



**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
**Special Variation Application**

**Community Engagement Materials**

**Round 1 Community Engagement Period:**

**2 August 2024 to 6 September 2024**

# Media Alert

## Proposed Special Rate Variation

31 July 2024

Gunnedah Shire Council wants to have a discussion with the community about a potential Special Rate Variation and invites ALL media to attend.

**What: Press Conference**

**When: Friday, August 2, 2024**

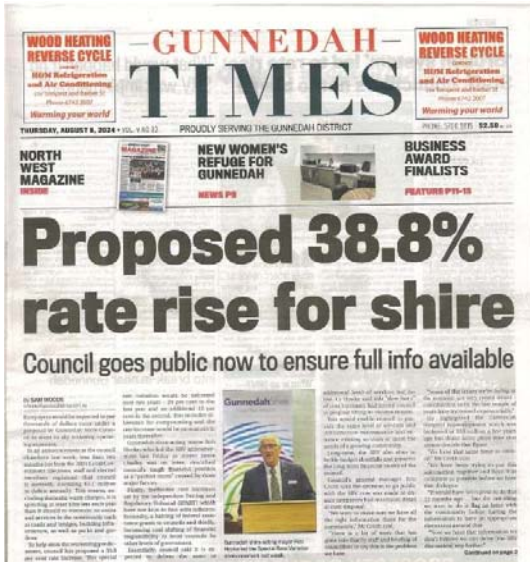
**Time: 11:30-12:30PM**

**Where: Council Chambers, 63 Elgin St, Gunnedah**

ENDS

For more information, contact Gunnedah Shire Council's Communications team on (02) 6740 2100 or [communications@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](mailto:communications@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au).

### Media Coverage



Considering the relevance of the SRV topic due to several neighbouring Councils having recently undertaken SRVs, (Tamworth Regional Council recently announced an SRV – 14<sup>th</sup> May), and the potential impact on Gunnedah’s residents, local media interest was high.



# Consultation Report Appenices

## Gunnedah Shire Council Proposed SRV

October 2024

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## Appendix A – SRV Website

### Gunnedah Shire Council (GSC) Homepage:

Featuring Proposed SRV Info Page tile on top right-hand side.

The screenshot shows the Gunnedah Shire Council homepage. At the top is a dark blue header with the council logo and name on the left, a search bar in the center, and a navigation menu on the right with categories: EVERYDAY LIVING (life in gunnedah), LIFESTYLE (arts & recreation), COMMUNITY (services & safety), BUSINESS & Industry, DEVELOPMENT (planning & building), ENVIRONMENT (wildlife & waste), and COUNCIL (what we do). Below the header is a large colorful abstract graphic with the text "Diverse exhibition from the Rainbow Region". To the right of this graphic are three promotional tiles: "Proposed Special Rate Variation" with a "Click for more information" link, "2024 NSW Local Government Elections Information" for Saturday, 14 September 2024, and "Visit Gunnedah" with the website URL www.visitgunnedah.com.au. Below these are two more tiles: "Draft Documents & Exhibition" and "GunnedahShire What's On" with the website URL www.thecivic.com.au. At the bottom is a grid of ten service tiles: NSW PLANNING PORTAL, PLANNING & BUILDING, PETS & ANIMALS, ROAD CLOSURES, EVENTS CALENDAR, BUSINESS PAPERS, COUNCIL MEETINGS, FUNDING FINDER, COUNCIL CAREERS, and CONTACT US. A small "Privacy Terms" icon is visible in the bottom right corner.

### GSC Proposed SRV Landing Page:

The screenshot shows the GSC Proposed SRV Landing Page. It features the same header as the homepage. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: HOME / COUNCIL / The Future of Gunnedah. The main content area is titled "PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION" and includes a "Special Rates Calculator" link. A large image of a sunset over a lake with a tree in the foreground is displayed. Below the image is the title "PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION" and a search bar. There are three tabs: "Rates Calculator", "Feedback Opportunities", and "Online Survey". The page contains the following text: "Gunnedah Shire Council is working hard to ensure we remain financially sustainable and is able to provide the services expected by our community, as well as meet our legislative obligations under the various acts of parliament under which we operate." and "At Councils ordinary meeting on 19 June 2024, Council endorsed the 2024/25 Operational plan that included the action to start a conversation with the community about a potential Special Rate Variation (SRV). This page contains information related to our decision to consult on a proposed SRV, details of the proposed amount, and". A "Privacy Terms" icon is visible in the bottom right corner.

This page contains information related to our decision to consult on a proposed SRV, details of the proposed amount, and resources to keep you informed and guide your ability to provide feedback on the proposal, including through a formal submission to Council and/or IPART.

**What is an SRV?**

An SRV allows a council to increase its general income above the rate peg to provide the services and infrastructure desired by their communities. SRV's can be either for a single year or over multiple years and can be permanent or temporary.

**What is the Rate Peg?**

Rates increase every year in line with an amount set by the State Government. This amount is calculated every year and is called the 'rate peg'. It is decided by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). The rate peg for Gunnedah Shire Council applied to the 2024/25 financial year will be 5.6%. This figure varies year to year and has been as low as 0.7% in the past five years.

**Our financial position**

Like many councils across NSW, Gunnedah Shire Council is facing the difficulty of maintaining its infrastructure and services within our existing income levels.

Council's long term financial plan shows that we are currently operating with an approximate \$3.1m operating deficit in the General Fund (excluding domestic waste services). This essentially means that we are spending \$3.1m less than we should be to maintain our assets and services to our current targeted service levels.

Without addressing this gap, the residents and visitors of the Shire will see a deterioration in service levels. Each year we fall behind, the cost of renewing infrastructure will rise and we will eventually have to catch up.

Council also has limitations on how it can spend money that is received for services. For example, income received via Water charges can only be spent on water related services. The same applies to Wastewater and Waste management services. This means that while Council may have significant funds in its bank account, only a portion of these can be used on General Fund activities such as roads, parks, gardens, libraries, and planning services. Current forecasts show that without action, either through additional income or reduced expenditure, Council's unrestricted cash balance will move to a negative value within two financial years. A negative unrestricted cash balance cannot be allowed to occur.

While Council continues to review operational efficiencies, and will continue to do so, because of limited ability to increase revenue in other areas, we are forced to consider an increase in rates via an SRV to secure the level of funding necessary to ensure that we can continue to maintain and renew our asset base.

Further information on Council's financial position, can be found in our 2024/25 Operational Plan, which is available

Further information on Council's financial position can be found in our 2024/25 Operational Plan, which is available here: [2024/25 Operational Plan](#)

**What is the proposed SRV?**

Council intends to discuss the potential application for a permanent SRV of 39.89% over two years. The 39.89% is comprised of a 24% increase in the first year (2025/26) and a 12% increase in year two (2026/27).

	2025/26	2026/27	Cumulative
Permanent Increase above rate peg	19%	7%	
Rate Peg (forecast)	5%	5%	
<b>Total Increase</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>36.86%</b>

The rationale behind these two values is as follows:

The 24% increase in Year One will allow Council to address the current operating deficit and the current forecast unrestricted cash challenges.

The 12% increase in Year Two will allow Council to commence addressing the backlog of works to bring our assets to the current targeted service levels.

**What does the SRV apply to?**

The proposed SRV would only apply to the rates portion of the bill (usually listed as the first item on the bill e.g. Residential Gunnedah) and not the separately listed essential charges such as waste and water. These services are all funded through direct fees and charges.



The SRV would apply to general rates only and would not apply to other charges shown on your rates notice.

**What the SRV funds would be used for**

The proposed SRV will be used to fund maintenance and renewal of Council's assets and specifically:

- Council's Transport network (roads, bridges and associated services).
- Council's Building infrastructure, and
- Council's Parks, gardens and Open Space.



**How would the increase impact me?**

The below tables show the impact of the increase based on averages for rates categories.


Category	2024/25 Average per annum	Year 1 Increase / per annum	Year 1 Increase / per week	Year 2 Increase / per annum	Year 2 Increase / per week	2026/27 Average per annum
Residential	\$1,106	\$264	\$5.08	\$164	\$3.15	\$1,534
Business	\$5,899	\$1,405	\$27.02	\$877	\$16.87	\$6,181
Farmland	\$5,337	\$1,271	\$24.44	\$793	\$15.25	\$7,401

Rating Category	Sub-Category	Base Scenario (5% in 25/26)			Year One Increase (24% in 25/26)			Cumulative Year Two Increase (24% in 25/26 and 12% in 26/27)				
		Average Rate by Category	Increase in Average rate per annum	Additional Cost per week	Average Rate by Category	Increase in Average rate per annum	Additional Cost per week	Average Rate by Category	Increase in Average rate per annum	Year two weekly increase	Cumulative Increase in Average rate per annum	Cumulative Additional Cost per week
Residential	Ordinary	\$993.37	\$48.02	\$0.89	\$1,173.04	\$25.70	\$4.34	\$1,313.04	\$140.80	\$2.71	\$966.50	\$7.05
	Rural	\$1,294.24	\$59.82	\$1.15	\$1,528.89	\$294.16	\$5.66	\$1,712.36	\$183.47	\$3.53	\$477.63	\$8.19
	Gummedah	\$1,251.00	\$57.75	\$1.11	\$1,473.94	\$283.58	\$5.45	\$1,650.61	\$176.87	\$3.40	\$480.45	\$8.85
	Village	\$614.32	\$28.29	\$0.54	\$725.54	\$139.51	\$2.68	\$812.57	\$87.83	\$1.67	\$326.54	\$4.36
Business	Ordinary	\$1,027.07	\$47.23	\$0.91	\$1,213.25	\$233.41	\$4.48	\$1,358.24	\$145.22	\$2.79	\$578.40	\$7.28
	Gummedah	\$7,288.80	\$337.20	\$6.49	\$8,607.60	\$1,656.09	\$31.85	\$9,640.58	\$1,032.98	\$19.87	\$2,889.07	\$51.71
	Business Power Generation	\$12,153.13	\$482.30	\$9.81	\$14,349.69	\$2,760.96	\$53.09	\$16,071.79	\$1,722.09	\$33.12	\$4,482.95	\$86.21
Farmland	Ordinary	\$5,595.43	\$258.89	\$4.98	\$6,607.83	\$1,271.31	\$24.45	\$7,400.80	\$792.95	\$15.25	\$2,004.26	\$39.70
	Additional Yield	\$181,776.99	\$15,959.02	\$295.17	\$192,042.13	\$74,436.21	\$1,450.50	\$435,087.13	\$47,045.00	\$904.71	\$12,471.21	\$2,355.22
		\$777,378.75			\$817,734.71			\$2,381,205.71				

It is important to note these values are averages and the impact of the increase will be different dependent on your property valuation.

Use the below rates calculator to estimate the impact on your property.

**NB: This rates calculator is an estimate only of how the special rate variation could affect your property – it does not include any change in property valuations or charges related to water, wastewater/sewage or waste.**



CLICK HERE TO USE OUR  
**RATES CALCULATOR**

**Feedback Opportunities**

**Community Information Sessions**

Council will be hosting the following community information sessions to provide details on Council's financial position, the proposed SRV and to provide the community with the opportunity to provide feedback.



Location	Date	Time
<b>CURLEWIS</b> Curlewis Community Hall, 21 Goran Street	Monday, 5 August 2024	5.30pm-7.00pm
<b>GUNNEDAH</b> Verdict Coffee Shop, 147 Conadilly Street	Wednesday, 7 August 2024	10am-12pm
<b>TAMBAR SPRINGS</b> Tambar Springs Hall, 1 School Street	Thursday, 8 August 2024	9.30am-12pm
<b>CARROLL</b> Carroll Community Hall, Oxley Hwy, Carroll	Tuesday, 13 August 2024	10am-12pm
<b>GUNNEDAH</b> Verdict Coffee Shop, 147 Conadilly Street	Wednesday, 14 August 2024	10am-12pm
<b>GUNNEDAH</b> Town Hall, 152 Conadilly Street	Wednesday, 14 August 2024	6.30pm-8pm
<b>GUNNEDAH</b> Gunnedah Shire Library, 291-293 Conadilly Street	Thursday, 15 August 2024	10am-12pm
<b>GUNNEDAH</b> Gunnedah Monthly Markets Wolsley Oval, 94 Conadilly Street	Saturday, 17 August 2024	8.30am-1.00pm
<b>GUNNEDAH</b> AgQuip - Gunnedah Shire Council Stand Blackjack Road	Tuesday, 20 August 2024	8.30am - 4.30pm
<b>GUNNEDAH</b> AgQuip - Gunnedah Shire Council Stand Blackjack Road	Wednesday, 21 August 2024	8.30am - 4.30pm
<b>GUNNEDAH</b> AgQuip - Gunnedah Shire Council Stand Blackjack Road	Thursday, 22 August 2024	8.30am - 4pm

A copy of the information being provided at Community Information Sessions can be found here: [GSC - Community SRV Information Pack PDF](#)

#### How can people have their say?

The consultation period for the proposed SRV closed on **Friday, 6 September 2024**.

#### What happens now?

At the conclusion of the current period of community engagement, Council will consider whether to proceed with an application for a Special Rate Variation. Council would then need to notify IPART of its intent to lodge a Special Rate Variation application in February 2025.

#### IPART

Further information on the SRV process, including fact sheets and information papers are available on the IPART website that can be accessed via the following link: [www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Local-Government/For-Councils/Apply-for-a-special-variation-or-minimum-rate-increase](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Local-Government/For-Councils/Apply-for-a-special-variation-or-minimum-rate-increase)

#### Learn more

If you would like to learn more about the ways in which local government differs from a business, [click here to view a presentation by Professor Joseph Drew](#).

#### Additional FAQs

##### Why is an SRV needed?

The cost to deliver services and maintain community assets to current service levels increases above the rate peg amount each year. Combined with reduced financial assistance and ongoing cost shifting to Local Government by other levels of government, councils are under constant financial pressure to deliver the same services for less, which is not a sustainable model.

Council also has an expanding infrastructure base as our community is growing. We view the fact that our population is increasing as very positive but we need to be able to maintain the associated infrastructure need to support this.

Council has very limited opportunity to increase our source revenue and, as a result, an increase in rates is the most viable solution for a financially sustainable council.

Council's long term financial plan shows that we are currently operating with an approximately \$3.1m operating deficit in the General Fund (excluding domestic waste services). This essentially means that we are spending \$3.1m less than we should be to maintain our assets and services to our current targeted service levels.

The SRV is also needed to address Council's current and forecast cash position. Our 2024/25 budget forecast shows that our projected cash reserves will be in decline and the unrestricted cash position will potentially move into a negative balance within the General Fund within two years without intervention. A negative unrestricted cash balance cannot be allowed to occur.

##### What would happen if the SRV is not implemented?

Council would need to defer necessary capital works and revise the basic range and levels of services provided to the community to avoid a deteriorating cash position, which is not sustainable in the long term. Service levels would need to reduce in the absence of additional funding being available.

##### What is Council doing to save money?

No matter what Council does, an SRV is required to restore the real cost of maintaining assets and providing services to grow and be sustainable. Council has a focus on continuous improvement and we work hard to keep costs under strict control. Council has introduced a program of service reviews to improve operations and maximise the use and efficiency of resources. These reviews are showing that a number of improvements have already been achieved and that, while further improvements are possible, any drop in funding will translate to a drop in service levels.

Recent improvement and savings include:

- Insurance savings
- Reduced electricity costs (street lighting and Sewer Treatment Plant)
- Service Review program commenced
- Changed unsealed roads techniques (compaction versus dry grading)
- Parks and Gardens (GPS line marking, irrigation systems)
- IT system improvements and Planning portal integration
- Library service improvements

##### Are other Councils in our area getting SRVs?

Yes, across the North-West and New England the following Councils have applied for and received SRVs.

- Tamworth Regional Council - 36.3% over two years (24/25)
- Armidale Regional Council - 58.8% over three years (23/24)





- Walcha Council – 57.74% across three years (23/24)
- Tenterfield Council – 43% in one year (23/24)
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council – 18.7% in one year (23/24)

**What can ratepayers expect in cases of hardship?**

Council recognises the community has been doing it tough and has held off as long as possible to request an increase (9 other NSW councils made applications in 24/25 and 17 in 23/24). Unfortunately, additional money is required to keep infrastructure adequately maintained so we can continue to deliver the same level of service the community expects.

For ratepayers experiencing financial hardship, Council has a "Hardship Policy" that has recently been updated to ensure we work with the most vulnerable in our community to support them as best we can during these challenging times.

**How will the new land valuation from the Valuer General impact the proposed Special Rate Variation?**

Residents across the Gunnedah Shire Council will be receiving new Notice of Valuation from the NSW Valuer General from January 2025. This is provided every 2 to 3 years and reflects the unimproved value of land of a property.

The new valuations will apply from 1 July 2025 for calculating general rates.

It's important to note an increase in land value does not necessarily mean an increase in rates. Council does not receive any more money because land values increase – some people may pay more or less on their rates depending on the change in value of their land relative to changes in land values across the Shire.

**Does an increase in land values mean Council can collect more general income?**

Council will be receiving new land valuations from the Valuer General effective 1 July 2025.

An increase in land valuations does not result in any additional general income for councils.

The total income that Council can source from land rates is capped at the approved rate pegged amount or any approved special rate variation.

It simply means it changes the way rates are distributed within each rate category/subcategory. Some people will pay more rates, some less, some the same.

**Will my rates increase if my land valuation does?**

An increase in your land valuation does not necessarily mean your rates will increase. The difference is how the rates revenue is shared across ratepayers, based on the change in their property value. Some people may pay more or less on their rates depending on the change in value of their land relative to changes in land values across the Shire.

Generally, properties whose land valuation increase is lower than the average increase for that rates category (residential, business, farmland or mining) will see a reduction in rates. However, properties whose valuation increase is higher than the average for the rating category may see a rise in rates.




**CONTACT US**

**Opening Hours**  
Monday - Friday: 9.00am - 4.00pm  
(Telephone enquiries: 8.30am - 5.00pm)


**Address**  
63 Elgin Street | PO Box 63  
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380

**Phone:** 02 6740 2100  
**Fax:** 02 6740 2119  
**Email:** council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au



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**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
Open New Horizons

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Gunnedah Shire Council acknowledges the Kamilaroi Aboriginal Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we live and work, and in doing so, Council pays its respect to all Elders past and present as well as to the young Indigenous leaders of tomorrow.

[Privacy Statement](#)  
[STAFF LOGIN](#)



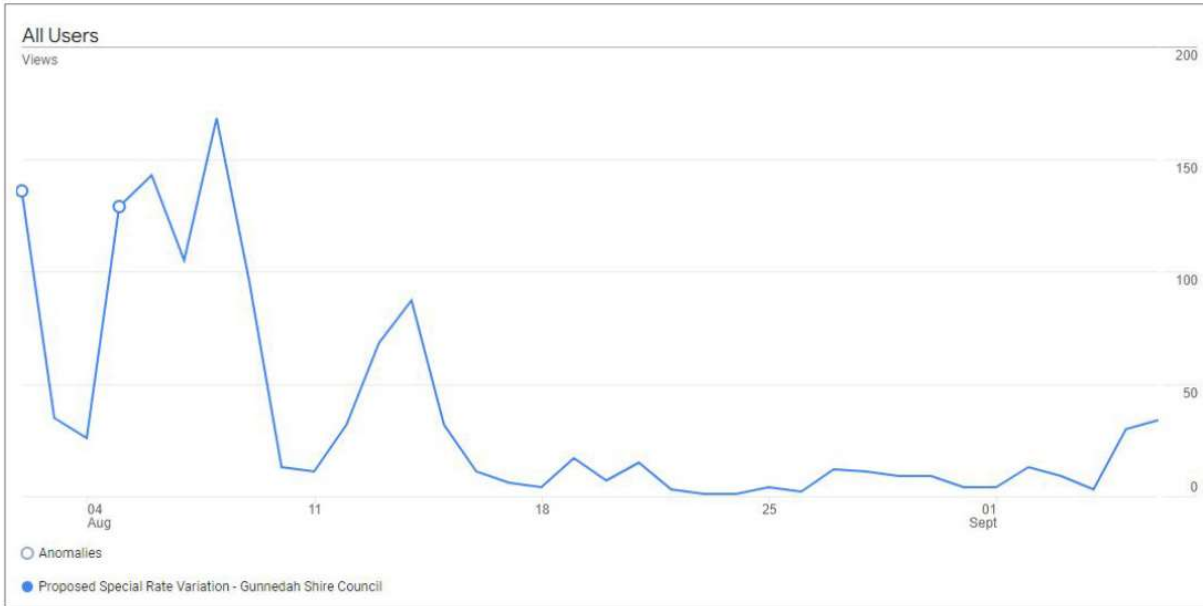
## Appendix B – Online Statistics

### Engagement Report - Google Analytics

**Webpage:** Proposed Special Rate Variation - Gunnedah Shire Council

**URL:** <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/index.php/council/the-future-of-gunnedah/proposed-special-rate-variation>

**Date range:** 2 August - 6 September 2024



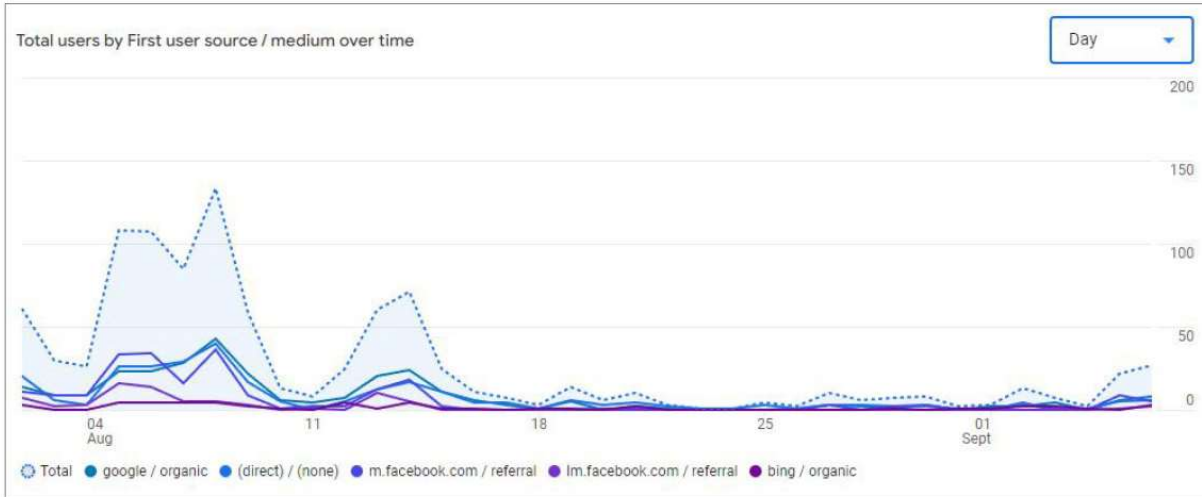
Total users	New users	Returning users	Views	Engagement rate	Sessions	Average session duration
760	352	272	1290	60.9%	1174	2m 31s

## Traffic Acquisition Report - Google Analytics

**Webpage:** Proposed Special Rate Variation - Gunnedah Shire Council

**URL:** <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/index.php/council/the-future-of-gunnedah/proposed-special-rate-variation>

**Date range:** 2 August - 6 September 2024



Source/Medium	Total users	New Users	Returning Users	Average engagement time per active user	Average engagement time per active user
Total	760 100% of Total	352 100% of Total	272 100% of Total	1m 06s Avg 0%	1174 Avg 0%
(direct) / (none)	212	130	63	38s	0.84
m.facebook.com / referral	209	152	18	10s	0.42
google / organic	203	23	118	1m 42s	1.31
lm.facebook.com / referral	57	31	23	3m 18s	1.33
bing / organic	28	1	20	2m 14s	1.75
intranet.gscdomain.infogunnedah.com.au / referral	21	0	19	2m 21s	2.33
l.facebook.com / referral	19	10	6	1m 10s	1.00
au.search.yahoo.com / referral	4	1	3	1m 15s	0.50
facebook.com / referral	4	3	0	17s	0.75
duckduckgo / organic	1	0	1	0s	1.00

**Rates Calculator Analytics data:** This is data is taken from Netlify's Analytics Logging, the program used to create the app:

Site Analytics spanning 30 days ▾

Data from Jul 29 to Aug 28

Total pageviews  
821

Total unique visitors  
632

**The Rates Calculator:** <https://rates-app.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/>

<b>Current (24-25)</b>	
Ordinary Rates Payable	\$12,529.21
<b>Proposed Rate Structure (25-26)</b>	
Ordinary Rates Payable	\$15,514.10
Movement between rating years	\$2,984.89
% movement	23.82%
<b>Weekly Variance</b>	<b>\$57.40</b>
<b>Proposed Rate Structure (26-27)</b>	
Ordinary Rates Payable	\$17,375.94
Movement between rating years	\$1,861.84
% movement	12%
<b>Weekly Variance</b>	<b>\$35.80</b>
<b>Cumulative % increase</b>	<b>38.68%</b>
<b>Disclaimer</b>	
Please note that these are indicative rates based upon current information utilising Land Valuations base dated 1 July 2022. The actual rate amount will be dependent upon future valuation changes, categorisation changes and land value movements and final approval of the rating structure by Council during the finalisation of the Special Rate Variation process. The special rate variation is applicable to the general rate only and does not include annual charges for Council services such as stormwater, water supply, sewer supply, waste services or government levies.	
<a href="#">Reset</a>	

**Gunnedah Shire Council  
Community Survey  
July 2024**

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ from Micromas Research and we are conducting a survey on behalf of Gunnedah Shire Council. The survey will take about 15 minutes.

It is a random sample survey and accordingly I would like to speak to the person who has the next birthday in your household and is over the age of 18 years, would you be able to assist us please?

Thank you for agreeing to assist us with this survey.

**QA. Before we start, I would like to check whether you work for Gunnedah Shire Council? (SR)**

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Yes	Terminate
2	No	

**QB. Please stop me when I read out your age bracket. Prompt (SR)**

Position	Answers	Notes
1	18-34	
2	35-49	
3	50-64	
4	65+	

**QC. In which area of the shire do you live? (SR)**

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Gunnedah	
2	Curtewig	
3	Corral	
4	Tombor Springs	
5	Breeza	
6	Emerald Hill	
7	Kelvin	
8	Mulberry	
9	Other rural areas	

**QDa. Does your household pay Council rates to Gunnedah Shire Council, if so, which type(s) do you pay? Prompt (MR)**

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Residential (1)	
2	Business (2)	
3	Farmland (3)	
4	None of these	Default to residential script <exclusive/>

**QDb. Which type of rates do you pay the most for? (SR)**

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Residential (1)	Show if selected in QDa
2	Business (2)	Show if selected in QDa
3	Farmland (3)	Show if selected in QDa

**Part A**

**Q1. In the first part could you please indicate which best describes your opinion of the importance of the following services/facilities to you, and in the second part, the level of satisfaction with the performance of that service. The scale is from 1 to 5 where 1 is low importance and low satisfaction, and 5 is high importance and high satisfaction. Prompt ONLY ASK SAT IF IMP 4 OR 5 SCALE**

**Community facilities**

Position	Answers	Importance					Satisfaction							
		Low	1	2	3	4	5	Low	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	Public parks													
2	Swimming pools													
3	Sporting grounds													
4	Libraries													
5	Public buildings and village halls													
6	The Civic Precinct (i.e. Town Hall/Movie Theatre/Art Gallery)													
7	Gunnedah showground													
8	Quality of town centres and public spaces													

**Infrastructure**

Position	Answers	Importance					Satisfaction							
		Low	1	2	3	4	5	Low	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	Unsealed roads													
2	Rural sealed roads													
3	Urban streets													
4	Footpaths and cycleways													
5	Street cleaning													
6	Gunnedah airport													
7	Drainage/flood management													
8	Water supply													
9	Sewerage management													
10	General garbage collection													
11	Livestock and waste transfer stations													
12	Recycling													

**Human services**

Position	Answers	Importance					Satisfaction							
		Low	1	2	3	4	5	Low	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	Youth services													
2	Ageed care services (i.e. Go C&C)													
3	Relationship with Indigenous residents													
4	Support for volunteers													
5	Disability access													
6	Emergency services (i.e. SES, RFS)													

**Corporate services and management**

Position	Answers	Importance					Satisfaction							
		Low	1	2	3	4	5	Low	1	2	3	4	5	NA
1	Opportunities to participate in Council decision making													
2	Management of development													
3	Tourism													
4	Economic development													
5	Environmental and sustainability initiatives													
6	Heritage conservation/promotion													

**Definitions to be read out for Part A - 'Corporate services and management'**

- Economic development is attracting and assisting new businesses and creating jobs
- Management of development is pacing building construction and what types of development can be located in which areas.

**Q2. What do you think are the key priorities for Council in the local area? (TEXT)**

Position	Answers	Notes
1		5 Lines

**Part B**

**Q3. How satisfied are you currently with the level of communication Council has with the community? Prompt (SR)**

Value	Answers	Notes
5	Very satisfied	
4	Satisfied	
3	Somewhat satisfied	
2	Not very satisfied	
1	Not at all satisfied	

**Q4. Overall, for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues, but across all responsibility areas? Prompt (SR)**

Value	Answers	Notes
5	Very satisfied	
4	Satisfied	
3	Somewhat satisfied	
2	Not very satisfied	
1	Not at all satisfied	

As we have just discussed Gunnedah Shire Council delivers a broad range of services and has the responsibility to maintain the facilities and infrastructure across the shire.

At present, Council's revenue is regulated by the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). IPART sets the amount by which councils can increase rates from one year to the next. This is called the rate peg. Council's Long Term Financial Plan provides for a 1.0% rate peg increase for the 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 financial years and 2.50% for the remaining years of the Plan. However, the rate peg will not provide enough revenue to maintain service levels.

Over recent years, Council has implemented a range of productivity savings and reduced cash across our operations, but there are no easy solutions to addressing an increasing funding gap. If Council does not address this gap now, our community assets (such as our roads, drainage, swimming pools and public buildings) will deteriorate. To address this situation, councils are able to apply for rate increases above rate peg. This is called a Special Rate Variation or SRV.

Gunnedah Shire Council is considering applying for a permanent SRV, there are two options which I would like you to consider.

Let's look at the options in more detail:

- Option 1 - Rate Peg Only:** Council will need to defer necessary capital works, as well as review their range and levels of services to avoid a deteriorating cash position - which is not sustainable in the long term.
- Option 2 - Maintain:** The proposed SRV is anticipated to generate additional revenue of \$1.2 million over a two-year period from 2025-2026 to 2026-2027 and will be used to fund existing services and maintenance of local infrastructure.

Council acknowledges that any rate increase may adversely impact some community members. Council has a Hardship Policy and alternative payment options to assist ratepayers should they have difficulty keeping up with their rate payments.

*Programmer note: Kolate Order*

**Option 1: Rate peg only**

No special rate variation, this option would continue the status quo with rates only increasing by an estimated rate peg amount (assumed to be 5.9% this year).

Under this option over the next two financial years: (READ OUT/SHOW APPROPRIATE SCRIPT BASED ON ANSWERS AT Q1, but only 1)

1. Residential – The average residential rates, which are currently \$1,106 per annum, will increase by approximately \$54 in Year 1 and \$58 in Year 2 – meaning the average residential rate will be \$1,218 in 2024/2027.
2. Business – The average Business rates, which are currently \$5,899 per annum, will increase by approximately \$284 in Year 1 and \$309 in Year 2 – meaning the average business rate will be \$6,494 in 2024/2027.
3. Farmland – The average Farmland rates, which are currently \$5,337 per annum, will increase by approximately \$258 in Year 1 and \$280 in Year 2 – meaning the average farmland rate will be \$5,875 in 2024/2027.

Under this option the impact would be:

- Our sealed and gravel road networks would deteriorate.
- Council would not be able to maintain the range of facilities and services currently provided.
- Council would rely heavily on grant funding to service existing assets.
- Community and recreational facilities such as pools and buildings will continue to deteriorate if grant funding is not successful, and potentially closed when the risk of operating becomes unacceptable.
- Council's backlog of roadworks would continue to increase and gravel roads would not be improved.

Q1a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 1? Prompt (18)

Value	Answers	Notes
5	Very supportive	
4	Supportive	
3	Somewhat supportive	
2	Not very supportive	
1	Not at all supportive	

**Option 2: Special Rate Variation**

Under Option 2, Council would apply for an SRV of 38.88% including each year's rate peg, phased in over two years to maintain infrastructure and service and commence addressing the infrastructure backlog of works (i.e., works that have not been done). At the end of the period the Special Rate Variation increase would be built into the rate base.

If implemented, the SRV will apply to your general rates only and will not apply to the waste management, water and sewerage charges on your rates notices. SRV funds would not be used on waste management, water and sewerage services, which are all funded through direct fees and charges.

Under this option over the next two financial years: (READ OUT/SHOW APPROPRIATE SCRIPT BASED ON ANSWERS AT Q2, but only 1)

1. Residential – The average residential rates, which are currently \$1,106 per annum, will increase by approximately \$284 in Year 1 and \$164 in Year 2 – meaning the average residential rate will be \$1,534 in 2024/2027.
2. Business – The average Business rates, which are currently \$5,899 per annum, will increase by approximately \$1,405 in Year 1 and \$877 in Year 2 – meaning the average business rate will be \$8,181 in 2024/2027.
3. Farmland – The average Farmland rates, which are currently \$5,337 per annum, will increase by approximately \$1,271 in Year 1 and \$793 in Year 2 – meaning the average farmland rate will be \$7,401 in 2024/2027.

The proposed SRV is anticipated to generate an additional revenue of \$6.2 million over a four-year period from 2024/2024 to 2024/2027 and will be used to fund maintenance of local infrastructure, including:

- Grading unsealed local roads to meet existing service levels;
- Additional maintenance of rural roads;
- Roadwork and renewal of urban streets;
- Increased funding to maintain existing services across Council operations
- Additional libraries, resealing and gravel re-sheeting to keep our roads at a good standard and prevent them from deteriorating;
- Culverts, causeways, drainage and footpath renewal; and
- Community assets renewal.

Q2a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 2? Prompt (18)

Value	Answers	Notes
5	Very supportive	
4	Supportive	
3	Somewhat supportive	
2	Not very supportive	
1	Not at all supportive	

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Q3c. Which of the following 2 options do you most prefer? Programming note: totate Order

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Option 1 – Rate Peg Only (No SRV, noting this will lead to a further deterioration of our assets and reduction in services)	
2	Option 2 – Special Rate Variation (SRV to maintain our current targeted service levels)	

Q3a. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference? (TEXT)

Position	Answers	Notes
1		5 Lines

Q3b. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation? (SR)

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Yes	
2	No	Go to D1
3	Not sure	Go to D1

Q3b. How were you informed of the Special Rate Variation? Please answer yes or no as I read each one. Prompt (18)

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Rate notice insert	
2	Council website	
3	Newspaper advertisement	
4	Radio advertisement	
5	Social media	
6	Other (Please specify)	Go to Q3b2

Q3b1. Other (Please specify). (TEXT)

Position	Answers	Notes
1		1 line

Having discussed the impact of the special rate variation, we are now interested in your thoughts regarding higher service levels than would be possible within the SRV.

Q7a. How supportive would you be of paying more, over and above the proposed SRV, in rates and charges to improve service levels for our roads (e.g., improved drainage works, increased gravel re-sheeting, review ability to seal high priority unsealed roads)? (SR)

Value	Answers	Notes
5	Very supportive	
4	Supportive	
3	Somewhat supportive	
2	Not very supportive	
1	Not at all supportive	

Q7b. How supportive would you be of paying more in rates and charges to improve service levels for our parks and gardens (e.g., expanded irrigation, improve Poppaline lookout, move skate park to first on park, water saving measures, increased cleaning of public toilets, more proactive tree management)? (SR)

Value	Answers	Notes
5	Very supportive	
4	Supportive	
3	Somewhat supportive	
2	Not very supportive	
1	Not at all supportive	

Q7c. How supportive would you be of paying more in rates and charges to make improvements to the Cultural Precinct (e.g., new library, community meeting spaces, enhanced and splitting performing arts venue and amenities)? (SR)

Value	Answers	Notes
5	Very supportive	
4	Supportive	
3	Somewhat supportive	
2	Not very supportive	
1	Not at all supportive	

**Demographics**

D1. Which of the following best describes the house you are currently living? Prompt (SR)

Position	Answers	Notes
1	I/We own/are currently buying this property	
2	I/We currently rent this property	

D2. How long have you lived in Gunnedah Shire? (SR) Prompt

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Less than 12 months	
2	1-3 years	
3	4-10 years	
4	11-20 years	
5	More than 20 years	

D3. What is your gender? DO NOT PROMPT! (SR)

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Male	
2	Female	
3	Non-binary	

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D4. Do you identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? (SR)

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Yes	
2	No	
3	Prefer not to say	

D5. Does anyone living in your home have a disability? (SR)

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Yes	
2	No	
3	Prefer not to say	

D6. Does anyone living in your home receive a Commonwealth Government Pensions? (SR)

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Yes	
2	No	
3	Prefer not to say	

As a participant in this research, you may be invited to participate in further community consultation, such as focus groups, about specific issues.

At this stage we are developing a register of interest for future consultations.

R1. Would you be interested in registering your interest? (SR)

Position	Answers	Notes
1	Yes	
2	No	Go to end

R2. May I please confirm your contact details? (TEXT)

Position	Answers	Notes
1	First name	1 line
2	Surname	1 line
3	Email address	1 line
4	Phone number	1 line

Thank you for your time and assistance. This market research is carried out in compliance with the Privacy Act, and the information you provided will be used only for research purposes. The research has been conducted by Micromex Research on behalf of Gunnedah Shire Council.

If you have any further questions regarding this special rate valuation, please contact Customer Service on 4740 2100 or visit the Gunnedah Shire Council website.

Thank you very much for your time. Enjoy the rest of your evening.

The information contained herein is believed to be reliable and accurate, however, no guarantee is given as to its accuracy and reliability, and no responsibility or liability for any information, opinions or commentary contained herein, or for any consequences of its use, will be accepted by Micromex Research, or by any person involved in the preparation of this report.

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## Appendix D – Online Survey

### Online Survey

Total Respondents: 137

#### Sample Profile

Gender		#	%
Male	Male	48	35%
Female	Female	88	64%
Non-binary	Other	1	1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ratepayer Status		#	%
Ratepayer	I/We own/are currently buying this property	135	99%
Non-ratepayer	I/We currently rent this property	2	1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

Time Lived in Area		#	%
< 12 Months	Less than 12 months	1	1%
1-5 Years	1-5 years	10	7%
6-10 Years	6-10 years	15	11%
11-20 Years	11-20 years	28	20%
>20 Years	More than 20 years	83	61%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

Age		#	%
18-34	18-34	26	19%
35-49	35-49	50	36%
50-64	50-64	43	31%
65+	65+	18	13%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

Disability in Home?		#	%
Yes	Yes	11	8%
No	No	116	85%
Prefer not to say	Prefer not to say	10	7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

Commonwealth Gov't Pension?		#	%
Yes	Yes	8	6%
No	No	123	90%
Prefer not to say	Prefer not to say	6	4%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

Type of Rates Paid (Most)		#	%
Residential	Residential	90	66%
Farmland	Farmland	40	29%
Business	Business	7	5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>



<b>Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?</b>		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	Yes	9	7%
No	No	113	82%
Prefer not to say	Prefer not to say	15	11%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Location</b>		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Gunnedah	Gunnedah	99	72%
Curlewis	Curlewis	6	4%
Tambar Springs	Tambar Springs	3	2%
Breeza	Breeza	2	1%
Kelvin	Kelvin	4	3%
Carroll	Carroll	5	4%
Emerald Hill	Emerald Hill	8	6%
Mullaley	Mullaley	2	1%
Other	Other rural areas	8	6%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Snapshot Summary

<b>Overall Satisfaction with Council</b>		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Not at all satisfied	1 - Not at all satisfied	31	23%
Not very satisfied	2 - Not very satisfied	63	46%
Somewhat satisfied	3 - Somewhat satisfied	34	25%
Satisfied	4 - Satisfied	9	7%
Very Satisfied	5 - Very satisfied	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

**At least somewhat satisfied** **43** **31%**

<b>Satisfaction with Council's Communication</b>		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Not at all satisfied	1 - Not at all satisfied	35	26%
Not very satisfied	2 - Not very satisfied	52	38%
Somewhat satisfied	3 - Somewhat satisfied	34	25%
Satisfied	4 - Satisfied	12	9%
Very Satisfied	5 - Very satisfied	4	3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

**At least somewhat satisfied** **50** **36%**

## Special Rate Variation

Awareness of SRV?		#	%
Yes	Yes	104	76%
No	No	29	21%
Not sure	Not sure	4	3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

Preferred Option		#	%
Option 1 – Rate Peg Only	Option 1 – Rate Peg Only (No	112	82%
Option 2 – SRV	Option 2 – Special Rate Varia	25	18%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

Option 1 - Rate Peg Only		#	%
Not at all supportive	1 - Not at all supportive	15	11%
Not very supportive	2 - Not very supportive	17	12%
Somewhat supportive	3 - Somewhat supportive	33	24%
Supportive	4 - Supportive	18	13%
Very supportive	5 - Very supportive	54	39%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

**At least somewhat supportive** 105 77%

Option 2 - Special Rate Variation		#	%
Not at all supportive	1 - Not at all supportive	86	63%
Not very supportive	2 - Not very supportive	32	23%
Somewhat supportive	3 - Somewhat supportive	12	9%
Supportive	4 - Supportive	3	2%
Very supportive	5 - Very supportive	4	3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>	<b>100%</b>

**At least somewhat supportive** 19 14%

Pay More for Roads		#	%
Not at all supportive	1 - Not at all supportive	62	45%
Not very supportive	2 - Not very supportive	21	15%
Somewhat supportive	3 - Somewhat supportive	14	10%
Supportive	4 - Supportive	5	4%
Very supportive	5 - Very supportive	2	1%
<b>Total</b>		<b>104</b>	<b>76%</b>

**At least somewhat supportive** 21 15%

Pay More for Parks & Gardens		#	%
Not at all supportive	1 - Not at all supportive	55	40%

Not very supportive	2 - Not very supportive	27	20%
Somewhat supportive	3 - Somewhat supportive	15	11%
Supportive	4 - Supportive	3	2%
Very supportive	5 - Very supportive	4	3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>104</b>	<b>76%</b>

**At least somewhat supportive** **22** **16%**

<b>Pay More for Cultural Precinct</b>		<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Not at all supportive	1 - Not at all supportive	64	47%
Not very supportive	2 - Not very supportive	23	17%
Somewhat supportive	3 - Somewhat supportive	11	8%
Supportive	4 - Supportive	1	1%
Very supportive	5 - Very supportive	5	4%
<b>Total</b>		<b>104</b>	<b>76%</b>

**At least somewhat supportive** **17** **12%**

## Appendix E – Public Relations

Advice of a Media Call was distributed in advance by GSC on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> of July, to give regional Media ample time to prepare to travel to Gunnedah/cover the press conference.



# Media Alert

## Proposed Special Rate Variation

31 July 2024

Gunnedah Shire Council wants to have a discussion with the community about a potential Special Rate Variation and invites ALL media to attend.

**What: Press Conference**

**When: Friday, August 2, 2024**

**Time: 11:30-12:30PM**

**Where: Council Chambers, 63 Elgin St, Gunnedah**

*ENDS*

For more information, contact Gunnedah Shire Council's Communications team on (02) 6740 2100 or [communications@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](mailto:communications@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au).

### **Media Release:**

A media release was given to media in attendance at the Press Call on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, and then widely distributed to local and regional media at lunchtime that same day.

*Photo: Acting Mayor Rob Hooke at today's announcement in the Gunnedah Shire Council Chambers*





# MEDIA RELEASE

## Council proposes Special Rate Variation

2 August 2024

Gunnedah Shire Council is planning for the future of the region, by considering the proposal of a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to maintain, and potentially enhance the services the community currently receives.

With initial community consultation on the SRV to be undertaken over the coming weeks, an SRV will allow Council to increase its general income above the rate peg, to provide the services and infrastructure desired by the community. SRVs can be either for a single year or over multiple years and can be permanent or temporary.

At Council's ordinary meeting on 19 June 2024, Council endorsed the 2024/25 Operational Plan that included the action to begin consultation with the community about a potential SRV.

Gunnedah Shire Deputy Mayor Cr Rob Hooke believes the Special Rate Variation will allow Council to deliver a bright future for the region.

"The difficulty Council faces around financially sustaining existing services and maintaining infrastructure within the existing income levels is not unique to our region and is one that many Councils across NSW are facing at this time," Cr Hooke said.

"Like other Councils, we have been negatively impacted over time by the rate peg not keeping up with actual cost increases, reduced levels of financial assistance, cost shifting from other levels of government and an expanding infrastructure base, which is needed to support our growing community.

"The proposed SRV will ensure the timely maintenance of essential infrastructure like roads, bridges, sporting fields, playgrounds, and community facilities which we use every day, and would allow Council to work towards the communities' future aspirations."

The primary reasons Gunnedah Shire Council is investigating an SRV include:



1. **To maintain current services:** Ensuring council can continue to provide the same level of services and infrastructure maintenance.
2. **Improving services:** Enhancing or expanding existing services or adding new services to meet the needs of our growing community.
3. **Financial sustainability:** Addressing budget shortfalls and ensuring the long-term financial health of the council.

The potential application will be for a permanent SRV of 38.88% over two years. This will be comprised of a 24% increase in the first year (2025/26) and a 12% increase in the second year (2026/27). Both years include an assumed rate peg of 5%.

The proposed SRV would only apply to the rates portion of the bill (usually listed as the first item on the bill e.g., "Residential Gunnedah") and not the separately listed essential charges such as waste and water.

Council will be engaging with the community over the coming weeks to gather feedback, share information and answer any questions around the proposed SRV. A series of drop-in sessions will be available for residents and ratepayers to attend, along with an online form for community members to provide feedback on Council's website.

Council will hold the first of its planned community engagement sessions to discuss the proposed SRV at the ~~Curlewis~~ Curlewis Community Hall next Monday, August 5, 2024 at 5:30PM.

Advise about other sessions will be made available on Council's dedicated SRV website page at [www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au).

The SRV application process involves submitting a detailed proposal to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), outlining the reasons for the requested increase and how the additional revenue would be used. Community feedback is extremely valuable to the decision-making around the SRV, and it is important an application includes information direct from our community.

It is important that everyone understands that this a process to have the conversation regarding a potential SRV. Council will not make a final decision on an SRV application until later in the year, once the initial community consultation has been undertaken.

For FAQs, a handy rate calculator, or if you're unable to attend one of the drop-in sessions and would like more information on the Special Rate Variation, visit Council's website at:

[www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/index.php/council/the-future-of-gunnedah/proposed-special-rate-variation](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/index.php/council/the-future-of-gunnedah/proposed-special-rate-variation)

*Caption: Acting Mayor Rob Hoake at today's announcement in the Gunnedah Shire Council Chambers*



ENDS

Media Contact: Jo McKinnon - Communications Officer

Gunnedah Shire Council

(02) 6740 2100.



## Media Call – Media Backgrounder:

Media who attended were supplied with the following backgrounder, by way of informing and supporting the details spoken about at the press conference.



### Special Rate Variation Background information

#### August 2024

##### Overview:

Gunnedah Shire Council is working hard to ensure Council remains financially sustainable and is able to provide the services expected by the community, as well as fulfilling its legislative obligations under the various acts of parliament under which it must operate.

At Council's Ordinary Meeting on 19 June 2024, Council endorsed the 2024/25 Operational Plan that included the action to start a conversation with the community about a potential Special Rate Variation (SRV).

##### What is an SRV?

An SRV allows a council to increase its general rates income above the rate peg to provide the services and infrastructure desired by their communities. SRVs can be either for a single year or over multiple years and can be permanent or temporary.

##### What is the Rate Peg?

Rates increase every year in line with an amount set by the NSW State Government. This amount is calculated every year and is called the 'rate peg'. It is decided by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). The rate peg for Gunnedah Shire Council in the 2024/25 financial year will be 5.6%. This figure varies year to year and has been as low as 0.7% in the past five years.

##### Why is an SRV needed?

The cost to deliver services and maintain community assets to current service levels increases above the rate peg amount each year. Combined with reduced financial assistance and ongoing cost shifting to Local Government by other levels of government, councils are under constant financial pressure to deliver the same services for less, which is not a sustainable model.

Council also has an expanding infrastructure base as our community is growing. We view the fact that our population is increasing as very positive but we need to be able to maintain the associated infrastructure to support this.

Council has very limited opportunity to increase our source revenue and, as a result, an increase in rates is the most viable solution for a financially sustainable council.

Council's long-term financial plan shows that we are currently operating with an approximately \$3.1m operating deficit in the General Fund (excluding domestic waste services). This essentially means that we are spending \$3.1m less than we should be to maintain our assets and services to our current targeted service levels.

The SRV is also needed to address Council's current and forecast cash position. Our 2024/25 budget forecast shows that our projected cash reserves will be in decline and the unrestricted



cash position will potentially move into a negative balance within the General Fund within two years without intervention. A negative unrestricted cash balance cannot be allowed to occur.

Further information on Council's financial position can be found in our 2024/25 Operational Plan, which is available on our website under "Council" then "Integrated Planning and Reporting".

**What would happen if the SRV is not implemented?**

Council would need to defer necessary capital works and revise the basic range and levels of services provided to the community to avoid a deteriorating cash position, which is not sustainable in the long term. Service levels would need to reduce in the absence of additional funding being available.

**What is the proposed SRV?**

Council intends to discuss the potential application for a permanent SRV of 38.88% over two years. The 38.88% is comprised of a 24% increase in the first year (2025/26) and a 12% increase in year two (2026/27). This includes an assumed rate peg of 5% in both years.

	2025/26	2026/27	Cumulative
<b>Permanent increase above rate peg</b>	19%	7%	
<b>Rate Peg (forecast)</b>	5%	5%	
<b>Total Increase</b>	24%	12%	38.88%

The rationale behind these two values is as follows:

1. The 24% increase in Year One would allow Council to address the current operating deficit and the current forecast unrestricted cash challenges,
2. The 12% increase in Year Two would allow Council to start addressing the backlog of works to bring assets to the current targeted service levels.

**What does the SRV apply to?**

The proposed SRV would only apply to the rates portion of the bill (usually listed as the first item on the bill e.g. "Residential Gunnedah") and not the separately listed essential charges such as waste and water.

**What would the SRV funds be used for?**

The proposed SRV would be used to fund maintenance and renewal of Council assets, specifically:

- Council's Transport Network (roads, bridges and associated services),
- Council's Building Infrastructure, and
- Council's Parks, Gardens and Open Space.



We are encouraging residents and ratepayers to provide their feedback by **Friday, 6 September 2024**.

At the conclusion of the current period of community engagement, Council will consider whether to proceed with an application for a Special Rate Variation. Council would then need to notify IPART of its intent to lodge a Special Rate Variation application in February 2025.

**How can people have their say?**

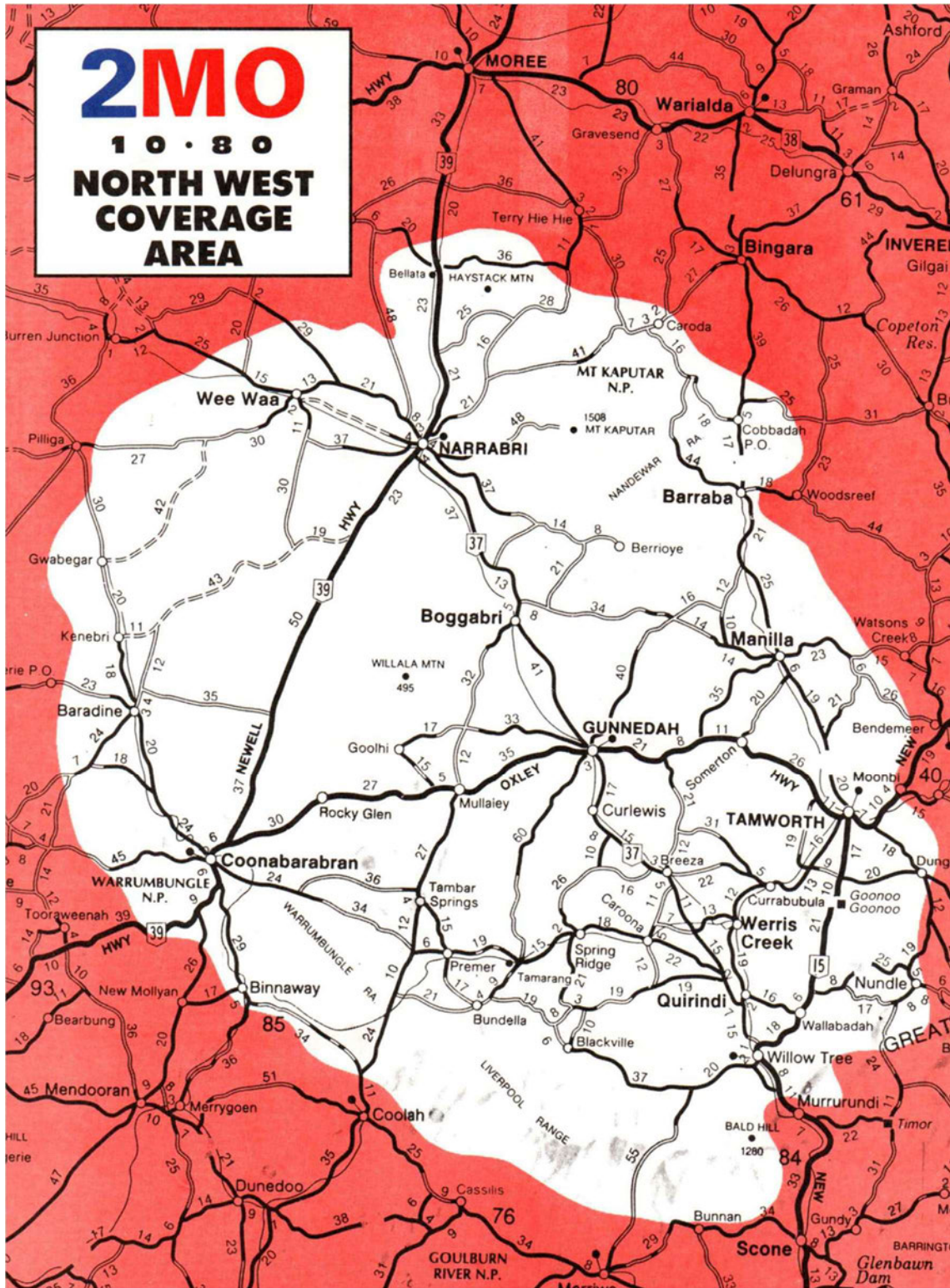
Residents and ratepayers are invited to read about the proposed SRV and have their say in a number of ways. Community feedback will be captured as part of our engagement opportunities that will be detailed on Facebook and our website, or you can provide a submission in writing by Friday, 6 September 2024 to the General Manager, Gunnedah Shire Council, PO Box 63, Gunnedah NSW 2380 or send by email to [council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

**Media Contact:**

Gunnedah Shire Council Communications Team - (02) 6740 2100 or [communications@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](mailto:communications@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

# Appendix F – Radio Coverage

GGG/2MO radio coverage area



## Appendix G – Newspaper Coverage

Northern Daily Leader (NDL) Thursday 8/8/24 - Tearsheet:

The advertisement is a full-page spread in the Northern Daily Leader, dated Thursday August 08, 2024. It features a dark blue background with a vibrant green and yellow logo for Gunnedah Shire Council at the top left. The main headline reads 'Planning for our Future' in large white font, with 'Special Rate Variation' in a smaller, light blue font below it. A section titled 'Have your say' contains text explaining the council's proposal for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to build a brighter future for the community, emphasizing the importance of public input. To the right of this text is a magnifying glass graphic containing a QR code and the text 'FIND OUT MORE'. The bottom half of the advertisement shows a scenic landscape of rolling hills and fields under a clear sky, framed by a green and yellow curved border.

NORTHERN DAILY LEADER Thursday August 08, 2024 northerndailyleader.com.au

**Gunnedah**  
Shire Council

# Planning for our Future

## Special Rate Variation

**Have your say**

Gunnedah Shire Council is proposing a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to build a brighter future for our community. Your input on the value of services currently provided is vital in the decision-making process. We're open to feedback and welcome you to visit us at one of our community consultation pop-ups or learn more at [www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

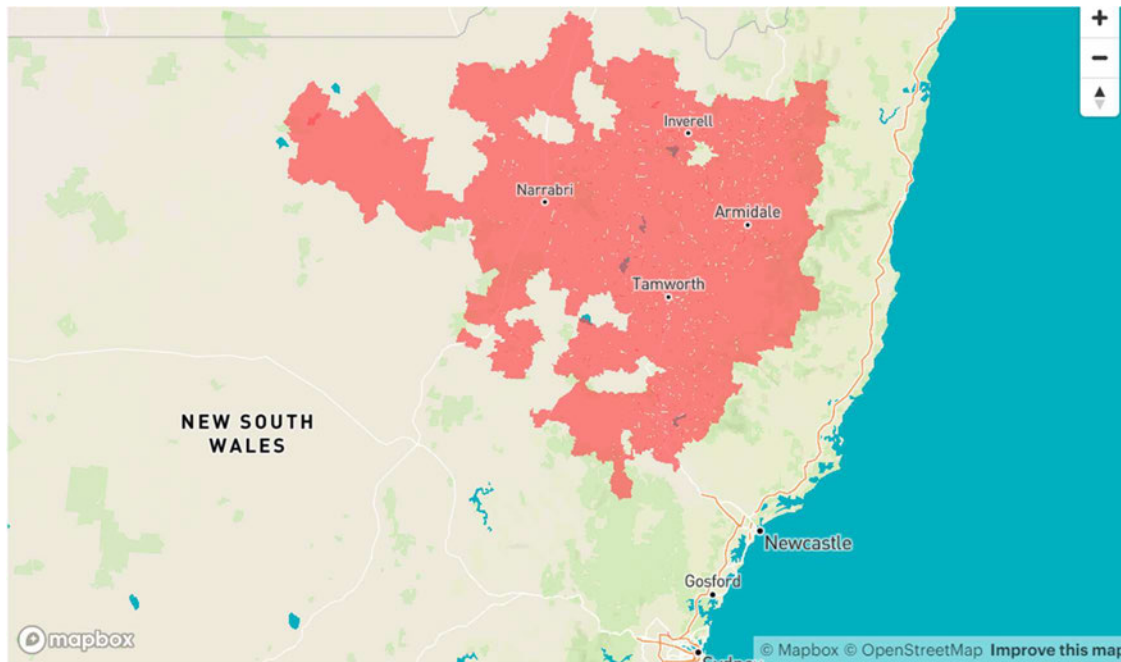
**FIND OUT MORE**

### NDL Stats:

**Mon – Fri:** Average Issue Readership: 11,676

**Audience Type:** Small Business Owners (incl Agriculture) 12%; Baby Boomers (1946-1965) 21% ; Gen X (1966-1980) 23% ; Gen Y (1981-1995) 29% ; Gen Z (1996-2010) 21% ; Families with Children at Home 36% ; Property Buyers 17%.

NDL Distribution area map:



The Gunnedah Times is an integral part of the Gunnedah Shire community, serving a local population of about 13,000 people. Although exact readership data is not always publicly detailed, the Gunnedah Times is a widely-read publication, both in print and online. Its influence is evident through its role in covering local news, events, and issues relevant to the community.

Considering its focus on local affairs and the population size, the Gunnedah Times is likely to reach a substantial portion of the regional population, bolstered by both print subscriptions and the introduction of a paywall for online content to sustain its operations.

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# GUNNEDAH TIMES

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**NORTH WEST MAGAZINE**  
INSIDE



**NEW WOMEN'S REFUGE FOR GUNNEDAH**  
NEWS P5



**BUSINESS AWARD FINALISTS**  
FEATURE P11-13

# Proposed 38.8% rate rise for shire

## Council goes public now to ensure full info available

By SAM WOODS  
editor@gunnedahtimes.com.au

Ratepayers would be expected to pay thousands of dollars more under a proposal by Gunnedah Shire Council to meet its sky-rocketing operating expenses.

In an announcement at the council chambers last week, less than two months out from the 2024 Local Government Elections, staff and elected members explained that council is currently operating \$3.1 million in deficit annually. This means, excluding domestic waste charges, it is spending at least \$3m less each year than it should to maintain its assets and services in the community such as roads and bridges, building infrastructure, as well as parks and gardens.

To help stem the worsening predicament, council has proposed a 38.8 per cent rate increase. This special

rate variation would be delivered over two years - 24 per cent in the first year and an additional 12 per cent in the second. This includes allowance for compounding and the rate increase would be permanent in years thereafter.

Gunnedah shire acting mayor Rob Hooke, who led the SRV announcement last Friday as mayor Jamie Chaffey was on leave, described council's tough financial position as a "perfect storm" caused by three major factors.

Firstly, ineffective rate increases set by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) which have not kept in line with inflation. Secondly, a halving of federal assistance grants to councils and thirdly, increasing cost shifting of financial responsibility to local councils by other levels of government.

Essentially, council said it is expected to deliver the same or



Gunnedah shire acting mayor Rob Hooke led the Special Rate Variation announcement last week.

additional level of services but for less. Cr Hooke said this "slow burn" of cost increases had forced council to propose lifting its income stream.

This would enable council to provide the same level of services and infrastructure maintenance and enhance existing services to meet the needs of a growing community.

Long-term, the SRV also aims to tackle budget shortfalls and preserve the long-term financial health of the council.

Council's general manager Eric Groth said the decision to go public with the SRV now was made to ensure ratepayers had maximum detail at their disposal.

"We want to make sure we have all the right information there for the community," Mr Groth said.

"There is a lot of work that has gone into that by staff and briefing of councillors to say this is the problem we have.

"Some of the issues we're facing at the moment are very recent issues - construction costs the last couple of years have increased exponentially."

He highlighted the Gunnedah Hospital redevelopment which was budgeted at \$53 million a few years ago but those same plans now cost almost double that figure.

"We have that same issue at council," Mr Groth said.

"We have been trying to put this information together and have it as complete as possible before we have that dialogue.

"It would have been great to do that 12 months ago ... but the last thing we want to do is flag an issue with the community before having the information to have an appropriate discussion around that.

"Now we have that information we don't believe we can delay [the SRV discussion] any further."

Continued on page 2

**WEATHER** Fri. Min 7° Max 19° Partly cloudy. Slight chance of a shower. Light winds becoming northeasterly 15 to 20 km/h during the morning.

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## Appendix H – Print Collateral

Artwork for DL Flyer:

### Planning for our Future Special Rate Variation

**Have your say**

Gunnedah Shire Council is proposing a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to build a brighter future for our community. Your input on the value of services currently provided is vital in the decision-making process. We're open to feedback and welcome you to visit us at one of our community consultation pop-ups or learn more at [www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)



**FIND OUT MORE**



### Frequently Asked Questions

**What is a Special Rate Variation (SRV)?**

A Special Rate Variation (SRV) is a process that allows local councils to apply for an increase in the rates they charge beyond the standard rate peg limit set by the State Government.

**Why does Council need one?**

The primary reasons Gunnedah Shire Council is investigating an SRV include:

- **To maintain current services:** Ensuring Council can continue providing the same level of services and infrastructure maintenance.
- **Improving services:** Enhancing or expanding existing services or adding new services to meet the needs of our growing community.
- **Financial sustainability:** Addressing budget shortfalls and ensuring the long-term financial health of the Council.

It is important for Council to engage in community consultation before applying for an SRV, to better understand the evolving needs and wants of the community.

The SRV application process involves submitting a detailed proposal to the State Government, outlining the reasons for the requested increase and how the additional revenue will be used. Your input on the value of services currently provided is vital in the decision-making process.

**Let's plan for the future of our region, together.**

**Contact**  
T: (02) 6740 2100  
E: [council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)



**Gunnedah**  
Shire Council



Artwork for A3 and A4 Posters:



# Appendix I – Newspaper Editorial

gunnedahtimes.com.au/2024/08/02/gunnedah-shire-council-proposes-special-rate-variation

October 2, 2024 Subscribe

19°C **GUNNEDAH TIMES**

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**GUNNEDAH SHIRE COUNCIL**  
**Gunnedah Shire Council proposes Special Rate Variation**



© Aug 2, 2024

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[Learn more](#)

Gunnedah Shire Council is planning for the future of the region, by considering the proposal of a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to maintain, and potentially enhance the services the community currently receives.

With initial community consultation on the SRV to be undertaken over the coming weeks, an SRV will allow council to increase

its general income above the rate peg, to provide the services and infrastructure desired by the community. SRVs can be either for a single year or over multiple years and can be permanent or temporary.



At council's ordinary meeting on 19 June 2024, Council endorsed the 2024/25 Operational Plan that included the action to begin consultation with the community about a potential SRV.

Gunnedah Shire deputy mayor Cr Rob Hooke believes the Special Rate Variation will allow council to deliver a bright future for the region.

"The difficulty council faces around financially sustaining existing services and maintaining infrastructure within the existing income levels is not unique to our region and is one that many councils across NSW are facing at this time," Cr Hooke said.

"Like other councils, we have been negatively impacted over time by the rate peg not keeping up with actual cost increases, reduced levels of financial assistance, cost shifting from other levels of government and an expanding infrastructure base, which is needed to support our growing community.

"The proposed SRV will ensure the timely maintenance of essential infrastructure like roads, bridges, sporting fields, playgrounds, and community facilities which we use every day, and would allow Council to work towards the communities' future aspirations."

The primary reasons Gunnedah Shire Council is investigating an SRV include:

- 1. To maintain current services:** Ensuring council can continue to provide the same level of services and infrastructure maintenance.
- 2. Improving services:** Enhancing or expanding existing services or adding new services to meet the needs of our growing community.
- 3. Financial sustainability:** Addressing budget shortfalls and ensuring the long-term financial health of the council.

The potential application will be for a permanent SRV of 38.88 per cent over two years. This will be comprised of a 24 per cent increase in the first year (2025/26) and a 12 per cent increase in the second year (2026/27). Both years include an assumed rate peg of 5 per cent.

The proposed SRV would only apply to the rates portion of the bill (usually listed as the first item on the bill e.g., "Residential Gunnedah") and not the separately listed essential charges such as waste and water.

Council will be engaging with the community over the coming weeks to gather feedback, share information and answer any questions around the proposed SRV. A series of drop-in sessions will be available for residents and ratepayers to attend, along with an online form for community members to provide feedback on council's website.

Council will hold the first of its planned community engagement sessions to discuss the proposed SRV at the Curlewis Community Hall next Monday, August 5, 2024 at 5:30PM.

Advice about other sessions will be made available on council's dedicated SRV website page at [www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au).

The SRV application process involves submitting a detailed proposal to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), outlining the reasons for the requested increase and how the additional revenue would be used. Community feedback is extremely valuable to the decision-making around the SRV, and it is important an application includes information direct from our community.

It is important that everyone understands that this a process to have the conversation regarding a potential SRV. Council will not make a final decision on an SRV application until later in the year, once the initial community consultation has been undertaken.

For FAQs, a handy rate calculator, or if you're unable to attend one of the drop-in sessions and would like more information on the Special Rate Variation, visit Council's website at:

[www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/index.php/council/the-future-of-gunnedah/proposed-special-rate-variation](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/index.php/council/the-future-of-gunnedah/proposed-special-rate-variation)



Home > Finance

FINANCE NEWS NSW NEWS

## Gunnedah council considers rate variation

06/08/2024



Gunnedah Shire Council says it is considering a Special Rate Variation (SRV) proposal in a bid to maintain, and potentially enhance the services the community currently receives.

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### LATEST ARTICLES



NEWS  
Green light for new Byron Shire Mayor



Gunnedah Shire Council says it is considering a Special Rate Variation (SRV) proposal in a bid to maintain, and potentially enhance the services the community currently receives.

The potential application will be for a permanent SRV of 38.88% over two years. This will be comprised of a 24% increase in the first year (2025/26) and a 12% increase in the second year (2026/27). Both years include an assumed rate peg of 5%.

It will begin initial community consultation on the SRV over the next few weeks.

Deputy Mayor, Rob Hooke *(pictured)* says he believes the rate variation will allow Council to deliver a bright future for the region.

"The difficulty Council faces around financially sustaining existing services and maintaining infrastructure within the existing income levels is not unique to our region and is one that many Councils across NSW are facing at this time," Cr Hooke said.

"Like other Councils, we have been negatively impacted over time by the rate peg not keeping up with actual cost increases, reduced levels of financial assistance, cost shifting from other levels of government and an expanding infrastructure base, which is needed to support our growing community.

"The proposed SRV will ensure the timely maintenance of essential infrastructure like roads, bridges, sporting fields, playgrounds, and community facilities which we use every day, and would allow Council to work towards the communities' future aspirations."

He says the primary reasons the Council is investigating an SRV include:

- **To maintain current services:** Ensuring council can continue to provide the same level of services and infrastructure maintenance;
- **Improving services:** Enhancing or expanding existing services or adding new services to meet the needs of our growing community;
- **Financial sustainability:** Addressing budget shortfalls and ensuring the long-term financial health of the council.

The proposed SRV would only apply to the rates portion of the bill (usually listed as the first item on the bill e.g., 'Residential Gunnedah') and not the separately listed essential charges such as waste and water, the Council said in a statement.

The SRV application process involves submitting a detailed proposal to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), outlining the reasons for the requested increase and how the additional revenue would be used.

"It is important that everyone understands that this a process to have the conversation regarding a potential SRV. Council will not make a final decision on an SRV application until later in the year, once the initial community consultation has been undertaken," the Council said.

[www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/index.php/council/the-future-of-gunnedah/proposed-special-rate-variation](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/index.php/council/the-future-of-gunnedah/proposed-special-rate-variation).



Shire Mayor



NEWS  
Russell Fitzpatrick returned as Bega Valley mayor



HERITAGE  
City of Bayswater pushes for brickworks preservation



AWARDS & RECOGNITION  
Greater Shepparton scores platinum pool safety award



NEWS  
Wollondilly Mayor welcome new faces

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An Editorial from Editor of Gunnedah Times Sam Woods gave a fair and balanced perspective of the Proposed SRV for Gunnedah Shire:

## Not surprising to see the wave of anger at Special Rate Variation

**OPINION:** There is nothing more contentious than targeting the bank balances of ordinary citizens - just look at the disastrous impact even the suggestion of a GST had for the Liberal-Nationals in the 'unloseable' election of the early 1990s.

Rate increases can have a similar knock on effect - driving anger and resentment in local communities, largely because of the wide and far reaching impact on residents.

It is not surprising to see the criticism that has already started on Gunnedah's special rate variation but is it all warranted?

Much of the anger and frustration, at least early in the process when Gunnedah first proposed the SRV, seemed to be generated by people unaware of the full details of the rate rise. It's symptomatic of the ease of social media to post your thought bubbles to the world immediately before getting the full picture about what's going on. Council said it turned comments off its posts as the page could not be monitored 24-7 for potentially defamatory statements (visit [gunnedah-times.com.au](http://gunnedah-times.com.au) for a full explanation).

Other people are just looking for a fight and no matter what information is put forward, their views would remain the same.

People need to vent and ultimately, the council, its staff and elected members - who are also part of this community - wear the brunt of the attack. But of those casting blame at positions of authority, how many are willing to give the process a go themselves? There is a sign on the sidelines at local sports games that says before you criticise, ask yourself, have you volunteered to help? The same rule should apply to every other walk of life.

There is a local government election in September, after which the newly elected Gunnedah shire councillors will decide whether to proceed or not with the SRV. That is the perfect opportunity for anyone willing to stick their hand up and make a stand for their community, to do so.

Some commentary has been made already about the timing of the SRV announcement immediately before the election. But in one sense, the timing couldn't be better. Those motivated for change can make an immediate difference on the outcome of this proposal - either for or against.

Council says it didn't want to go earlier on the SRV without all the information for the community at its disposal. But one would think there's a tipping point at which council says enough is enough before the rate increase reaches almost half what we're already paying. Perhaps the comfort comes from knowing many other councils are faced with equally high special rate variations - so we're not alone.

Still on timing, others have questioned why council would roll this out amid the "cost of living crisis". Undeniably, some people in our community and indeed across the country are doing it tough financially. It's also true everyday expenses are skyrocketing but so too are expenses for everyone else, local council included. If council costs are going up, it's only a matter of time before its charges are increased.

It seems many people have the misconception that governments and councils are expected to shoulder the burden of life's problems and Joe Bloggs is entitled to live consequence-free because of it. But this couldn't be further from the truth. People need to take responsibility for their own financial situation and if they need help, ask for it. Just don't expect to be bailed out on every occasion because eventually the kind hearts will wear thin and your luck will run out.

People also forget how lucky we are to have this democratic process of consultation in the first place - many other locations the world over are not so fortunate. If we don't agree with the ideas put forward, we can tell those in positions of power what we think. If we still don't agree, we can vote accordingly on the elected members. Try doing the same in less developed countries of the world and see how far you get. Australia has fought for these freedoms, some have died for them, don't take it for granted.

I urge everyone with an opinion about Gunnedah's proposed special rate variation - either good or bad - to make their views known, either through the in-person community consultation sessions, in writing, or over the phone. The *Gunnedah Times* will be doing its best to cover consultation process, putting forward views from across the shire about the rate proposal and any alternatives.

- Sam Wood

# Appendix J – Social Media

## GSC Facebook

**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
August 2 · 🌐

**COUNCIL CONSIDERS PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION**

**Gunnedah Shire Council** is planning for the future of the region, by considering the proposal of a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to maintain, and potentially enhance the services the community currently receives.

With initial community consultation on the SRV to be undertaken over the coming weeks, an SRV will allow Council to increase its general income above the rate peg, to provide the services and infrastructure desired b... [See more](#)




**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
August 2 · 🌐

The **Gunnedah Shire Council** is considering a proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV). Council will hold the first of its planned community engagement sessions to discuss the proposed SRV at the Curlewis Community Hall next Monday, August 5, 2024 at 5:30PM.

Advice about other sessions over the coming weeks is available on Council's dedicated SRV website page at [www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au) .... [See more](#)



**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
August 5 · 🌐




**PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION**

**PHONE SURVEY**

Residents and ratepayers are being surveyed about the proposed SRV and encouraged to have their say. This survey commences **Monday, 5 August 2024**.

**Find out more at**  
[www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

**Let's plan for the future of our region, together.**



👍 🗨️ 🌟 8      6 shares

**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
August 5 · 🌐

Reminder to come along tonight to the Curlewis Community Hall. It's warm inside and there's tea and coffee.



**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
August 2 · 🌐

The **Gunnedah Shire Council** is considering a proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV). Council will hold the first of its planned community engagement sessions to ... [See more](#)

Want to learn more about how you could be affected by the potential Special Rate Variation (SRV) that is being considered at the moment?

You can calculate the impact of a potential rates increase by using our special rates calculator which can be accessed here <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../proposed-special-rate...>

## WHAT DOES THE SRV APPLY TO?

The SRV applies to your general rates only and will not apply to the waste management, water and sewerage charges on your rates notices.

RATES AND CHARGES NOTICE 01/07/2024 to 30/06/2025			
Gunnedah Shire Council PO Box 63 GUNNEDAH NSW 2380		13279251	17/07/2024
Gunnedah Shire Council PO Box 63 GUNNEDAH NSW 2380		31/08/2024	1/07/2022
Gunnedah Shire Council PO Box 63 GUNNEDAH NSW 2380		Residential Gunnedah	
REBATE OF RATES AND CHARGES			
REBATE OF RATES AND CHARGES	CENTS PER \$	NOTABLE AMOUNT	AMOUNT
Residential Gunnedah	0.01172553	49,900	\$585.15
GWS Availability Charge	2.42	1	\$2.42
Sewer Availability Charge	686	40	\$58,840
DWRMS 1-140L waste/240L rec/240L green	440	00	\$440.00
Waste Management Facility Fee	86	90	\$8,690

Use the online rates calculator to estimate how the special rate variation could affect you.  
[www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

👍❤️ 14

Want to learn more or have your say about the Proposed Special Rate Variation currently being considered by Council?

We have a range of community sessions coming up around our shire. The next one is tomorrow outside The Verdict Cafe in the main street of Gunnedah between 10am-midday.

For details go to the dedicated page on our website [www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au) .... See more

## COMMUNITY SESSIONS PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

**GUNNEDAH**  
Verdict Coffee Shop  
(outside)  
Wednesday, 7 August 2024  
10am-12pm

- Learn more about the proposed SRV
- Engage directly with Council
- Have your questions answered
- Provide your SRV feedback

**TAMBAR SPRINGS**  
Tambar Springs Hall  
Thursday, 8 August 2024  
9.30am-12pm

Find out more at  
[www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

**CARROLL**  
Carroll Hall  
Tuesday, 13 August 2024  
10am-12pm

Let's plan for the future of  
our region, together.



👍❤️ Jo McKinnon and 10 others

10 shares

Thank you to residents of the village of Curlewis who, despite the cold weather, showed up to our first community session last night to understand more about the proposed Special Rate Variation.

More than 70 people filled the community hall which served as a fantastic facility to host this important conversation.

Special thanks to the passionate Curlewis Progress NSW for their assistance in gathering such a strong attendance.

The next session will be held tomorrow outside The Verdict Cafe in Gunnedah between 10AM-12 Noon.

For more information and a full list of upcoming community sessions please go to our dedicated web page <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../proposed-special-rate...>



This morning, the first of a series of Gunnedah-based community information sessions, regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation being considered by Council, was held.

Initially designed for one-on-one conversations outside The Verdict cafe, to answer questions from our community on an individual basis, this was extended to a more formal group presentation inside the Town Hall that went for 2 hours and was facilitated by our General Manager Eric Groth, assisted by Govern...

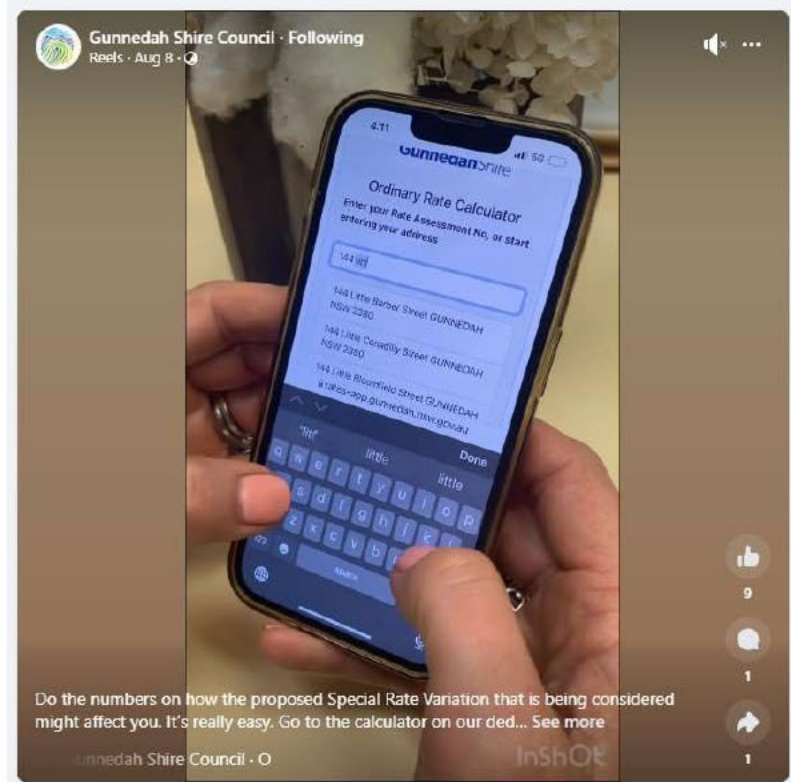




Gunnedah Shire Council  
August 7 · 🌐

The **Gunnedah Shire Council** will hold a community engagement session regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation currently currently being considered tomorrow at the **Tambar Springs Community Hall** between 9:30am-midday.

[Tambar Springs Progress Association CWA - Tambar Springs Branch](#)





Gunnedah Shire Council is in Tambar Springs.

August 8 · 🌐



Thank you to everyone from the Tambar Springs community who showed up for our information session this morning regarding the Special Rate Variation currently being considered by Council.

**CWA - Tambar Springs Branch Tambar Springs Community**

Our next scheduled information session will be held at the Carroll Community Hall next Tuesday, 13 August, between 10am-12pm,



Gunnedah Shire Council  
August 9 · 🌐

The **Gunnedah Shire Council** will hold a community information session regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation currently being considered next Tuesday, 13 August, at the Carroll Community Hall.

For a full list of locations we will hold sessions at please go to our dedicated web page [www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au) .



**COMMUNITY SESSION**  
**PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION**

**Carroll  
Community Hall  
Tuesday, 13 August 2024  
10:00am-midday**

Let's plan for the future of our region, together.



Gunnedah Shire Council  
August 13 · 🌐

Thanks to everyone who came to our information session this morning to learn more about the Special Rate Variation that is currently being considered by Council.

Special thanks also to the hard working Robyn Hattam and the **Carroll progress association** team who readied the hall for us and made us feel so welcome. It is much appreciated.

For the full schedule of upcoming community information sessions please go to the dedicated page on our website <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../proposed-special-rate...> .



Gunnedah Shire Council  
August 13 · 🌐

The **Gunnedah Shire Council** will hold a community information session regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation currently being considered tomorrow evening at the Gunnedah Town Hall.

For a full list of locations we will hold sessions at please go to our dedicated web page <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../proposed-special-rate...> .



**COMMUNITY SESSION**  
**PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION**

**Gunnedah Town Hall  
Wednesday, 14 August  
6.30pm-8pm**

Let's plan for the future of our region, together.



Gunnedah Shire Council  
August 14 · 🌐

The phone survey that has been taking place about the proposed Special Rate Variation is now available online. 🗳️

You can jump on to <https://app.keysurvey.com/f/41742584/741f/> to have your say.

To find out more about the proposed Special Rate Variation, you can visit <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../proposed-special-rate...> .

T... See more



**PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION SURVEY**

You can have your say about the proposed SRV on an online survey.

**Find out more at**  
[www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

Let's plan for the future of our region, together.



**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
August 14 · 🌐

A reminder that Gunnedah Shire Council will hold a community information session regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation currently being considered tonight at Gunnedah Town Hall. For a full list of locations of sessions, please go to our dedicated web page <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../proposed-special-rate...>

**COMMUNITY SESSION**  
**PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION**

**Gunnedah Town Hall**  
**Wednesday, 14 August**  
**6.30pm-8pm**

Let's plan for the future of our region, together.

**Gunnedah Shire Council**

Like Share

**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
August 14 · 🌐

Community information session about potential Special Rate Variation now in progress at the Town Hall.

Erin Carroll and 5 others · 2 shares

Like Share

**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
August 27 · 🌐

Don't forget, you can still have your say about the proposed rate variation. You can find out more, and find the link to the survey and other ways to have your say here: <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../proposed-special-rate...> You can find the rates calculator - that will give you an estimate of your own rates under a proposed rate variation on the same page. Submissions will close on Friday, 6 September, 2024.

**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
September 2 · 🌐

We are still seeking your view on a Proposed Special Rate Variation for Gunnedah Shire. You can fill out the survey here: <https://app.keysurvey.com/f/41742584/741f/> And find out more information here: <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../proposed-special-rate...> Submissions will close on Friday.

**Gunnedah Shire Council - Following**  
Reels - Aug 8 · 🌐

4:11  
gunnedahshire  
Ordinary Rate Calculator  
Enter your Rate Assessment No, or start entering your address  
144  
@rates-app.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au

**HAVE YOUR SAY**  
**PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION**

Let's plan for the future of our region, together.

**Gunnedah Shire Council**

Send message



Gunnedah Shire Council  
September 5 at 11:12 AM · 🌐



Submissions for the proposed Special Rates Variation close tomorrow.  
Our survey is available online!

**HAVE YOUR SAY  
PROPOSED  
SPECIAL RATE  
VARIATION**

Let's plan for the future of  
our region, together.

**Gunnedah**  
Shire Council

Gunnedah Shire Council  
Government organization

Send message

The advertisement features a scenic background of a tree in the foreground and a landscape under a sunset sky. The text is presented in a clean, sans-serif font. The bottom of the ad has a dark blue curved banner with a green stripe above it. The Gunnedah Shire Council logo is a stylized fingerprint-like graphic.

# Instagram



**gunnedah\_shire** ...

**gunnedah\_shire** Gunnedah Shire Council is planning for the future of the region, by considering the proposal of a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to maintain, and potentially enhance the services the community currently receives.

With initial community consultation on the SRV to be undertaken over the coming weeks, an SRV will allow Council to increase its general income above the rate peg, to provide the services and infrastructure desired by the community. SRVs can be either for a single year or over multiple years and can be permanent or temporary.

At Council's ordinary meeting on 19 June 2024, Council endorsed the 2024/25 Operational Plan that included the action to begin consultation with the community about a potential SRV.

The potential application will be for a permanent SRV of 38.88% over two years. This will be comprised of a 24% increase in the first year (2025/26) and a 12% increase in the second year (2026/27). Both years include an assumed rate peg of 5%.

The proposed SRV would only apply to the rates portion of the bill (usually listed as the first item on the bill e.g. "Residential Gunnedah") and not the separately listed essential charges such as waste and water.

Council will be engaging with the community over the coming weeks to gather feedback, share information and answer any questions around the proposed SRV. A series of drop-in sessions will be available for residents and ratepayers to attend, along with an online form for community members to provide feedback on Council's website.

Edited · 8w

♡ 🔍 📌

Liked by **hisgalus** and others  
August 2

😊 Add a comment... Post



# Gunnedah Shire Council

Community Strategic Plan and Special Rate Variation

Community Information Pack

2 August 2024



## AGENDA

- Community Strategic Plan
  - Current Community Strategic Plan themes
  - Are they still current and appropriate.
- Financial Sustainability & Special Rate Variation
  - Current Financial position
  - Our options
  - Why consider an SRV?
  - SRV value for discussion
  - Impact on ratepayers
  - Where will the money be spent?
  - How do we compare to others
  - Is it just Gunnedah Shire in this position?
- Discussion

## Community Strategic Plan Review

- Current Themes
- **Theme 1: Engaging and Supporting the Community**
  - Focused on community leadership, engagement in decision-making and Council's role as an organisation and the need to fund and manage infrastructure.
- **Theme 2: Building our Shire's Economy**
  - Focuses on an increasing population, investment and diversifying the Shore's economic base.
- **Theme 3: Retaining Our Quality of Life**
  - Focuses on creating positivity of country living, in a supportive and friendly community.
  - It is a great place to bring up a family. Parklands, open space, sporting and cultural facilities offer a wide range of recreational opportunities. "There is always something to do if you are interested."
- **Theme 4: Protecting and Enjoying Our Beautiful Surrounds**
  - Focuses on our beautiful surrounds include the open plains, landscapes, waterways, native flora and fauna as well as our built environment, heritage, parks and urban streetscapes.
  - Covers agriculture benefits from productive soils and mining from high quality coal deposits.
  - Notes the importance of the balance between development and industry and maintaining biodiversity.
  - Covers the need for our precious koalas need to be protected and nurtured.



## Themes: Are they still current?

- Where do we want to be in 10 years' time?
- What are our current priorities and aspirations?
- Is the community willing to pay for additional services (either new or increased services)
- Are our current themes still current?
  - *Engaging and Supporting the Community*
  - *Building our Shire's economy*
  - *Retaining our quality of life*
  - *Protecting and Enjoying our beautiful surrounds*

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## Current Financial Position Forecast Operating Result



- Councils' current rates income is approximately \$16m per year and has an operating deficit of \$3.1m/year in the General Fund excluding Domestic Waste Management.
- This means Council is spending \$3.1m less than required to maintain its assets and for each year this continues, the asset renewal backlog increases by \$3.1m
- GSC's general fund is currently in a stable but weakening financial position, heavily reliant on State and Federal grants. (for example, the \$3.1m deficit includes additional roads funding not guaranteed after 28/29)
- GSC has limited unrestricted cash reserves and without addressing this, GSC will move into a negative unrestricted cash position within three years. This cannot be allowed to happen.
- It is important to note the bank account balance does not equal the unrestricted cash reserves. There are concerns \$10m in the bank may be seen as 'not bad' which is misleading.

## What are our options

*The options Council has available include:*

- 1. Reducing service levels, which will impact the local economy,*
- 2. Sell and/or dispose of assets that will reduce the associated on-going expenses,*
- 3. Increase income raised through rates, user fee and charges, and other sources, or*
- 4. A combination of the above options.*

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## Why an SRV?

- Efficiency gains can only cover a portion of the shortfall.
- GSC has very limited opportunity to increase own source revenue.
- Council's income base from rates is fixed. Any increase is limited to an annual 'rate peg' amount set by the State Government.
- The rate peg has not been sufficient to cover the true increase in the cost of running Council in recent years.
  - If the rate peg has been 2%pa below the real increased cost of services, it equates to a compound effect of 22% over the past ten years.
  - At 3% it equates to a compounded effect of 34% over the past ten years.

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## How much does Council need?

- Council needs an additional \$3.1m per annum on top of normal cost increases (currently approx. \$800k per annum) to address the current known asset renewal gap in General Fund excluding domestic waste.
- Council also needs an additional \$1.5m per year to create capacity that will allow us to:
  - commence addressing the infrastructure backlog
    - The Roads and Buildings backlog is currently \$15m over 10 years.

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## What is the Proposed SRV?

- Council is discussing an SRV of 38.88% to be implemented over two years.
- The proposed SRV is for maintaining our assets by addressing the renewal gap and creating capacity to commence addressing the backlog of works.
- The implementation would be proposed as:
  - 24% in year one – this will address the current renewal gap to stop further asset deterioration, and
  - 12% in year – this will create capacity to commence addressing the backlog.

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## Implications of the SRV Options

### Do Nothing

- Always an option and the default scenario if no decision to proceed is made.
- Will result in a further deterioration of assets and an increase in the asset renewal backlog.
- Will ultimately mean a lower level of service over key asset classes

### **38.88% increase implemented across two years and retained permanently**

- Will allow for the assets to be maintained at current targeted service levels
- Will create capacity to address a portion of the backlog of renewal works.
- Will create some capacity to address the impacts of cost shifting and match future grant opportunities.
- Implementing over two years will reduce the single year impact on ratepayers and time to build resources to utilise the funds.
- Will allow more time to seek other funding sources
- Potential to not apply full amount if alternate funding can be sourced

## Impacts of the SRV Options – No SRV

Category	2024/25 Average per annum	Year 1 Increase / per annum	Year 1 Increase / per week	Year 2 Increase / per annum	Year 2 Increase / per week	2026/27 Average per annum
Residential	\$1,106	\$54	\$1.04	\$58	\$1.12	\$1,218
Business	\$5,899	\$286	\$5.50	\$309	\$5.94	\$6,494
Farmland	\$5,337	\$258	\$4.96	\$280	\$5.38	\$5,875

Under this option the impact would be:

- Our sealed and gravel road networks would deteriorate.
- Council would not be able to maintain the range of facilities and services currently provided.
- Council would rely heavily on grant funding to renew existing assets.
- Community and recreational facilities such as pools and buildings will continue to deteriorate if grant funding is not successful, and potentially closed when the risk of operating becomes unacceptable.
- Council's backlog of roadworks would continue to increase and gravel roads would not be improved.



## Impacts of the SRV Options – 38.88% increase

Category	2024/25 Average per annum	Year 1 Increase / per annum	Year 1 Increase / per week	Year 2 Increase / per annum	Year 2 Increase / per week	2026/27 Average per annum
Residential	\$1,106	\$264	\$5.08	\$164	\$3.15	\$1,534
Business	\$5,899	\$1,405	\$27.02	\$877	\$16.87	\$8,181
Farmland	\$5,337	\$1,271	\$24.44	\$793	\$15.25	\$7,401

The proposed SRV is anticipated to generate an additional revenue of \$6.2 million over a two-year period from 2025-2026 to 2026-2027 and will be used to fund maintenance of local infrastructure, including:

- Grading unsealed local roads to meet existing service levels;
- Additional maintenance of rural roads;
- Roadwork and renewal of urban streets;
- Increased bitumen resealing and gravel re-sheeting to keep our roads at a good standard and prevent them from deteriorating;
- Culverts, causeways, drainage and footpath renewal; and
- Community assets renewal.

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## Where would the money be spent?

Rate Peg Only	24% increase in year 1	12% increase in year 2
Additional income of \$777,000 (based on 5%).	Additional income of \$3.82m	Additional income of \$2.38m
The funds would be split to cover award wages increases and contractual obligations with any residual allocated to asset classes and priority works if/where possible. (e.g. the 24/25 award wage increase equates to \$500,000 for general fund excluding waste).	<p>\$800k – general cost increases due to award wages increase and contract obligations</p> <p>Infrastructure Renewal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$2.1m – Transport</li> <li>• \$500k Open Space</li> <li>• \$400k – Buildings</li> <li>• Stormwater – TBD</li> </ul> <p><i>Transport includes Sealed Roads, Unsealed roads, Bridges, Signage</i></p>	<p>\$900k – general cost increases due to award wages increase and contract obligations</p> <p>\$1,500,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ commence addressing the backlog of works (Commencing with Roads and Buildings).</li> </ul>

**None of these scenarios include any capacity to address items such as the Cultural precinct Masterplan, Admin building upgrades until at least year five and assuming future rate pegs cover the true increase in operating costs.**

# What do you get for you General Rates?

- Residential - \$21.27 / week, Business - \$113.44/week,
- Farmland - \$102.63/week (values and services exclude Water, Sewer and Domestic Waste)

- Roads, bridges and transport services
- Libraries/library services
- Cemeteries
- Sporting facilities and grounds
- Events and festivals
- Arts and cultural facilities
- Swimming pools/Aquatic centres
- Parks and playgrounds
- Community buildings/halls
- Development Control and Planning
- Street cleaning / Street Lighting
- Public Amenities
- Emergency Services (RFS, SES, Fire & Rescue, ESL)
- Community safety/crime prevention / Graffiti management

- Youth Services
- Local area/town centre appearance
- Health / Food safety
- Weed / Vegetation control
- Stormwater drainage/flood management
- Litter control & rubbish dumping
- Protecting the natural environment
- Tree management
- Economic Development
- Domestic animal control
- Tourism
- Protecting heritage values and buildings
- Community Engagement
- Governance / Elected members / Grant applications
- Advocacy

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# How will the SRV impacts my Rates



ABN 80 163 655 793  
Administration Building  
63 Elgin St, Gunnedah  
PO Box 63, Gunnedah, NSW 2380  
Enquiries (02) 6740 2100  
Email: council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au  
Web: www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au

## RATES AND CHARGES NOTICE 01/07/2024 to 30/06/2025

RATES ACCOUNT NUMBER
DATE OF POSTING
17/07/2024
DUE DATE
31/08/2024
RATEABLE VALUE BASE DATE
1/07/2022
RATE CATEGORY
Residential Gunnedah

Gunnedah Shire Council  
PO Box 63  
GUNNEDAH NSW 2380

### LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

[Redacted Property Address]



**eNotices**  
To have your notices emailed  
Register at [gunnedah.enotices.com.au](http://gunnedah.enotices.com.au)  
Reference No: 0B9D30F35S

PARTICULARS OF RATES AND CHARGES	CENTS IN \$	RATEABLE VALUE	AMOUNT
Residential Gunnedah	0.01172653	49,900	\$585.15
GWS Availability Charge	242.50	1	\$242.50
Sewer Availability Charge	638.40	1	\$638.40
DWMS 1- 140L waste/240L rec/240L green	440.00	1	\$440.00
Waste Management Facility Fee	86.90	1	\$86.90

	2024/25 Value	25/26 - 24% SRV	26/27 - 12% SRV	25/26 Annual Increase	25/26 Weekly Increase	26/27 Annual Increase	26/27 Weekly Increase
Residential Gunnedah	\$ 585.15	\$ 724.57	\$ 811.56	\$ 139.42	\$ 2.69	\$ 96.99	\$ 1.87
		25/26 - 5%	26/27 - 5%				
GWS Availability Charge	\$ 242.50	\$ 254.63	\$ 267.36	\$ 12.13	\$ 0.23	\$ 12.73	\$ 0.24
Sewer Availability Charge	\$ 638.40	\$ 722.62	\$ 796.96	\$ 34.42	\$ 0.66	\$ 36.14	\$ 0.70
DWMS 1- 140L waste/240L rec/240L green	\$ 440.00	\$ 462.00	\$ 485.30	\$ 22.00	\$ 0.42	\$ 23.30	\$ 0.44
Waste Management Fee	\$ 86.90	\$ 91.25	\$ 95.53	\$ 4.35	\$ 0.08	\$ 4.56	\$ 0.09
	\$ 2,042.95	\$ 2,355.26	\$ 2,439.79	\$ 292.31	\$ 4.08	\$ 363.52	\$ 3.34

Daily interest will be calculated on overdue Rates and Charges at 10.5% per annum.

1st INSTALMENT	2nd INSTALMENT	3rd INSTALMENT	4th INSTALMENT	TOTAL PAYMENT DUE
\$512.95	\$510.00	\$510.00	\$510.00	\$2,042.95
31/08/2024	30/11/2024	28/02/2025	31/05/2025	12/07/2024

## Impacts of the SRV Options - detailed

Rating Category	Sub-Category	Base Scenario (5% in 25/26)			Year One Increase (24% in 25/26)			Cumulative Year Two Increase (24% in 25/26 and 12% in 26/27)				
		Average Rate by Category	Increase in Average rate per annum	Additional Cost per week	Average Rate by Category	Increase in Average rate per annum	Additional Cost per week	Average Rate by Category	Increase in Average rate per annum	Year two weekly increase	Cumulative increase in Average rate per annum	Cumulative Additional Cost per week
Residential	Ordinary	\$993.37	\$46.02	\$0.89	\$1,173.04	\$225.70	\$4.34	\$1,313.84	\$140.80	\$2.71	\$366.50	\$7.05
	Rural	\$1,294.24	\$59.92	\$1.15	\$1,528.89	\$294.16	\$5.66	\$1,712.36	\$183.47	\$3.53	\$477.63	\$9.19
	Gunnedah	\$1,251.00	\$57.75	\$1.11	\$1,473.94	\$283.58	\$5.45	\$1,650.81	\$176.87	\$3.40	\$460.45	\$8.85
	Village	\$614.32	\$28.29	\$0.54	\$725.54	\$139.51	\$2.68	\$812.57	\$87.03	\$1.67	\$226.54	\$4.36
Business	Ordinary	\$1,027.07	\$47.23	\$0.91	\$1,213.25	\$233.41	\$4.48	\$1,358.24	\$145.22	\$2.79	\$378.40	\$7.28
	Gunnedah	\$7,288.80	\$337.29	\$6.49	\$8,607.60	\$1,656.09	\$31.85	\$9,640.58	\$1,032.98	\$19.87	\$2,689.07	\$51.71
	Business Power Generation	\$12,151.13	\$562.30	\$10.81	\$14,349.69	\$2,760.86	\$53.09	\$16,071.78	\$1,722.09	\$33.12	\$4,482.95	\$86.21
Fermland		\$5,595.43	\$258.89	\$4.98	\$6,607.85	\$1,271.31	\$24.45	\$7,400.80	\$792.95	\$15.25	\$2,064.26	\$39.70
Mining		\$331,774.99	\$15,359.02	\$295.37	\$392,042.13	\$75,426.21	\$1,450.50	\$439,087.13	\$47,045.00	\$904.71	\$122,471.21	\$2,355.22
Additional Yield			\$777,378.75			\$3,817,734.71			\$2,381,205.71			

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## What if I am struggling to pay my rates

- Council is aware of the rising costs faced by the community. These same drivers are one of the key factors driving this conversation.
- Council has reviewed and updated its Councils 'Hardship Policy' which works to provide relief.
- Council is reviewing options to minimise the impact of any potential rate rise on residents including consideration of a potential freeze of some annual charges
  - e.g., domestic waste and sewer charges for one year if the SRV proceeds to minimise the impact on the community.
- Council will also seek to ensure the community are aware of the various methods available to pay rates. For example, demonstrate how residents can pay their rates in smaller but more frequent payments, e.g., weekly/fortnightly/monthly.

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Shire Council

## What is Council doing to improve efficiencies?

- Council will also continue improving its operations, however there is not enough capacity to cover the full amount of the asset renewal gap through efficiency gains alone.
- Efficiency gains are normally used to offset unexpected expenses, such as cost shifting, and minimise future increases.
- Recent improvement and savings include:
  - Insurance savings,
  - Reduced electricity costs (street lighting and Sewer treatment Plant),
  - Service Review program,
  - Changed unsealed roads techniques (compaction v dry grading),
  - Parks and Gardens (GPS line marking, irrigation systems),
  - IT system improvements and Planning portal integration, and
  - Library service improvements.

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## Is it only Gunnedah Shire Council?

- No, Financial sustainability is a significant issue across local government in NSW.
- Recent years have seen:
  - Significant Cost shifting (e.g., Emergency Services Levy)
  - Increased regulatory costs (e.g., increased audit costs),
  - Growth in asset base. (largely created from grant-funded projects, which are good for the community but create ongoing funding requirements),
  - Labour market challenges, and
  - Large increases in the cost of maintaining assets (e.g., increased price of steel, concrete and associated services).

There are currently multiple reviews being undertaken across the sector to review how we ensure appropriate and sustainable Councils into the future. These include

- Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability, and
- Inquiry - Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services.

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## Is it only Gunnedah Shire Council (cont.)

Across the North-West and the New England, the following Councils have applied for and received SRVs in the past two years.

- Tamworth Regional Council – 36.3% over two years (24/25)
- Armidale Regional Council – 58.8% over three years (23/24)
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council – 18.1% in one year (23/24)
- Tenterfield Council – 43% in one year (23/24)
- Walcha Council – 57.74% across three years (23/24)

Across the state

- Nine (9) Councils made applications for 24/25, and
- 17 applications in 23/24.

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Shire Council

## Timeline

### **29 July – 6 September**

- Community Consultation

### **9 September – 23 September**

- Report on outcomes in preparation for new Council
- Update draft CSP on feedback from consultation

### **October**

- Present findings to new Council

### **November / early December**

- Final decision on SRV application by new Council

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## How to get information and provide feedback

### Information

- Council's website
  - Background Information
  - Rates Calculator
- Community Engagement Sessions
- Newsletter's
- Call Council's customer service team

### Feedback

- Community Engagement Sessions
- Council's website
- Email Council
- ***IPART will also undertake consultation if an application proceeds***

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Shire Council

## Q&A

- **Where do we want to be in 10 years' time?**
- **What are our current priorities and aspirations?**
- **Is the community willing to pay for additional services (either new or increased services)?**
- **Are our current themes still current?**
  - *Engaging and Supporting the Community*
  - *Building our Shire's economy*
  - *Retaining our quality of life*
  - *Protecting and Enjoying our beautiful surrounds*
- **How does the potential SRV application affect your feedback?**

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## Appendix

### ➤ Comparison of Rates

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## Comparison of Rates – Neighbouring Councils

Rates comparisons for Gunnedah to the two neighbouring Councils closest in services from the 2024/25 financial year.

	Average Residential rate \$			Average Business rate \$			Average Farmland rate \$		
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
	Current Year	(1st SV year)	(2nd SV year)	Current Year	(1st SV year)	(2nd SV year)	Current Year	(1st SV year)	(2nd SV year)
<b>Gunnedah Shire Council</b>	\$1,106.17	\$1,369.68	\$1,534.04	\$5,898.78	\$7,304.32	\$8,180.84	\$5,336.54	\$6,607.85	\$7,400.80
<b>Narrabri Shire</b>	\$1,143.18	\$1,200.34	\$1,260.36	\$2,921.42	\$3,067.49	\$3,220.86	\$4,437.54	\$4,659.42	\$4,892.39
<b>Tamworth Regional</b>	\$1,387.41	\$1,595.52	\$1,675.30	\$4,942.02	\$5,683.32	\$5,967.49	\$2,530.45	\$2,910.02	\$3,055.52
<b>Average</b>	\$1,063.63	\$1,186.21	\$1,264.69	\$3,652.78	\$4,156.38	\$4,466.46	\$4,290.81	\$4,756.86	\$5,087.21
<b>Difference to Average (\$)</b>	-\$159.13	-\$28.25	\$66.21	\$1,967.06	\$2,928.92	\$3,586.67	\$1,852.55	\$2,823.13	\$3,426.85
<b>Difference to Average (%)</b>	-14.385%	-2.063%	4.316%	33.347%	40.098%	43.842%	34.714%	42.724%	<sup>26</sup> 46.304%



**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
**Special Variation Application**

**Community Engagement Materials**

**Round 2 Community Engagement Period:**

**7 November 2024 to 19 December 2024**

# ATTACHMENTS

## Appendix A – Direct letter to ratepayers

**Gunnedah**  
Shire Council



29 November 2024

Dear Ratepayer

### **Proposed Special Rate Variation and Minimum Rate Increase**

Like many councils across NSW, Gunnedah Shire Council is facing the difficulty of maintaining its infrastructure and services within our existing income levels. Our long-term financial projections show that we are currently operating with an average \$3.1 million annual deficit in the General Fund.

*This essentially means that we are spending \$3.1 million per annum less than we should be to maintain our assets and services to our current targeted service levels.*

The Gunnedah Shire is a wonderful place to live, work and visit and maintaining our assets and services is essential to retaining the high quality of life we enjoy as residents, businesses, investors and tourists.

Council recently undertook an extensive community engagement process regarding a potential Special Rate Variation (SRV) driven by a need to address our financial and asset sustainability.

The additional income generated by the SRV would ensure Council has sufficient funds to maintain and renew its assets and address the backlog of works.

We have listened to the community's feedback and, at a meeting held on 6 November 2024, Council made the difficult but necessary decision to proceed with an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART) for a Special Rate Variation that is an overall 37.67% cumulative increase to be implemented over two years and retained permanently, comprised of:

- A capped 15% increase per year or 32.25% cumulative increase applied to the **Residential, Business, Farmland** rating categories, and
- An 85.13% cumulative increase applied to the **Mining** rating category.

At the same meeting, Council also resolved to:

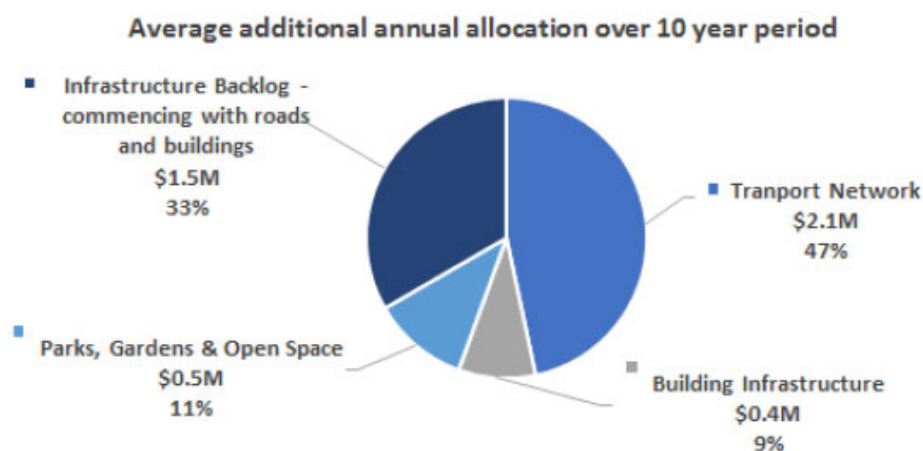
- make application to increase Minimum rates in line with the proposed SRV, and
- strive to achieve \$930,000 of savings and efficiency gains over the next three years along with a report to Council each May to outline progress.

If Council's application is successful, the SRV would be implemented over the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years.

The current SRV proposal is lower for Residential, Business, Farmland rating categories than what was previously consulted on. In the original SRV proposal, these rating categories would have experienced an increase of 38.88% over two years. Under the revised SRV proposal we have been able to reduce the burden for these rating categories by 6.63% to 32.25% over two years.

Whilst there was strong support for no SRV indicated in the community feedback, there was equally strong support for levels of service to at least be maintained or even improved, which is not possible without an SRV.

The proposed SRV would generate additional revenue to address the maintenance and renewal of Council's assets and address our unsustainable unrestricted cash forecast. The graph below shows the annual allocation of the additional funding that would be generated by the proposed SRV following the two-year implementation period.



Council considered six scenarios prior to endorsing the application for the 37.67% SRV and the below table shows how the community feedback influenced the decision on the revised SRV proposal.

Council considered six scenarios prior to endorsing the application for the 37.67% SRV and the below table shows how the community feedback influenced the decision on the revised SRV proposal.

Community Feedback	Influence on SRV Proposal
The community does not want to pay higher rates (noting current difficult times and costs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clearly heard, however, this is not an option whilst being financially responsible and undertaking appropriate asset maintenance and renewal.</li> <li>Council is investigating options to consider freezing or limiting increases to Water, Sewerage and Waste annual charges to partly offset the SRV increase, should it be approved. Note that while these are all shown on the 'Rates and Charges' notice the SRV only applies to rates.</li> </ul>
The community does not want to see a reduction in service levels and wants to see an increase in some areas (especially in the condition of Council's roads).	Clearly heard and the key factor in the scale of the revised proposed SRV and implementation timeframe, especially the ability to commence addressing the backlog of works with rising costs.
If an SRV is required, then it should be for a smaller amount and/or phased in over a longer period to reduce the single year impact on residents and ratepayers (especially those on fixed incomes).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed cumulative increase to residential, business and farmland rating categories reduced from 38.88% to 32.25%.</li> <li>The proposed first year increase applicable to residential, business and farmland rating categories reduced from 24% to 15%.</li> <li>The proposed SRV implementation retained as two years to address the unrestricted cash position and commence addressing the backlog of works.</li> </ul>
The split of how an SRV is applied should be reviewed so the balance is right between the various rating categories of residential, business, farmland and mining.	
Council needs to ensure it is operating as efficiently as possible, is engaging with the community and is transparent in its decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The driver behind Council's decision that it strive to achieve \$930,000 of efficiency gains over the next three years.</li> <li>Council has committed to regular public reporting on savings and efficiency gains and ongoing engagement with the community.</li> </ul>
Council needs to look at non-rate revenue that can help address the asset renewal gap and find a solution to ensure large SRVs are not needed in the future.	Council is continuing to advocate that the State and Federal governments return total taxation revenue provided to Local Government for operational purposes to 1% of total taxation revenue, as this has reduced to approximately 0.55%.

Council would like to hear from the community regarding this revised proposal and we invite you to provide your views on the revised SRV proposal by **5pm Thursday, 19 December 2024**.

Following this engagement, Council will prepare, finalise and lodge applications to IPART to apply for a Special Rate Variation and Minimum rate increase. A copy of the application and submissions from the revised proposal will be formally presented to Council in January 2025 prior to lodgement with IPART by 3 February 2025.

Once an application is submitted, IPART will also undertake their own community consultation where residents and ratepayers will have the ability to lodge submissions directly to IPART regarding the applications.

The enclosed Fact Sheet provides information on the SRV, where you can obtain further information and how you can have your say.

Yours faithfully



Eric Groth  
GENERAL MANAGER

Contact: 02 6740 2100

#### See what the SRV means for you

Use our rates calculator to see how the SRV could affect your property by going to:

<https://rates-app.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/>

And entering your address or assessment number. Below is an example of what the rates calculator will show you.

Ordinary Rate Calculator	
<b>Assessment No</b>	
13279251	
<b>Property Address</b>	
144 Little Conadilly Street GUNNEDAH NSW 2380	
<b>2022 Rateable Land Value</b>	
\$49,900.00	
<b>Rate Category/Sub Category</b>	
Residential Gunnedah	
<b>Current (24-25)</b>	
Ordinary Rates Payable	\$585.15
<b>Proposed Rate Structure (25-26)</b>	
Ordinary Rates Payable	\$672.96
Movement between rating years	\$87.81
% movement	15.01%
<b>Weekly Variance</b>	<b>\$1.69</b>
<b>Proposed Rate Structure (26-27)</b>	
Ordinary Rates Payable	\$773.96
Movement between rating years	\$101.00
% movement	15.01%
<b>Weekly Variance</b>	<b>\$1.94</b>
<b>Cumulative % increase</b>	<b>32.27%</b>
<b>Disclaimer</b>	
Please note that these are indicative rates based upon current information utilising Land Valuations base dated 1 July 2022. The actual rate amount will be dependent upon future valuation changes, categorisation changes and land value movements and final approval of the rating structure by Council during the finalisation of the Special Rate Variation process. The special rate variation is applicable to the general rate only and does not include annual charges for Council services such as stormwater, water supply, sewer supply, waste services or government levies.	

### What SRV is now proposed?

Council considered a range of scenarios in response to the community feedback and has determined to proceed with an application to IPART for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) as follows:

1. a section 508(A) permanent SRV to address Council's financial sustainability and maintain essential community infrastructure and service levels,
2. the total SRV is 37.67% cumulative to be implemented over two years commencing in the 2025/26 financial year,
3. the increase on Residential, Business and Farmland rating categories is capped at 15% per year (32.25% cumulative) with the balance of the revised SRV to be sourced from the Mining rating category (85.13% cumulative), and
4. An application to increase the Maximum value of the Minimum ordinary rate to match the section 508(A) permanent SRV application value.

Council was mindful of community feedback regarding efficiency and productivity and included an action to strive to find \$930,000 through efficiency gains and operational savings and report on progress in May each year.

The following tables show the revised proposed SRV by year.

	2025/26	2026/27	Cumulative
Permanent increase above rate peg	13.30%	13.17%	
Rate Peg (2025/26 actual, 2026/27 forecast)	4.70%	3.50%	
<b>Total SRV</b>	<b>18.00%</b>	<b>16.67%</b>	<b>37.67%</b>

Rating Category	2025/26	2026/27	Compounded Increase %
Residential	15.00%	15.00%	32.25%
Business	15.00%	15.00%	32.25%
Farmland	15.00%	15.00%	32.25%
Mining	43.66%	28.87%	85.13%

The impact on individual ratepayers will vary according to the rating category their property is in. The below information shows the indicative impact of the SRV on the average ratepayer in each main rating category.

Rating Category	2024/25 Average	2025/26 Year 1 Increase	2025/26 Year 1 Increase	2026/27 Year 2 Increase	2026/27 Year 2 Increase	2026/27 Average
	Per Annum	Per Annum	Per Week	Per Annum	Per Week	Per Annum
Residential	\$1,106.16	\$165.93	\$3.19	\$190.81	\$3.67	\$1,462.90
Business	\$5,899.02	\$884.85	\$17.02	\$1,017.58	\$19.57	\$7,801.45
Farmland	\$5,336.54	\$800.49	\$15.39	\$920.55	\$17.70	\$7,057.58
Mining	\$316,615.92	\$138,232.82	\$2,658.32	\$131,297.32	\$2,524.95	\$586,146.06

To apply the SRV as proposed, Council will also be applying for an increase in the Maximum value of its Minimum rates, as follows:

Rating Category	2024/25	2025/26	2025/26 Year 1 Increase	% Increase	2026/27	2026/27 Year 2 Increase	% Increase	Cumulative % Increase
Residential – Ordinary								
Residential – Rural	\$555.00	\$638.00	\$83.00	14.95%	\$733.00	\$95.00	14.89%	32.07%
Residential – Gunnedah								
Business – Gunnedah	\$544.00	\$625.00	\$81.00	14.89%	\$718.00	\$93.00	14.88%	31.99%
Farmland	\$555.00	\$638.00	\$83.00	14.95%	\$733.00	\$95.00	14.89%	32.07%

The above increase is designed to ensure an equitable rating distribution across all ratepayers.



### What is a Special Rate Variation?

IPART sets the amount councils in NSW can increase total rates by each year, which is called the rate peg. A Special Rate Variation is a request by a council to increase rates by more than the rate peg amount. The value of the SRV must include the value of the rate peg applicable in each year of the SRV.

### Where can I obtain further information?

Further information on the proposed SRV is available from Council's website [www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au) including access to a calculator that will show you the impact of the proposed SRV on your property's rates, based on the current land value as set by the NSW Valuer General. It is important to note that changes in land value will likely impact rates, however, Council's overall revenue from rates does not increase due to changes in land valuations.



Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documents have been updated to include additional information on the proposed SRV. These are currently on public exhibition until Thursday, 19 December 2024 and can be viewed on Council's website under 'Draft Documents & Exhibition'. These documents include:

- Community Engagement Strategy
- Amended Delivery Program 2022/23-2025/26
- Amended Resourcing Strategy 2022/23-2025/26; including the Long Term Financial Plan 2025/26-2034/35
- Amended Operational Plan 2024/25

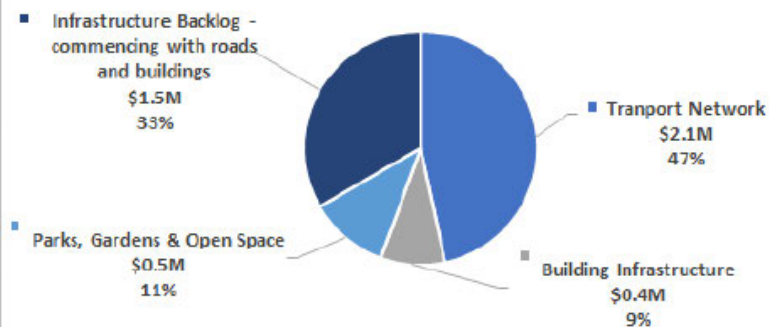
Enquiries regarding this SRV proposal should be directed to Council's customer service team on (02) 6740 2100 or via email: [council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

### What would the SRV be used for?

The proposed SRV would generate additional revenue to address the maintenance and renewal of Council's assets and the forecast unsustainable unrestricted cash position. The portion above the rate peg component and funds required to address the unrestricted cash position would be used to fund maintenance and renewal of assets, including:

<b>1. Transport Network</b> <i>Sealed and unsealed roads, bridges, footpaths, kerb and gutter.</i>
<b>2. Building Infrastructure</b> <i>Community halls, cultural precinct, library, Council offices, community housing.</i>
<b>3. Parks, Gardens and Open Space</b>

Average additional annual allocation over 10 year period



The above graph shows the annual allocation of additional funding generated by the SRV following the two-year implementation period.

If the SRV application is successful, Council would be required to account for and report on the allocation of SRV-related expenditure each year via the Annual Report, which is a public document. Council has also committed to quarterly reporting on SRV expenditure that will be publicly available.

### What is Council doing to be more efficient?

Council has made significant efforts to improve operations and deliver services to the community without increasing rates over several years. Council has a focus on continuous improvement and has introduced a program of service reviews to improve operations and maximise the use and efficiency of resources. This program is overseen by the Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee and, while the reviews are showing that a number of improvements have already been achieved and more are possible, the reality is that any drop in funding will translate to a drop in service levels.

A key criteria for the SRV application is that Council can demonstrate the achievement of past efficiencies and what is planned for the future. Council also included the following action as part of the endorsement of the SRV: *That Council strive to achieve \$930,000 through efficiency gains and operational savings over the 3-year period 2025 to 2028 with a report to council by May 30th annually during this period on the progress of achieving these savings and/or efficiency gains.*

### Why is an SRV needed?

Like many councils across NSW, Gunnedah Shire Council is facing the difficulty of maintaining its infrastructure and services within our existing income levels and our long-term financial plan shows that we are currently operating with an average \$3.1 million annual deficit in the General Fund (excluding domestic waste).

*This essentially means that we are spending \$3.1 million per annum less than we should be to maintain our assets and services to our current targeted service levels.*

Council's role in the community includes managing a vast network of infrastructure assets used by the general public on a daily basis. The SRV funding is needed to maintain existing infrastructure and service levels.

The SRV is also needed to address Council's current and forecast cash position. Our current forecast shows that our projected cash reserves will be in decline and the unrestricted cash position in the General Fund will potentially move into a negative balance within two years without intervention. A negative unrestricted cash balance cannot be allowed to occur.

The SRV is required to address:

- Current and forecast General Fund operating deficits (averaging around \$3.1m/year for the next 10 years),
- Council's unrestricted cash position (currently forecast to become negative during 2027/28), and
- The current asset renewal gap and backlog of works (\$15m over 10 years for roads and buildings).

The following has contributed to the current unsustainable financial outlook:

- the cost to deliver services and maintain community assets to current service levels has been increasing above the value of rate peg each year,
- reduced financial assistance and ongoing cost shifting to Local Government by other levels of government with limited or no financial compensation, and
- high inflation that has contributed to an increase in Council's costs in a range of areas.

If no SRV is implemented, Council would need to defer necessary capital works and revise the basic range and levels of services provided to the community to avoid a deteriorating cash position, which is not sustainable in the long term. Service levels would need to reduce in the absence of additional funding being available.

### What would the SRV apply to?

The proposed SRV would only apply to the rates portion of the 'Rates and Charges Notice' (usually listed as the first item e.g. "Residential Gunnedah"). It does not apply to the separately listed essential charges such as waste, water and sewer.

Council is investigating options to consider freezing or limiting increases to Water, Sewerage and Waste annual charges to partly offset the SRV increase, should it be approved.

### What happens now?

Residents and ratepayers are invited to read about the proposed SRV and have their say. You can provide a submission in writing by **5pm Thursday, 19 December 2024** in the following ways:

Mail	The General Manager Gunnedah Shire Council PO Box 63 Gunnedah NSW 2380
Email	<a href="mailto:council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au">council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au</a>
Web Form	Accessible from Council's website from the 'Contact Us' page

At the conclusion of the current period of community engagement, Council will prepare, finalise and lodge an application to IPART to apply for a Special Rate Variation by 3 February 2025. A copy of this application, including any submissions to the revised SRV proposal, will be presented to Council at an extraordinary meeting in January 2025 prior to lodgement.

IPART will then assess Council's SRV application and conduct their own process of consultation, which the community can directly make submissions to. Further information on the SRV process, including the timeline, fact sheets and information papers are available on IPART's website: [www.ipart.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au)

# Appendix B – Updated SRV Website

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Gunnedah Shire Council website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with categories: EVERYDAY LIVING (life in gunnedah), LIFESTYLE (arts & recreation), COMMUNITY (services & safety), BUSINESS & INDUSTRY, DEVELOPMENT (planning & building), ENVIRONMENT (wildlife & waste), and COUNCIL (what we do). A search bar is located in the top right. The main content area features a large banner image of a road through a forest with the text "Facelift for village signs". To the right of the banner are three smaller promotional boxes: "Proposed Special Rate Variation", "Council Christmas Closure Information", and "Visit Gunnedah". Below these are several service tiles: "Draft Documents & Exhibition", "GunnedahShire What's On", and "GUNNEDAH CULTURAL PRECINCT". A grid of icons provides quick access to services like NSW PLANNING PORTAL, PLANNING & BUILDING, PETS & ANIMALS, ROAD CLOSURES, EVENTS CALENDAR, BUSINESS PAPERS, COUNCIL MEETINGS, FUNDING FINDER, COUNCIL CAREERS, and CONTACT US. A "LATEST NEWS & MEDIA" section is at the bottom.

The screenshot shows the "Proposed Special Rate Variation" page on the Gunnedah Shire Council website. The breadcrumb trail is "HOME / COUNCIL / The Future of Gunnedah". The page title is "PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION" with a sub-section for "Special Rates Calculator". A large image of a sunset over a body of water is featured. Below the image, there are buttons for "Rates Calculator" and "Make a Submission". The page is dated "Updated November 2024". An "Overview" section follows, stating that the Council has identified a Special Rate Variation is needed for financial sustainability and to maintain essential infrastructure and service levels. It mentions that in June 2024, the Council included an action to start a conversation with the community about a potential Special Rate Variation in the 2024/25 Operational Plan, and that the Council subsequently undertook an extensive community engagement process to gauge the community's feedback about the proposal.

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Council subsequently undertook an extensive community engagement process to gauge the community's feedback about a Special Rate Variation proposal from Friday, 2 August to Friday, 6 September 2024.

At an **Extraordinary Meeting held on Wednesday, 6 November 2024**, Council committed to proceeding with a section 508(A) (permanent) Special Rate Variation, which has been varied in response to the feedback received by the community.

### **What is an SRV?**

A Special Rate Variation (SRV) allows a council to increase its general rates income above the rate peg to provide the services and infrastructure desired by their communities. SRVs can be either for a single year or over multiple years and can be permanent or temporary.

### **What is the Rate Peg?**

Rates increase every year in line with an amount set by the NSW State Government. This amount is calculated every year and is called the 'rate peg'. It is decided by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). The rate peg for Gunnedah Shire Council in the 2024/25 financial year is 5.6%. This figure varies year to year and has been as low as 0.7% in the past five years.

### **Why is an SRV needed?**

Like many councils across NSW, Gunnedah Shire Council is facing the difficulty of maintaining its infrastructure and services within our existing income levels.

The cost to deliver services and maintain community assets to current service levels increases above the rate peg amount each year. Combined with reduced financial assistance and ongoing cost shifting to Local Government by other levels of government, councils are under constant financial pressure to deliver the same services for less, which is not a sustainable model.

Without addressing this gap, the residents and visitors of the Shire will see a deterioration in service levels. Each year we fall behind, the cost of renewing infrastructure will rise and we will eventually have to catch up.

Council also has an expanding infrastructure base as our community is growing. We view the fact that our population is increasing as very positive but we need to be able to maintain the associated infrastructure to support this.

Council has very limited opportunity to increase other sources of revenue and, as a result, an increase in rates is the most viable solution for a financially sustainable council.

Council's long-term financial plan shows that we are currently operating with an approximately \$3.1m operating deficit in the General Fund (excluding domestic waste services). This essentially means that we are spending \$3.1m less than we should be to maintain our assets and services to our current targeted service levels.

The SRV is also needed to address Council's current and forecast cash position. Our 2024/25 budget forecast shows that our projected cash reserves will be in decline and the unrestricted cash position will potentially move into a negative balance

within the General Fund within two years without intervention. A negative unrestricted cash balance cannot be allowed to occur.

Further information on Council's financial position can be found in our 2024/25 Operational Plan, which is available here: [2024/25 Operational Plan](#).

### **What would happen if the SRV is not implemented?**

Council would need to defer necessary capital works and revise the basic range and levels of services provided to the community to avoid a deteriorating cash position, which is not sustainable in the long term. Service levels would need to reduce in the absence of additional funding being available.

### **What SRV did Council consult on?**

Council consulted on a permanent SRV of 38.88% over two years. The 38.88% is comprised of a 24% increase in the first year (2025/26) and a 12% increase in year two (2026/27). This included an assumed rate peg of 5% in both years.

	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>Cumulative</b>
<b>Permanent increase above rate peg</b>	19%	7%	
<b>Rate Peg (forecast)</b>	5%	5%	
<b>Total Increase</b>	24%	12%	38.88%

The rationale behind these two values is as follows:

1. The 24% increase in Year One will allow Council to address the current operating deficit and the current forecast unrestricted cash challenges,
2. The 12% increase in Year Two will allow Council to commence addressing the backlog of works to bring our assets to the current targeted service levels.

The distribution of the rate increase was proposed to be equally applied across all rate categories.

## What did the Community tell us in the first round of the SRV consultation?

A large range of feedback was provided and key feedback received was:

1. The Community does not want to see an increase in rates,
2. The Community want to see better services for their rates, in particular the community wants to see improved roads,
3. If an SRV is required, the first-year increase is too high and it should be for a smaller amount and implemented over a longer period of time,
4. Council needs to tighten its belt and make sure it is operating as efficiently as possible, and
5. Council needs to look at how rates are distributed and ensure that each rating category is paying an appropriate proportion of Council's income.

## What SRV is now proposed?

Council has committed to an application for a permanent cumulative SRV of 37.67% over two years.

The SRV is to be applied based on:

- a **32.25%** cumulative increase (21.80% above rate peg) applied to the Residential, Business, Farmland rating categories, and
- an **85.13%** cumulative increase (64.33% above rate peg) applied to the Mining rating category.

	2025/26	2026/27	Cumulative
<b>Permanent increase above rate peg</b>	13.30%	13.17%	
<b>Rate Peg (forecast)</b>	4.70%	3.50%	
<b>Total Increase</b>	18.00%	16.67%	37.67%

The yearly increases would be applied as follows:

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Compounded Increase % Change
Residential	15.00%	15.00%	32.25%
Business	15.00%	15.00%	32.25%
Farmland	15.00%	15.00%	32.25%
Mining	43.66%	28.87%	85.13%

These values include a rate peg of 4.7% in Year 1 and 3.5% in Year 2. The SRV is 26.47% above the rate peg limit.

This SRV is lower for Residential, Business, Farmland rating categories than what was originally proposed. In the original SRV proposal, these rating categories would have experienced an increase of 38.88% over two years. Under the revised SRV

proposal the increase is capped to 32.25% over two years.

The SRV proposal will also necessitate that Council make an application to IPART under section 548 of the *Local Government Act 1993* for the Maximum value of the Minimum ordinary rate for Residential, Business and Farmland categories to be set as follows to match the section 508(A) permanent SRV application value:

Category	2025-2026	2026-2027
Residential - Ordinary		
Residential - Rural	\$638.00	\$733.00
Residential - Gunnedah		
Business - Gunnedah	\$625.00	\$718.00
Farmland	\$638.00	\$733.00

### What does the SRV apply to?

The proposed SRV would only apply to the rates portion of the bill (usually listed as the first item on the bill e.g. "Residential Gunnedah") and not the separately listed essential charges such as waste and water.

**RATES AND CHARGES NOTICE**  
01/07/2024 to 30/06/2025

**RATES ACCOUNT NUMBER**  
[REDACTED]

**DATE OF POSTING**  
17/07/2024

**DUE DATE**  
31/08/2024

**RATEABLE VALUE BASE DATE**  
1/07/2022

**RATE CATEGORY**  
Residential Gunnedah

**eNotices**  
To have your notices emailed Register at [gunnedah.enotices.com.au](http://gunnedah.enotices.com.au) Reference No: 0B9D30F39S

ARTICULARS OF RATES AND CHARGES	CENTS IN \$	RATEABLE VALUE	AMOUNT
Residential Gunnedah	0.01172653	49,900	\$585.15
GWS Availability Charge	242.50	1	\$242.50
Sewer Availability Charge	688.40	1	\$688.40
DWMS 1- 140L waste/240L rec/240L green	440.00	1	\$440.00
Waste Management Facility Fee	86.90	1	\$86.90

The SRV would apply to general rates only and would not apply to other charges shown on your rates notice.

### What the SRV funds would be used for

The proposed SRV would be used to fund maintenance and renewal of Council assets, specifically:

- Council's Transport network (roads, bridges and associated services),
- Council's Building infrastructure, and
- Council's Parks, Gardens and Open Space.

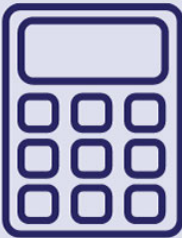
### How would the increase impact me?

The below tables show the impact of the increase based on averages for rates categories.

Category	2024/25 Average per annum	2025/26 Year 1 Increase / per annum	2025/26 Year 1 Increase / per week	2026/27 Year 2 Increase / per annum	2026/27 Year 2 Increase / per week	2026/27 Average per annum
Residential	\$1,106.16	\$165.93	\$3.19	\$190.81	\$3.67	\$1,462.90
Business	\$5,899.02	\$884.85	\$17.02	\$1,017.58	\$19.57	\$7,801.45
Farmland	\$5,336.54	\$800.49	\$15.39	\$920.55	\$17.70	\$7,057.58
Mining	\$316,615.92	\$138,232.82	\$2,658.32	\$131,297.32	\$2,524.95	\$586,146.06

		2024/25	Year One Increase (2025/26)			Cumulative Year Two Increase (2026/27)				
Rating Category	Sub-Category	Average Rate by Category	Average Rate by Category	Increase in Average rate per annum	Additional Cost per week	Average Rate by Category	Increase in Average rate per annum	Year two weekly increase	Cumulative increase in Average rate per annum	Cumulative Additional Cost per week
Residential	Ordinary	\$947.34	\$1,089.47	\$142.13	\$2.73	\$1,252.95	\$163.48	\$3.14	\$305.61	\$5.88
	Rural	\$1,234.73	\$1,419.96	\$185.23	\$3.56	\$1,632.99	\$213.03	\$4.10	\$398.26	\$7.66
	Gunnedah	\$1,190.36	\$1,368.93	\$178.57	\$3.43	\$1,574.29	\$205.36	\$3.95	\$383.93	\$7.38
	Village	\$586.03	\$673.76	\$87.73	\$1.69	\$774.63	\$100.87	\$1.94	\$188.60	\$3.63
Business	Ordinary	\$979.84	\$1,126.74	\$146.90	\$2.83	\$1,295.57	\$168.83	\$3.25	\$315.73	\$6.07
	Gunnedah	\$6,951.51	\$7,994.26	\$1,042.75	\$20.05	\$9,193.43	\$1,199.17	\$23.06	\$2,241.92	\$43.11
	Business Power Generation	\$11,588.83	\$13,327.19	\$1,738.36	\$33.43	\$15,326.35	\$1,999.16	\$38.45	\$3,737.52	\$71.88
Farmland		\$5,336.54	\$6,137.03	\$800.49	\$15.39	\$7,057.58	\$920.55	\$17.70	\$1,721.04	\$33.10
Mining		\$316,615.92	\$454,848.74	\$138,232.82	\$2,658.32	\$586,146.06	\$131,297.32	\$2,524.95	\$269,530.14	\$5,183.27
	Additional Yield			\$2,857,561.19			\$3,147,820.10			

Use the below rates calculator to estimate the impact on your property.



CLICK HERE TO USE OUR  
**RATES CALCULATOR**

**NB:** This rates calculator is an estimate only of how the special rate variation could affect your property – it does not include any change in property valuations or charges related to water, wastewater/sewerage or waste.

### What happens now?

Council is providing community members with an opportunity to have their say about the revised SRV proposal.

At the conclusion of the current period of community engagement, Council will finalise an application to IPART to apply for a Special Rate Variation application in February 2025.

Access the updated community information pack [here](#).



## IPART

IPART will then assess Council's SRV application and conduct their own period of consultation. Further information on the SRV process, including the timeline, fact sheets and information papers are available on the IPART website that can be accessed via the following link: [www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Local-Government/For-Councils/Apply-for-a-special-variation-or-minimum-rate-increase](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Local-Government/For-Councils/Apply-for-a-special-variation-or-minimum-rate-increase)

### How can people have their say?

Residents and ratepayers are invited to read about the proposed SRV and have their say in a number of ways.

You can provide a submission in writing by **5pm Thursday, 19 December 2024** in the following ways:

#### Mail:

The General Manager,  
Gunnedah Shire Council,  
PO Box 63,  
Gunnedah NSW 2380

**Email:** [council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

**Web Form:** [Click here to access form](#)

### Learn more

If you would like to learn more about the ways in which local government differs from a business, [click here to view a presentation by Professor Joesph Drew](#).

## Additional FAQs

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### How does the Revised SRV address the Community feedback?

#### 1. The Community does not want to see an increase in Rates.

##### Response

Council understands this and does want to increase rates more than required to maintained assets.

The revised SRV proposal is for a lower increase that what was originally proposed for Residential, Business, Farmland rating categories. It is also higher than what was originally proposed for the Mining rating category.

The option of a lower SRV offset by savings was considered by Council. However, it was also acknowledged that Council operates in a highly legislatively constrained environment and there are minimum levels of service that Council is required to support. In this environment, it is difficult to nominate guaranteed savings that could assist with reducing the impact of an SRV. The decision that Council has made is responsible but allows for flexibility in that we will continue to strive for efficiency in the way we can deliver services.

#### 2. The Community want to see better services for their rates, in particular the community wants to see improved roads.

##### Response

While there was strong support for no SRV indicated in the community feedback, there was equally strong support for levels of service to at least be maintained or even improved, which is not possible without an SRV.

Without additional funds, Council will not be able to provide the levels of service the community is seeking. The core reason behind this proposal is to allow Council to maintain its assets, with a key focus on roads, closer to the level the community expects.

#### 3. If an SRV is required, the first year's increase is too high and it should be for a smaller amount and implemented over a longer period of time.

##### Response

For the Residential, Business and Farmland rating categories, the revised proposal is for a smaller increase in the first year. The original proposal was for a 24% increase in Year 1 and this has been reduced to a 15% increase in Year 1. The second year is slightly higher than what was originally proposed but the overall cumulative increase under the revised proposal is 6.63% lower than the original proposal for these rating categories.

The revised proposal does mean a larger increase for the Mining category than the original proposal.

#### 4. Councils needs to tighten its belt and make sure it is operating as efficiency as possible.

##### **Response**

Council operates an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee who oversee a service review program to deliver ongoing efficiencies and improvements to Council's operations.

Council has documented efficiencies and improvements already achieved as part of the SRV process and is required to demonstrate its progress in this area in the SRV application to IPART.

Additionally, in approving the revised SRV proposal, Council included an action to strive for improvement through efficiency gains and operational savings and report on progress in May each year.

#### 5. Council needs to look at how rates are distributed and ensure that each rating category is paying an appropriate proportion of Council's income.

##### **Response**

Council has reviewed the proposed contributions by rating category and the revised proposal seeks to re-balance the contributions by category to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of rates across all ratepayers.

If the revised proposal was implemented, the contribution to Council's total rate income would change as per the below table.

Category	Current	Proposed	Movement
Residential	33.10%	31.85%	-1.26%
Business	18.89%	18.17%	-0.72%
Farmland	38.13%	36.68%	-1.45%
Mining	9.88%	13.30%	3.42%

#### What is a Minimum Rate?

Gunnedah Shire Council applies an ad valorem amount that is subject to a minimum amount for properties classified as Residential, Business and Farmland and a base amount and an ad valorem amount for properties classified as Mining.

With base amounts, every assessment starts off with the same level of rate, to which an ad valorem component is added.

Under a structure with minimum rates, the ad valorem amount is calculated and then compared with the minimum amount, and the ratepayer is charged the greater amount.

Where a council adopts a minimum rate for a particular category or sub-category, all ratepayers within that category or sub-category will pay at least that minimum amount regardless of their land value. Therefore, in most cases the use of minimum rates will impact ratepayers with relatively lower land values.

#### What is Council doing to save money?

No matter what Council does, an SRV is required to restore the real cost of maintaining assets and providing services to grow and be sustainable. Council has a focus on continuous improvement and we work hard to keep costs under strict control. Council has introduced a program of service reviews to improve operations and maximise the use and efficiency of resources. These reviews are showing that a number of improvements have already been achieved and that, while further improvements are possible, any drop in funding will translate to a drop in service levels.

Recent improvement and savings include:

- Insurance savings
- Reduced electricity costs (street lighting and Sewer Treatment Plant)
- Service Review program commenced
- Changed unsealed roads techniques (compaction versus dry grading)
- Parks and Gardens (GPS line marking, irrigation systems)
- IT system improvements and Planning portal integration
- Library service improvements

#### Are other Councils in our area getting SRVs?

Yes. Across the North-West and New England, the following Councils have applied for and received SRVs.

- Tamworth Regional Council – 36.3% over two years (24/25)
- Armidale Regional Council – 58.8% over three years (23/24)
- Walcha Council – 57.74% across three years (23/24)
- Tenterfield Council – 43% in one year (23/24)
- Liverpool Plains Shire Council – 18.1% in one year (23/24)

### **What can ratepayers expect in cases of hardship?**

Council recognises the community has been doing it tough and has held off as long as possible to request an increase (9 other NSW councils made applications in 24/25 and 17 in 23/24). Unfortunately, additional money is required to keep infrastructure adequately maintained so we can continue to deliver the same level of service the community expects.

For ratepayers experiencing financial hardship, Council has a "Hardship Policy" that has recently been updated to ensure we work with the most vulnerable in our community to support them as best we can during these challenging times.

### **How will the new land valuation from the Valuer General impact the proposed Special Rate Variation?**

Residents across the Gunnedah Shire Council will be receiving new Notice of Valuation from the NSW Valuer General from January 2025. This is provided every 2 to 3 years and reflects the unimproved value of land of a property.

The new valuations will apply from 1 July 2025 for calculating general rates.

It's important to note an increase in land value does not necessarily mean an increase in rates. Council does not receive any more money because land values increase – some people may pay more or less on their rates depending on the change in value of their land relative to changes in land values across the Shire.

### **Does an increase in land values mean Council can collect more general income?**

Council will be receiving new land valuations from the Valuer General effective 1 July 2025.

An increase in land valuations does not result in any additional general income for councils.

The total income that Council can source from land rates is capped at the approved rate pegged amount or any approved special rate variation.

It simply means it changes the way rates are distributed within each rate category/subcategory. Some people will pay more rates, some less, some the same.

### **Will my rates increase if my land valuation does?**

An increase in your land valuation does not necessarily mean your rates will increase. The difference is how the rates revenue is shared across ratepayers, based on the change in their property value. Some people may pay more or less on their rates depending on the change in value of their land relative to changes in land values across the Shire.

Generally, properties whose land valuation increase is lower than the average increase for that rates category (residential, business, farmland or mining) will see a reduction in rates. However, properties whose valuation increase is higher than the average for the rating category may see a rise in rates.

# Appendix C – Media Release - Council Determines Special Rate Variation

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Council Determines Special Rate Variation

**7 November 2024**

Following an extensive community engagement process, Gunnedah Shire Council has made the difficult but necessary decision to proceed with a Special Rate Variation at an Extraordinary Meeting yesterday.

It was noted that a Special Rate Variation (SRV) was needed to address Council's financial sustainability and maintain essential community infrastructure and service levels.

While there was strong support for no SRV indicated in the community feedback, there was equally strong support for levels of service to at least be maintained or even improved, which is not possible without an SRV.

The original SRV proposal was for a permanent cumulative 38.88% increase over two years with a 24% increase in year one and 12% increase in year two. The community feedback indicated that the year one increase was too high.

Council considered a range of scenarios in response to the community feedback and has determined to proceed with a Special Rate Variation over two years that is 37.67% cumulative but caps the increase on Residential, Business and Farmland rate categories at 15% per year (32.25% cumulative). The balance of the revised SRV of 37.67% cumulative is to be sourced from the Mining rating category.

Six SRV scenarios were included in the report to Council for consideration and the options were robustly debated at the meeting.

Given the current financial position of the Council and the significant challenges that face local government in relation to increased costs associated with cost-shifting, high inflation and natural disasters, Council has made a balanced determination on the SRV that considers the potential impacts on Council's services and the essential infrastructure it supports and the community.

Council was also mindful of community feedback regarding efficiency and productivity and included an action to strive for improvement through efficiency gains and operational savings and report on progress in May each year.

The option of a lower SRV offset by savings was considered by Council. However, it was also acknowledged that Council operates in a highly legislatively constrained environment and there are minimum levels of service that Council is required to support. In this environment, it is difficult to nominate guaranteed savings that could assist with reducing the impact of a Special Rate Variation. The decision that Council has made is responsible but allows for flexibility in that we will continue to strive for efficiency in the way we can deliver services.

The community will be invited to have their say on the revised SRV proposal and information about the way to do this will be provided on Council's website.

Key points from Council’s Extraordinary Meeting on 6 November 2024 are:

- Gunnedah Shire Council committed to proceed with a section 508(A) permanent Special Rate Variation (SRV) to address its financial sustainability and maintain essential community infrastructure and service levels.
- In response to the community feedback, Council determined a position on the SRV as follows:
  - An SRV application to be made to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) under section 508(A) be endorsed at 37.67% cumulative to be phased in over two years and retained permanently commencing in 2025-2026.
  - This scenario spreads the SRV more evenly over two years and caps the Residential, Business and Farmland rating categories to an SRV of 15% per annum (32.25% cumulative) with the balance to be sourced from the Mining rating category.
- Council makes an application to IPART under section 548 of the Local Government Act 1993 for the Maximum value of the Minimum ordinary rate for Residential, Business and Farmland categories to be set as follows to match the section 508(A) permanent SRV application value:

Category	2025-2026	2026-2027
Residential – Ordinary		
Residential – Rural	\$638.00	\$733.00
Residential – Gunnedah		
Business – Gunnedah	\$625.00	\$718.00
Farmland	\$638.00	\$733.00

- Council, prior to 29 November 2024, will formally notify IPART that it intends to submit a Special Rate Variation application for the 2025-2026 financial year.
- Council's Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) documentation will be updated to meet the SRV application requirements, and the amended IP&R documents will be presented to a future Council meeting for the purpose of being endorsed by Council for public exhibition.
- Council will convene an Extraordinary Council meeting in January 2025 for the purpose of receiving any submissions on the revised IP&R documentation and to endorse the SRV application, including Council's approach to continuous improvement, efficiency gains and operational savings, prior to the submission to IPART by February 3, 2025.
- Council will strive to achieve \$930,000 through efficiency gains and operational savings over the 3-year period 2025 to 2028 with a report to council by May 30th annually during this period.

**QUOTES FROM MAYOR CR COLLEEN FULLER:**

**“It’s time to plan for the future of our Shire.**

**“Gunnedah Shire Council spoke with the community about a proposed application for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to maintain and potentially enhance the services it currently receives.**

**“We listened to what the community told us and have developed a revised proposal based on the feedback we received which is crucial in shaping Gunnedah’s future.**

**“I would like to thank my fellow councillors and staff for what has been a great team approach to this very important process and to ensuring the outcomes meet the needs of our community as best as possible while also maintaining a range of efficiency and productivity measures.”**

*ENDS*

Media and communications team contact: (02) 6740 2100.

# Appendix D – Media Release - Council Welcomes Submissions for Special Rate Variation

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Council Welcomes Submissions for Special Rate Variation

**13 November 2024**

Following last week's difficult but necessary decision to proceed with a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to address its financial sustainability and maintain essential community infrastructure and service levels, Gunnedah Shire Council is now welcoming written submissions from the local community. These can be provided to Council until Thursday, 19 December 2024.

Council's original SRV proposal was for a permanent cumulative 38.88% increase over two years with a 24% increase in year one and 12% increase in year two. The community feedback indicated that the year one increase was too high.

Council considered a range of scenarios in response to the community feedback and has determined to proceed with a permanent Special Rate Variation over two years that is 37.67% cumulative but caps the increase on Residential, Business and Farmland rate categories at 15% per year (32.25% cumulative). The balance of the revised SRV of 37.67% cumulative is to be sourced from the Mining rating category.

This week Council formally notified IPART that it intends to submit a Special Rate Variation application for the 2025-2026 financial year.

Council's Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) documentation will be updated to meet the SRV application requirements, and the amended IP&R documents will be presented to a future Council meeting for the purpose of being endorsed by Council for public exhibition.

Council will convene an Extraordinary Council meeting in January 2025 for the purpose of receiving any submissions on the revised IP&R documentation and to endorse the SRV application prior to the submission to IPART by February 3, 2025.

Council also resolved to strive to achieve \$930,000 through efficiency gains and operational savings over the 3-year period 2025 to 2028 with a report to council by May 30th annually during this period.

Members of the community can measure how they will be directly affected by the Special Rate Variation by accessing the rates calculator now available on the dedicated SRV page on Council's website [www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au).

General enquiries on the Special Rate Variation can be made to Council's customer service team on 6740 2100 or [council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

Written public submissions will be accepted until December 19, 2024, and can be made via post:

The General Manager,  
Gunnedah Shire Council,  
PO Box 63,  
Gunnedah NSW 2380

Or

Email: [council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au) and  
webform <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/index.php/council/keep-in-touch/contact-us> .

Submissions can also be dropped into Council's office at 63 Elgin Street, Gunnedah.

*ENDS*

Media and communications team contact: (02) 6740 2100.



## Appendix E – Facebook Posts

 **Gunnedah Shire Council**  
6 November 2024 · 🌐


COUNCIL DETERMINES POSITION ON SPECIAL RATE VARIATION (SRV)

Read more 📄 <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../2764-council...>



**Gunnedah Shire Council**  
Government organisation

Send message

 **Gunnedah Shire Council**  
12 November 2024 · 🌐

COUNCIL WELCOMES SUBMISSIONS FOR SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

Following last week's difficult but necessary decision to proceed with a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to address its financial sustainability and maintain essential community infrastructure and service levels, Gunnedah Shire Council is now welcoming written submissions from the local community.

These can be provided to Council until Thursday, 19 December 2024.

Council's original SRV proposal was for a permanent cumulative 38.88% increase over two years with a 24% increase in year one and 12% increase in year two.

The community feedback indicated that the year one increase was too high.

Council considered a range of scenarios in response to the community feedback and has determined to proceed with a permanent Special Rate Variation over two years that is 37.67% cumulative but caps the increase on Residential, Business and Farmland rate categories at 15% per year (32.25% cumulative). The balance of the revised SRV of 37.67% cumulative is to be sourced from the Mining rating category.

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Council's Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) documentation will be updated to meet the SRV application requirements, and the amended IP&R documents will be presented to a future Council meeting for the purpose of being endorsed by Council for public exhibition.

Council will convene an Extraordinary Council meeting in January 2025 for the purpose of receiving any submissions on the revised IP&R documentation and to endorse the SRV application prior to the submission to IPART by February 3, 2025.

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Email: [council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au) and webform <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../keep-in-touch/contact-us>.

Submissions can also be dropped into Council's office at 63 Elgin Street, Gunnedah.



**Gunnedah Shire Council**

16 December 2024 at 14:45 · 🌐

A reminder that submissions on the proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV) close this Thursday at 5pm.

You can find out more about the proposed SRV here -

<https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../proposed-special-rate...>

You can provide a submission in writing by 5pm Thursday, 19 December 2024 in the following ways:

Mail:

The General Manager,  
Gunnedah Shire Council,  
PO Box 63,  
Gunnedah NSW 2380

Email: [council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

Web Form: <https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au/.../keep-in-touch/contact-us>



[GUNNEDAH.NSW.GOV.AU](https://www.gunnedah.nsw.gov.au)

**Proposed Special Rate Variation - Gunnedah Shire Council**

Information, resources, rates calculator and feedback opportunities related to the Gunnedah S...