



IPART Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal | NSW

Minimum Rate Increase
Application Form Part B

Application Form

2024-25

Local Government >>

Acknowledgment of Country

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

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

Contact details

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The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

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

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Council information

Council name	Narrandera Shire Council
Date submitted to IPART	5 th February 2024

About this application form

This Application Form is to be completed by councils applying for an increase to a minimum rate (MR) for 2024-25 above the statutory limit under s 548(3) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act). The application form for a minimum rate increase (MR increase) is in two parts:

- Application Form [Part A](#) (separate Excel spreadsheet)
- Minimum Rate Increase Application Form Part B (this MS Word document).

Councils can apply for an MR increase either in conjunction with a special variation (SV) under s 508(2) or s 508A of the LG Act, or as a stand-alone adjustment (i.e. without also seeking an increase to general income above the rate peg).

Councils applying for an MR increase in conjunction with an SV should complete this form and SV Application Form [Part B](#). In addition, they should complete the Application Form [Part A](#) that covers both MR and SV increases.

This MR Increase Application Form Part B consists of:

- Description and Context Questions
- Criterion 1: Rationale for increasing minimum rates above the statutory limit
- Criterion 2: Impact on ratepayers
- Criterion 3: Consultation on the proposal
- Criterion 4: Other relevant matters
- Council certification and contact information
- List of attachments

Under each section, we provide some guidance to complete the section. However, when preparing their application, including this form, councils should refer to:

- [OLG's MR Guidelines](#) issued in November 2020
- section 4 of IPART's [Guidance Booklet - Special variations: How to prepare and apply](#), in particular for information about community awareness and engagement for special variations and minimum rates.

Preparing your application

Ordinary rates – minimum amounts

Councils must apply to increase the minimum amount of an ordinary rate above the statutory limit where:

- The council is currently charging a minimum ordinary rate at or below the statutory limit and is seeking to increase its minimum rate(s) above the statutory limit for the first time.
- The council is currently charging a minimum ordinary rate(s) above the statutory limit and is seeking to increase its minimum rate(s) in 2024-25 by more than the rate peg percentage or the percentage allowed by an approved SV.
- The council is currently charging a minimum ordinary rate at or below the statutory limit and, as part of implementing a proposed SV for 2024-25 (whether applying a lower, higher or the same percentage increase as the requested SV percentage) the increase would result in minimum rates that are above the statutory limit for the first time.

Councils **do not need** to apply for an increase to minimum ordinary rates in the following circumstances, whether or not they are applying for an SV:

- The proposed increase (even if it is above the rate peg percentage) would result in minimum rate(s) which are still below the statutory limit.
- The minimum rate(s) is already above the statutory limit (having previously been granted approval for the rates to be above the statutory limit) and the council proposes to increase the minimum rate(s) by the rate peg percentage or the percentage allowed by an approved SV.

If an MR increase application is approved, IPART will issue the instrument in **dollar terms** rather than percentage increase(s).

Special rates – minimum amounts

Councils must apply to increase (even by the rate peg percentage) the minimum amount of a special rate above the statutory limit of \$2 or a previously approved limit.

Attaching supporting material

Responses in the text boxes should clearly cross-reference where the information is located in the supporting documents attached to the council's application.

It is not necessary to submit a document with the MR Increase Part B application form if the same document is submitted as part of an SV application.

Confidential content in supporting material

We will publish all applications (excluding any confidential content) on our website. The submission process allows councils to highlight confidential content. Examples of confidential content include personal information relating to a member of the public or a document which includes commercial-in-confidence content.

Councils should ensure supporting documents are redacted to remove confidential content where possible, or clearly marked as **CONFIDENTIAL**. To protect confidential details in submissions from ratepayers, either redact or submit as a confidential attachment (see).

Submitting the application online

Applications must be submitted through IPART's [LG Portal](#) by 11:59pm on Monday, 5 February 2024.

We are using a new portal for 2024. A council will need to register before first use. You can find user information, including guidance for uploading SV and MR applications [here](#).

Maximum file size allowed per document is 150 megabytes.

Contact Arsh Suri on (02) 9113 7730 or localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au for assistance with using the [LG Portal](#).

Description and context

These questions seek general information about the council's application to increase minimum rates.

Question 1: What is the increase to minimum rate(s) the council is applying for?

The response will provide a high-level summary of the proposal to increase minimum rates. Detailed information about the increase is collected in Application Form [Part A](#). However, if only applying for an MR increase (not an SV), please note that Worksheet 8 and parts of Worksheets 10 and 11 are not required to be completed. Further details about what needs to be completed is provided in Worksheet 1 of the [Part A](#) application after selecting the nature of the application as a 'Minimum Rates Increase' application.

If the increase applies to an ordinary rate, complete this section

Does the council propose to increase the minimum amount of its ordinary rate(s) above the statutory limit for the first time?	Yes
Which rating category(s) will the increase(s) apply to? If the increase will apply to some subcategory(s), please specify them in the text box also.	Residential Ordinary : Business Ordinary: Business Narrandera: Farmland Ordinary:
Please specify the proposed dollar amount(s) per rating category (and if applicable per subcategory) that the council considers would need to apply in 2024-25.	Residential Ordinary - \$640 : Business Ordinary - \$640: Business Narrandera - \$715: Farmland Ordinary- \$640
Does the council propose to increase the minimum amount of its ordinary rate(s) for 2024-25 by the rate peg percentage, the proposed SV percentage, a previously approved SV percentage, or a different percentage?	Proposed SV percentage 25.5%
For multi-year increases, please specify the proposed dollar amount(s) per rating category (and if applicable per subcategory) that council considers would need to apply in each proposed year after 2024-25.	For 2025/26- Residential Ordinary - \$755 Business Ordinary - \$755: Business Narrandera - \$845: Farmland Ordinary- \$755

For multi-year increases, does the council propose to increase the minimum amount of its ordinary rate(s) by the rate peg percentage, the proposed SV percentage, a previously approved SV percentage or a different percentage? Please specify for each proposed year after 2024-25.	Proposed SV increase - 2025/26 - 18%
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If the increase applies to a special rate, complete this section

Does the council propose to increase the minimum amount of a special rate above the statutory limit?	No
Does the council propose to increase the minimum amount of its special rate(s) by the rate peg percentage, SV percentage or a different percentage?	Choose an item. X%
Please specify the proposed dollar amount(s) for the special rate that the council considers would need to apply in 2024-25 (and for multi-year increases, for each financial year after 2024-25).	Click or tap here to enter text.
For multi-year increases, does the council propose to increase the minimum amount of its special rate(s) by the rate peg percentage, the proposed SV percentage, a previously approved SV percentage or a different percentage? Please specify for each proposed year after 2024-25.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Question 2: What is the key purpose(s) for requesting to increase minimum rate(s) above the statutory limit?

In the **text box** indicate at the highest level the key purpose(s) of the proposed increase to minimum rates. The purposes could include one or a combination of:

- increasing minimum rates by the rate peg percentage
- maintaining an equitable allocation of the rating burden across the council's rating categories
- improving the equitable allocation of the rating burden across the council's rating categories
- matching the level of minimum rates in comparable councils
- improving financial sustainability (assuming there is a related SV application), and/or
- increasing a special rate by the rate peg percentage.

Council is proposing an increase to the minimum rates to maintain the equitable allocation of the rating burden across the council's rating categories. This increase is aligned to the Special Variation (SV) application, which ensures that the minimum rate increase equates to an overall increase in Council's revenue, rather than simply a redistribution. This means that the proposed increase will also assist with improving Council's financial sustainability, in order to deliver increased services and improved assets in line with community expectations.

Criterion 1 – Rationale for increasing minimum rates above the statutory limit

Criterion 1 in the MR Guidelines is:

The rationale for increasing minimum rates above the statutory amount.

The MR Guidelines discuss minimum rates in the context of rating principles in Attachment 1. The MR Guidelines state that:

Where applicable, councils should make reference to the relevant parts of their Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documentation to demonstrate how the criteria have been met.^a

We expect councils to be able to provide evidence of how the increase to minimum rates proposal was developed in the context of the council's IP&R framework, and councils should refer to the relevant parts of their IP&R documents.

How to respond for Criterion 1

The council's response should be tailored to the specific circumstances of the minimum rate increase, including whether it is part of a proposal for an SV.

If the increase to minimum rates is **in conjunction** with a proposed SV, the response for criterion 1 should focus on the aspects directly relevant to the proposed MR increase. It is not necessary to duplicate all the information explaining how the council established financial need which is included in the response for criterion 1 in the SV Application Form Part B.

Where applicable, councils should provide references to their IP&R documents dealing with the proposal to increase minimum rates to demonstrate how the criterion has been met.

What is the council's rationale for increasing minimum rates above the statutory limit?

In the text boxes the response should:

- Explain how the council developed the proposal in the context of its IP&R framework, including the SV proposal, if relevant.
- Explain why the council considers the increase to minimum rates is necessary.
- Discuss both the benefits and drawbacks of the proposed changes to the rating structure.

^a OLG, MR Guidelines, section 2.2.

a. Why the council is seeking to introduce or increase minimum rates above the statutory limit.

Council is seeking to increase residential, business and farmland minimum rates above the statutory limit, as part of a special variation application as detailed in Form Part B and in doing so maintain a fair and equitable distribution of rates across the LGA.

Narrandera Shire Council has established a rating structure that provides a level of equity and does not want to disproportionately change and/or increase the rates burden on the different rating categories and thus individual ratepayers.

In addition, the increase to minimum rates will assist in ensuring Council is financially sustainable to deliver on community expectations, as the minimum rate application is being made alongside the proposed SV that it is seeking.

The purpose of the proposed Special Variation (SV) is to cover the increasing costs (as defined in part 3.2 of the SV application) which are currently outpacing revenue growth and to continue providing services at their current levels, as expected by the community into the future. The SV will respond to the Community Strategic Plans' (Attachment 1), position that "the role of Council has expanded significantly from the traditional days of roads, rates and rubbish. To manage its ever-evolving role Council actively seeks additional revenue ... ".The CSP identifies through strategic action 5.1.19 to "Investigate solutions that will assist in the financial sustainability of Narrandera Shire Council to

undertake major capital expenditure, such as a Special Rate Variation (SRV) A SRV would enable the commencement of the major capital works project, Narrandera CBD stormwater infrastructure duplication project', attachment 1 p.27.

This action would enable Council to improve the urban stormwater drainage to resolve a flooding issue and address ongoing core deficits in the General Fund, ensuring Council is financially sustainable, more resilient and responsive to shocks and unexpected events in the future.

Without the SV, there remain core deficits in the General Fund, and without the rate increase, there is also no ability to maintain current service levels nor address the urban flooding issue in Narrandera nor address the increased risk of a growing asset backlog. Refer to Asset Management Plans attachment 8.

Council's Original Long Term Financial Plan 2023-2033 (attachment 2), illustrated that for General Fund Council was not collecting enough money each year to adequately cover the increasing cost of normal operations and maintain the community infrastructure, with operating deficits (before capital grants and contributions) for nine of the ten years. Further the stormwater capital project and other asset renewal projects would likely be delayed or reduced in line with the available funding.

Council then employed independent consultants (Morrison Low) to undertake a financial sustainability assessment which confirmed Council's unsustainable financial position for General Fund. Consultation with councillors and staff was undertaken, and a revised 2024-2034 Long Term Financial Plan (attachment 4) was developed, which highlighted the need for an SV to address the issues. Council resolved to undertake community engagement on the potential special variation on 19 September 2023 (attachment 11). The community engagement process on the Revised Delivery program, Long Term Financial Plan and proposed SV took place during September, October and November 2023. A final decision to apply for an SV was made by Council resolution on 21 November 2023 (attachments 12 and 13) and on 13 December 2023 item 14.2 (attachment 19)

The variation in rates will work in parallel with an ongoing program of internal review and productivity improvements, which has already achieved \$940,000 of annual savings, to ensure the organisation's proud record of financial sustainability will continue into the coming decades.

b. How the proposed minimum rates are to be applied.

As per the Revised Long Term Financial Plan and Capacity to Pay report (attachment 4), rating income strategy section Council proposes to apply the proposed SV increases to all minimum amounts for all residential, business and farmland rate categories and subcategories. The proposed increases are detailed in the following table:

Rate Category	Current Minimum Amount	Minimum for 2024/25	Minimum for 2025/26
Residential Ordinary- 2 year SV	\$510	\$640	\$755
Business Ordinary- 2 year SV	\$510	\$640	\$755
Business Narrandera -2 year SV	\$570	\$715	\$845
Farmland Ordinary- 2 year SV	\$510	\$640	\$755

c. What benefits and drawbacks of the proposed changes to the rating structure have been identified?

There are no fundamental changes to the current rating structure. Council intends to apply the SV over that structure. Council has established a rating structure that provides a level of equity and don't want to disproportionately change and/or increase the rates burden on the different rating categories and thus individual ratepayers. Council's resolution to apply for an SV also included the following: "Council recognises the impact of the proposed increase on the properties currently rated as "Farmland" and requires the General Manager to report to Council prior to 30 June 2025 on the appropriateness of the current balance of rates income." Attachment 13. This review may see a change to the existing rating structure.

The drawbacks are that some minimum ratepayers may be considered to have a lower capacity to pay, particularly in certain areas of the LGA. However, this drawback will be lessened by Council's Hardship Policy (attachment 16) and the Pension Concession Policy (attachment 14)

Table 1 Criterion 1 attachments

Attachment number	Name of document	Page references
Attachment 1	Community Strategic Plan	pp 24 & 26
Attachment 2	NSC Original LTFP	
Attachment 3	NSC Revised Delivery Program	pp 8 & 9
Attachment 4	NSC Revised LTFP and Capacity to Pay Report	P 12
Attachment 11	NSC Council Minutes 19 September 2023	
Attachment 12	NSC Ordinary Council Mtg 21 Nov 2023 Report SV	
Attachment 13	NSC Ordinary Council Mgt Minutes 21 Nov 2023 Resolution SV	
Attachment 14	NSC Pension Concession Policy	
Attachment 16	NSC Rates Charges Financial Hardship Policy	
Attachment 19	NSC Unconfirmed Minutes 13 December 2023	

Criterion 2 – Impact on ratepayers

Criterion 2 in the MR Guidelines is:

The impact on ratepayers, including the level of the proposed minimum rates and the number and proportion of ratepayers that will be on the minimum rates, by rating category or subcategory.

The criterion requires consideration of two elements:

- the level of minimum rates for ratepayers whose rates will be increased, and
- the distribution of the rate burden in the particular category or subcategory between those paying minimum rates and those paying an amount based on the value of their property.

Although it is a matter for each council to determine its rating structure, including the level of minimum rates, for this criterion, IPART will assess the proposal on its merits, but will consider how the proposed minimum rates accord with the principles of rating, by looking at:

- the absolute and percentage increase in minimum rates proposed for ratepayers paying the minimum amount
- how the council will manage any adverse impact on ratepayers
- how the increase in minimum rates affects the equitable distribution of the rate burden among all ratepayers in the category or subcategory.

As the minimum rate is the lowest amount that is paid by ratepayers in any rating category, the impact of the proposed increase to minimum rates may not, of itself, be as significant as the same percentage increase to rate levels above the minimum. Nevertheless, IPART expects that councils will be able to demonstrate how they have considered its affordability and the affected ratepayers' capacity to pay.

IPART will make its own assessment of the affected ratepayers' capacity to pay by reference to evidence provided by the council and our own analysis using socioeconomic indicators, including as they relate to those for comparable councils in the council's OLG grouping.

How to respond for Criterion 2

By completing the Application Form [Part A](#), councils will provide full details of current and proposed levels of minimum rates and the number of ratepayers affected. The response to the first question for criterion 2 requires only a summary of this information.

If the increase to minimum rates is in conjunction with a proposed SV, the response for the other questions for criterion 2 should focus on the aspects of the impact on ratepayers and its affordability which are directly relevant to the proposed MR increase. It is not necessary to duplicate all the information providing details included in the response for criterion 3 in the SV Application Form [Part B](#).

The council's response to the other questions for criterion 2 should explain the specific circumstances of the minimum rate increase, including whether it applies to an ordinary or special rate and whether it is part of a proposal for an SV, and the characteristics of the ratepayers who will be affected.

Where applicable, councils should provide references to their IP&R documents dealing with the proposal to increase minimum rates to demonstrate how the criterion has been met.

The response to this criterion should refer to matter such as:

- the extent to which the new minimum rates exceed the equivalent ad valorem rates that would apply in the absence of the minimum rates
- the overall impact on ratepayers resulting from the proposed increase
- steps that have been taken to distribute the rate burden equitably
- affected ratepayers' capacity to pay the higher level of rates, overall and by each rating subcategory
- how the council plans to address hardship ratepayers may experience in meeting their obligations to pay rates in the future.

In considering capacity to pay, you may also want to consider how the council's socioeconomic profile and other relevant measures of capacity to pay relate to those for comparable councils. IPART will also review various socio-economic indicators, particularly as they relate to those for comparable councils in your OLG grouping.

What are the current and proposed levels of minimum rates, and the number of ratepayers on the minimum rate over the application period?

In the text box summarise the information. This can be presented in table form, if appropriate, that clearly shows the different items over the application period (up to 7 years). Alternatively, the information can be presented in an attachment.

Narrandera Shire Council has 3618 rate assessments with 2,428 residential ratepayers and 373 business ratepayers and 817 farmland ratepayers. Council has a base amount structure for Ordinary Residential Narrandera category with 2,014 ratepayers and a minimum rate structure for the balance of its structure. The following tables detail the current minimum rates and the number of minimums and the application of the proposed 2-year SV that was detailed in the revised LTFP and capacity to pay report (attachment 4), SV Background Paper (attachment 6), the community engagement information and report (attachment 10).

Residential Ordinary ratepayers on minimum

Year		Proposed minimum \$	% on minimum	Number on minimum
23/24	Current	510	92%	382

24/25	Year 1	640	92%	382
25/26	Year 2	755	92%	382

Business ratepayers on minimum

Year		Proposed minimum \$	% on minimum	Number on minimum
Business Ordinary				
23/24	Current	510	78%	92
24/25	Year 1	640	76%	90
25/26	Year 2	755	76%	90
Business Narrandera				
23/24	Current	570	23%	58
24/25	Year 1	715	23%	58
25/26	Year 2	845	23%	58

Farmland ratepayers on minimum

Year		Proposed minimum \$	% on minimum	Number on minimum
23/24	Current	510	8%	66
24/25	Year 1	640	8%	68
25/26	Year 2	755	8%	68

With the implementation of the proposed SV on the current minimum rate structure, Council expects very little change in the number of ratepayers on minimum rates.

What will be the impact on ratepayers of the proposed increase in minimum rates?

In the text box set out the increase in dollar and percentage terms for each category and subcategory of ratepayers affected by the proposed MR increase. This can be presented in table form, if appropriate, that shows category breakdowns of ratepayers (e.g. minimum ratepayers and ad valorem ratepayers) over the application period (up to 7 years). Alternatively, the information can be presented in an attachment.

As detailed above Narrandera Shire Council has 3618 rate assessments with 2,428 residential ratepayers and 373 business ratepayers and 817 farmland ratepayers. Council has a base amount structure for Ordinary Residential Narrandera category with 2,014 ratepayers. Following are the details of those 1604 ratepayers that are on the minimum structure; the increases in minimum rates resulting from the proposed 2-year SV; the breakdown of the number of ratepayers on minimums and ad valorem

Residential Ordinary ratepayers on minimum

Year		# Minimum/Ad valorem	Proposed minimum \$	Year 1 Increase \$/%	Year 2 Increase \$/%
23/24	<i>Current</i>	382/382	510		
24/25	Year 1	382/414	640	130/25.5	
25/26	Year 2	382/414	755	115/18.0	245/48.1

Business ratepayers on minimum

Year		# Minimum/Ad valorem	Proposed minimum \$	Year 1 Increase \$/%	Year 2 Increase \$/%
Ordinary Business					
23/24	<i>Current</i>	92/118	510		
24/25	Year 1	90/118	640	130/25.5	
25/26	Year 2	90/118	755	115/18.0	245/48.1
Business Narrandera					
23/24	<i>Current</i>	58/255	570		
24/25	Year 1	58/255	715	145/25.5	
25/26	Year 2	58/255	845	130/18	275/48.1

Farmland ratepayers on minimum

Year		# Minimum/Ad valorem	Proposed minimum \$	Year 1 Increase \$/%	Year 2 Increase \$/%
23/24	<i>Current</i>	68/817	510		
24/25	Year 1	68/817	640	130/25.5	
25/26	Year 2	68/817	755	115/18.0	245/48.1

How does the proposed increase affect the distribution of the rating burden among ratepayers?

In the text box explain the action, if any, the council took in response to feedback from the community.

The proposed SV will be distributed evenly across the current rating structure, therefore there is no change in the distribution of rate burden across the rating categories.

The recommended SV option was the one-year SV option of 41.5% as detailed the report to Council on 19th Sept 2023, **Item 21.1 Consideration of the financial position of Council and the need for as special variation p67** – [Council Meetings | Narrandera Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#) and the revised LTFP and capacity to pay report (attachment 4, p3). Having consider the feedback from the community, Community Engagement report (attachment 10) and the capacity to pay report (attachment 4) Council resolved to implement the SV over a two-year period to reduce the impact on ratepayers in year one.

How has the council considered affordability and the affected ratepayers' capacity to pay higher rates, including measures to address hardship?

In the text box explain how the council considered whether the rate increases would be affordable for the affected ratepayers, including any socioeconomic data referred to in making its assessment, and any measures the council proposes to use to reduce the impact, if necessary.

Council engaged Morrison Low to undertake an independent analysis and evaluation of the community's capacity to meet the financial impacts of the proposed SV (Revised LTFP and Capacity to Pay report, attachment 4). The analysis observed that the LGA has reasonably significant levels of disadvantage, mixed with some pockets of significant advantage. This inequity is highlighted by the grouping and locality level SIEFA rankings, which vary quite substantially. Overall, the LGA is in the 14th percentile for IRSD and 15th for IRSAD. This is notably lower than the Regional NSW averages of 32nd and 36th, and Riverina-Murray averages of 26th and 27th. Council acknowledges the levels of disadvantage within the community, and that it does not significantly marginalise particularly vulnerable individuals and households, especially in the Narrandera and Borellan groupings. There is some disparity in relation to the proposed SV increases, as some of the groupings with lower levels of advantage will see higher average increases, due to higher average residential land values in these areas. This means that Council will ensure that it considers vulnerable ratepayers and provides access to support, such as through hardship policies.

Council also benchmarked its proposed special variation increase to rates with similar rural councils (OLG group 10 classification). Narrandera currently has average rates that sit well below the average of comparison councils, except for farmland. With the proposed SV application, the averages rates would move just above the average for group 10 Councils

except for Farmland. Council would still remain comparable to other councils – see page 89 of attachment 4 (Page 31 of Capacity to Pay Report).

Table 2 Criterion 2 attachments

Attachment number	Name of document	Page references
Attachment 4	Revised LTFP and Capacity to Pay Report	pp 3,12, 89 of attachment 4 (Page 31 of Capacity to Pay Report).
Attachment 6	SV Background paper	p 6
Attachment 10	Community Engagement Report	p 59
Link to Website	Council on 19 th Sept 2023, <i>Item 21.1 Consideration of the financial position of Council and the need for as special variation p67 – Council Meetings Narrandera Shire Council (nsw.gov.au)</i>	p 67

Criterion 3 – Consultation on the proposal

Criterion 3 in the MR Guidelines requires IPART to assess applications in light of:

The consultation the council has undertaken to obtain the community's views on the proposal.

The criterion requires IPART to make an assessment on the council's consultation with its community about the proposal to increase minimum rates.

Although this criterion does not specify the various aspects of how the council should conduct consultation on the minimum rate increases, IPART expects that councils should be able to offer evidence to demonstrate that its consultation has been effective. Councils need to utilise appropriate methods to make the community aware of the proposal and afford ratepayers opportunities to provide feedback and show that the proposed increase is reflected in its IP&R documents.

The breadth and depth of the consultation should be commensurate with the size of the proposed increase in rates and tailored to the specific circumstances of the minimum rate increase, including whether or not it is part of a proposed SV.

IPART expects that the consultation would:

- include the broader community as well as the ratepayers directly affected
- explain the rationale for the proposal, and
- transparently outline:
 - how the proposed minimum rate increase incorporates the rate peg and/or SV percentage increase
 - the annual increase (rather than just a weekly amount)
 - the full cumulative increase in percentage terms, and the total increase in dollar terms for ratepayers in each affected rating category
 - the impact on other ratepayers in the category who do not pay the minimum rate
 - any change in the proportion of ratepayers on the minimum rate.

How to respond for Criterion 3

The response for this criterion should demonstrate that the council used an appropriate range of methods to inform the community about the proposed increase to minimum rates and offered opportunities for the community to provide their comments on the proposal.

Where applicable, councils should provide references to their IP&R documents dealing with the proposal to increase minimum rates to demonstrate how the criterion has been met.

In the **text box**, the council should explain the consultation process, including:

- how the council has consulted with the community
- the forms of consultation used
- when consultation occurred

- which groups were consulted
- opportunities for the community to give feedback
- a summary of the outcomes and feedback received
- any action taken, or which will be taken, to address issues of common concern within the community about the proposal to increase minimum rates.

If the increase to minimum rates is in conjunction with a proposed SV, the response for criterion 3 should focus on the aspects directly relevant to the proposed MR increase.

How did the council consult the community about the proposed increases to minimum rates?

a. The consultation methods used to make ratepayers aware of the proposal and provide opportunities for feedback from them.

The methods of consultation were detailed in the Community Engagement Plan (attachment 9 Section 5 pp 6-8) and reported on in the Community engagement Report (attachment 10)

b. When the consultation occurred.

The formal community consultation occurred from 19th September 2023 to 3rd November, 2023, (attachment 9 p 6). Community engagement continues, with all documents available on the website, and notifications anticipated for distribution for the submission of this application.

c. Which groups were consulted.

All ratepayers and community groups and stakeholders as identified in the Community engagement Plan (Attachment 9 pp 5-6)

d. The way the proposed change to minimum rates was presented to the community.

Council created a table detailing the increases in minimum rates for each of the two SV options as detailed below. The table was included in the Revised LTFP (attachment 4), SV Background Paper(attachment 6), on the Council SV website page - [Special Variation | Narrandera Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#), presentation to community consultation meetings (attachment 10 p 59):

Rate Category	Current Minimum Amount	Minimum for 2024/25	Minimum for 2025/26
Residential Ordinary 1 year SV	\$510	\$720	\$740
Residential Ordinary 2 year SV	\$510	\$640	\$755
Business Ordinary 1 year SV	\$510	\$720	\$740

Business Ordinary 2 year SV	\$510	\$640	\$755
Business Narrandera 1 year SV	\$570	\$810	\$825
Business Narrandera 2 year SV	\$570	\$715	\$845
Farmland Ordinary 1 year SV	\$510	\$720	\$740
Farmland Ordinary 2 year SV	\$510	\$640	\$755

e. What feedback was received.

The SV Community Engagement Report (Attachment 10) shows that there is demonstrated awareness of the proposed SV and understanding of the proposed process, with 94% of survey respondents indicating understanding and 84% of respondents wanting Council to be in a strong financial position.

The engagement outcomes where 187 submissions, website views 794, SV estimator 625 views, seven community sessions with 352 people attending in person, 50 SV survey responses, social media with a total post reach of over 10,800, live streaming reach was 2051 and distribution of information by media, noting the average rate increases was the approached used to demonstrate changes in rates.

f. How the council responded to any issues of concern raised in feedback from the community.

Council staff met with residents, replied to emails, website, and telephone enquiries. Council also answered questions and responded to feedback in the public forums and community meetings. Feedback from submissions was collated and analysed and presented to Council in the SV Community Engagement Report, including Councils response to the submissions received.

Councils preferred SV option was the one-year SV option of 41.5% as detailed the report to Council on 19th Sept 2023, Item 21.1 Consideration of the financial position of Council and the need for as special variation p67 – Council Meetings | Narrandera Shire Council (nsw.gov.au) and the revised LTFP and capacity to pay report. Having considered the feedback from the community, Community Engagement report (attachment 10) and the capacity to pay report (attachment 4) Council resolved to make a two-year SV application to reduce the impact on ratepayers in year one.

Residents who attended consultation sessions and made submissions, who provided email addresses, were emailed the resolution made by Narrandera Shire Council. A total of 202 emails were sent, with one response received.

Councils response to the submissions received are detailed in attachment 10 pp 72-75 .

Table 3 Criterion 3 Attachments

Attachment number	Name of document	Page references
Attachment 4	Revised LTFP and Capacity to Pay Report	p 12
Attachment 6	SV Background Paper	p 6
Attachment 9	Community Engagement Plan	pp 5-6; 6-8;
Attachment 10	Community Engagement Report	pp 35 & 41; 76-77; 72-75;

Criterion 4 – Other relevant matters

The MR Guidelines provide that we will assess each application based on its merits against the three assessment criteria and any other matters we consider relevant. The MR Guidelines do not specify examples of such matters.

Consistent with the approach for assessing SV applications, IPART's approach will be to assess each of the 3 criteria, then make an overall assessment taking into account any other relevant factors.

In the text box the council may provide information in addition to that provided elsewhere in the Application which it would like to be considered when assessing the proposed increase to minimum rate(s).

N/A

Table 4 Criterion 4 attachments

Attachment number	Name of document	Page references
N/A		

Council certification and contact information

Certification of application



Councils must submit a declaration in the specified form. It should be completed by the General Manager and the Responsible Accounting Officer. Prepare a document in the form indicated below, sign, scan and attach as a public supporting document.

Application for a Minimum Rate Increase

To be completed by General Manager and Responsible Accounting Officer

Name of the council:	Narrandera Shire Council
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We certify that to the best of our knowledge the information provided in this application is correct and complete.

General Manager (name):	George Cowan
Signature and Date:	 George Cowan 2024-01-31
Responsible Accounting Officer (name):	Martin Hiscox
Signature and Date:	 Martin HISCOX 2024-01-31

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

Council contact information

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

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

General Manager

General Manager contact phone	██████████
General Manager contact email	██

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

Primary council contact

Council contact phone	██████████
Council contact email	C ███
Council email for inquiries about the SV application	██

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

Secondary council contact

Council contact phone	Click or tap here to enter text.
Council contact email	Click or tap here to enter text.
Council email for inquiries about the SV application	Click or tap here to enter text.

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

List of attachments

Table 5 is a check list such that all relevant documents are submitted to IPART.

Some documents are mandatory for all councils to submit, whilst others are only applicable if required by the council's specific circumstances and application. Each council can determine which other supporting materials to attach. To assist councils, includes the names of some supporting documents commonly provided.

If the increase to minimum rates is in conjunction with a proposed SV, councils should include in the List of attachments all documents relied on in the application and referred to in Tables 1-4.

Complete the List of attachments, adding rows as necessary:

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

IPART will publish on our website the Application Forms and all material submitted as attachments to the application (unless it is marked confidential).

Table 5 List of attachments to the council's application

Name of Attachment	The document is included	The document is not applicable	The document was attached with the SV Part B application form
Mandatory forms/attachments (i.e. to be published on IPART's website):			
Application Form Part A (Excel spreadsheet)	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application Form Part B (this Word document)	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Council resolution to apply for the for the minimum rate increase	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Completed certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivery Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Long Term Financial Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Consultation material	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Community feedback (including surveys and results if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	NA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Willingness to pay study (if applicable) Capacity to Pay Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hardship Policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other public supporting materials:			
Attachment 6 SV Background Paper			x
Attachment * Asset Management Strategy and Plans			x
Attachment 14 Pensioner Concession Policy			x

Name of Attachment	The document is included	The document is not applicable	The document was attached with the SV Part B application form
Confidential supporting material (i.e. not to be published on IPART's website):			
(List the documents)			

Important information

Submitting online

Applications must be submitted through IPART's [LG Portal](#) by 11:59pm on Monday, 5 February 2024. Councils should note a file size limit of 150MB applies to any individual document uploaded in the portal.

It is not necessary to submit a duplicate copy of a document with the MR Increase Application Form if the council has submitted the same document as an attachment to its SV Application Form.

Confidential content

IPART will publish all applications (excluding confidential content) on our website. Examples of confidential content are those parts of a document which disclose the personal identity or other personal information pertaining to a member of the public, a document such as a council working document that does not have formal status, or document which includes commercial-in-confidence content.

Councils should ensure supporting documents are redacted to remove confidential content where possible, or clearly marked as **CONFIDENTIAL**.

Publishing the council's application

Councils should also publish their application on their own website for the community to access.