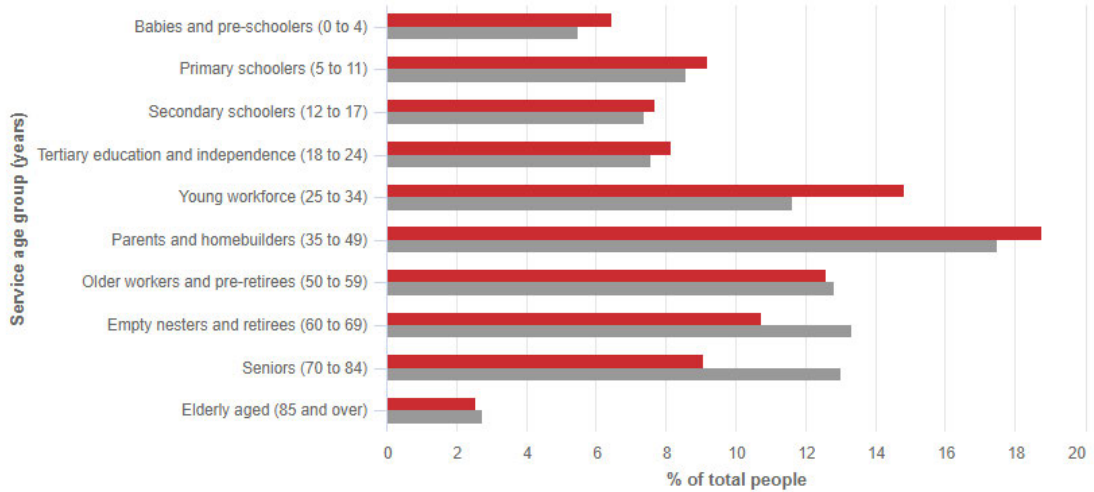
The below data provides information about the make up of our community, who we are and how we live.

Age structure - service age groups, 2021

export

Total persons

Griffith City Regional NSW



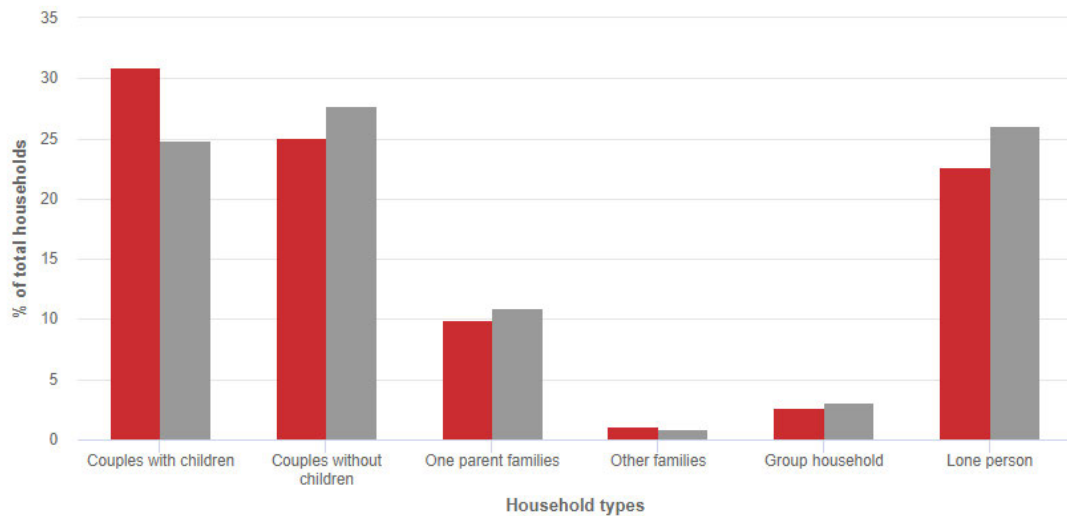
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2021 (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by id (informed decisions).

Analysis of the service age groups of Griffith City in 2021 compared to Regional NSW shows that there was a higher proportion of people in younger age groups (0 to 17 years) and a lower proportion of people in older age groups (60+ years). Overall, 23.3% of the population was aged between 0 and 17, and 22.4% were aged 60 years and over, compared with 21.4% and 29.1% respectively for Regional NSW. The median age for the Griffith LGA is 37.

Household type, 2021

export

Griffith City Regional NSW

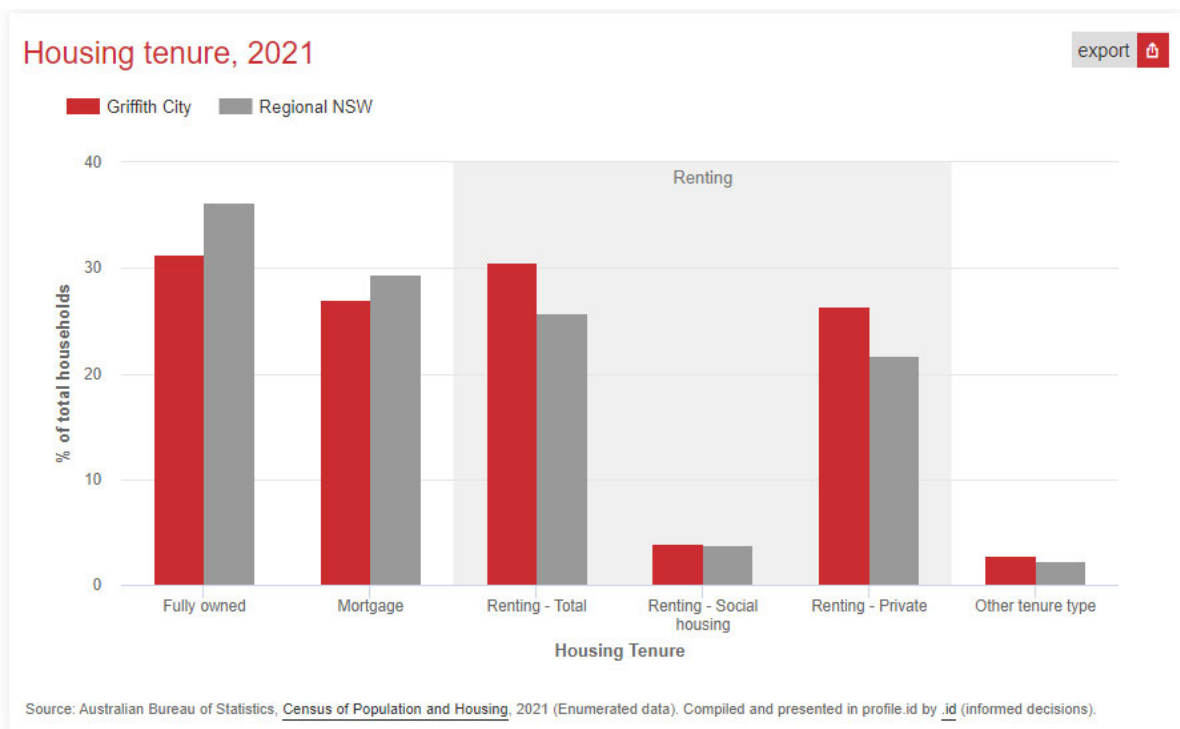


Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2021 (Enumerated data). Compiled and presented in profile.id by id (informed decisions).

Analysis of the household/family types in Griffith City in 2021 compared to Regional NSW shows that there was a higher proportion of couple families with child(ren) as well as a lower proportion of one-parent families.

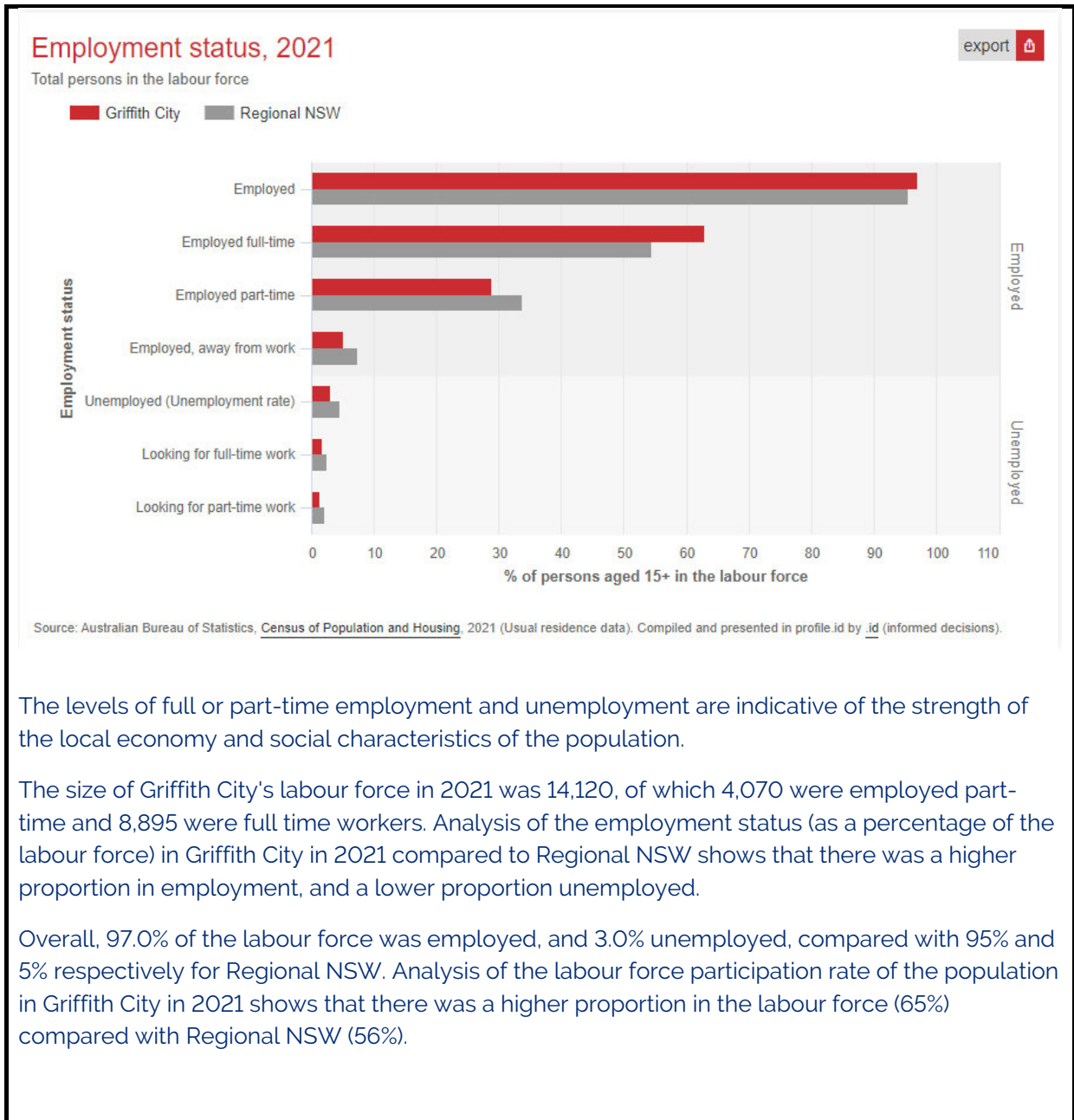
Overall, 30.9% of total families were couple families with child(ren), and 9.9% were one-parent families, compared with 24.8% and 10.9% respectively for Regional NSW. There were a lower proportion of lone person households and a lower proportion of couples without children.

Overall, the proportion of lone person households was 22.7% compared to 26.1% in Regional NSW while the proportion of couples without children was 25.1% compared to 27.7% in Regional NSW.



Analysis of the housing tenure of households of Griffith City in 2021 compared to Regional NSW shows that there was a smaller proportion of households who owned their dwelling; a smaller proportion purchasing their dwelling; and a larger proportion who were renters.

Overall, 31.3% of households owned their dwelling; 27.0% were purchasing, and 30.5% were renting, compared with 36.3%, 29.4% and 25.7% respectively for Regional NSW.

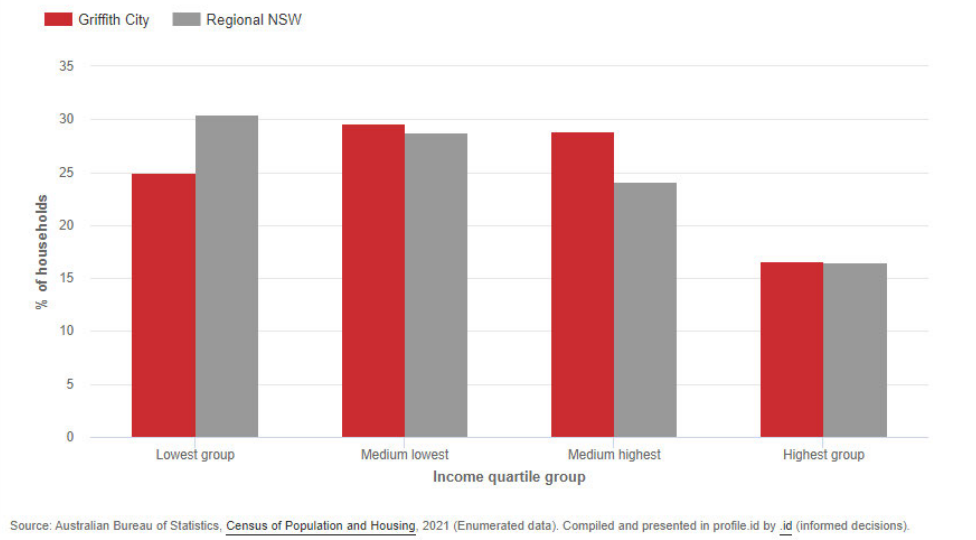


The levels of full or part-time employment and unemployment are indicative of the strength of the local economy and social characteristics of the population.

The size of Griffith City's labour force in 2021 was 14,120, of which 4,070 were employed part-time and 8,895 were full time workers. Analysis of the employment status (as a percentage of the labour force) in Griffith City in 2021 compared to Regional NSW shows that there was a higher proportion in employment, and a lower proportion unemployed.

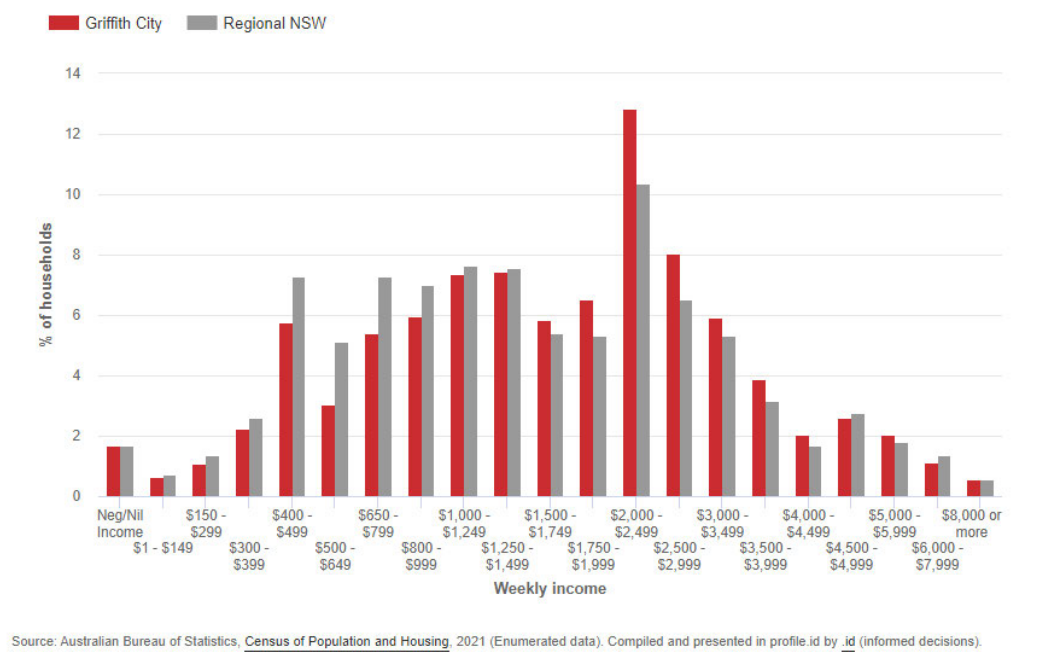
Overall, 97.0% of the labour force was employed, and 3.0% unemployed, compared with 95% and 5% respectively for Regional NSW. Analysis of the labour force participation rate of the population in Griffith City in 2021 shows that there was a higher proportion in the labour force (65%) compared with Regional NSW (56%).

Equivalent household income quartiles, 2021



Equivalent income quartiles allow us to compare relative income-earning capabilities across time. Because the data is equivalised, households of different size and composition are placed on an equal footing. Analysis of the distribution of households by income quartile in Griffith City compared to Regional NSW shows that there was a similar proportion of households in the highest equivalised income quartile, and a lesser proportion in the lowest equivalised income quartile.

Weekly household income, 2021

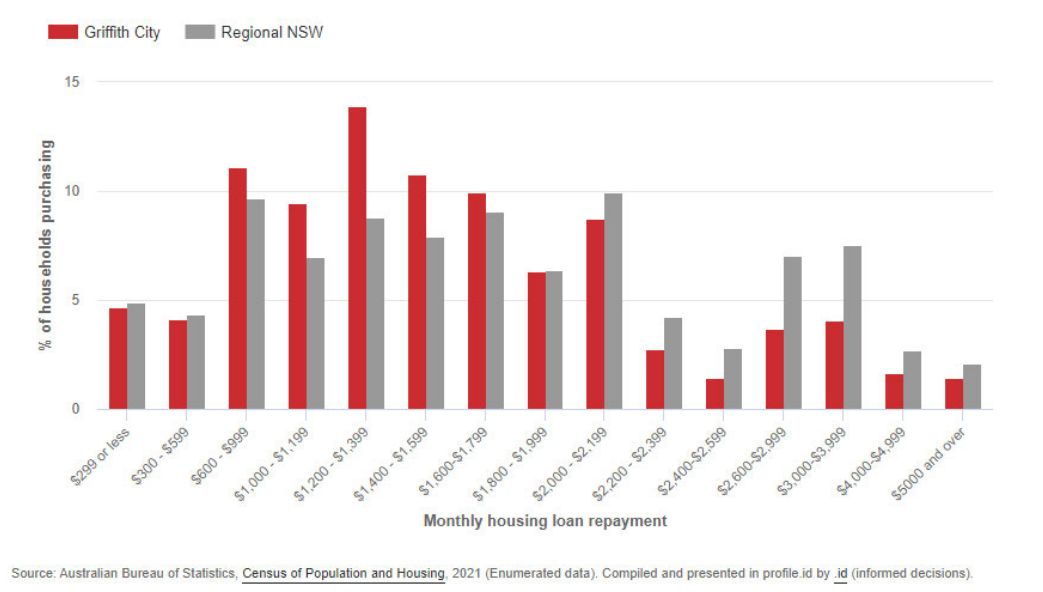


Analysis of household income levels in Griffith City in 2021 compared to Regional NSW shows that there was a larger proportion of high income households (those earning \$3,000 per week or more) and a lower proportion of low income households (those earning less than \$800 per week).

Overall, 18.2% of the households earned a high income and 19.8% were low income households, compared with 16.7% and 26.0% respectively for Regional NSW.

Median weekly household income is \$1,715, compared to \$1,466 in Regional NSW.

Monthly housing loan repayments, 2021



Analysis of the monthly housing loan repayments of households in Griffith City compared to Regional NSW shows that there was a smaller proportion of households paying high mortgage repayments (\$2,600 per month or more), and a larger proportion of households with low mortgage repayments (less than \$1,200 per month). Overall, 10.8% of households were paying high mortgage repayments, and 29.4% were paying low repayments, compared with 19.4% and 25.8% respectively in Regional NSW.

The median weekly mortgage repayment is \$339, the same as for Regional NSW. 27% of households have a mortgage. Median weekly rent is \$295, compared to \$330 for Regional NSW.

The above statistical data suggests that overall, the Griffith City Council local government area has a strong, diverse economy and the social characteristics of the population demonstrate capacity to pay.

The **Socio-Economic Index for Areas** (SEIFA) is an economic tool developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to rank areas in Australia according to their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage based on a range of Census characteristics. The primary variables used in determining the index include; income, education, employment, occupation, housing and other miscellaneous factors. It serves as a strong comparative tool to determine our community's relative wealth and capacity to pay.

The SEIFA Index of Disadvantage (IRSD) index contains only disadvantage indicators (e.g. unemployment, low incomes or education levels, single parent families, low skilled occupations, poor English proficiency). This index highlights the areas of most need with a low score indicating relatively greater disadvantage.

The SEIFA Index of Disadvantage (IRSD) for Griffith City Council in 2021 was 974 (5th Decile). The value of 974 and being in the 5th decile suggest that Griffith City Council falls in the middle range of disadvantage among areas in Australia. The deciles range from 1 to 10, with 1 being the most disadvantaged and 10 being the least disadvantaged.

The SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) index contains indicators of disadvantage as well as additional indicators of advantage (e.g. professional occupations, high income, higher education levels, high rent, large dwellings). A high score indicates a relative lack of disadvantage and greater advantage in general. A low score indicates relatively greater disadvantage and a lack of advantage in general.)

The SEIFA Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) for Griffith City Council in 2021 was 950 (5th Decile). This means that Griffith City Council falls in the middle range of socio-economic advantage and disadvantage among areas in Australia, as the deciles range from 1 to 10, with 1 being the most disadvantaged and 10 being the least disadvantaged.

Griffith City Council's SEIFA IRSAD quintile is 3 with 1 being the most disadvantaged and 5 being most advantaged.

The above data shows that the Griffith LGA sits within the midway point in respect to socio-economic disadvantage and or advantage in comparison to other councils. Relative to the other similar councils, Griffith City Council has greater levels of wealth and socio-economic advantage within the community and as such has a greater capacity to pay for an increase in rates. However, Griffith along with other regional centres of Wagga Wagga and Albury have a wide range of scores indicating pockets of high to relatively low levels of disadvantage in each area.

Council considered the Office of Local Government (OLG) comparative data for 2021/22 in order to analyse other factors that demonstrate the community's willingness and capacity to pay.

Council's SV proposal (based on the Average Residential Rates) would result in an increase in ordinary rates by \$116 per year from 2023/24 to 2024/25, an increase of \$128 from 2024/25 to 2025/26 and \$142 from 2025/26 to 2026/27.

At the completion of the SV implementation, the average residential ratepayer would pay an additional \$386 in ordinary rates . This amounts to approximately \$96.50 per quarter .

Alongside our ratepayers' capacity to pay it is also important to gauge the community's willingness to pay for its current levels of services. Griffith City Council facilitated community workshops and meetings to inform the community about its current unsustainable financial position and the need to rectify this with a number of initiatives including a SV.

Council conducted community consultation in May 2023 in relation to the draft budget (Delivery Program/Operational Plan and Long Term Financial Plan). The community were informed about the need to address Council's declining General Fund with a proposed SV as well as implementation of cost saving initiatives.

This initial 'budget' consultation period was followed by a more targeted consultation process on the impact of a SV.

Analysis of the responses received showed that only 157 formal submissions were received in total. This equates to less than 1% of ratepayers lodging a submission.

Of the 157 submissions, 69% of respondents were not in favour of a rate rise and 31% did not oppose the proposal. This demonstrates that the community has willingness and capacity to pay.

In considering the community's willingness to pay, Council also noted the percentage of overdue rate assessments as at 30 June 2023 being 279 assessments out of 11,434. This equates to approximately 2% of all rate assessments and is consistent with previous years. Council actively manages overdue assessments and in general ratepayers are co-operative to entering payment arrangements.

As at 30 June 2023 Council had approximately 38 accounts that have legal action outstanding and 64 on payment plan arrangements. Most of Council's outstanding accounts are actively able to pay and are working with Council to arrange suitable payment plans.

Council considered the community's willingness and capacity to pay when proposing options for a special variation. The draft Delivery Program / Operational Plan and Long Term Financial Plan documents were presented to Council on 9 May 2023. At this time, Council determined to consult the community on a proposed SV consisting of three increases of 10.50% over 3 years (inclusive of the rate pegging increase assumed at 3.00%).

It was determined this proposal would cause the least amount of financial impact to ratepayers compared to the other proposed scenarios as it was staged over a three year period.

The cost of living is another key consideration in the community's capacity to pay for an SV. These factors include inflation, household stress, electrical, gas and petroleum prices. Whilst Council does not have any influence over these factors, a number of strategies are in place to offer assistance to ratepayers under financial hardship.

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held 24 October 2023, Council resolved the following initiatives to assist ratepayers:

- Financial Hardship Policy to be reviewed to ensure adequate assistance is provided to ratepayers experiencing genuine financial hardship.
- Council capped increases to Water and Sewer charges by the assumed 3% annual rate peg for the 3 year implementation of the SV.

- Council increased Pensioner Rebates on Ordinary rates for the 3 year implementation of the SV. At the completion of the SV implementation the Pensioner Concession Rebate will revert back the level prior to SV.

	Additional Pensioner Rebate per Assessment	Additional Annual Cost to Council
Year 1	\$100	\$123,700
Year 2	\$75	\$92,775
Year 3	\$50	\$61,850
	Total	\$278,325

- Note that, as at 1 July 2023, Council currently provides rebates to 1,157 assessments out of 11,434 total assessments.

The proposed SV was carefully assessed in terms of its impact and affordability, taking into account demographic data, socio-economic indexes, and comparative Council data. Overall, the data suggests that the Griffith community has the capacity and willingness to absorb the proposed SV, considering various economic indicators and the Council's efforts to address financial challenges.

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.

Measures to reduce the impact of the proposed SV are outlined in section 5.2 and include the following:

- Financial Hardship Policy to be reviewed to ensure adequate assistance is provided to ratepayers experiencing genuine financial hardship.
- Council capped increases to Water and Sewer charges by the assumed 3% annual rate peg for the 3 year implementation of the SV.
- Council increased Pensioner Rebates on Ordinary rates for the 3 year implementation of the SV. At the completion of the SV implementation the Pensioner Concession Rebate will revert back the level prior to SV.

	Additional Pensioner Rebate per Assessment	Additional Annual Cost to Council
Year 1	\$100	\$123,700
Year 2	\$75	\$92,775
Year 3	\$50	\$61,850
	Total	\$278,325

- Note that as at 1 July 2023 Council currently provides rebates to 1,157 assessments out of approximately 11,434 total assessments.

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's Hardship Policy](#) is available on Council's website and referenced in Council's Delivery Program/Operational Plan 2023/24 pages 129-130.

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

Council's Financial Hardship Policy is available on Council's website and referenced in Council's Delivery Program/Operational Plan 2023/24 document.

Once review of the Financial Hardship Policy has been completed, Council will advertise the provisions of the policy to members of the public. Members of the public will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft policy while it is on public exhibition.

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.

Council resolved to cap increases to Water and Sewer charges by the assumed 3% annual rate peg for the 3 year implementation of the SV.

Additional to the initiatives described above, Council offers a range of payment methods for rates to assist ratepayers pay on time. Ratepayers have the option to make payments via direct debit, mail, Bpay, telephone, online and in person at any Australia Post outlet or Council's administration building. They can be paid fortnightly, quarterly or annually. Council accepts flexible repayment arrangements including fortnightly direct debits.

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	11 February 2022 to 9 March 2022	Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Council - Tuesday, 8 February 2022 (nsw.gov.au)	22 March 2022	Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Council - Tuesday, 22 March 2022 (nsw.gov.au)	Council's IP&R documents can be located on Council's website: Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework Griffith City Council (nsw.gov.au) https://www.griffith.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-UDC-86-70-52
Delivery Program	12 May 2023 to 9 June 2023	Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Council - Tuesday, 9 May 2023 (nsw.gov.au)	27 June 2023	Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Council - Tuesday, 27 June 2023 (nsw.gov.au)	Final Adopted Delivery Program 2022-26 and Operational Plan 2023-24.pdf (nsw.gov.au)
Long Term Financial Plan	12 May 2023 to 9 June 2023	Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Council - Tuesday, 9 May 2023 (nsw.gov.au)	27 June 2023	Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Council - Tuesday, 27 June 2023 (nsw.gov.au)	final_adopted_long_term_financial_plan_annual_review_2023_24_1 (2).pdf

Asset Management Plan (which contain long-term projections of asset maintenance, rehabilitation and replace, including forecast costs).	13 May 2022 to 10 June 2022	Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Council - Tuesday, 10 May 2022 (nsw.gov.au)	28 June 2022	Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of Council - Tuesday, 28 June 2022 (nsw.gov.au)	june_2022_asset_management_strategy_and_plans_2022_2032_reduced(4).pdf
Annual Report 2022/23	Not required	Not required	27 June 2023	Minutes Ordinary Meeting of Council Tuesday, 27 June 2023	https://www.griffith.nsw.gov.au/page.asp?f=RES-BQJ-18-03-74

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.

Griffith City Council has identified several strategic areas to be examined for opportunities to improve productivity in its operations and asset management and in particular drive down Council's operating cost base.

These are identified below:

Senior Management Team, Departmental Managers, Staff & Councillors

Identification of improved productivity measures, cost savings and alternative revenue streams. Senior Management Team meet on a weekly basis to consider and implement cost efficiency and productivity strategies and initiatives.

Internal Audit Program

Council has undertaken an internal audit program since 2009. The Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee will adopt and implement a new four year Strategic Plan commencing in FY2024/25. The purpose of the internal audit program is to examine key risk organisational risks, highlight opportunities for productivity improvements and increased efficiencies in Council functional areas.

Service Reviews

Council has in the past undertaken a series of service reviews in a number of key areas including road services, customer service, tourism and economic development and best value reviews. Council is implementing a service review program in accordance with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines. The scheduled service reviews will assist Council in relation to asset management, as well as improving productivity in its operations.

Local Government Performance Excellence Program

Between 2016 to 2021, Council participated in the Local Government Performance Excellence Program in which participating councils submit annual data extracts and respond to various questions. Councils then receive findings, trends and meaningful comparisons that focus on operational and management excellence. Over the six years that Griffith City Council participated in this program, customised insights reports were provided comparing business performance to that of other participating councils. The report provided information including workforce trends, finance, operations and service delivery.

Organisation Restructure

During 2012 Council undertook a restructure of the organisation resulting in a net reduction of 20 staff. The annual saving to Council's budget was \$2M. Along with a net reduction in staff, Council also reallocated some functional responsibilities between Directorates to improve balance of workloads. A review of all services within the organisation was done at this time to identify opportunities for operational cost savings.

Human Resource Strategies

Council has implemented various human resource strategies to improve efficiencies and productivity and is continuing to investigate these areas. Some initiatives that have been implemented include:

- An improved Work Safe culture which has resulted in reduced lost time injuries, reduced average cost of claims, reduced workers compensation insurance premiums and improved staff morale & productivity.
- Enacting Award provisions to utilise excess leave held by employees.
- Improving management of Overtime costs and work scheduling
- Electronic capture of employee work cycle
- Review of staff vacancies
- Implementation and review software programs and subscriptions.

LG Procurement

Council utilises Local Government Procurement's contracts and other digital platforms for tenders and contract management to seek the most competitive pricing for the supply of major goods and services.

Riverina & Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO)

At a strategic level, Council is a member of Riverina & Murray Joint Organisation which brings together 11 regional councils. The aim of RAMJO is to build stronger councils and to improve service delivery and infrastructure in key priority areas such as water security, energy, transport, digital connectivity, waste management and health in a cost effective manner.

Other Strategic Partnerships

Council is also a member of the Regional Capitals Australia group which advocates for regional capital cities in Federal policy. Council has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with Regional Cities NSW to guide strategic partnerships between Government and regional councils.

Consultancy Services

Council is taking steps to rationalise our reliance on consultancy services and developing its own workforce to perform required functions.

Rationalisation of property assets

Over the past decade Council has reviewed its property assets and identified land which was surplus to Council's needs and not part of Council's strategic planning documents.

Asset Management

Council's Asset Management Plan outlines the management strategies for infrastructure and other assets covering the lifecycle of assets, from acquisition to disposal. Using asset management data analytics and technology to make informed decisions significantly improves productivity. This includes monitoring and analysing asset performance, predicting maintenance needs, and optimising resource allocation.

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 continually monitors its financial position to ensure that services are delivered for the community in accordance with the Community Strategic Plan and the Delivery Program/Operational Plan. Senior management have worked diligently to ensure the finances are managed appropriately and that best use of public funds are always at front of mind.

Organisation Restructure – Reduction of FTE

During 2012 Council undertook a major restructure of the organisation resulting in a net reduction of 20 staff. Along with a net reduction in staff, Council also reallocated some functional responsibilities between Directorates to improve balance of workloads. A review of all services within the organisation was done at this time to identify opportunities for operational cost savings.

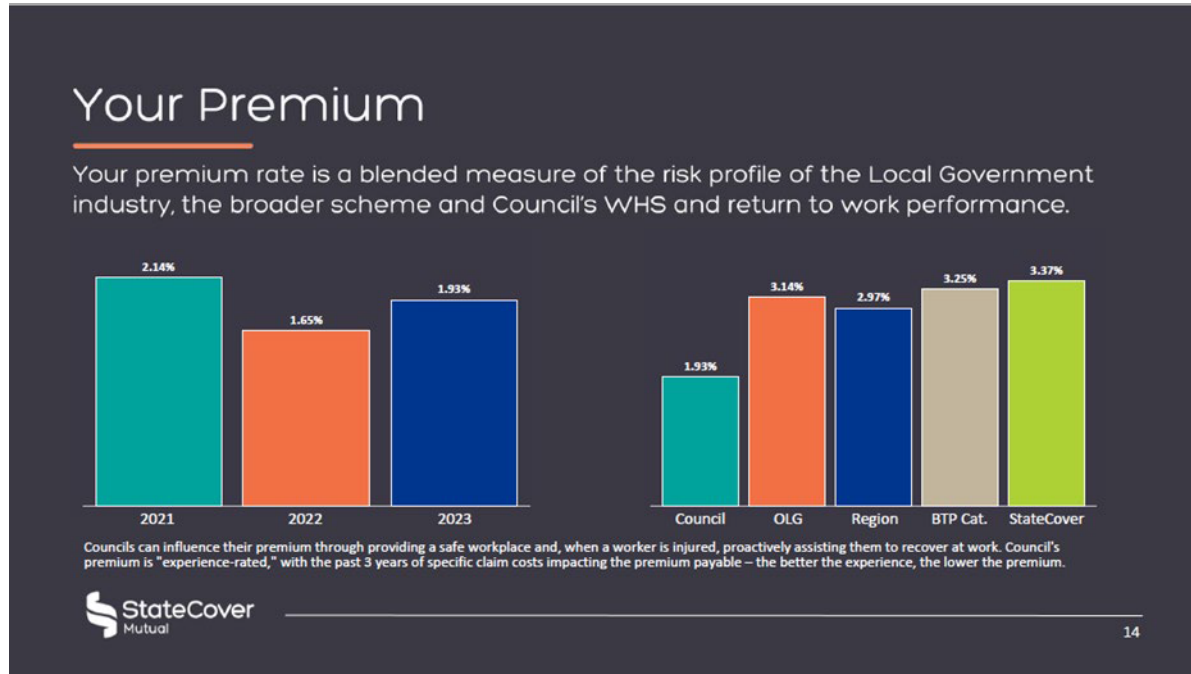
Work Safe Culture

Council has successfully implemented its 'Recover at Work' strategy which has resulted in decreased claim costs and insurance premiums. Council's Workers Compensation Annual Insurance Premiums have decreased with the additional resources utilised to subsidise the provision of services to the community as well as part reinvestment in further reinforcing a work safe culture.

The below image provided by StateCover Mutual highlights Council's low average claim cost compared to other entities. This is largely due to the successful implementation of Council's Recover at Work program.



The below image provided by StateCover Mutual highlights Council's low insurance premium compared to other entities. This has been achieved as a result of providing a safe workplace and proactively assisting injured staff to recover at work.



Senior Management Team, Departmental Managers & Staff

Council's Senior Management Team meet on a weekly basis to review operational issues including productivity and cost containment strategies. Monthly meetings are held with Senior Management Team and Departmental Managers to discuss opportunities for increased efficiencies in Council operations.

Councillors

Workshops are regularly held with the elected body to review Council budgets, service levels and to discuss initiatives to reduce costs and increase revenue.

Internal Audit Program

The purpose of the internal audit program is to examine key risk organisational risks, highlight opportunities for productivity improvements and increased efficiencies in Council functional areas. Council has undertaken an internal audit program since 2009 with over 60 audits having been performed during this time.

A number of recommendations have been adopted as a result of internal audit reviews and implemented as resources have permitted.

Service Reviews

In addition to a rigorous internal audit program, Council has in the past undertaken service reviews including Customer Focus 2015, Roads Service Review in 2015, Tourism & Economic Development 2018 and Best Value Review in 2014.

In line with Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements, a number of service reviews have been identified and are scheduled to take place from 2023/24.

Alternative Revenue Streams

Examples of alternative revenue streams include:

- Temporary trading of the component of Council's annual water licence that is surplus to the community's need
- Airport Hire car parking
- Airport Counter rental charges.

Rationalisation of Property Assets

Council performed a review of its current land holdings and in recent years sold land that has not been identified for strategic use in the future. This initiative reduced holding costs and generated cash flow from the proceeds of sale.

Staff Overtime

Council management have reviewed the need for staff overtime and have directed that works be scheduled to ensure overtime is kept to a minimum.

Conferences & Seminars

Management have encouraged staff and Councillors to attend Conferences / Seminars by remote attendance where possible. Frequency of attendance at Conferences / Seminars has also been considered as well as relevance and need to attend.

Electronic Capture of Employee Work Cycle

Council has implemented 'Element Time', an intuitive online timesheet platform designed specifically for local government. This web-based software solution electronically captures all data related to fortnightly payroll preparation, approval of leave applications, and costing of works to functional areas. The implementation of Element Time has improved the accuracy and efficiency of data capture, improved reporting and overall productivity.

Recruitment and Training Software

The recent implementation of new Recruitment (EziJobs) and Training (LMS) software has improved productivity and cost efficiencies within the organisation, saving time and money.

Staff Vacancies

All positions that become vacant are closely examined by the Senior Management Team to determine the ongoing need for the role and if there are any alternative methods to complete the tasks in a more cost-effective manner, whilst maintaining current levels of services.

Energy Contracts and Consumption Audits

Council rolled over approximately 130 small site energy accounts to the NSW Government Small Site Contract on 1 December 2023.

Council is currently in the process of participating in a Joint Organisation of Council's procurement initiative for the large energy consumption sites. Savings are anticipated to be realised from FY2024/25.

An energy audit was conducted in early 2023 for the top 5 high consumption facilities. This report identified a number of initiatives to reduce energy consumption. Council will need to invest in capital to implement these savings.

Statewide Mutual and StateCover Insurance

Statewide Mutual Insurance and StateCover Insurance provide insurance and risk management services to Council. By pooling resources and sharing risks among other member councils, the benefits achieved by Council include cost savings, customised coverage and stable long-term planning.

Purchasing - LG Procurement

Council utilises Local Government Procurement's contracts and other digital platforms for tenders and contract management to seek the most competitive pricing for the supply of major goods and services.

Consultancy Services

Council is taking steps to rationalise our reliance on consultancy services.

Council is conscious of skill shortages in a range of professional and technical areas as is highlighted in the Workforce Management Plan. Council has a professional support budget to upskill existing employees in an endeavour to retain them in our organisation and hence reduce future reliance of outsourcing to contract labour.

Fixed Low Interest Rate Debt to Service Expansive Capital Investment Projects & Low Cost Loan Initiative

Council undertook a number of major capital works projects in recent years. During this period, Council exercised good financial management and foresight by entering into low fixed rate loans, with an expectation of rising interest rates. This has resulted in significant reductions in borrowing costs.

Council was successful in its application for the NSW Government Low Cost Loan initiative programs which funds 50% of the interest paid on borrowings relating to infrastructure that enable new housing supply.

Subscriptions, Licences and Telecommunications Contracts

Council has adopted more efficient information and communications technology for a range of activities.

IT subscriptions and licences have been reviewed to reduce the number of users / programs and therefore cost to Council. Council's telecommunications contracts have been reviewed and re-negotiated to ensure best value for money is being provided.

Strategic Partnerships

Council is a member of Riverina & Murray Joint Organisation which aims to improve service delivery and infrastructure in key priority areas such as water security, energy, transport, digital connectivity, waste management and health.

Council is also a member of the Regional Capitals Australia group which advocates for regional capital cities in Federal policy and has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with Regional Cities NSW to guide strategic partnerships between Government and regional councils.

Fees for Services – contracting to provide services to other councils

Council has provided paid services such as Environmental Health services, to other local government areas on a fee for service basis.

Bookable software

In 2023, Council implemented a new software system which allows improved management of Council venues, increasing utilisation and revenue to Council through hiring out of facilities.

Waste Collection Services

In 2018 Council called tenders for the provision of a garbage collection service for both domestic and recycling services following the conclusion of the kerbside recycling collection service contract. This initiative produced savings in the cost of both domestic and recycling collection services.

Griffith City Council is a member of the Riverina Waste Group along with Carrathool Shire Council, Hay Shire Council, Leeton Shire Council, Murrumbidgee Council and Narrandera Shire Council. The regional group of councils is auspiced by the Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO) and is funded primarily through the Environment Protection Authority. The Riverina Waste Group is tasked with identifying key projects and priorities for current future services, developing infrastructure and delivering educational programs, helping residents reduce waste, improve sustainability and save money.

Western Riverina Libraries (WRL)

Western Riverina Libraries is a collaboration between five local government areas to share resources and technical services to provide library services which are current, efficient and valued. This regional library service provides five branch libraries and two mobile libraries serving a combined population of approximately 41,603 in an area of 42,895 square kilometres.

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

Organisation Restructure

A major restructure of the organisation in 2012 resulted in a net reduction of 20 staff. The **annual saving to Council's budget was approximately \$2M**. A review of all services within the organisation was done at this time to identify opportunities for operational cost savings.

Work Safe Culture

The implementation of Council's 'Recover at Work' strategy resulted in decreased claim costs and insurance premiums. Council's Workers Compensation Annual Insurance Premiums have **decreased from approximately \$1.2M per annum in 2012 to \$600,000 in 2022/23**.

In addition to this, Council participated in the WHS audit programs through StateCover by demonstrating our procedures and processes for WHS. As a result of this, **from 2019, Council has received over \$469,000 in incentive payments** from StateCover to be utilised educating staff through our health and well-being programs.

Alternative Revenue Streams

Trading of Temporary Water - During the last decade, Council lobbied strongly to enable local government to temporarily trade the proportion of the annual water entitlement that was surplus to the City's requirements. Council's lobbying efforts were successful and as a consequence, an additional revenue stream has been secured. It should be noted that the revenue stream varies from year to year based on seasonal conditions and the prevailing water market pricing. **Council has raised additional income of \$5,209,550 since 2017/18 from this initiative.**

Internal Audit Program

A number of recommendations have been adopted as a result of internal audit reviews, which have highlighted opportunities for productivity improvements and increased efficiencies in Council functional area. For example, following a recent procurement audit, Senior Management reviewed the purchasing thresholds in the Procurement Manual to ensure quotations are competitive as possible.

Service Reviews

Council has undertaken service reviews including Best Value Review in 2014, Customer Focus 2015, Roads Service Review in 2015, Tourism & Economic Development in 2018. These have resulted in improved efficiencies and implementation of identified cost saving initiatives. For example, the Tourism & Economic Development review resulted in a Council facility being able to be hired out to an external organisation at **an amount of over \$20,000 annually.**

Airport Hire Car Parking

In early 2023, Council performed a review of hire car companies utilising car parking at Griffith Airport. This review found that hire care companies were occupying a significant number of car parking spaces. **Additional revenue has been raised through this review in the order of \$30,000 per annum.**

Airport Hire Car Counter Rental Charges

Council implemented a fee structure for hire car companies to utilise a counter within the Airport terminal building. **This has resulted in approximately \$10,000 revenue per annum.**

Employees Leave Entitlements

Council's annual liability for employees leave entitlements adjustment has been significantly reduced.

Management of Overtime

Management of overtime and work schedules has resulted in reduced overtime costs.

Electronic Capture of Employee Work Cycle

Implementation of Element Time online timesheets has improved the accuracy and efficiency of data capture, resulting in improved reporting and overall productivity.

Staff Vacancies

All positions that become vacant are closely examined by the Senior Management Team to determine the ongoing need for the role and if there are any alternative methods to complete the tasks in a more cost-effective manner, whilst maintaining current levels of services. By actively managing vacancies and assessing alternative ways to complete tasks, **As at December 2023 the Senior Management Team have identified savings in employee costs of \$515,000 for FY2023/24.**

Internal Overhead Distribution

Council examined its General Fund overhead distribution across all functional areas of Council to ensure that an appropriate level of recovery of overheads has been charged to the Water, Sewerage and Waste Funds.

Conferences and Seminars

In person attendance at conferences and seminars by Council staff and Councillors has reduced over the last few years mainly due to the impact of Covid restrictions and the availability of attending more conferences and seminars remotely via online options. This has resulted in savings to the organisation. For example, Councillors attendance at conferences and interstate travel in 2022/23 **was \$26,985 less than in 2021/22.**

Energy Contracts and Consumption Audits

Council rolled over approximately 130 small site energy accounts to the NSW Government Small Site Contract on 1 December 2023. The assessment of the tariff review is **estimated to save Council in the range of \$70K to \$80K per year.**

An energy audit was conducted in early 2023 for the top 5 high consumption facilities. This report identified a number of initiatives to reduce energy consumption. Council will need to invest in capital to implement these savings.

Council Insurances

By pooling resources and sharing risks among other member councils, the benefits achieved by Council include cost savings, customised coverage and stable long-term planning.

In order to reduce insurance premiums, Council conducted a review of the insurance excesses in 2015, from \$10,000 to \$30,000 for property insurance, from \$500 to \$700 for motor vehicle insurance. **This resulted in a saving of approximately \$252,419.43 for the first year, resulting in close to \$2M over the past six years.**

Council paid its Workers Compensation premium in advance rather than instalments **to realise a \$10,000 saving.**

Purchasing - LG Procurement

Council utilises Local Government Procurement's contracts and other digital platforms for tenders and contract management to seek the most competitive pricing for the supply of major goods and services. This has resulted in more efficient procurement and reporting processes.

Consultancy Services

Council has rationalised its reliance on consultancy services. One example of this strategy is where Council has discontinued financial consultancy services, providing **an annual savings of approximately \$24,000 per annum.** An additional example of reduction in the use of consultants is that Council has prepared this SV application using internal staff resources, rather than engaging consultants. **This has saved Council approximately \$100K.**

Fixed Low Interest Rate Debt to Service Expansive Capital Investment Projects & Low Cost Loan Initiative

Council exercised good financial management and foresight by entering into low fixed rate loans, resulting in significant reductions in borrowing costs.

Council will achieve savings in interest costs on existing loans approved under the Low Cost Loan Initiative to **the amount of \$788,953 in the period from FY2019/20 to FY2030/31. As at 30 June 2023, Council had received rebates totalling \$394,277.**

Subscriptions, Licences and Telecommunications Contracts

Council reviewed subscriptions and licences to reduce the number of users / programs and therefore cost to Council. Council's telecommunications contracts have been reviewed to ensure best value for money is being provided. **Annual savings of \$140,000 have been realised from 2023/24.**

EziJobs

The implementation of the EziJobs software program has improved efficiencies in relation to recruitment and induction processes.

Learning Management System

The implementation of a new Learning Management System software program has improved efficiencies in relation to training processes and the cost of delivering courses to staff.

Bookable software

Council has implemented a new software system which allows improved management of Council venues, increasing utilisation and revenue opportunities.

Waste Collection Services

Council contracted out both domestic and recycling collection in November 2018. This initiative produced savings in the cost of both domestic and recycling collection services. The comparison of the cost per pick up is in the below table:

	Domestic Collection	Recycling Collection
2017/18 Council Operating Cost per bin per lift	\$ 2.09	\$ 4.3066 (JR Richards August 2018)
2017/18 Contractor Tender Cost per bin per lift	\$ 0.9808	\$ 2.3486

Council currently collects approximately 9,800 domestic waste bins each week and 9,600 domestic recycling bins each fortnight. Based on the number of domestic waste & recycling bins and the savings per bin per lift from contracting the services, **Council has reduced operating costs for waste operations by approximately \$1M per year. Engaging contracted waste collection services has delivered a reduction in operating costs in excess of \$5M from November 2018 to June 2023.**

The above cost saving initiative has provided funding to enable Council to continue to meet increasing environmental obligations (Environment Protection Licence requirements issued by the EPA for Councils landfill), increased funding to renew assets and improve services, provide funding to develop new landfill cells and commence rehabilitation works on existing landfill cells,

It has also allowed Council to place funds into reserve to assist with meeting future landfill expansion & rehabilitation provisions.

Rationalisation of Property Assets

In 2021 and 2022 Council sold off three farm properties in Lake Wyangan following an Expression of Interest process as there was high demand for residential land within the Griffith area at the time. This generated sale proceeds of \$1.84M, and in addition **reduced operational / maintenance costs which were approximately \$10,000 per year.**

In 2013 Council sold vacant land at Railway Street for the amount of \$2.5M.

Western Riverina Libraries (WRL)

Western Riverina Libraries is a collaboration between five local government areas to share resources and technical services to provide a library service which is current, efficient and valued.

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.

Senior Management Team, Departmental Managers & Staff

Council's Senior Management Team will continue to meet on a weekly basis to review Council's expenditure, productivity and cost containment strategies.

Monthly meetings with Senior Management Team and Departmental Managers will continue as an opportunity to discuss cost savings / efficiencies in operations.

Council has published in its Long Term Financial Plan, an annual cost saving target for the organisation of \$300K in FY2023/24 and \$1M from FY2024/25 onwards.

Internal Audit Program

The Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee will adopt and implement a new four year Strategic Plan commencing in 2024/25. The internal audit program has been prioritised to examine key risk organisational risks, highlight opportunities for productivity improvements and increased efficiencies in Council functional areas. The draft Strategic Internal Audit Plan (4 year plan) includes planned audits on areas with a focus of cost efficiency including WHS Management, Asset Management, Accounts Payable, Insurance Management, Fleet and Plant Management, Grants Management and Leases and Licences.

Service Reviews

In line with Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements, the following service reviews have been identified and are scheduled to take place:

- Water & Sewer FY2023/24
- Roads services including asset management FY2023/24
- Griffith Regional Aquatic Leisure Centre FY2023/24
- Developer Services FY2024/25
- Parks and Gardens FY2024/25
- Compliance FY2025/26.

The service reviews will help to achieve continuous improvement, generate financial savings, and optimise service provision.

LG Procurement

Council utilises LG Procurement to save time and resources by not having to go to tender for values greater than the tendering threshold. This platform ensures procurement is undertaken in a cost-effective manner by providing access to contracts with a number of suppliers. For example, new contracts are being negotiated for the Griffith Regional Aquatic Leisure Centre for electricity and gas supply. Based on current contract costs and estimates, the forecasted saving will be in the range of \$75K to \$100K per year.

Paid Car Parking – Griffith Airport

Council is investigating the introduction of paid parking at the Griffith Airport to generate additional revenue. This will require some capital expenditure to implement.

Alternative Revenue Stream

Council will continue to temporarily trade the component of Council's annual water licence that is surplus to community needs.

Council will continue to charge hire car companies for parking and counter fees at Griffith Airport.

Employees Leave Entitlements

Council will continue to enact Award provisions to utilise excess leave held by employees. This will reduce Council's annual liability for employees leave entitlements adjustment.

Overtime

Council will reduce overtime costs by increased scrutiny of overtime applications for all staff.

Conferences and Seminars

Council will review the number of staff and Councillors attending Conferences, with online attendance of conferences being the preferred option. Frequency of attendance at conferences will also be considered as well as relevance and need to attend.

A conservative estimate is that Council is currently spending approximately \$3,000 per delegate per conference (includes registration and travel/accommodation costs). It is anticipated Council could reduce our number of attendances by 10 to 15 per annum, with a potential saving of \$30K to \$45K.

Electronic Capture of Employee Work Cycle

The implementation of the Element Time program will continue to improve the accuracy and efficiency of data capture, providing improved reporting, review and overall productivity. It is estimated to reduce payroll data entry by 3 – 4 days per pay run, resulting in savings of approximately \$20,000 per annum.

Staff Vacancies

All positions that become vacant will be closely examined by the Senior Management Team to determine the ongoing need for the role and if there are any alternative methods to complete the tasks in a more cost-effective manner.

Energy Costs

Council will consider recommendations from recently conducted energy audits with a view to investing in capital such as more solar panels on Council facilities to implement possible savings. This will require some capital expenditure to implement.

Leases and Licences

Council will closely examine future leases /licences and renewal of leases / licences to ensure the revenue return to Council is in line with commercial rates where appropriate. Estimated savings are \$10K to \$20K per year.

Fees for Services

Council will continue to explore opportunities to provide paid services such as Environmental Health services, to other local government areas on a fee for service basis.

Consultancy Services

Council will continue to rationalise its reliance on consultancy services and address skill shortages with a number of strategies including upskilling current staff, traineeships.

Subscriptions, Licences and Telecommunications Contracts

Council will continue to review subscriptions, licences and telecommunications contracts to identify cost saving measures. Estimated cost savings are \$140,000 per year.

Asset AI Project

Griffith City Council is one of two local government authorities in NSW to be invited by Transport for NSW to be a pilot for the Asset Artificial Intelligence (Asset AI) software project.

This software will highlight and predict critical safety issues like damaged signage, faded line markings, potholes and escalate them based on severity and safety risk to Council maintenance planners. This program is backed by the NSW Government as preventative road maintenance can reduce costs for Council by reducing the reliance on time consuming and costly road audits while extending the lifespan of asphalt and bitumen roads.

Reduction of Number of Councillors

At the last Council election held December 2021, Griffith residents voted to reduce the number of Councillors from twelve to nine following resolution to hold a referendum. This action, will result in future savings of approximately \$88,518 per year.

Calculations:

Based on 2021/22 actual costs, Councillor fees (excluding Mayor) $\$232,000 / 11 = \$21,090$ per Councillor

Councillor expenses (including Mayor): $\$101,000 / 12 = \$8,416$ per Councillor

Saving = $\$21,090 + \$8,416 = \$29,506$ per Councillor x 3 = $\$88,518$

Cleaning Contract

Council's cleaning contract is due for renewal in 2024. Council will investigate amending the scope of the contract to reduce costs for this service. Estimated cost savings are \$15K - \$20K per year.

Griffith Regional Sports Stadium

Council has endorsed a proposal to lease part of the Griffith Regional Sports Stadium in 2024 to the NSW Electoral Commission for a period of 14 weeks. This will generate \$40,000 additional income. Utilisation opportunities outside of sports events will be pursued in future for example, trade shows, exhibitions.

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

Council has published in its Long Term Financial Plan, an annual cost saving target for the organisation. During FY2023/24, a minimum of \$300,000 savings to operations and from FY2024/25 an annual cost saving target of \$1M.

The items listed in 7.3 a have been workshopped throughout 2023. The cost reductions and revenue increases will be incorporated into the FY2024/25 Long Term Financial Plan.

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

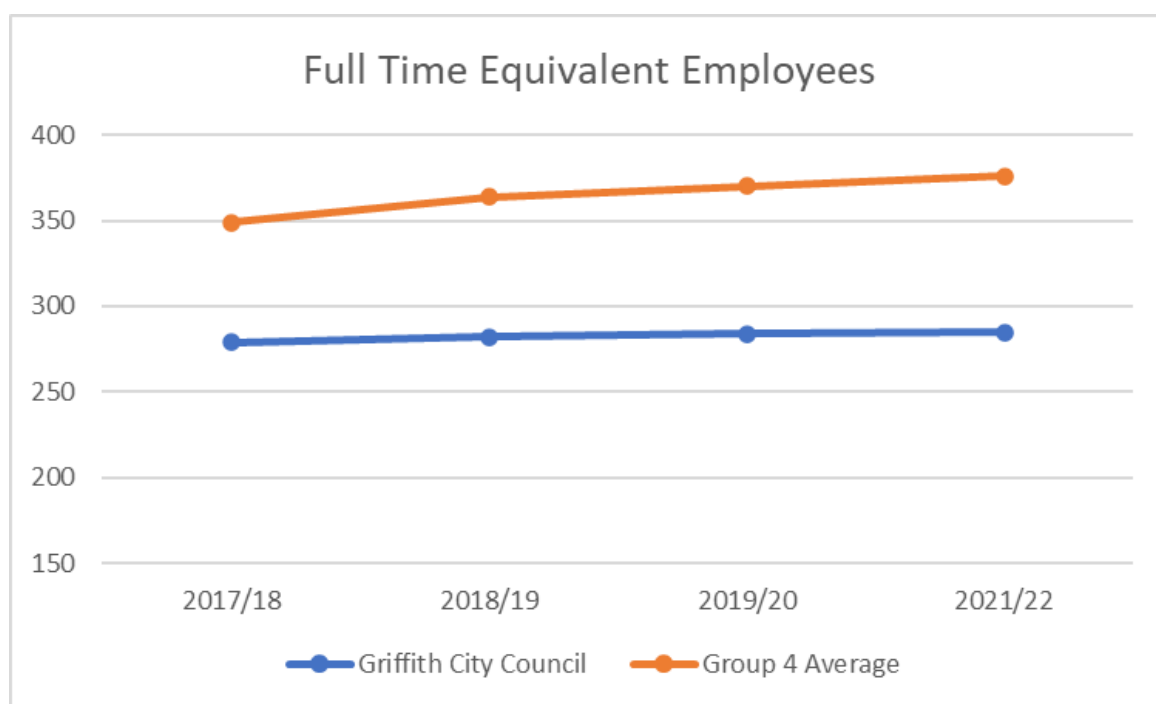
In the text box summarise data which demonstrates how the council has improved productivity and indicate its performance against that of comparable councils.

Griffith City Council has exhibited a positive trend in productivity and efficiency over the past decade, attributable to strategic initiatives such as organisational restructuring, monitoring of vacant positions, oversight of expenditure, continual improvement of processes and systems and collaborative resource-sharing efforts.

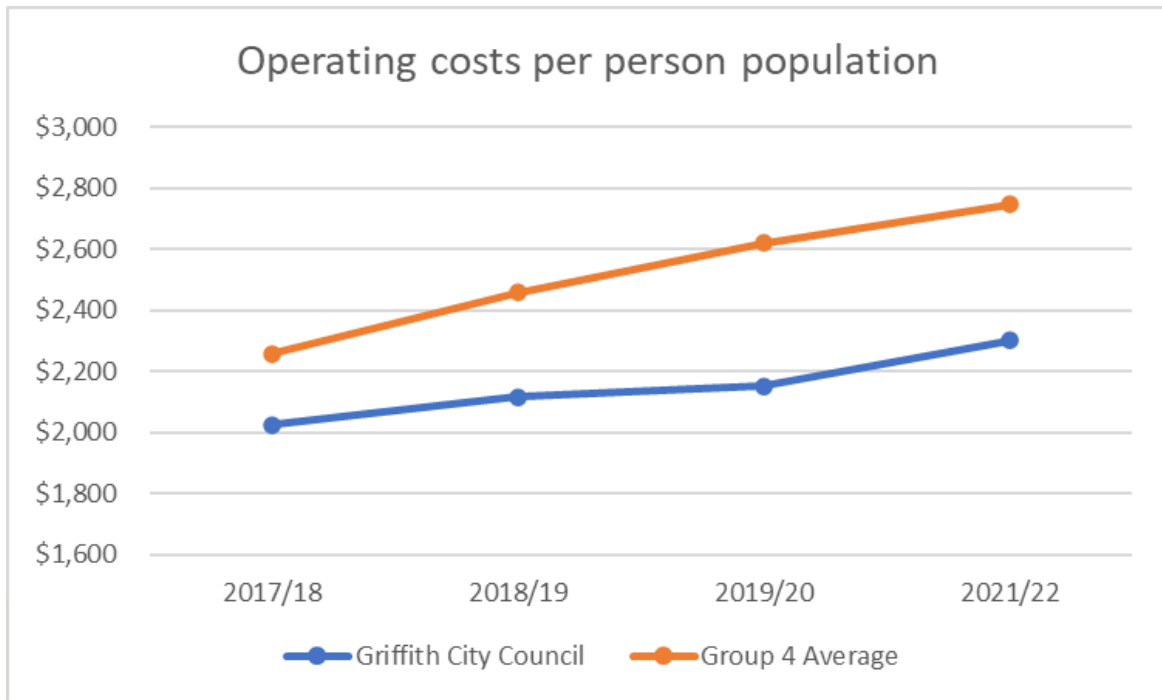
Council considered time series data available on the Office of Local Government website to compare its performance against other Group 4 Councils.

The below graph compares the number of Full Time Equivalent Employees (FTE) from 2017/18 to 2021/22 between Griffith City Council and the Group 4 Council average. This demonstrates that Council's number of FTE employees is lower than the Group 4 Council average.

The trend for Griffith City Council is stable over this period increasing from 279 to 285. In comparison the average for Group 4 Councils increased from 349 to 376. This equates to a 2% increase over this period for Griffith City Council, compared to a 8% increase for the Group 4 average.



Council's operating costs per person/population is also below the average of Group 4 Councils as is demonstrated in the graph below.



The below table shows the number of Group 4 councils which have applied for a SV along with Operating Performance Ratio and Average Ordinary Rates by category for FY2021/22.

Council The councils listed are those that continued operations and reported for the financial year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022	SRV Approved between 2011-2022	Operating Performance Ratio (%)	Average Residential Rate (\$)	Average Farmland Rate (\$)	Average Business Rate (\$)
Albury	Yes	-2.1	1,415.66	4,477.27	6,279.04
Armidale Regional	Yes	8.0	1,065.51	3,386.64	3,877.44
Ballina	Yes	0.5	1,136.72	1,784.19	3,567.04
Bathurst Regional		-20.8	1,173.06	1,537.22	4,396.31
Bega Valley	Yes	11.8	1,159.14	2,335.04	2,664.02
Broken Hill		1.8	1,102.45	1,090.91	6,417.91
Byron		-5.4	1,414.69	2,546.64	3,529.37
Cessnock	Yes	3.4	1,264.61	2,922.30	3,857.60
Clarence Valley	Yes	0.2	1,234.80	1,669.15	3,042.14
Dubbo Regional		-0.9	1,091.36	3,720.40	4,862.92
Eurobodalla	Yes	6.1	1,116.24	1,676.26	3,746.03
Goulburn Mulwaree		6.2	1,057.20	1,830.66	5,293.66
Griffith		5.4	1,077.73	3,814.79	2,864.76
Kempsey	Yes	1.1	1,274.78	2,095.49	2,618.52
Kiama	Yes	Not provide	Not provide	Not provide	Not provide
Lismore	Yes	0.9	1,360.74	2,560.13	4,571.89
Lithgow	Yes	4.9	840.18	1,662.22	4,849.58
Mid-Western Regional		10.2	987.89	2,572.02	2,197.44
Orange		6.5	1,492.86	1,952.51	6,130.62
Queanbeyan-Palerang Re	Yes	-1.7	1,211.66	2,565.71	4,980.73
Richmond Valley	Yes	-2.8	1,116.00	1,822.25	3,001.51
Singleton	Yes	-0.7	1,181.11	2,423.60	2,437.50
Snowy Monaro Regional	Yes	-0.3	948.29	1,987.16	1,510.17
Tamworth Regional	Yes	0.4	1,119.44	2,042.41	3,693.49
Wagga Wagga		-4.7	1,126.86	2,844.51	5,998.94
Wingecarribee	Yes	-1.8	1,872.39	3,982.77	4,573.27

From this table:

- Of the 26 Councils in Group 4, 17 have already implemented a SV during the period 2011 to 2022.
- Of the 9 Council's in Group 4 who have not implemented a SV, only 4 (including Griffith City Council) have a positive Operating Performance Ratio.
- However, Griffith City Council's Operating Performance ratio is on a negative trajectory as demonstrated below. Council is being proactive in making this application before the Operating Performance Ratio is negative.

Griffith City Council Operating Performance Ratio	FY2016/17	FY2017/18	FY2018/19	FY2019/20	FY2020/21	FY2021/22
	15.1%	10.7%	6.3%	5.0%	4.0%	5.4

In summary, Griffith City Council's performance demonstrates commendable efforts in maintaining levels of productivity, efficiency and financial management. Coupled with Council's initiative to identify efficiencies of at least \$1M annually from FY2024/25 onwards and a targeted program of services reviews and audit program, Griffith City Council has demonstrated a commitment to improved productivity and efficiency.

Table 10 Criterion 5 attachments

Attachment number	Name of document	Page references

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:	Griffith City 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):	Brett Stonestreet
Signature and Date:	Signed document uploaded 11/01/2024
Responsible Accounting Officer (name):	Steve Saffioti
Signature and Date:	Signed document uploaded 11/01/2024

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 – Brett Stonestreet

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 – Steve Saffioti

Council contact phone	[REDACTED]
Council contact email	[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 – Shireen Donaldson

Council contact phone	[REDACTED]
Council contact email	[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"/>	
Application Form Part B (this Word document)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Council resolution to apply for the special variation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Completed certification and declaration (see 8.1)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
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)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant instrument(s) for past special variations (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of compliance with conditions in past instruments (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory public supporting material (i.e. to be published on IPART's website):		
Community Strategic Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Delivery Program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Long Term Financial Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Asset Management Plan(s) (required if a key purpose of the SV is related to assets and capital expenditure)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Community feedback (including surveys and results)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Willingness to pay study (if applicable) – note information is contained within this application	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hardship policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Other public supporting materials:		
Government agency's report on financial sustainability e.g. NSW Treasury Corporation (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Annual Report 2022/23		
ASV Notification Form 2022/23		
Griffith City Council Audited Permissible Income 2023		
Community Engagement Plan SRV		
Council Report and Minutes 9 May 2023		
Imagine Griffith – What our community said CSP consultation summary		
Long Term Financial Plan 2022/23		
SRV Community Engagement Summary		
Confidential supporting material (i.e. not to be published on IPART's website):		

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. NOTE: The baseline (no SV) was presented to Council 9 May 2023 as part of the adoption of the 2023/24 Long Term Financial Plan. The report also presented other SV scenarios. It was resolved to place Scenario 3 (proposed SV) on exhibition for 28 days. However, throughout the SV community consultation period Council presented to the community Long Term Financial Plan projections with and without the proposed SV. The Long Term Financial Plan was adopted 27 June 2023.	<input 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 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"/>