

Community Engagement Report Special Variation

November
2023



Table of Contents

1. Background	3
2. Engagement objectives and goals	3
3. Engagement approach	3
5. Engagement Outcomes	74
6. Customer Service Loop	76
7. Appendices	82

1. Background

At the Council meeting on 19 September 2023 Council resolved to go to the community and consult on a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Variation (SV) of either:

- A special variation implemented over one year of 41.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5%) or
- A special variation implemented over two years of 25.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5%) and 18.0% in 2025-26 (including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5%), representing a cumulative Special Variation of 48.1% and retained permanently.

Community engagement must be undertaken before applying for a Special Variation (SV) under the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) guidelines. IPART requires evidence that the community is aware of the need for and extent of a rate rise.

The guidelines state that Council's engagement approach must utilise an appropriate variety of methods to ensure community awareness and input are received. It is important to note that IPART's assessment is not based on the level of support received from the community but rather that the community was made aware of the impacts of a proposed SV. This summary report has been prepared as evidence of the extensive community engagement undertaken by Council, before a potential application to IPART for an SV.

2. Engagement objectives and goals

The Community Engagement Plan – Special Variation, was created to actively engage with the local community providing information in a timely, open, and transparent nature, to ensure that residents and stakeholders remain well informed. A dedicated Special Variation Community Engagement Plan (Appendix 1) was developed based on the principles of Narrandera Shire Council's Community Engagement Strategy 2023.

3. Engagement approach

4.1 Website

Launched 19 September 2023

Action:

A dedicated SV page was launched on 19 September 2023 with a direct link from the Council's homepage. The SV webpage served to provide information throughout the SV consultation process and following the community engagement period. The page was updated throughout the community engagement period in response to questions raised.

Outcome:

Between September 19 – 3 November 2023, the Have Your Say Special Variation page had 794 views by 363 users, approximately 2.19 views per user, with an average engagement time of 2 minutes and 59 seconds.

355 PDFs were downloaded from the page for viewing.



Special Variation



Background

At the Council meeting on 19 September 2023 Council resolved to go to the community and consult on a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Variation (SV) of either a one-year SV of 41.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent) or a two year SV of 25.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent) and 18.0 per cent in 2025-26 (including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5 per cent), representing a cumulative Special Variation of 48.1 per cent over two years.

SV Options	Cumulative increase over		
	2024-25	2025-26	SV implementation period
Base Case	3.5%	2.5%	6.1%
Sustainability Scenario - 1 Year SV	41.5%	2.5%	45%
Sustainability Scenario - 2 Year SV	25.5%	18.0%	48.1%

Consultation Live Stream and Recordings

Council Meeting - 19 September 2023

Live Stream | Narrandera Shire Council (nsw.gov.au)



Barellan - 10/10/2023

Special Variation Community Consultation

Four decades of rate pegging

Asset condition worsening

Governance cost increasing

Project

Structural Deficits Own source Revenue below Benchmark

Restructure Fit for the Future Improvement Plan

Watch on YouTube

Grong Grong - 11/10/2023

Special Variation Community Consultation

Four decades of rate pegging

Asset condition worsening

Governance cost increasing

Project

Structural Deficits Own source Revenue below Benchmark

Restructure Fit for the Future Improvement Plan

Watch on YouTube

Sandigo - 12/10/2023

2023 10 12 Special Variation Communi...

Four decades of rate pegging

Asset condition worsening

Governance cost increasing

Project

Structural Deficits Own source Revenue below Benchmark

Restructure Fit for the Future Improvement Plan

Watch on YouTube

Narrandera - 26/10/2023

Special Variation Community Consultation

Four decades of rate pegging

Asset condition worsening

Governance cost increasing

Project

Structural Deficits Own source Revenue below Benchmark

Restructure Fit for the Future Improvement Plan

Watch on YouTube

What is a Special Variation (SV) and Rate-Pegging?

Normally general rates increase each year in line with an amount set by IPART. This amount is calculated annually based on methodology including a local government cost index and is commonly called the 'rate peg'. For the 2023/24 financial year, the rate peg applied to NSW councils including Narrandera Shire Council is 3.7%. An assumed rate peg of 3.5% for 2024/25 and 2.5% for 2025/26 is being utilised as an estimate for the purposes of this consultation.

If a council's rate revenue is not sufficient to maintain service levels, undertake capital renewals and ensure sustainability, it can apply to IPART to increase general rate revenue by more than the rate peg. This is known as a Special Variation (SV). To apply for an SV, councils must demonstrate to the community and IPART that they need the money and have implemented improvements to be as efficient and productive as possible. Since 2016/2017 79 of the state's 128 general-purpose councils have applied to IPART for an SV. Those increases have varied from just 6.3% (Tweed) up to 92.8% (Strathfield). An annual list of approvals is published on the IPART website [Media Release \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au)

Is the SV increase permanent?

Yes, in this instance, if approved the proposed SV will increase the general rate base permanently, commencing in 2024/2025. The rate base as from the 2025/26 for option one, or from the 2026/27 for option two, will increase by the annual rate pegging limit as set by IPART.

What will the SV fund?

If implemented the special variation will generate an additional \$2.3m. These funds will be used as follows:

- Ensure financial sustainability.
- Upgrade of the Narrandera stormwater system (loan repayments on Council's share of that cost)
- Maintain existing service levels.
- Staff salary system improvements.
- Technology upgrades including cyber security and a new enterprise management system.
- Compliance including the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and risk management.
- Infrastructure renewals to reduce the backlog in asset conditions.

Why is this increase in rates necessary?

Council's income from rates has not kept pace with increases in expenses and this has meant that Council has over time become unsustainable and almost totally dependent on grants for capital renewals. The need to upgrade the stormwater system in Narrandera is an important component of the challenge faced by Council, but it is only one of many factors impacting the long-term sustainability of the organisation. The combined effects of ongoing rate pegging at levels below actual cost, fair value accounting for assets, increasing compliance cost and growing community expectations fuelled by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal process have taken their toll.

How much will the rates change?

Rate Category	Ave. Rate 2023/24	Ave. Rate 2024/25	Ave. Rate 2025/26
Residential			
No SRV	743	769	788
1 Year SV	743	1,051	1,078
2 Year SV	743	932	1,100
Business			
No SRV	1,265	1,309	1,342
1 Year SV	1,265	1,790	1,835
2 Year SV	1,265	1,588	1,873
Farmland			
No SRV	3,957	4,095	4,198
1 Year SV	3,957	5,599	5,739
2 Year SV	3,957	4,966	5,860

How do my rates compare to other councils?

The Office of Local Government groups councils with other similar councils for comparison. Narrandera Shire Council is in Group 10 with 22 other councils. This group of councils represents a diverse cross-section of geographies and communities across New South Wales. The neighbouring Councils of Leeton and Griffith have also been included in this graphic for comparative purposes. (We have utilised the 21/22 figures as those are the most recent published)

Rate Category	Average Rate 2021/22	Average Rate 2024/25 if the SV is implemented
Residential		
Narrandera	\$688	\$1,051
Group 10 average	\$848	\$971
Leeton	\$1,112	\$1,223
Griffith	\$1,078	\$1,260
Business		
Narrandera	\$1,233	\$1,790
Group 10 Average	\$1,679	\$1,941
Leeton	\$976	\$1,074
Griffith	\$2,865	\$3,350
Farmland		
Narrandera	\$3,669	\$5,599
Group 10 Average	\$3,106	\$3,580
Leeton	\$3,714	\$4,086

How can I have my say?

Narrandera Shire Council values community input and actively seeks feedback during the consultation period for the Special Variation. The consultation period ends Friday 3 November 2023.

You can email council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au or write to 141 East Street Narrandera, 2700. You can also make a submission online, select Have Your Say at the bottom of this page.

Community Engagement Sessions will be held as follows:

27 September 2023 - 5.30pm- 7pm - Narrandera Ex-serviceman's club

10 October 2023 - 5.30pm-7pm - Barellan Hall

11 October 2023 - 5.30pm-7pm - Grong Grong Hall

12 October 2023 - 5.30pm-7pm - Sandigo Hall

18 October 2023 - 10am-12pm - Narrandera Ex-servicemen's club

26 October 2023 - 6.30pm-8.30pm - Narrandera Ex-servicemen's club

One on One meeting's can be booked through Council - 69595510

The Mayor and General Manager are happy to attend meetings of your organisation if invited.

Following extensive community consultation, should Council resolve to apply to IPART for a Special Variation, members of the public will also be able to make a submission to IPART in February 2024.

When will the decision on the Special Variation be made?

The decision on the Special Rate Variation will be made by Narrandera Shire Council after intensive community consultation has been undertaken.

Following the public consultation period, a further report will be considered by Council in November 2023. At that meeting, Council will make a final decision as to whether it will apply to IPART for the Special Variation. If IPART approves the application, the first stage of the increase will be effective in July 2024.

Online Special Variation Estimator

<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/rates-calculator-2024>

Please note an estimate only is provided and is subject to change due to the Valuer General assessment of your land value. This does not include Sewer, Water, Waste, Recycling or Stormwater charges. This estimate cannot be substituted for actual Rates Notices and Council cannot be held liable for an incorrect estimate. The information is provided in good faith; however, Council makes no statements, representations or warranties about the information provided on this page.

Special Variation Survey










Narrandera Shire Council understands the importance of your opinions and we encourage all residents to participate in this survey. Your responses will remain anonymous, and the data will be presented at the November council meeting to assist the Councillors in their decision-making process. Please follow the below link to complete the survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YTK3NLQ>

TIS National Interpretative Service

TIS National is a language service - phone 131450

PDF files

-  Strategic Asset Management Plan
-  Delivery Program 2022-26
-  Community Engagement Plan - Special Variation 2023
-  Council Report - Consideration of the Financial position of Council and the Need for a Special Variation
-  Frequently Asked Questions
-  Narrandera Improvement Plan
-  Workforce Management Plan 2021-26
-  Long Term Financial Plan and Capacity to Pay Report
-  Special Variation Background Paper

Participate

Sorry. This form is closed to new submissions.

4.2 Special Variation Estimator

Launched 19 September 2023

Action:

A Special Variation Estimator to allow ratepayers to assess the impact of the proposed Special Variation (SV) on their respective rates. The SV Estimator has been added to help ratepayers better understand how the increase will impact them as the Council continues to ask for the community's view on a proposed SV to ensure long-term financial viability. The Special Variation Estimator is available on the website.

Outcome:

Between 19 September – 3 November 2023 the Special Variation Estimator page was viewed 625 times by 204 Users, an average of 3.06 views per user with an average engagement time of 2 minutes and 36 seconds.



141 East Street, Narrandera NSW 2700
 All enquiries to Council - telephone (02) 6959 5510
 facsimile (02) 6959 1884
 email: council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au
 website: www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au
 ABN 96 547 765 589

Enter your assessment number into the online special variation estimator

Rate Notice 2023 - 2024

ASSESSMENT NO. [REDACTED]
 ISSUE DATE [REDACTED]
 DEDUCT PAYMENTS SINCE [REDACTED]
 DUE DATE [REDACTED]
 VALUATION BASE DATE [REDACTED]
 VALUATION 100000
 RATING CATEGORY [REDACTED]
 SUB-CATEGORY 2 - Residential Ordinary

Description & Location of Property

Particulars of rates and charges	Rateable Value	Rate/Charge	Amount
Residential Ordinary (MR)	100000	\$0.00000	\$096.00
Brim Down Waste Coll 240L	-	-	-
Brim Down Waste Axial	-	-	-
Brim Down Waste Recycle 240L	-	-	-
Brim Stormwr Chg - Residential	-	-	-
*This invoice contains GST of \$0.00			
Total Amount			

The only item on your rate notice that will be impacted by a special variation

Simple daily interest at the rate of 9.0% per annum shall accrue on overdue rates and charges.

ARREARS PAYABLE	1ST INSTALMENT	2ND INSTALMENT	3RD INSTALMENT	4TH INSTALMENT	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE
\$0.00	31/08/2023	30/11/2023	28/02/2024	31/05/2024	

Please turn over for payment methods and instructions

[Signature]
 G Condo
 General Manager

Assessment number

Please note an estimate only is provided and is subject to change due to the Valuer General assessment of your land value. This does not include Sewer, Water, Waste, Recycling or Stormwater charges. This estimate cannot be substituted for actual Rates Notices and Council cannot be held liable for an incorrect estimate. The information is provided in good faith, however Council makes no statements, representations or warranties about the information provided on this page.

Estimates are provided in full, assessments eligible for pension rebates do not have the rebate applied to the estimate.

Lookup

4.3 Community Consultations

September 27 – October 26 2023

Action:

6 Community Consultations were held between September 27 and October 26, 2023.

One Staff Consultation was held on 12 October 2023.

Community Consultations were led by the Mayor with a presentation by the General Manager.

Outcome:

352 people attended information sessions or community consultations in person.

Date	Type	Venue	Time	Attendance
27-Sep-23	Information Session	Narrandera Ex-Servicemen's Club	5.30pm-7.30pm	16
10-Oct-23	Community Consultation	Barellan Hall	5.30pm – 7.30pm	43
11-Oct-23	Community Consultation	Grong Grong Hall	5.30pm – 7.30pm	34
12-Oct-23	Staff Consultation	Narrandera Ex-Servicemen's Club	12pm - 3.30pm	88
12-Oct-23	Community Consultation	Sandigo Hall	5.30pm – 7.30pm	24
18-Oct-23	Community Consultation	Narrandera Ex-Servicemen's Club	10am – 12pm	79
26-Oct-23	Community Consultation	Narrandera Ex-Servicemen's Club	6.30pm-8.30pm	68

4.4 Individual Meetings

September 19 – November 3, 2023

Action:

General Manager George Cowan attended one-on-one meetings with ratepayers when requested.

Outcome:

General Manager, George Cowan, attended one one-on-one meetings as follows:

- Wednesday 27 October 2023 – 1 meeting.
- Wednesday 11 October 2023 – 2 meetings.
- Tuesday 24 October 2023 – 3 meetings.
- Thursday 2 November 2023 – 1 meeting.

4.5 Individualised Correspondence to Ratepayers

Dispatched to Australia Post 2nd – 6th October 2023

Action:

A letter, including individual estimates of the financial impact of an SV for both options, was sent to each ratepayer in the shire. The letter outlined what an SV and rate pegging is, if the SV increase is permanent, what the additional funds will be used for, why the council must increase the rates, how residents can have their say and the community engagement sessions. A submission form was also included in the package with a reply-paid envelope.

Outcome:

3612 letters were dispatched to Australia Post for ratepayers between 2 – 6 October 2023. The mail merge was created on the 22nd of September, to be dispatched earlier, however, packaging 3612 letters, submission forms and reply-paid envelopes took more time than anticipated, despite this, the initial timeframe to dispatch was met. As of 6 October 2023, 32 letters have been returned to the sender.

Our ref:

Your ref:

(Insert Date)

Insert Name

Insert Address

Dear

RE: Individualised Special Variation Estimate

At the Council meeting on 19 September 2023, Council resolved to go to the community to consult on a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Variation (SV) of either:

- a one-year SV of 41.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent), or
- a two-year SV of 25.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent) and 18.0 per cent in 2025-26 (including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5 per cent), representing a cumulative Special Variation of 48.1 per cent over two years.

Below are the individualised estimates for your property:

Property Address	
Assessment Number	
Land value	
2023-24 Amount	
2024-25 Amount Option 1 Year 1	
2025-26 Option 1 Year 2	
Option 2 Year 1	
Option 2 Year 2	

What is a Special Variation (SV) and Rate-Pegging?

General rates normally increase each year in line with an amount set by IPART. This amount is calculated annually based on methodology including a local government cost index and is commonly called the 'rate peg'.

For the 2023-24 financial year, the rate peg applied to NSW councils including Narrandera Shire Council is 3.7%. An assumed rate peg of 3.5% for 2024-25 and 2.5% for 2025/26 is being utilised as an estimate for the purposes of this consultation.

If a council's rate revenue is not sufficient to maintain service levels, undertake capital renewals and ensure sustainability, it can apply to IPART to increase general rate revenue by more than the rate peg. This is known as a Special Variation (SV). To apply for an SV, councils must demonstrate to the community and IPART that they need the money and have implemented improvements to be as efficient and productive as possible. Since 2016-17, 79 of the state's 128 general-purpose councils have applied to IPART for an SV. Those increases have varied from just 6.3% (Tweed) up to 92.8% (Strathfield). An annual list of approvals is published on the IPART website [Media Release \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Is the SV increase permanent?

Yes. In this instance, if approved, the proposed SV will increase the general rate base permanently, commencing in 2024-25. The rate base as from 2025-26 for option one, or from 2026-27 for option two will increase by the annual rate pegging limit as set by IPART.

What will the SV fund?

If implemented the special variation will generate an additional \$2.3M. These funds will be used as follows:

- Ensure financial sustainability
- Upgrade of the Narrandera stormwater system (loan repayments on Council's share of that cost)
- Maintain existing service levels
- Staff salary system improvements
- Technology upgrades including cyber security and a new enterprise management system
- Compliance including the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and risk management
- Infrastructure renewals to reduce the backlog in asset conditions.

Why is this increase in rates necessary?

Council's income from rates has not kept pace with increases in expenses. This has meant that the Council has over time become unsustainable and almost totally dependent on grants for capital renewals.

The need to upgrade the stormwater system in Narrandera is an important component of the challenge faced by Council, but it is only one of many factors impacting the long-term sustainability of the organisation. The combined effects of ongoing rate pegging at levels below actual cost, fair value accounting for assets, increasing compliance cost and growing community expectations fuelled by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal process have taken their toll.

How can I have my say?

Narrandera Shire Council values community input and actively seeks feedback during the consultation period for the Special Variation (open until Friday 3 November 2023). You can email council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au, write to 141 East Street Narrandera 2700, or make an online submission through the website [Special Variation | Narrandera Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Community Engagement Sessions will be held as follows:

27 September 2023	5:30pm – 7:00pm	Narrandera Ex-Serviceman's Club
10 October 2023	5:30pm – 7:00pm	Barellan Hall
11 October 2023	5:30pm – 7:00pm	Grong Grong Hall
12 October 2023	5:30pm – 7:00pm	Sandigo Hall
18 October 2023	10:00am – 12:00pm	Narrandera Ex-Servicemen's Club

One-on-one meetings can be booked by telephoning Council on 02 6959 5510. The Mayor and General Manager are happy to attend meetings of your organisation if invited

Following extensive community consultation, should Council resolve to apply to IPART for a Special Variation, members of the public will also be able to make a submission to IPART in February 2024.

If you have any further enquiries concerning this matter please contact Narrandera Shire Council by telephone 02 6959 5510 or email council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au.

Yours faithfully

George Cowan
General Manager

4.6 Media Releases

Action:

Media releases were distributed on 19 September 2023 and 27 October 2023.

Outcome:

Media Releases were published on Council's website and social media and emailed to the business group, community groups, sporting groups, councillors, all staff, and local and regional media outlets.

MEDIA RELEASE



19 September 2023

Narrandera Shire Council Endorses Financial Plan and Seeks Community Consultation in Special Variation Application

Narrandera Shire Council has taken a significant step toward securing the future financial sustainability of the organisation by endorsing the Strategic Asset Management Plan, Delivery Program, Community Engagement Plan, and Long-Term Financial Plan.

During the September council meeting, it was recommended that the council make an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for the implementation of a Special Variation (SV) commencing in the 2024/25 financial year. The proposed SV options include a one-year SV of 41.5% in 2024-25, including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent, or a two-year SV of 25.5% in 2024-25, including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent, and 18.0 per cent in 2025-26, including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5 per cent. These variations amount to a cumulative Special Variation of 48.1 per cent over two years.

To ensure transparency and community involvement, Narrandera Shire Council will commence a comprehensive community consultation process based on the approved Community Engagement Plan for a Special Variation. This process will allow residents and stakeholders to have their voices heard and provide feedback on the proposed rate increase.

Mayor Cr. Neville Kschenka emphasized the importance of community engagement in decision-making: "We value the input and participation of our residents and stakeholders in shaping the future of our shire. This is a crucial step in securing the financial stability of the council while ensuring we meet our legislative obligations and community expectations."

The outcomes of the community consultation process will be presented in a report at the council's November meeting. Council will carefully consider the feedback received before making a final decision on the Special Variation application.

The need to upgrade the stormwater system in Narrandera has been identified as a key factor impacting the long-term sustainability of the council. The proposed rate increase aims to provide the necessary funding to address infrastructure challenges and maintain service levels that meet community needs.

Council has undergone a comprehensive assessment of its financial position and believes that a significant increase in income is necessary to ensure its long-term viability. Both IPART and higher levels of government expect councils to be sustainable and capable of fulfilling their legislative obligations.

Council encourages all residents and stakeholders to actively participate in the community consultation process and provide their valuable feedback to help shape the future direction of Narrandera Shire.

For more information on the proposed rate increase, community consultation process, and how to get involved, please visit the Narrandera Shire Council website [Special Variation | Narrandera Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/special-variation) or contact 02 6959 5510.

MEDIA RELEASE



27 October 2023

SPECIAL VARIATION CONSULTATION CLOSING 3 NOVEMBER 2023

Narrandera Shire Council would like to remind all residents and stakeholders that the deadline for submissions regarding the proposed Special Variation (SV) is fast approaching. Submissions will close on 3 November 2023, providing residents with an opportunity to voice their opinions on the proposed budget adjustments.

The proposed SV aims to address the current financial challenges and ensure the provision of essential services and infrastructure developments throughout the Narrandera Shire. The proposal intends to strike a balance between maintaining services, enhancing community facilities, and managing financial sustainability for the community's best interests.

Mayor Cr. Neville Kschenka encourages all residents, community groups, and businesses to participate in this crucial process by submitting any feedback, suggestions, or concerns regarding the proposed budget. "This is an opportunity to actively shape the future of Narrandera Shire and ensure that Council's decisions reflect the needs and aspirations of the community."

Submissions can be made through various channels including:

1. Online: Visit our official website www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au and fill out the submission form provided.
2. Email: Send your submission to council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au
3. Postal Mail: Address your submission to the General Manager, 141 East Street, Narrandera NSW 2700.

All submissions received will be considered by the Narrandera Shire Council before the final budget decision-making process.

To assist with the submission process, additional information about the proposed Special Variation, as well as frequently asked questions (FAQs), can be found on the Council's website.

The deadline for submissions is 3 November 2023. Council encourages all residents to have their say and contribute to the decision-making process that will shape the future of our community.

END

Precis or Summary: Special Variation Consultation Closing 3 November 2023			
Attachments:	Nil	Embargoed:	N/A
Authorised By:	Media Contact:	Number of Pages	1
George Cowan - General Manager	Communications Officer T (02) 6959 5502		
Distribution To: Council Website, Facebook, Media – Local & Regional		Number: 23/24	14

An additional Media Release was made available before the September council meeting, advising the community that a recommendation to consult with the community would be presented at the September meeting.

MEDIA RELEASE



Friday 15 September 2023

RECOMMENDATION TO CONSULT WITH COMMUNITY ON SPECIAL VARIATION FOR SEPTEMBER COUNCIL MEETING

Following the completion of Council's financial reports for 2022-23 a review of the organisation's long-term financial sustainability has been undertaken. A detailed report examining those issues and recommending that Council consult with the community on a significant rate increase will be presented at the September 19 Council Meeting 2023.

To read the agenda for this month's meeting:
[Council Meetings | Narrandera Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/council-meetings)

To live stream the meeting:
[Live Stream | Narrandera Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/live-stream)

END

Precis or Summary: Recommendation to Consult with Community on Special Variation for September Council Meeting			
Attachments	Nil	Embargoed: N/A	
Authorised By: George Cowan - General Manager	Media Contact: Communications Officer T (02) 6959 5502	Number of Pages	1
Distribution To: Council Website, Facebook, Media – Local		Number: 23/24-	10

4.7 Newsletters

Action:

Narrandera Shire Council's monthly newsletter 'Council News' is distributed by Australia Post each month as an unaddressed mail-out, to both properties and post office boxes.

Outcome:

A newsletter edition labelled 'Special Variation' (edition 21) was created and distributed. This edition shared information specific to the proposed special variation. 2,731 newsletters were distributed between 2 – 6 October 2023.

The October Edition also included information for the proposed special variation. 2,731 Newsletters were distributed between 23 – 27 October 2023.

COUNCIL NEWS

Issue 21
Special Variation

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday 17 October 2023

- 1.30pm - Public Forum
- 2.00pm - Ordinary Meeting of Council

WHAT IS A SPECIAL VARIATION AND RATE PEGGING?

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For the 2023/24 financial year, the rate peg applied to NSW councils including Narrandera Shire Council is 3.7%. An assumed rate peg of 3.5% for 2024/25 and 2.5% for 2025/26 is being utilised as an estimate for the purposes of this consultation.

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- a one-year SV of 41.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5%)

- or a two year SV of 25.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5%) and 18.0% in 2025-26 (including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5%), representing a cumulative Special Variation of 48.1% over two years.

ONLINE SPECIAL VARIATION ESTIMATOR

Narrandera Shire Council has launched a Special Variation Estimator to allow ratepayers to assess the impact of the proposed Special Variation (SV) on their respective rates.

The SV Estimator has been added to help ratepayers better understand how the increase will impact them as Council continues to ask for the community's view on a proposed SV to ensure long-term financial viability.

Enter your Assessment Number, which can be found in the top righthand corner of your rates notice to see the estimated rates based on proposed SV options.

The Online Special Variation Estimator is available on our website:
<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/rates-calculator-2024>

IS THE SPECIAL VARIATION INCREASE PERMANENT?

Yes, in this instance, if approved the proposed SV will increase the general rate base permanently, commencing in 2024/2025. The rate base as from the 2025/26 for option one, or from the 2026/27 for option two, will increase by the annual rate pegging limit as set by IPART.

SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION DATES

27 SEPTEMBER 2023
• NARRANDERA EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB
• 5.30PM - 7.30PM

10 OCTOBER 2023
• BARELLAN HALL
• 5.30PM - 7.30PM

11 OCTOBER 2023
• GRONG GRONG HALL
• 5.30PM - 7PM

12 OCTOBER 2023
• SANDIGO HALL
• 5.30PM - 7.30PM

18 OCTOBER 2023
• NARRANDERA EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB
• 10AM - 12PM

WHAT WILL THE SPECIAL VARIATION FUND?

If implemented the special variation will generate an additional \$2.3m. These funds will be used as follows:

- Ensure financial sustainability, maintain existing service levels and fully funding depreciation to pay for additional renewals to reduce backlog - \$960K Upgrade of the Narrandera stormwater system (loan repayments on Council's share of that cost), \$300k pa (interest)
- Staff salary system improvements - \$810k
- Technology upgrades including cyber security and a new enterprise management system - \$231k
- Compliance including the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and risk management.

HOW CAN I HAVE MY SAY?

Narrandera Shire Council values community input and actively seeks feedback during the consultation period for the Special Variation. The consultation period ends Friday 3 November 2023.

Email: council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au

Write: 141 East Street Narrandera, 2700.

Online: <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/have-your-say/special-variation>

One on One meetings can also be arranged by contacting 02 6959 5510.

COUNCIL NEWS

Issue 22
October 2023

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday 21. November 2023

- 1.30pm - Public Forum
- 2.00pm - Ordinary Meeting of Council

FLORA AND FAUNA RESERVE

Narrandera Shire Council is making our beloved Flora and Fauna Reserve even more accessible and beautiful. We're thrilled to announce the installation of a brand-new entrance at the reserve! This new addition aims to enhance visitor experience, making it easier for all of us to explore and connect with the incredible natural wonders that surround us. Remember, let's all do our part in protecting and preserving this natural haven. Respect the habitat, follow guidelines, and together let's ensure the Flora and Fauna Reserve remains a thriving sanctuary for generations to come.



BARELLAN SEWER UPDATE

Work on the Barellan Sewer Scheme commenced last month with Keane Civil mobilising to the site. The project will result in the town of Barellan being connected to the sewer system, with approximately 5.5km of gravity pipework installed as well as four sewer pump stations within the town and rising mains. The town's sewage will be pumped to a new treatment plant (series of storage lagoons) located along Kolkibertoo Road where it will undergo treatment. Most of the work is expected to be completed by August 2024. For more information on this project please contact Narrandera Shire Council on 02 6959 5510.

AUSTRALIA DAY NOMINATIONS OPEN

Nominations have opened for the 2024 Narrandera Shire Australia Day Awards.

We want to recognise the outstanding contributions of individuals and groups to the local community.

We need your nominations to let us know of those people you feel are deserving of these awards.

The categories for the 2024 Australia Day Awards are:

- Citizen of the Year
- Young Citizen of the Year
- Senior Citizen of the Year
- Organisation of the Year
- Environmental Australia Day Award – Individual or Organisation
- Disability Advocate of the Year – Individual or Organisation

Award Guidelines and Nomination Forms are available from the Narrandera Visitor Information Centre or can be downloaded from <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/recreation/events/australia-day>

It is a simple process so do not leave it to someone else. Get your nominations in this year!

Nominations close at 4 pm Friday 27 October 2023.



NOV 4-5 STILLNESS & MOVEMENT OF WATERCOLOURS WORKSHOP
10AM ARTSHUB @ NARRANDERA RAILWAY STATION

NOV 5 RIVER COUNTRY
1.30PM-5PM NARRANDERA EXIES

NOV 19 NARRANDERA LIONS COMMUNITY MARKET
9AM-1PM MARIE BASHIR PARK

FOR MORE INFO OR TO HAVE YOUR EVENT LISTED PLEASE VISIT US AT
WWW.NARRANDERA.NSW.GOV.AU/EVENTS



SPECIAL VARIATION SURVEY

Narrandera Shire Council understands the importance of your opinions and we encourage all residents to participate in this survey. Your responses will remain anonymous, and the data will be presented at the November council meeting to assist the Councillors in their decision-making process.

Scan the QR Code or visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YTK3NLQ>

SENIORS MOVIE AT THE LIBRARY

- Friday 27 October 2023
- Narrandera Library Youth Space
- 2pm

This month's movie "Lion" is based on an incredible true story.

Coffee, tea, and biscuits are available.

4.8 Electronic Newsletter

Sent October 11 2023

Action:

An electronic newsletter is sent monthly to subscribed residents by the council.

Outcome:

The electronic newsletter was sent to 427 recipients who have elected to subscribe to the service.



SPECIAL VARIATION EDITION

BACKGROUND

Following the completion of Council's financial reports for 2022-23 a review of the organisation's long-term financial sustainability has been undertaken. A detailed report examining those issues and recommending that Council consult with the community on a significant rate increase will be presented at the September Council meeting 2023.

To read the agenda for this month's meeting or to livestream the meeting visit www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au

WHAT IS A SPECIAL VARIATION AND RATE PEGGING?

Normally general rates increase each year in line with an amount set by IPART. This amount is calculated annually based on methodology including a local government cost index and is commonly called the 'rate peg'.

For the 2023/24 financial year, the rate peg applied to NSW councils including Narrandera Shire Council is 3.7%. An assumed rate peg of 3.5% for 2024/25 and 2.5% for 2025/26 is being utilised as an estimate for the purposes of this consultation.

If a council's rate revenue is not sufficient to maintain service levels, undertake capital renewals and ensure sustainability, it can apply to IPART to increase general rate revenue by more than the rate peg. This is known as a Special Variation (SV).

To apply for an SV, councils must demonstrate to the community and IPART that they need the money and have implemented improvements to be as efficient and productive as possible. Since 2016/2017 79 of the state's 128 general-purpose councils have applied to IPART for an SV. Those increases have varied from just 6.3% (Tweed) up to 92.8% (Strathfield). An annual list of approvals is published on the IPART website.

IS THE SPECIAL VARIATION INCREASE PERMANENT?

Yes, in this instance, if approved the proposed SV will increase the general rate base permanently, commencing in 2024/2025. The rate base as from the 2025/26 for option one, or from the 2026/27 for option two, will increase by the annual rate pegging limit as set by IPART.

WHAT WILL THE SPECIAL VARIATION FUND?

If implemented the special variation will generate an additional \$2.3m. These funds will be used as follows:

- Ensure financial sustainability, maintain existing service levels and fully funding depreciation to pay for additional renewals to reduce backlog - \$960K
- Upgrade of the Narrandera stormwater system (loan repayments on Council's share of that cost). \$300k pa (interest)
- Staff salary system improvements. - \$810k
- Technology upgrades including cyber security and a new enterprise management system. - \$231k
- Compliance including the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and risk management.

ONLINE SPECIAL VARIATION ESTIMATOR

Narrandera Shire Council has launched a Special Variation Estimator to allow ratepayers to assess the impact of the proposed Special Variation (SV) on their respective rates.

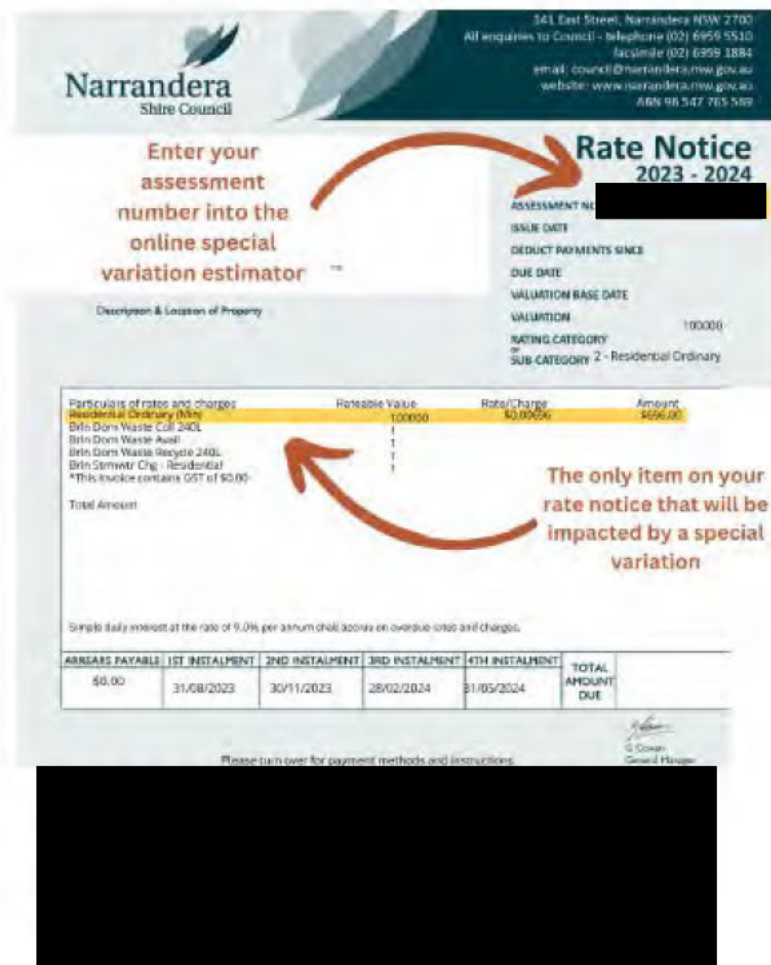
The SV Estimator has been added to help ratepayers better understand how the increase will impact them as Council continues to ask for the community's view on a proposed SV to ensure long-term financial viability.

Enter your Assessment Number, which can be found in the top righthand corner of your rates notice to see the estimated rates based on proposed SV options:

- A one-year SV of 41.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5%)

- Or a two year SV of 25.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5% and 18.0% in 2025-26 (including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5%)), representing a cumulative Special Variation of 48.1% over two years.

The Online Special Variation Estimator is available here:
<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/rates-calculator-2024>



Narrandera Shire Council
341 East Street, Narrandera NSW 2702
All enquiries to Council - Telephone (02) 6959 5510
Facsimile (02) 6269 1884
email: council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au
website: www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au
ABN 98 547 765 509

Rate Notice 2023 - 2024

ASSESSMENT NO: [REDACTED]
ISSUE DATE:
DEDUCT PAYMENTS SINCE:
DUE DATE:
VALUATION BASE DATE:
VALUATION: 100000
RATING CATEGORY OR SUB-CATEGORY 2 - Residential Ordinary

Particulars of rates and charges

Particulars of rates and charges	Rateable Value	Rate/Charge	Amount
Residential Ordinary (Rate)	100000	\$0.00006	\$696.00
Bin Doms Waste Coll 240L			
Bin Doms Waste Avail			
Bin Doms Waste Recycle 240L			
Bin Strwmtr Chg - Residential			
*This invoice contains GST of \$0.00			
Total Amount			

The only item on your rate notice that will be impacted by a special variation

Single daily interest at the rate of 9.0% per annum shall accrue on overdue rates and charges.

AMOUNTS PAYABLE	1ST INSTALLMENT	2ND INSTALLMENT	3RD INSTALLMENT	4TH INSTALLMENT	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE
\$0.00	31/08/2023	30/11/2023	28/02/2024	31/05/2024	

Please turn over for payment methods and instructions.

G. Cooper
General Manager

HOW CAN I HAVE MY SAY?

Narrandera Shire Council values community input and actively seeks feedback during the consultation period for the Special Variation. The consultation period ends Friday 3 November 2023.

You can email council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au or write to 141 East Street Narrandera, 2700. You can also make a submission online, select Have Your Say at the bottom of this page.

Community Engagement Sessions will be held as follows:

27 September 2023 - 5.30pm- 7pm - Narrandera Ex-serviceman's club

10 October 2023 – 5.30pm-7pm - Barellan Hall

11 October 2023 – 5.30pm-7pm – Grong Grong Hall

12 October 2023 – 5.30pm-7pm – Sandigo Hall

18 October 2023 – 10am-12pm – Narrandera Ex-servicemen's club

One on One meeting's can be booked through Council – 69595510

The Mayor and General Manager are happy to attend meetings of your organisation if invited.

Following extensive community consultation, should Council resolve to apply to IPART for a Special Variation, members of the public will also be able to make a submission to IPART in February 2024.

SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION DATES

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• NARRANDERA EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB
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SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION DATES

18 OCTOBER 2023
• NARRANDERA EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB
• 10AM - 12PM

26 OCTOBER 2023
• NARRANDERA EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB
• 6.30PM - 8.30PM

An additional consultation
date for Narrandera is now
available

LOOKING FOR MORE?

Follow us on our social pages below to stay up-to-date with news and events in Narrandera Shire!

4.9 Social Media

September 2023 - ongoing

Action:

SV consultation opportunities, media releases, and a series of information were shared on social media.

Narrandera Shire Council social media audience:

- Facebook 4,500
- Instagram 1,052

Outcome:

34 posts were shared on Facebook and Instagram. The total post reach on 8 November 2023 is over 10,800. Posts were shared with I Live in Narrandera and Barellan Community Noticeboard.



Narrandera Shire Council
Published by 4024 16 September 23

SPECIAL VARIATION RATES ESTIMATOR NOW LIVE

Narrandera Shire Council has launched a Special Variation Estimator to allow ratepayers to assess the impact of the proposed Special Variation (SV) on their respective rates.

The SV Estimator has been added to help ratepayers better understand how the increase will impact them as Council continues to ask for the community's view on a proposed SV to ensure long-term financial viability.

Enter your Assessment Number, which can be found in the top righthand corner of your rates notice to see the estimated rates based on proposed SV options:

- A one-year SV of 41.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5%)
- Or a two year SV of 25.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5% and 18.0% in 2025-26 (including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5%), representing a cumulative Special Variation of 46.1% over two years.

The Online Special Variation Estimator is available here <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/rates-calculator-2024>



**Online
Special Variation
Estimator**

Find out what the proposed SV would mean to your rates

<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/rates-calculator-2024>



Narrandera Shire Council
Published by 4024 16 September 23

SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION DATES

Narrandera Shire Council advises the consultation date listed in the Narrandera Argus is incorrect. The first consultation date was Wednesday 27 September 2023.

Further consultation dates include:

- 10 October 2023 - 5.30pm - 7.30pm - Barellean Hall
- 11 October 2023 - 5.30pm - 7.30pm - Grong Grong Hall
- 12 October 2023 - 5.30pm - 7.30pm - Sandigo Hall
- 18 October 2023 - 10am - 12pm - Narrandera Ex-Servicemen's Club

**Community Engagement
sessions) on the
proposed special rate
variation from 5.30 to
7pm today at the Nar-
randera Ex-servicemen's
Club.**

The first session at Narrandera today will be live streamed and will include a similar presentation to the one provided to councillors during the September Council meeting last week.

Further community consultations will take place on October 10 from 5.30-7pm at Barel-

 **Narrandera Shire Council**
Published by Jess le... - October 13 at 10:34 AM · 🌐

SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION DATES

An **additional** community consultation has been scheduled due to demand.

- 📍 Wednesday 18 October 2023 - 10am-12pm - Narrandera Ex-Servicemen's Club
- 📍 Thursday 26 October 2023 - 6.30pm - 8.30pm - Narrandera Ex-servicemen's club

Narrandera Shire Council values community input and actively seeks feedback during the consultation period for the Special Variation.

The consultation period ends Friday 3 November 2023.

You can email council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au or write to 141 East Street Narrandera, 2700.

You can also make a submission online <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/.../special-variation>

SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION DATES

18 OCTOBER 2023
• NARRANDERA EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB
• 10AM - 12PM

26 OCTOBER 2023
• NARRANDERA EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB
• 6.30PM - 8.30PM

An additional consultation date for Narrandera is now available



council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au ✉️
02 6959 5510 📞
141 East Street Narrandera NSW 2700 📍

 **Narrandera Shire Council**
Published by Jess le... - October 13

Composing a Submission for a Special Variation of Rates

Narrandera Shire Council plays a crucial role in the development and maintenance of the local community. As a resident, it is important to have your voice heard when it comes to the Special Variation (SV). Submitting a meaningful submission for a special variation of rates is an effective way to contribute to the decision-making process and shape the future of your community. In this article, we will explore some valuable tips on how you can make a meaningful submission that will have a positive impact.

1. Understand the Special Variation of Rates:

Before you start drafting your submission, take the time to thoroughly understand the purpose and objectives of the special variation of rates proposed by Narrandera Shire Council. This knowledge will help you craft a well-informed submission that addresses the key concerns and interests of the community.

Information regarding the special variation is available on our website:
<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/.../special-variation>

2. Gather Relevant Information:

To make your submission more effective, gather relevant information and data to support your arguments. Look for documented evidence, such as statistics, reports, or studies, which align with your views. This will add credibility to your submission and provide a solid foundation for your opinions.

An online special variation estimator is available to provide you with an individualised estimate of the increase in rates for both special variation options:
<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/rates-calculator-2024>

3. Clearly State Your Position:

In your submission, clearly state your position on the special variation of rates proposal. State whether you are in favour or opposed to it and explain your reasons why. It is essential to articulate your concerns, suggestions, and any potential alternatives you may have in mind. Address the potential impact on different sectors, including residents, businesses, and the broader community.

A list of items you may wish to include:

- Reasons for objection.
- Support for option 1 or option 2 of the special variation.
- Supporting evidence to strengthen your submission.
- Alternative proposals for funding.
- Suggestions for service changes.

Be respectful, concise, and specific to make your message easily understood.

4. Submitting Your Submission:

Once your submission is complete, you can email council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au or write to 141 East Street Narrandera, 2700. You can also make a submission online <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/.../special-variation>



Composing a Submission for a Special Variation of Rates

Narrandera Shire Council
Published by Jessie on October 27 at 2:16 PM

MEDIA RELEASE - SPECIAL VARIATION CONSULTATION CLOSING 3 NOVEMBER 2023

Narrandera Shire Council would like to remind all residents and stakeholders that the deadline for submissions regarding the proposed Special Variation (SV) is fast approaching. Submissions will close on 3 November 2023, providing residents with an opportunity to voice their opinions on the proposed budget adjustments.

The proposed SV aims to address the current financial challenges and ensure the provision of essential services and infrastructure developments throughout the Narrandera Shire. The proposal intends to strike a balance between maintaining services, enhancing community facilities, and managing financial sustainability for the community's best interests.

Mayor Cr. Neville Kschenka encourages all residents, community groups, and businesses to participate in this crucial process by submitting any feedback, suggestions, or concerns regarding the proposed budget. "This is an opportunity to actively shape the future of Narrandera Shire and ensure that Council's decisions reflect the needs and aspirations of the community."

Submissions can be made through various channels including:

1. Online: Visit our official website www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au and fill out the submission form provided.
2. Email: Send your submission to council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au
3. Postal Mail: Address your submission to the General Manager, 141 East Street, Narrandera NSW 2700.

All submissions received will be considered by the Narrandera Shire Council before the final budget decision-making process.

To assist with the submission process, additional information about the proposed Special Variation, as well as frequently asked questions (FAQs), can be found on the Council's website https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/_/special-variation

The deadline for submissions is 3 November 2023. Council encourages all residents to have their say and contribute to the decision-making process that will shape the future of our community.

MEDIA RELEASE





**Special Variation Consultation Closing
3 November 2023**

Narrandera Shire Council
Published by Jessie on October 18 at 4:32 PM



SPECIAL VARIATION SURVEY

Narrandera Shire Council understands the importance of your opinions and we encourage all residents to participate in this survey. Your responses will remain anonymous, and the data will be presented at the November council meeting to assist the Councillors in their decision-making process.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YTK3NLQ>



Special Variation Survey

 **Narrandera Shire Council**
Published by Jess [profile icon] · 5m · 🌐

REMINDER - SPECIAL VARIATION CONSULTATION PERIOD ENDS TODAY

Narrandera Shire Council would like to remind all residents and stakeholders that the deadline for submissions regarding the proposed Special Variation is today, Friday 3 November 2023.

Submissions can be made through various channels including:

1. Online: Visit our official website www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au and fill out the submission form provided.
2. Email: Send your submission to council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au

For further information about the proposed Special Variation please visit:
<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/.../special-variation>



**Special
Variation**



4.10 Survey

Action:

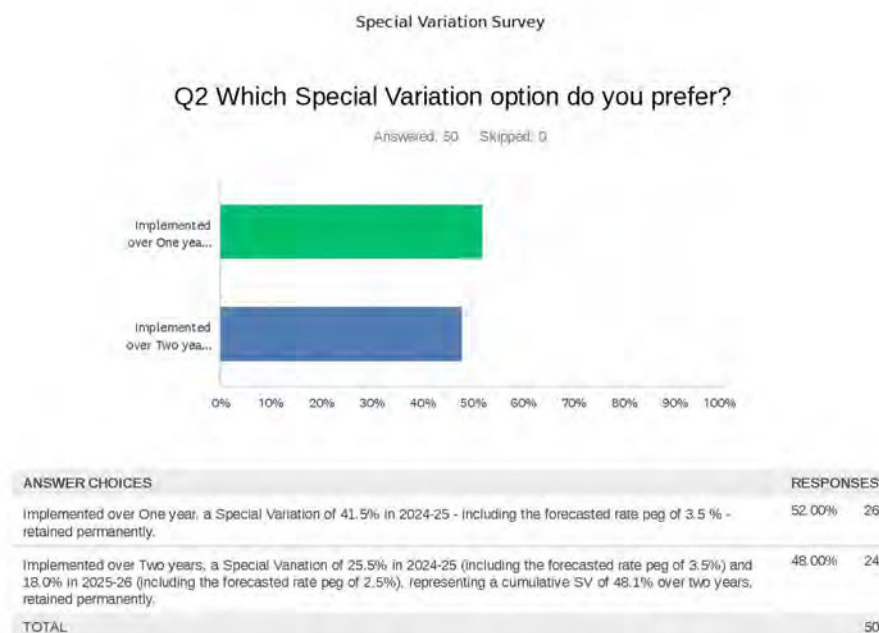
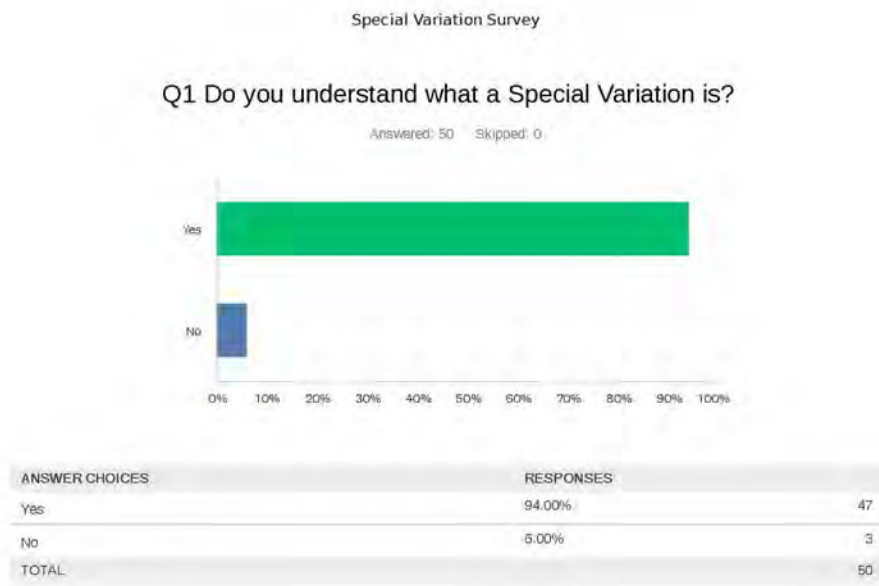
A survey was created to collate general community sentiment on a range of questions specific to an SV. The survey was not intended to collate statistics for support or objection of the proposed SV as it is anonymous, submissions were to form the basis of the support or object statistics.

Outcome:

The Special Variation Survey was made available on SurveyMonkey and accessed via the web site and social media.

The survey was advertised on social media, Narrandera Argus, and Councils newsletter.

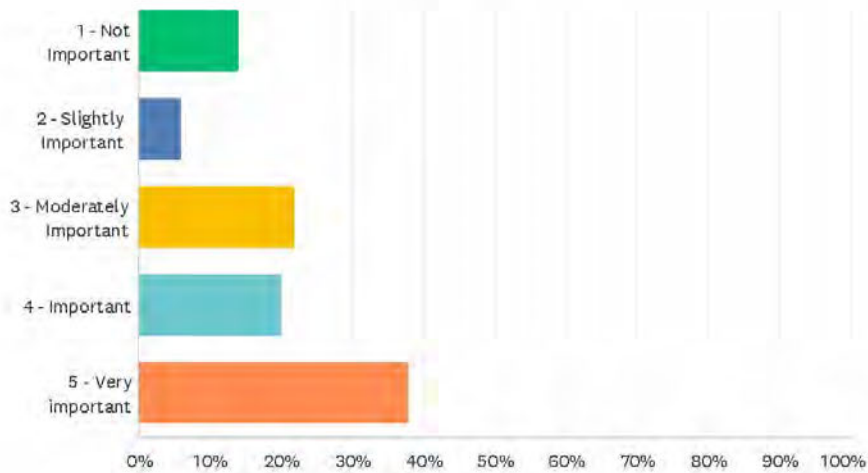
50 responses were received.



Special Variation Survey

Q3 How important is it for Council to maintain the current range of assets provided?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0

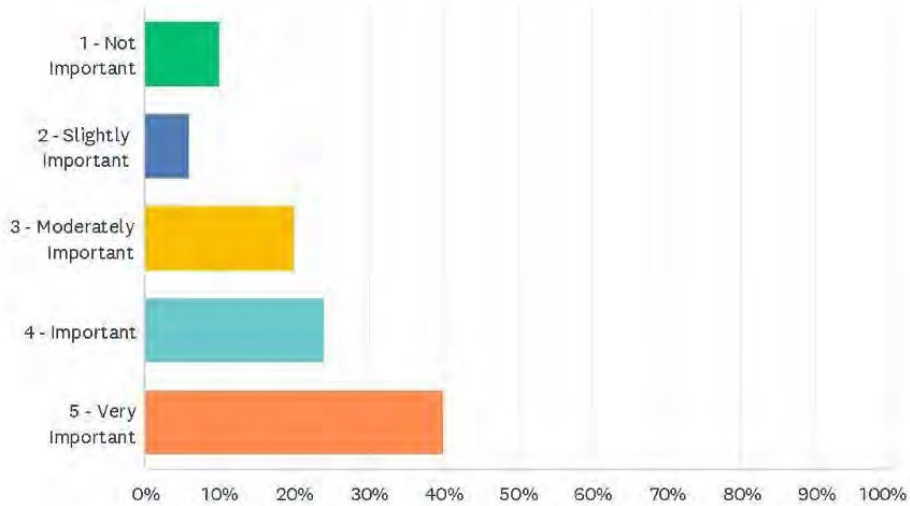


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 - Not Important	14.00%	7
2 - Slightly Important	6.00%	3
3 - Moderately Important	22.00%	11
4 - Important	20.00%	10
5 - Very important	38.00%	19
TOTAL		50

Special Variation Survey

Q4 How important is it for Council to maintain current levels of service?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0

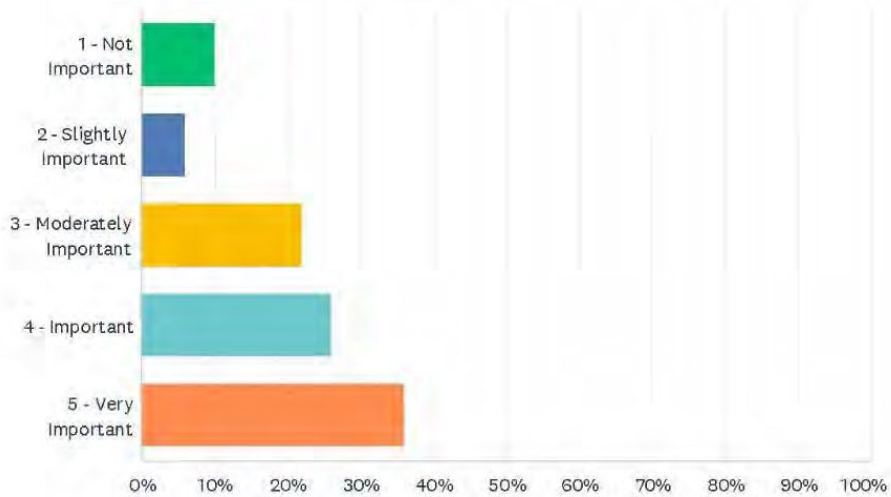


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 - Not Important	10.00%	5
2 - Slightly Important	6.00%	3
3 - Moderately Important	20.00%	10
4 - Important	24.00%	12
5 - Very Important	40.00%	20
TOTAL		50

Special Variation Survey

Q5 How important is it for Council to provide the current range of services?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 - Not Important	10.00%	5
2 - Slightly Important	6.00%	3
3 - Moderately Important	22.00%	11
4 - Important	26.00%	13
5 - Very Important	36.00%	18
TOTAL		50

Special Variation Survey

Q6 If not important (rating 1 or 2), please list what Council services you recommend could be reduced or cut?

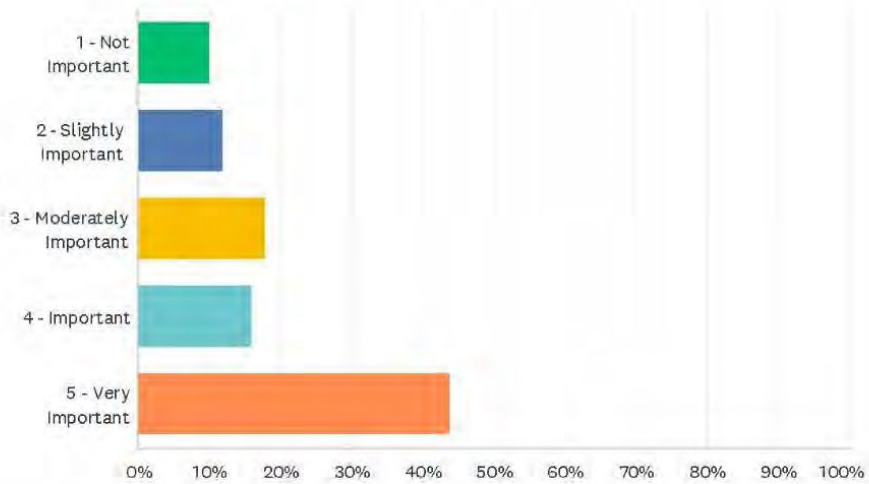
Answered: 19 Skipped: 31

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Disband council	11/3/2023 9:33 AM
2	Staffing and management wages	11/2/2023 5:31 PM
3	consaltancy fees	11/2/2023 1:52 PM
4	The basic services are of course important maintaining infrastructure etc, however where a council should shine is creating community and I do not think enough finds are earmarked in this direction.	11/1/2023 2:34 PM
5	Brewery Flat free camp, showgrounds camping when no event running, town art (nice, but low importance)	10/31/2023 10:09 AM
6	Stop wasting money on projects from grant money and put it into our hospital.	10/30/2023 11:20 AM
7	Streetsweeping, kerbside pick up, leaf sucker, ridiculous number of street trees planted where theyre not wanted or needed, money wasted maintaining a sports field used 10 times a year by predominantly one club, excessive staff within chambers and in town	10/26/2023 6:17 PM
8	Amount of people standing driving around all day	10/25/2023 2:46 PM
9	Why such a massive increase over a short time, it would point to incompetence management the previous years and a wast of money, which narrandera councils seems very good at over the years	10/25/2023 8:03 AM
10	I want no SRV. Where is this option? This survey is inaccurate and biased towards an SRV	10/24/2023 6:26 PM
11	I'm satisfied with council services like garbage and recycling, but wasting money on signals for the town (without even asking if Narrandera's people wanted it) is something that needs to be stopped	10/23/2023 5:51 PM
12	Unnecessary new signage like the blue koalas saying thanks for visiting...these look tacky	10/23/2023 5:40 PM
13	Only a small one- Natives in the main street so that you don't need to keep re-planting?	10/19/2023 9:59 PM
14	Everything that is the responsibility of another agency	10/19/2023 7:33 AM
15	█ treat rate payers with contempt and arrogance	10/18/2023 8:40 PM
16	People want value for money. Staff need to be accountable	10/18/2023 7:06 PM
17	Narrandera Shire should be ashamed of themselves there's no service what so ever, drinking water is on the next level, roads havent been touch in 20yrs look out side the club.	10/18/2023 5:32 PM
18	Reduced wages of high level employees	10/18/2023 5:00 PM
19	n/a	10/18/2023 4:48 PM

Special Variation Survey

Q7 How important is it for Council to maintain fees and charges at the current levels?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0

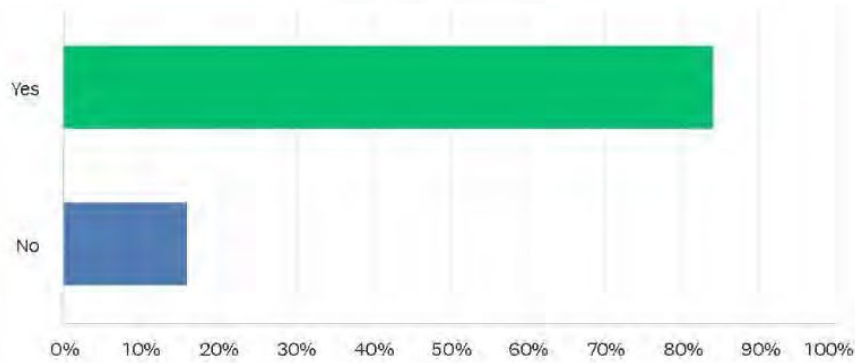


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1 - Not Important	10.00%	5
2 - Slightly Important	12.00%	6
3 - Moderately Important	18.00%	9
4 - Important	16.00%	8
5 - Very Important	44.00%	22
TOTAL		50

Special Variation Survey

Q8 Would you like Council to be and remain in a strong financial position?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0

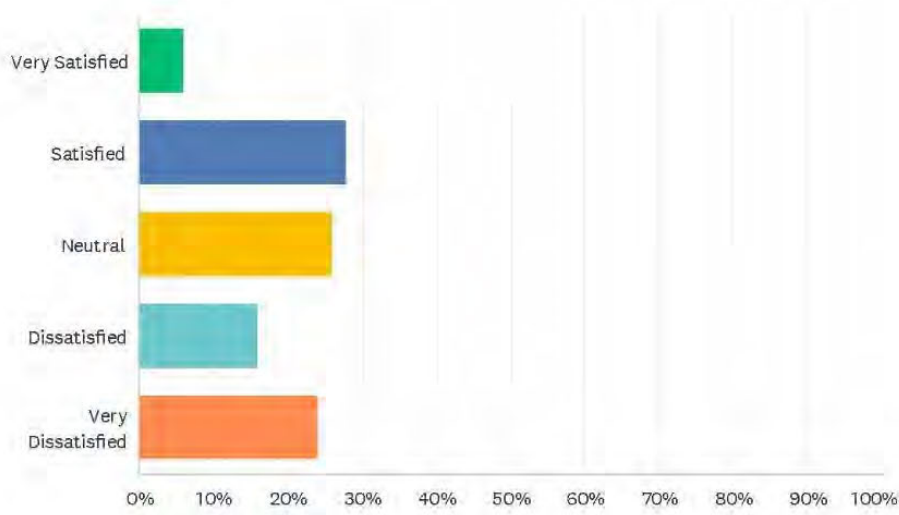


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	84.00%	42
No	16.00%	8
TOTAL		50

Special Variation Survey

Q9 How satisfied are you with the standard of maintenance of Council infrastructure (for example roads, footpaths, bridges, buildings, parks)?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0

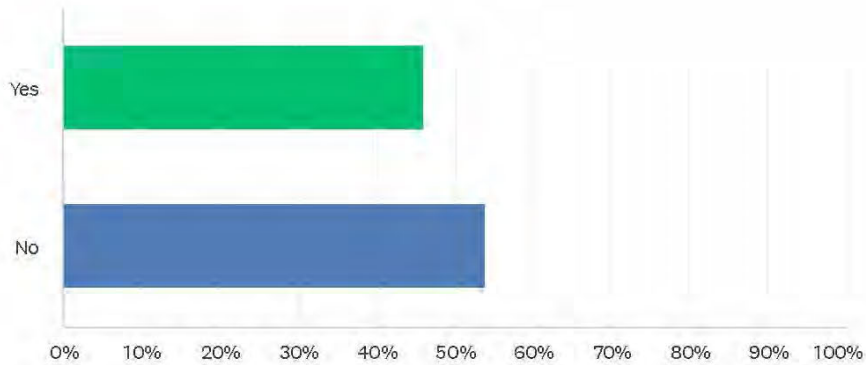


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very Satisfied	6.00%	3
Satisfied	28.00%	14
Neutral	26.00%	13
Dissatisfied	16.00%	8
Very Dissatisfied	24.00%	12
TOTAL		50

Special Variation Survey

Q10 Do you believe Council has provided adequate information and consultation on the proposed Special Variation (SV) that council are proposing?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	46.00%	23
No	54.00%	27
TOTAL		50

Special Variation Survey

Q11 If answered No above, please provide comment on improvements that you recommend.

Answered: 29 Skipped: 21

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The survey is flawed, the first question only had the two options of an SRV, a third option with no SRV should be included. An insult to the intelligence of ratepayers.	11/3/2023 9:33 AM
2	We have been granted information at the public meetings however I think council need to provide proof of being sustainable. Agreeing to accept grant money is only 'good' & 'cheap' or 'affordable' if the financial contribution from council is warranted and ongoing maintenance & insurance liability associated with these assets can be accounted for in ongoing financial budgets.	11/2/2023 7:52 PM
3	Provide costings of where the shortfalls and what the increase is needed for	11/2/2023 5:31 PM
4	Stop wasting money on consultancy fees, endless beautification of the main street - roundabouts, centre road parking spots, having four workers doing a one person job.	11/2/2023 1:52 PM
5	This survey is very one sided. For example there was no option for NO rate increase, which is my choice. All businesses are being asked to do more with less these days and find efficiencies. Council should do the same.	11/1/2023 2:34 PM
6	Actual breakdown of how the money will be used - general categories read like mostly being used for pay rises. Cost of living keeps going up because everyone is expecting pay rises!	10/31/2023 10:09 AM
7	More information as to why you want to pay employees an exorbitant amount of money to "attract" them, when you could spend the money making our town a space that young families want to come and live in.	10/30/2023 8:59 PM
8	Council needs to relate to ratepayers that the extra money won't be used for salary increases.	10/30/2023 11:20 AM
9	Answered yes	10/26/2023 6:17 PM
10	Timely notice of meetings about rate special variations and details, Council meetings in general. Access to staff and Councillors. More widely available paper based and all sorts of media	10/26/2023 12:03 PM
11	More information in the mail Not everyone is IT proficient Not everyone has a computer	10/26/2023 11:47 AM
12	u basically made a bad time so no1 could turn up in barellan	10/25/2023 6:17 PM
13	Fix the water fix the roads WHAT ABOUT GRONG GRONG	10/25/2023 2:46 PM
14	Why such a large increase in rates, seems as if the [REDACTED] managers are incompetent	10/25/2023 8:03 AM
15	They regard it as a fine deal. The [REDACTED] has engaged [REDACTED] with the brief" Recommend an SRV"	10/24/2023 6:26 PM
16	Find another affordable way fir the residents pensioners can not afford this rise maybe have a look at staffing levels and competences especially in the office	10/24/2023 12:19 PM
17	Detail of budget expenditure blowout is required to see where the costs are	10/24/2023 10:05 AM
18	I just feel like we need more consultation with the Narrandera Community, and informing us more thoroughly. I'm also not satisfied with this survey, especially in its design, you don't really give us options to give our opinion.	10/23/2023 5:51 PM
19	Too much of an increase!	10/23/2023 5:40 PM
20	What is the "\$810k salary system improvements" really for, how much of a pay rise? Are the salaried staff over qualified for what they do?	10/20/2023 7:52 AM
21	Not everyone can get to a meeting, you could have had a more simply explained pamphlet sent	10/19/2023 9:59 PM

Special Variation Survey

to residents of why it is happening and why it is needed. eg. Technology upgrade- our system is over 20 years old and it dire need of upgrade.

22	What are the alternatives foe costs reductions , new revenue streams and challenging depreciation schedule	10/18/2023 10:41 PM
23	There is no attempt by Council to explore cost saving measures	10/18/2023 8:40 PM
24	You want to increase rates but you do nothing for the outlying shire you waste all our rates in Narrandera only I would like to see Tared roads and street signs in Grong grong	10/18/2023 7:35 PM
25	Somewhat yes but also no. Mail out dated 10 days earlier than people received it	10/18/2023 7:06 PM
26	Time for fresh blood in the council office you all need to go. Worried about a art centre which will been [REDACTED] all into town how about using the river that will get people attention	10/18/2023 5:32 PM
27	This is a money grab by council. There are parts of town that council do not have any regard for that have limited street lighting, no sewage, no foot paths, are over grown, bridges with no wall ways and no sign of any improvement in those areas BUT Victoria Ave sure does look a picture, sam only a small percentage of the residents live on that Ave. I firmly believe that this % raise will only benefit those people/areas in the councils focus and other areas of Narrandera will continue to be forgotten. Personally I would appreciate some form of foot path, or a gutter (especially since I have a charge in my rates for storm water?), or sewage. NSC is a small town council taking care of mates and back scratchers.	10/18/2023 5:03 PM
28	More options for those who work to attend meetings at realistic times	10/18/2023 5:00 PM
29	n/a	10/18/2023 4:48 PM

Special Variation Survey

Q12 If you have any further feedback for Council, please provide your comments below.

Answered: 34 Skipped: 16

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Why have capital grants been reduced so dramatically in the long term financial plan?	11/3/2023 9:33 AM
2	I dont agree that the special variation should be so high. 41.5% increase is excessive.	11/2/2023 11:36 PM
3	I also think increasing the rates for farmers who don't receive access to town water, rubbish removal etc should be treated carefully. Farmers bring financial income to our local community and to see an increase in their rates to potentially \$50k per year is absurd. Farmers don't receive a salary and income can be very varied dependant on seasonal conditions. We need local farming families to remian in our town, reducing the likelihood of corporates taking over all our farming land.	11/2/2023 7:52 PM
4	I do not agree to either option of the rate increase but can't submit this without completing all questions!	11/2/2023 1:52 PM
5	I own rental property in Narrandera but I live on the Northern Beaches of Sydney in one of the most affluent suburbs. Narrandera's rates are HIGHER than the rates on our waterfront property and this should not be the case.	11/1/2023 2:34 PM
6	Areas with unsealed roads, no footpaths, no piped drainage, or have paid directly for installation of sewer or water infrastructure connections should not be levied extra as they are not receiving equal benefit. Council should not provide services that "compete with local business", such as free camps within 5km of town. Council should increase rates on "empty shops" to encourage more retailers and make the town look more alive (bottom of East St pretty sad), any council owned empty shops that are not being rented should be let at cheap rent (renter pays usage costs, etc) to encourage occupancy - some use better than none.	10/31/2023 10:09 AM
7	This whole surgery has been designed to enable your agenda. The way the questions and comment space have been worded. How pathetic.	10/30/2023 8:59 PM
8	There are areas of Narrandera that are visually disgraceful	10/30/2023 11:20 AM
9	This week council spends more and more in services to whinging Narrandera residents than an other council. They want more but obviously are happy for others, who dont live in the town, or even visit or use its services. The farmers and residents of the satellite villages are expected to cough up more but will not see any benefit. Youre asking farmers to fork out tens of thousands more for a drainage system and a council computer system and pay rise. If you raise rates in the satellite towns it should be spent there, not in Narrandera	10/26/2023 6:17 PM
10	Look after your trees specially the white cedar trees. They are constantly dropping either leaves or seed pods which impose a serious risk to public safety.	10/26/2023 2:12 PM
11	Bolton Street project, why hasn't been completed. More Information in mail including in monthly newsletterRegular reports on financils/expenditures/projected expenditure. Use of Council staff instead of consultants.	10/26/2023 12:03 PM
12	More information in the mail Not everyone has a computer Not everyone is IT proficient. The use of council staff inthead of consultants. Regular reports on financials/expenditure/projected expenditure.	10/26/2023 11:47 AM
13	might be time for the council to find a new [REDACTED] as it seems [REDACTED] isn't doing a good job... the council had money b4 he turned up... also [REDACTED] should of had the guts to show up to all these meetings.. and there should of been 3 questions u have basically made it I'm possible on the first question to say u disagree	10/25/2023 6:17 PM
14	Fix Grong Grong	10/25/2023 2:46 PM
15	Drop money wasting protects, many other shires are doing better money management and not	10/25/2023 8:03 AM

Special Variation Survey

increasing rates

16	I understand that the cost of services has increased and Council needs pass on these increases if we expect a certain level of service. My only concerns are for those who already do without. Please make sure that there are payment plans that assist those who need it.	10/24/2023 9:49 PM
17	Cut expenditure and better utilise your financial assets Narrandera Shire Council. Wasteful expenditure is rampant at this council and I believe that outdoor staff are reverting to a 4 day week with no productivity gains. The [REDACTED] has badly mismanaged this organisation since [REDACTED] appointment in 2017.	10/24/2023 6:26 PM
18	I am just really unhappy with Narrandera Shire Council and their irresponsible use of money. You keep using money for minor projects, or projects no one in town even asked for in the first place. We didn't ask for signals down at the Commons, nor did we ask for the signage at the entry/exit points of town. Tourism is important yes, but your money needs to go towards helping the people of Narrandera who reside here, not just tourists who stay a few nights or pass by. I, like majority of the town, can agree that it is frustrating having to travel out of town to access services and shops. We need more shops in Narrandera, we need more health and mental health services in town (it's disappointing that we have to travel all the way to Wagga or elsewhere for emergency or complicated health conditions). Besides that, I would like to see more transparency and accountability from the Council. I would like to see more about how money is used, and actually consulting and listening to the community.	10/23/2023 5:51 PM
19	How will council encourage new business to Narrandera?	10/23/2023 5:40 PM
20	As residents and ratepayers we are in a cost of living crisis but we forget that Council faces these costs as well with very little means to earn more money. If we want a sustainable Council and not have our children inherit more debt we need to commit to this increase.	10/22/2023 11:20 AM
21	We understand that Narrandera Shire Residential rate payers have paid less than their regional neighbours.	10/20/2023 1:18 PM
22	This survey was more about saying if you want to improve or maintain services etc we need more money and not very much about what people really think about the idea. People are not in a financial position for such a huge increase in rates just so that the salary earners can have a significant pay rise!	10/20/2023 7:52 AM
23	Regardless of how good the reason is, most people will be against the rate rise because it hits their wallets. Don't cower to the crowd that wants everything but don't think that they should have to pay for it.	10/19/2023 8:38 AM
24	Stop spending money you don't have	10/19/2023 7:33 AM
25	Use the temporary option to buy time to work on better solutions	10/19/2023 10:41 PM
26	Council is a failed money manager	10/19/2023 8:40 PM
27	Stop increasing rates and bleeding people dry when it's hard enough to put food on the table and stop charging rubbish removal for empty blocks	10/19/2023 7:35 PM
28	People want value for money. Council staff need to be more accountable. Eg : one worker digging hole five workers above him looking at phones. Not a good look. Workers manually watering trees in places where automated sprinklers have been fitted. Workers taking half truckload on tree off cuts to tip driving around another fallen branch on road. It's not that hard	10/18/2023 7:06 PM
29	I support the rate rise. I am aware of what my rates pay for. My rates will only increase approximately \$10 per week so I can justify this. I also support Council finding efficiencies into the future. This increase is a small part of making NSC a viable enterprise.	10/18/2023 6:13 PM
30	Seems like council doesn't do much around town, so why should they get more money from us? You can't even get someone in to get rid of the dead wood in the trees. Also you don't trim trees so bins can be collected, rates payers do that!	10/18/2023 5:33 PM
31	How about using the pool income to help instead of the lee brother making heaps out of it, once more question since when is Narrandera Shire been able to build bridges, I don't think anyone in the shire is a bridge carpenter???	10/18/2023 5:32 PM
32	See above	10/18/2023 5:03 PM
33	Where are we going to find the money to pay for the increase	10/18/2023 5:00 PM
Special Variation Survey		
34	Please speed up the water filtration plant and keep us informed regularly of the progress or why it is delayed	10/18/2023 4:48 PM

4.11 Radio

Action:

5 advertisements were booked between 13 October 2023 – 17 October 2023.

Outcome:

5 Advertisements were run on Narrandera Community Radio between 13 October 2023 and 17 October 2023.

The General Manager and Mayor Cr. Neville Kschenka discussed the SV with media outlets including Triple M and Spirit FM on 20 September 2023 x 2 and 25 October 2023.



Special Variation Advertisement – Radio

Narrandera Shire Council has made a significant decision to consult with the community for a special variation of rates and they want you to have your say.

Council strongly believes that these Special Variation options will contribute to the long-term sustainability of our shire.

To participate and make a difference, you can attend the upcoming community meetings and consultations, the next consultation dates are the 18th of October from 10am-12pm and the 26th of October 6.30pm-8.30pm, both held at the Narrandera Ex-servicemen's club.

For more information please visit councils website or call 02 69595510

Authorised by

George Cowan

Narrandera Shire Council
141 East Street
NARRANDERA NSW 2700

4.12 Print


Action:

Advertisements were placed in the local newspaper, the Narrandera Argus, to provide information to residents.

Outcome:

Advertisements were placed in the Narrandera Argus on 28/9/2023, 12/10/2023, 19/10/2023, 2/11/2023.

The council's newsletter is placed in the Narrandera Argus each month and appeared in the Narrandera on 5/10/2023 and 26/10/2023.



Narrandera
Shire Council

SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

At the Council meeting on 19 September 2023 Council resolved to go to the community and consult on a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Variation (SV) of either a one-year SV of 41.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent) or a two year SV of 25.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent) and 18.0 per cent in 2025-26 (including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5 per cent), representing a cumulative Special Variation of 48.1 per cent over two years.

If approved the proposed SV will increase the general rate base permanently, commencing in 2024/2025. The rate base as from the 2025/26 for option one, or from the 2026/27 for option two, will increase by the annual rate pegging limit as set by IPART.

What is a Special Variation (SV) and Rate-Pegging?

Normally general rates increase each year in line with an amount set by IPART. This amount is calculated annually based on methodology including a local government cost index and is commonly called the 'rate peg'.

For the 2023/24 financial year, the rate peg applied to NSW councils including Narrandera Shire Council is 3.7%. An assumed rate peg of 3.5% for 2024/25 and 2.5% for 2025/26 is being utilised as an estimate for the purposes of this consultation.

If a council's rate revenue is not sufficient to maintain service levels, undertake capital renewals and ensure sustainability, it can apply to IPART to increase general rate revenue by more than the rate peg. This is known as a Special Variation (SV). To apply for an SV, councils must demonstrate to the community and IPART that they need the money and have implemented improvements to be as efficient and productive as possible. Since 2018/2017 79 of the state's 128 general-purpose councils have applied to IPART for an SV. Those increases have varied from just 6.3% (Tweed) up to 92.8% (Strathfield). An annual list of approvals is published on the IPART website.

How can I have my say?

Narrandera Shire Council values community input and actively seeks feedback during the consultation period for the Special Variation. The consultation period ends Friday 31 November 2023.

You can email council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au or write to 141 East Street Narrandera, 2700. You can also make a submission online.

Community Engagement Sessions will be held as follows:

- 27 September 2023 - 5:30pm- 7pm - Narrandera Ex-servicemen's club
- 10 October 2023 - 5:30pm-7pm - Baretan Hall
- 11 October 2023 - 5:30pm-7pm - Drong Grong Hall
- 12 October 2023 - 5:30pm-7pm - Sandigo Hall
- 18 October 2023 - 10am-12pm - Narrandera Ex-servicemen's club

One on One meetings can be booked through Council - 69595510

The Mayor and General Manager are happy to attend meetings of your organisation if invited.

Following extensive community consultation, should Council resolve to apply to IPART for a Special Variation, members of the public will also be able to make a submission to IPART in February 2024.

Online Estimator

An online special variation estimator is available for all ratepayers, enter your assessment number to view the increase estimates for individual properties.

<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/rates-calculator2024>

Please note an estimate only is provided and is subject to change due to the Valuer General assessment of your land value. This does not include Sewer, Water, Waste, Recycling or Stormwater charges. This estimate cannot be substituted for actual Rates Notices and Council cannot be held liable for an incorrect estimate. The information is provided in good faith, however Council makes no statements, representations or warranties about the information provided on this page.

For more information on the proposed rate increase, community consultation process, and how to get involved, please visit the Narrandera Shire Council website <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/have-your-say/special-variation> or contact 02 6959 5510.

George Cowan - General Manager



SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

At the Council meeting on 19 September 2023 Council resolved to go to the community and consult on a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Variation (SV) of either a one-year SV of 41.5% in 2024/25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent) or a two-year SV of 25.5% in 2024/25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent) and 16.0 per cent in 2025/26 (including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5 per cent), representing a cumulative Special Variation of 48.1 per cent over two years.

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What is a Special Variation (SV) and Rate-Pegging?

Narrandera general rates increase each year in line with an amount set by IPART. This amount is calculated annually based on methodology including a local government cost index and is commonly called the 'rate peg'.

For the 2023/24 financial year, the rate peg applied to NSW councils including Narrandera Shire Council is 3.7%. An assumed rate peg of 3.5% for 2024/25 and 2.5% for 2025/26 is being utilised as an estimate for the purposes of this consultation.

If a council's rate revenue is not sufficient to maintain service levels, undertake capital renewals and ensure sustainability, it can apply to IPART to increase general rate revenue by more than the rate peg. This is known as a Special Variation (SV). To apply for an SV, councils must demonstrate to the community and IPART that they need the money and have implemented improvements to be as efficient and productive as possible. Since 2016/2017, 79 of the state's 128 general-purpose councils have applied to IPART for an SV. These increases have varied from just 6.3% (Tweed) up to 92.8% (Strathfield). An annual list of approvals is published on the IPART website.

How can I have my say?

Narrandera Shire Council values community input and actively seeks feedback during the consultation period for the Special Variation. The consultation period ends Friday 3 November 2023.

You can email council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au or write to 141 East Street Narrandera, 2700. You can also make a submission online.

Community Engagement Sessions will be held as follows:

27 September 2023 - 5.30pm- 7pm - Narrandera Ex-servicemen's club

10 October 2023 - 5.30pm-7pm - Baralatai Hall

11 October 2023 - 5.30pm-7pm - Gong Gong Hall

12 October 2023 - 5.30pm-7pm - Samilga Hill

18 October 2023 - 10am-12pm - Narrandera Ex-servicemen's club

One on One meetings can be booked through Council - 68669510

The Mayor and General Manager are happy to attend meetings of your organisation if invited.

Following extensive community consultation, should Council resolve to apply to IPART for a Special Variation, members of the public will also be able to make a submission to IPART in February 2024.

Online Estimator

An online special variation estimator is available for all ratepayers, enter your assessment number to view the increase estimates for individual properties.

<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/rates-calculator-2024>

Please note an estimate only is provided and is subject to change due to the Valuer General assessment of your land value. This does not include Sewer, Water, Waste, Recycling or Stormwater charges. This estimate cannot be substituted for actual Rates Notices and Council cannot be held liable for an incorrect estimate. The information is provided in good faith, however Council makes no statements, representations or warranties about the information provided on this page.

For more information on the proposed rate increase, community consultation process, and how to get involved, please visit the Narrandera Shire Council website <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/have-your-say/special-variation> or contact 02 6959 5510.

George Cowan - General Manager



ADDITIONAL SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

At the Council meeting on 19 September 2023 Council resolved to go to the community and consult on a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Variation (SV) of either a one-year SV of 4.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent) or a two year SV of 25.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5 per cent) and 18.0 per cent in 2025-26 (including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5 per cent), representing a cumulative Special Variation of 48.1 per cent over two years.

If approved the proposed SV will increase the general rate base permanently commencing in 2024/2025. The rate base as from the 2025/26 for option one, or from the 2026/27 for option two, will increase by the annual rate pegging limit, as set by IPART.

Additional Community Consultation

Due to demand, an additional consultation date is available:

Thursday 26 October 2023 – 6.30pm - 8.30pm – Narrandera Ex-servicemen's Club

One-on-One meetings can be booked through Council – 69595510

The Mayor and General Manager are happy to attend meetings of your organisation if invited.

Online Estimator

An online special variation estimator is available for all ratepayers; enter your assessment number to view the increase estimates for individual properties.

<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/rates-calculator-2024>

Please note an estimate only is provided and is subject to change due to the Valuer General's assessment of your land value. This does not include Sewer, Water, Waste, Recycling or Stormwater charges. The estimate cannot be substituted for actual Rates Notices and Council cannot be held liable for an incorrect estimate. The information is provided in good faith; however, Council makes no statements, representations or warranties about the information provided on this page.

For more information on the proposed rate increase, community consultation process, and how to get involved, please visit the Narrandera Shire Council website, <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/have-your-say/special-variation> or contact 02 6959 5510

George Cowan – General Manager



Special Variation Consultation closing 3 November 2023

Narrandera Shire Council would like to remind all residents and stakeholders that the deadline for submissions regarding the proposed Special Variation is fast approaching. Submissions will close on 3 November 2023, providing residents with an opportunity to voice their opinions on the proposed Special Variation.

Submissions can be made through various channels including:

1. **Online:** Visit our official website www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au and fill out the submission form provided.
2. **Email:** Send your submission to: council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au
3. **Postal Mail:** Address your submission to the General Manager, 141 East Street, Narrandera NSW 2700.

All submissions received will be considered by the Narrandera Shire Council for the November Council meeting.

To assist with the submission process, additional information about the proposed Special Variation, as well as frequently asked questions (FAQs), can be found on the Council's website <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/have-your-say/special-variation>

George Cowan
General Manager

COUNCIL NEWS

Issue 21
Special Variation

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING
Tuesday 17 October 2023

- + 1:30pm - Public Forum
- + 2:00pm - Ordinary Meeting of Council

WHAT IS A SPECIAL VARIATION AND RATE PEGGING?

Normally general rates increase each year in line with an amount set by IPART. This amount is calculated annually based on methodology including a local government cost index and is commonly called the 'rate peg'. For the 2023/24 financial year, the rate peg applied to NSW councils including Narrandera Shire Council is 3.7%. An assumed rate peg of 3.5% for 2024/25 and 2.5% for 2025/26 is being utilised as an estimate for the purposes of this consultation.

If a council's rate revenue is not sufficient to maintain service levels, undertake capital renewals and ensure sustainability, it can apply to IPART to increase general rate revenue by more than the rate peg. This is known as a Special Variation (SV). To apply for an SV, councils must demonstrate to the community and IPART that they need the money and have implemented improvements to be as efficient and productive as possible. Since 2016/2017 79 of the state's 128 general-purpose councils have applied to IPART for an SV. Those increases have varied from just 6.3% (Tweed) up to 92.8% (Strathfield). An annual list of approvals is published on the IPART website.

BACKGROUND

At the Council meeting on 19 September 2023 Council resolved to go to the community and consult on a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Variation (SV) of either:

- a one-year SV of 41.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5%)
- or a two year SV of 25.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5%) and 18.0% in 2025-26 (including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5%), representing a cumulative Special Variation of 48.1% over two years.

ONLINE SPECIAL VARIATION ESTIMATOR

Narrandera Shire Council has launched a Special Variation Estimator to allow ratepayers to assess the impact of the proposed Special Variation (SV) on their respective rates. The SV Estimator has been added to help ratepayers better understand how the increase will impact them as Council continues to ask for the community's view on a proposed SV to ensure long-term financial viability.

Enter your Assessment Number, which can be found in the top righthand corner of your rates notice to see the estimated rates based on proposed SV options.

The Online Special Variation Estimator is available on our website:
<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/rates-calculator-2024>

IS THE SPECIAL VARIATION INCREASE PERMANENT?

Yes. In this instance, if approved the proposed SV will increase the general rate base permanently, commencing in 2024/2025. The rate base as from the 2025/26 for option one, or from the 2026/27 for option two, will increase by the annual rate pegging limit as set by IPART.

SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION DATES

27 SEPTEMBER 2023
- NARRANDERA EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB
+ 9:30AM - 11:30AM

10 OCTOBER 2023
- BARRILLER HALL
+ 9:30AM - 11:30AM

11 OCTOBER 2023
- GRONG GRONG HALL
+ 9:30AM - 11AM

12 OCTOBER 2023
- KARRIDOO HALL
+ 9:30AM - 11:30AM

18 OCTOBER 2023
- NARRANDERA EX-SERVICEMEN'S CLUB
+ 11AM - 12PM



council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au
02 6959 5510
141 East Street Narrandera NSW 2700

WHAT WILL THE SPECIAL VARIATION FUND?

If implemented the special variation will generate an additional \$2.3m. These funds will be used as follows:

- Ensure financial sustainability, maintain existing service levels and fully funding depreciation to pay for additional renewals to reduce backlog - \$960k Upgrade of the Narrandera stormwater system (loan repayments on Council's share of that cost), \$300k pa (interest)
- Staff salary system improvements, - \$810k
- Technology upgrades including cyber security and a new enterprise management system, - \$231k
- Compliance including the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and risk management.

HOW CAN I HAVE MY SAY?

Narrandera Shire Council values community input and actively seeks feedback during the consultation period for the Special Variation. The consultation period ends Friday 3 November 2023.

Email: council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au

Write: 141 East Street Narrandera, 2700.

Online: <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/have-your-say/special-variation>

One on One meetings can also be arranged by contacting 02 6959 5510.



Narrandera
Shire Council

141 East Street, Narrandera, NSW 2700
P: 02 6959 5510 E: council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au
www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au

COUNCIL NEWS

Issue 22
October 2023

FLORA AND FAUNA RESERVE

Narrandera Shire Council is making our beloved Flora and Fauna Reserve even more accessible and beautiful. We're thrilled to announce the installation of a brand-new entrance at the reserve! This new addition aims to enhance visitor experience, making it easier for all of us to explore and connect with the incredible natural wonders that surround us. Remember, let's all do our part in protecting and preserving this natural haven. Respect the habitat, follow guidelines, and together let's ensure the Flora and Fauna Reserve remains a thriving sanctuary for generations to come.



BARELLAN SEWER UPDATE

Work on the Barellan Sewer Scheme commenced last month with Keane Civil mobilising to the site. The project will result in the town of Barellan being connected to the sewer system, with approximately 5.5km of gravity pipework installed as well as four sewer pump stations within the town and rising mains. The town's sewage will be pumped to a new treatment plant (series of storage lagoons) located along Kokibertoo Road where it will undergo treatment. Most of the work is expected to be completed by August 2024. For more information on this project please contact Narrandera Shire Council on 02 6959 5510.

AUSTRALIA DAY NOMINATIONS OPEN

Nominations have opened for the 2024 Narrandera Shire Australia Day Awards.

We want to recognise the outstanding contributions of individuals and groups to the local community.

We need your nominations to let us know of those people you feel are deserving of these awards.

The categories for the 2024 Australia Day Awards are:

- Citizen of the Year
- Young Citizen of the Year
- Senior Citizen of the Year
- Organisation of the Year
- Environmental Australia Day Award – Individual or Organisation
- Disability Advocate of the Year – Individual or Organisation

Award Guidelines and Nomination Forms are available from the Narrandera Visitor Information Centre or can be downloaded from <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/recreation/events/australia-day>

It is a simple process so do not leave it to someone else. Get your nominations in this year!

Nominations close at 4 pm Friday 27 October 2023.




Narrandera
WHAT'S ON

- NOV 4-5** SKILLNESS & MOVEMENT OF WATERCOLOURS WORKSHOP
10AM-ARTS@NARRANDERA RAILWAY STATION
- NOV 5** RIVER COUNTRY'S
11:30PM-2PM NARRANDERA ZEDS
- NOV 19** NARRANDERA LIONS
COMPANION'S PARADE!
10PM-11PM MARIE BASHIR PARK

FOR MORE INFO OR TO HAVE YOUR EVENT LISTED PLEASE VISIT US AT
WWW.NARRANDERA.NSW.GOV.AU/EVENTS

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday 21 November 2023

- 1.30pm - Public Forum
- 2.00pm - Ordinary Meeting of Council

ADDITIONAL SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNITY CONSULTATION DATE

An additional community consultation has been scheduled due to demand.

Thursday 26 October 2023 - 6.30pm - 8.30pm - Narrandera Ex-servicemen's club

Narrandera Shire Council values community input and actively seeks feedback during the consultation period for the Special Variation.

The consultation period ends Friday 3 November 2023.

You can email council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au or write to 141 East Street Narrandera, 2700.

You can also make a submission online <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/have-your-say/special-variation>

SPECIAL VARIATION SURVEY

Narrandera Shire Council understands the importance of your opinions and we encourage all residents to participate in this survey. Your responses will remain anonymous, and the data will be presented at the November council meeting to assist the Councilors in their decision-making process.

Scan the QR Code or visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YTK3NLQ>



SENIORS MOVIE AT THE LIBRARY

- Friday 27 October 2023
- Narrandera Library Youth Space
- 2pm

This month's movie 'Lion' is based on an incredible true story.

Coffee, tea, and biscuits are available.



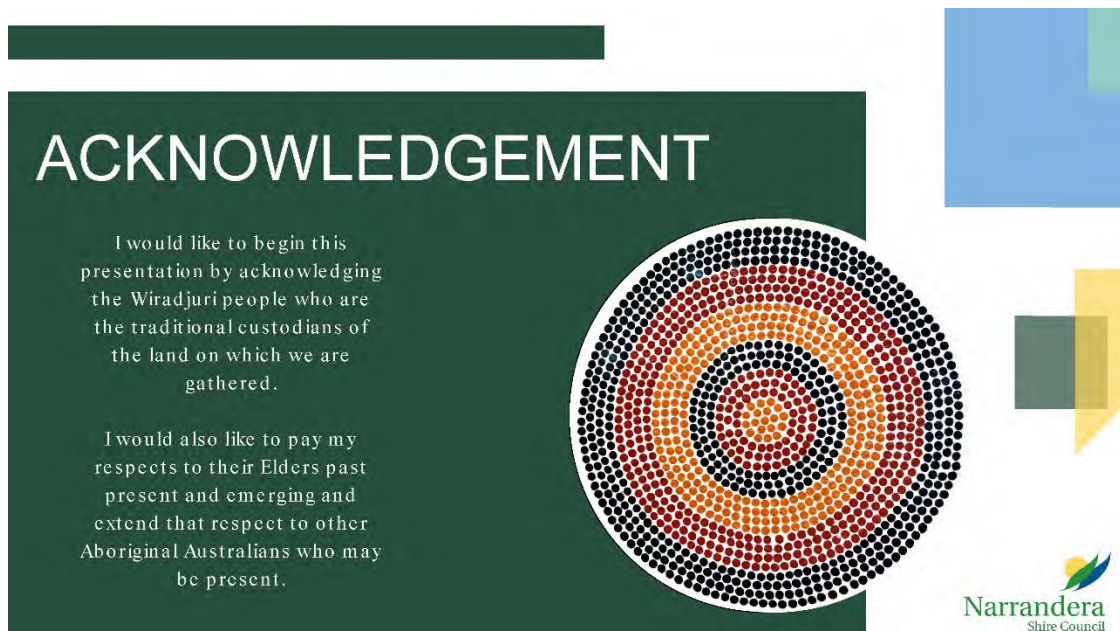
4.13 Special Variation Presentation

Action:

A PowerPoint presentation was developed to present at consultation meetings.

Outcome:

The PowerPoint was presented at each community meeting, and the information added, including rate notices, was specific to each area where the consultation was held. For example, at the community consultation held in Barellan on 10/10/2023, blank rate notices were sourced from the area and presented.



AGENDA

- What is being proposed
- Why this is happening
- What that will mean for you as a landowner
- What are the expected outcomes
- How you can gain more information and make a submission
- Council web site – Frequently asked questions

The purpose of the meeting is to make sure that you leave with a good understanding of the proposal, the process and what is involved.

Happy to take questions as we go


Fiscal Responsibility

Local Government Act 1993, Sec 8B:

- Responsible and sustainable spending
- Alignment of general revenue and expenditure
- Achieving a fully funded operating position
- Effective financial and asset management
- Adequate cash reserves and use of borrowings
- Responsible and sustainable infrastructure investment
- Constant monitoring of options to improve the operating position, and Intergenerational equity

Balancing services and resources





1/11 East Street, Narrandera NSW 2700
 All enquiries to Council - telephone (02) 5959 5510
 facsimile (02) 5959 1884
 email: council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au
 website: www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au
 ARN 06 547 765 569


Rate Notice 2023 - 2024

ASSESSMENT NO. [REDACTED]
 ISSUE DATE 05-07-2023
 DEDUCT PAYMENTS SINCE 04-07-2023
 DUE DATE 31-08-2023
 VALUATION BASE DATE 1/07/2022
 VALUATION 61800
 RATING CATEGORY 3 - Residential Narrandera
 SUB-CATEGORY

Particulars of rates and charges	Rateable Value	Rate/Charge	Amount
Residential Narran Base Amount	1	\$314.98	\$314.98
Residential Narrandera	61800	\$0.006101	\$377.04
Water Access Charge 20mm	1	\$320.00	\$320.00
Sewer Access Chg - Residential	1	\$799.80	\$799.80
Ndra Dom Waste Coll 240L	1	\$232.50	\$232.50
Ndra Dom Waste Avail	1	\$54.90	\$54.90
Ndra Dom Waste Recycle 240L	1	\$88.20	\$88.20
*This invoice contains GST of \$0.00			
Total Amount			\$2,187.42

Particulars of rates and charges	Rateable Value	Rate/Charge	Amount
Residential Narran Base Amount	1	\$314.98	\$314.98
Residential Narrandera	61800	\$0.006101	\$377.04

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

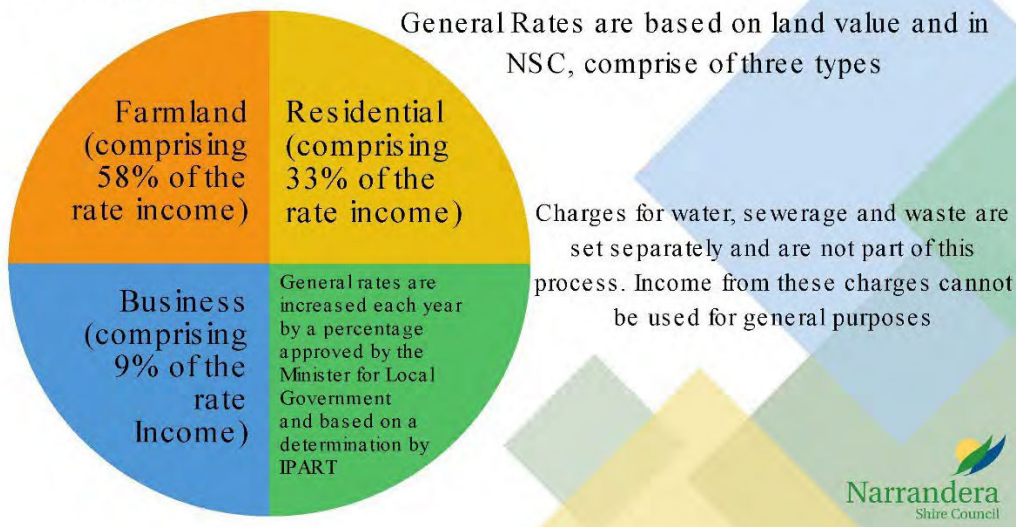


- Four decades of rate pegging
- Asset condition worsening
- Governance cost increasing
- Narrandera Stormwater Renewal Project
- Structural Deficits
- Own source Revenue below Benchmark
- Restructure Fit for the Future Improvement Plan

Current Rate Structure

Rate Category	Rate (cents) in \$	Minimum Rate	Estimated Yield
Farmland Ordinary	\$0.181900	\$510.00	\$3,235,072
Residential Other	\$0.69600	\$510.00	\$236,158
Residential Narrandera	\$0.610100	\$314.98 (Base)	\$1,569,356
Business Other	\$1.032000	\$510.00	\$90,696
Business Narrandera	\$1.645000	\$570.00	\$399,817

General Rates



Special Variations

Where Councils are unable to secure their financial future based on the normal rate peg the legislation provides for an application for a "Special Variation" (SV)



Temporary or permanent an SV application requires the Council to prove its financial position, asset renewal capacity and operational efficiency and consult with its community.



79 of the Councils in NSW have applied for an SV since 2016

Proposed Permanent Special Variation Options

Special Variation options considered by Council			
SV Options	2024-25	2025-26	Cumulative increase over SV implementation period
Base Case	3.5%	2.5%	6.1%
Sustainability Scenario Introduced over One-year	41.5%	2.5%	41.5%
Sustainability Scenario Introduced over Two-years	25.5%	18.0%	48.1%

The Special Variation will generate an additional \$2.3m and it will fund the following...

- Maintain existing service levels and fund depreciation
- Upgrade of the stormwater system in Narrandera \$300k
- Start to address the asset backlog \$960k
- Proceed with the technology and compliance upgrades \$240k
- Would become competitive in the labour market \$800k
- Could match grants for infrastructure renewal
- May capitalise on opportunities - Industrial lands, AAPA

Critically Council will have capacity to cope with the current challenges and take advantage of some of the future opportunities

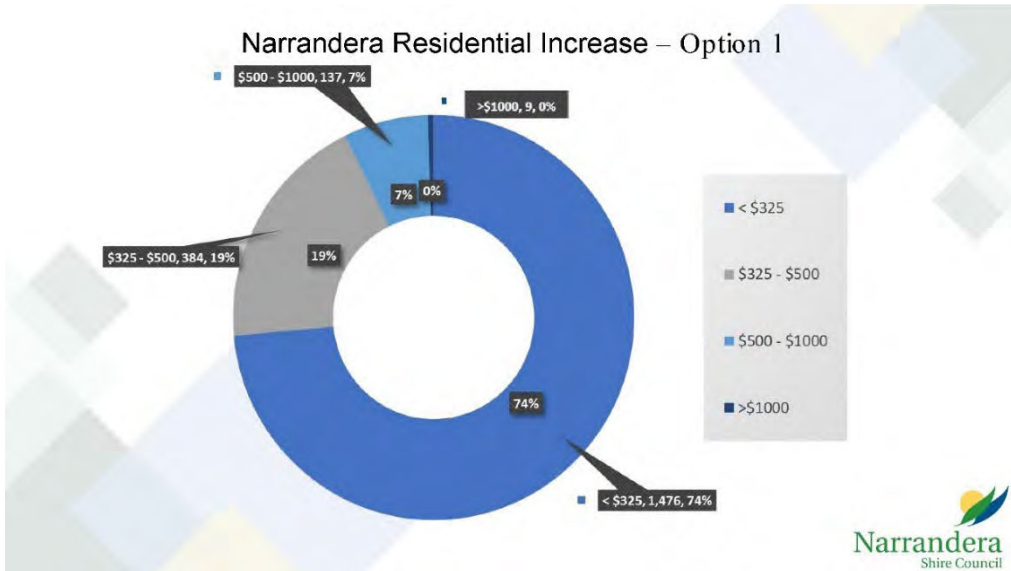
Comparisons Option 1

Rate Category	Average Rate 2021/22	Average Rate 2025/26 if the SV is implemented
Residential		
NARRANDERA	\$699	\$1,078
Group 10 average	\$848	\$1,000
Leeton	\$1,112	\$1,254
Griffith	\$1,078	\$1,386
Business		
NARRANDERA	\$1,233	\$1,835
Group 10 average	\$1,676	\$1,981
Leeton	\$976	\$1,101
Griffith	\$2,865	\$3,685
Farmland		
NARRANDERA	\$3,669	\$5,739
Group 10 average	\$3,106	\$3,688
Leeton	\$3,714	\$4,188
Griffith	\$3,815	\$4,907

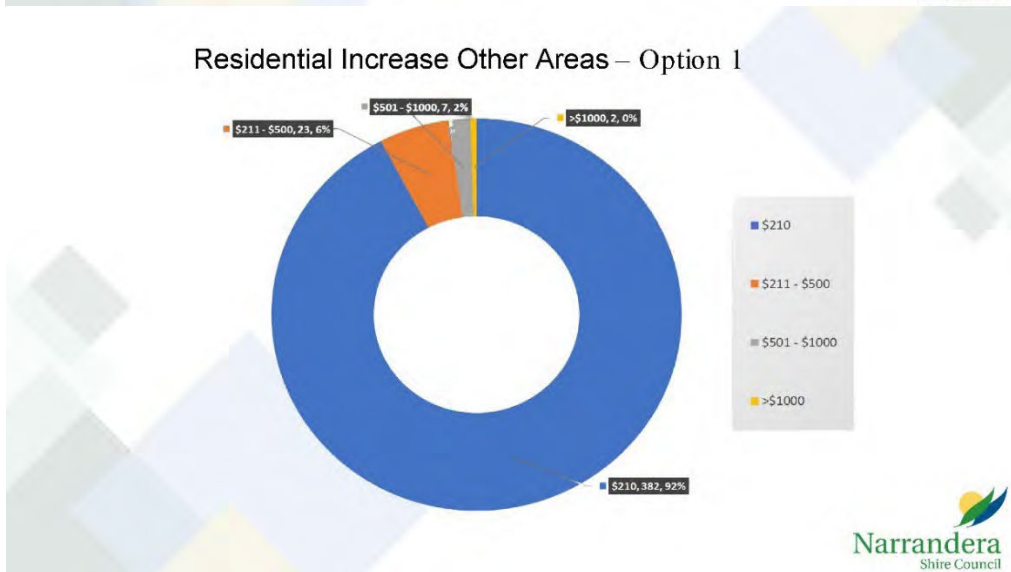
Proposed minimum rates

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

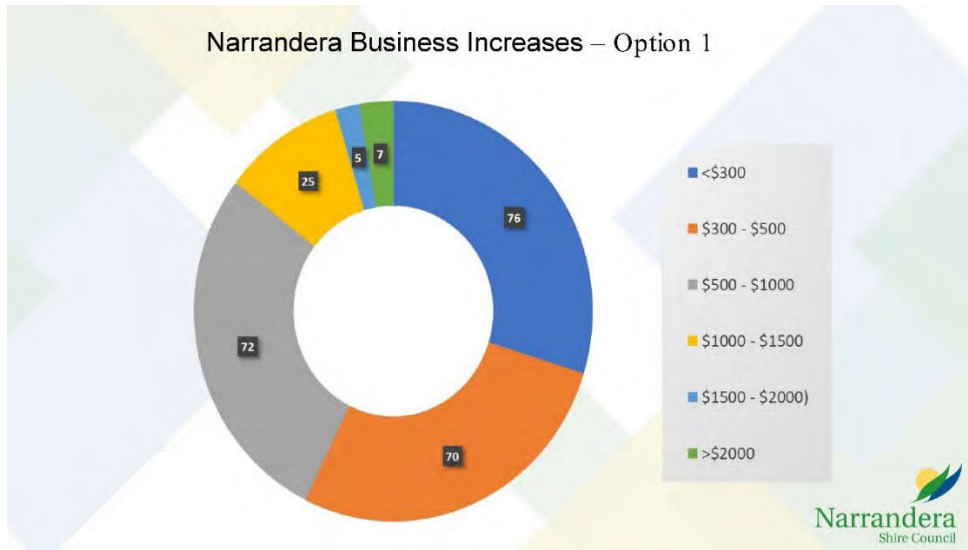
Narrandera Residential Increase – Option 1



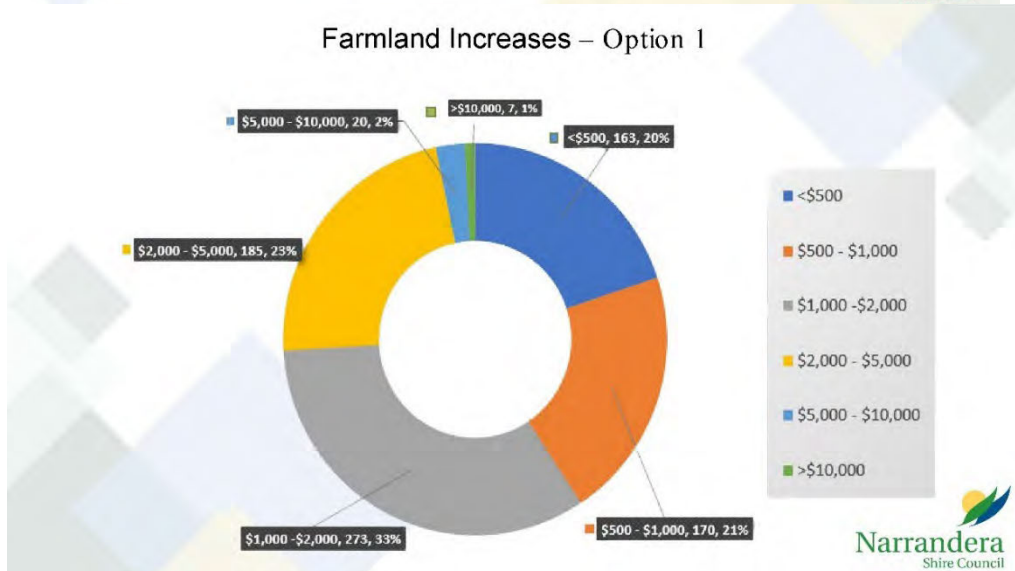
Residential Increase Other Areas – Option 1



Narrandera Business Increases – Option 1



Farmland Increases – Option 1



Maintain fundamental quality of life in the Shire

Community looks to the Council to pursue economic growth

Australian Airline Pilots Academy

New Industrial Estate



FUTURE CHALLENGES OPPORTUNITIES



Attracting and Supporting new industry

Population Growth

Influencing State and Federal Governments

Wish list – public housing, aged care, Lake Talbot, Koalas, Barellan Flood Levee

Affordability

- Detailed analysis available
- Uneven spread of capacity
- Most disadvantaged are renters
- Majority of residents have an increase which is less than the average
- Pension rebates and Hardship policy applies



Outcomes

If the special variation goes ahead, Council:

- Would become financially sustainable, no ongoing deficits
- Could continue to deliver current services
- Start to address the asset backlog
- Proceed with the technology and compliance upgrades
- Would become competitive in the labour market
- Could match grants for infrastructure renewal including the stormwater
- May capitalise on opportunities - Industrial lands, AAPA


Critically Council will have capacity to cope with the current challenges and take advantage of some of the future opportunities

Outcomes

If the special variation does not proceed:

- Council cannot continue to operate as it is - we know grants will dry up, costs will continue to rise, compliance will never stop
- Review of service levels
- Fees and charges increase
- The Narrandera stormwater upgrades would rely on grants
- Asset renewal will depend entirely on grants
- Opportunities would be lost
- Inevitable reduction in staff members
- There would be no chance of significant increases in salaries

How can you have your say?




Visit Councils web site, scroll down and click on...
“Special Variation”

[Special Variation | Narrandera Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://Special Variation | Narrandera Shire Council (nsw.gov.au))

That will take you to all the background information about the proposal, the associated documents and a survey inviting you to make a submission

The page also has an “online estimator” that will give you the predicted increase in rates for your property

Alternatively, you can always get hard copy of this material and fill out a submission form,
send an email or write a letter expressing your view




THANK YOU

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the staff and the team from Morrison Low

Their combined efforts and expertise has been instrumental in establishing the material fundamental to any consideration by Council of the options around a special variation.





4.14 Staff and Councillor Communication

Action:

Providing information and resources for staff and Councillors to ensure they were equipped to respond to feedback or queries received from the community.

Outcome:

Councillor information sessions were held on:

17 May 2022

14 December 2022

15 August 2023

21 October 2023

Frontline staff information sessions were held on:

8 September 2023

14 September 2023

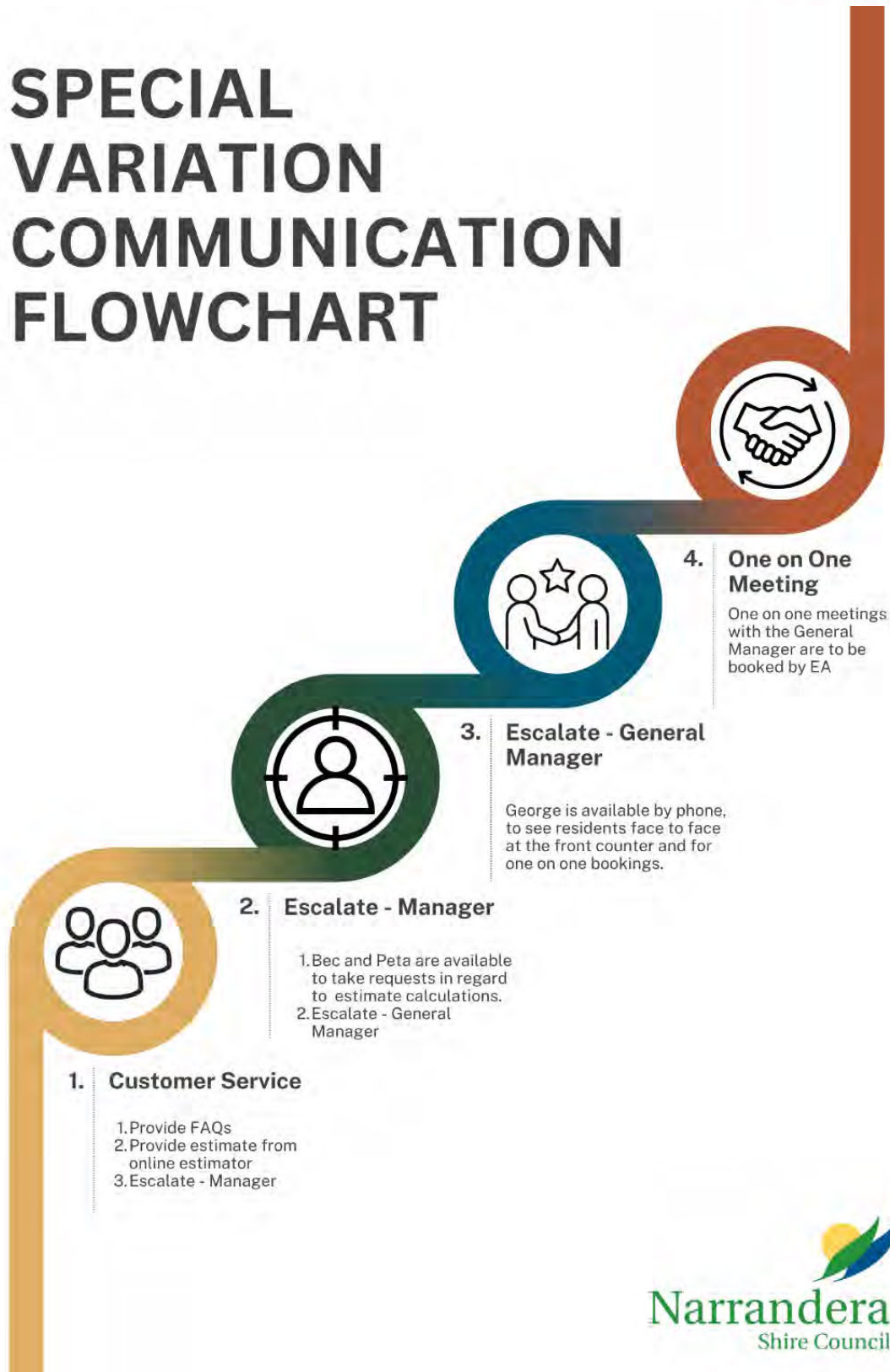
15 September 2023 x 2 Sessions

Dealing with difficult customer training was provided to frontline staff and councillors on 8 and 9 October 2023.

An information session for all staff was held on the 12/10/2023, 88 staff attended.

Frequently Asked Questions (Appendix 2) were developed to assist staff in responding to queries as well as being available to residents.

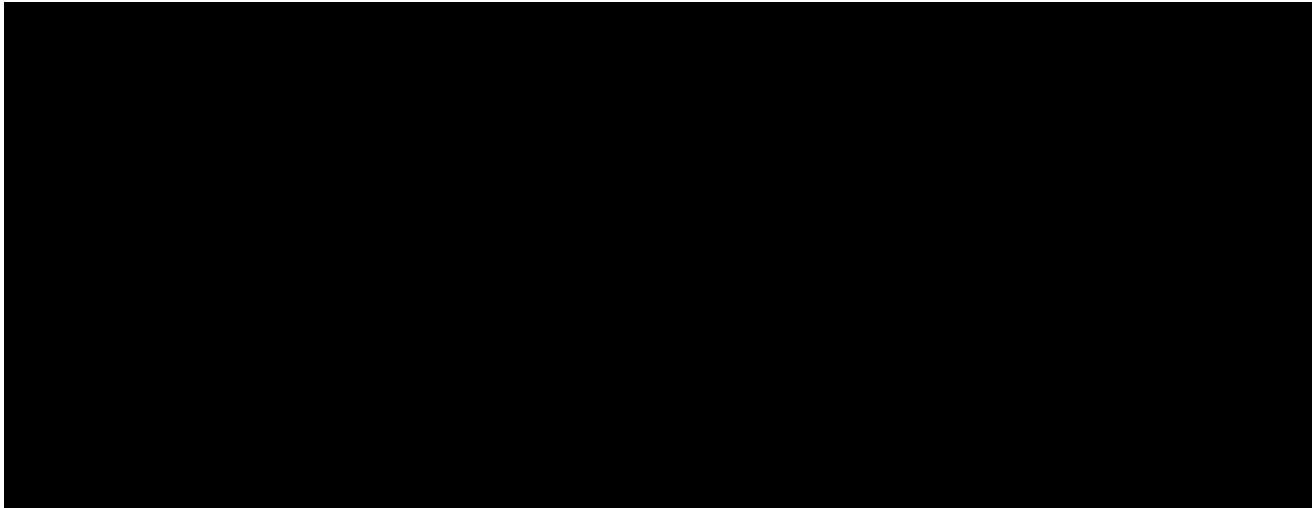
SPECIAL VARIATION COMMUNICATION FLOWCHART



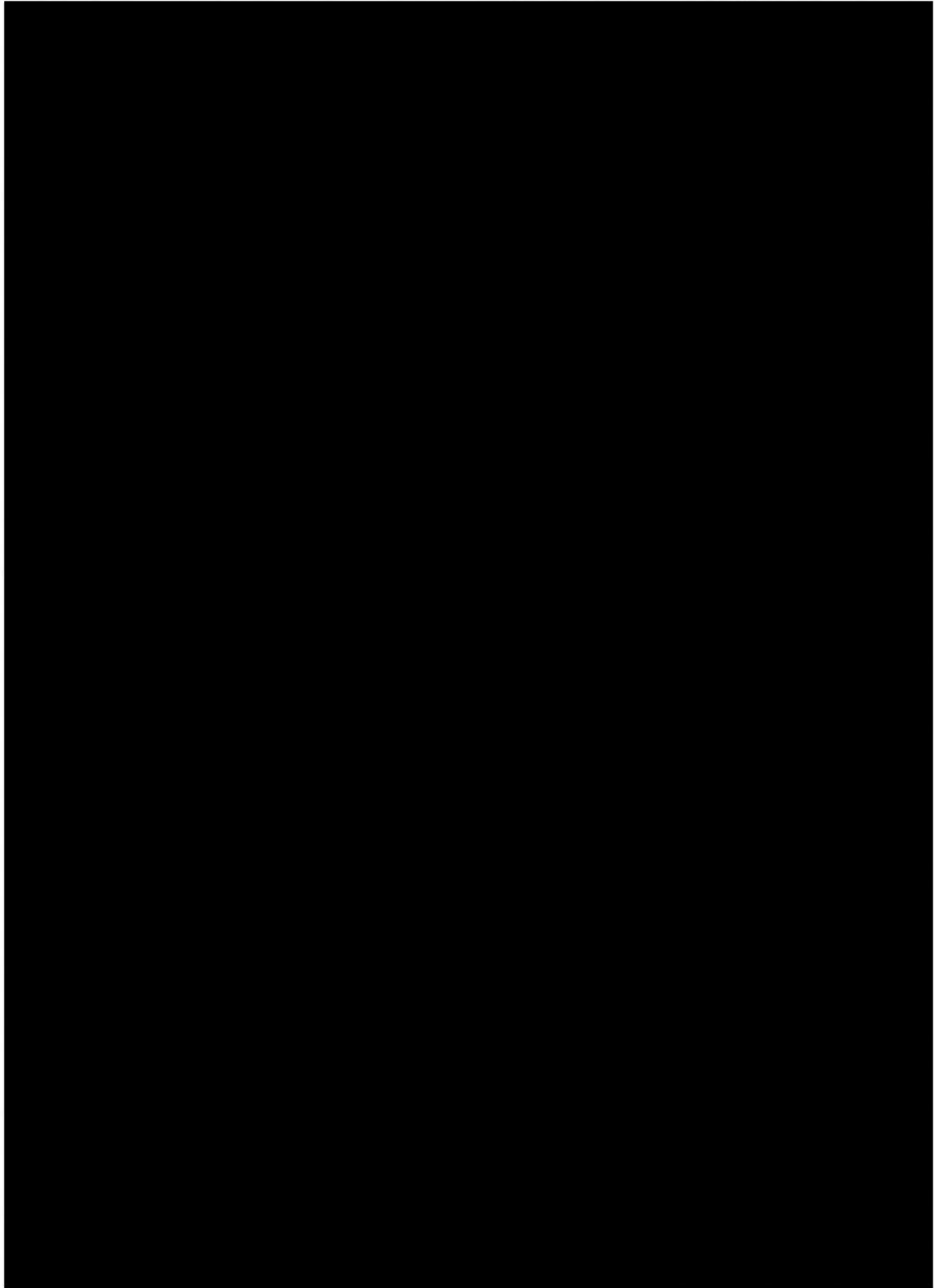
4.15 Additional Media

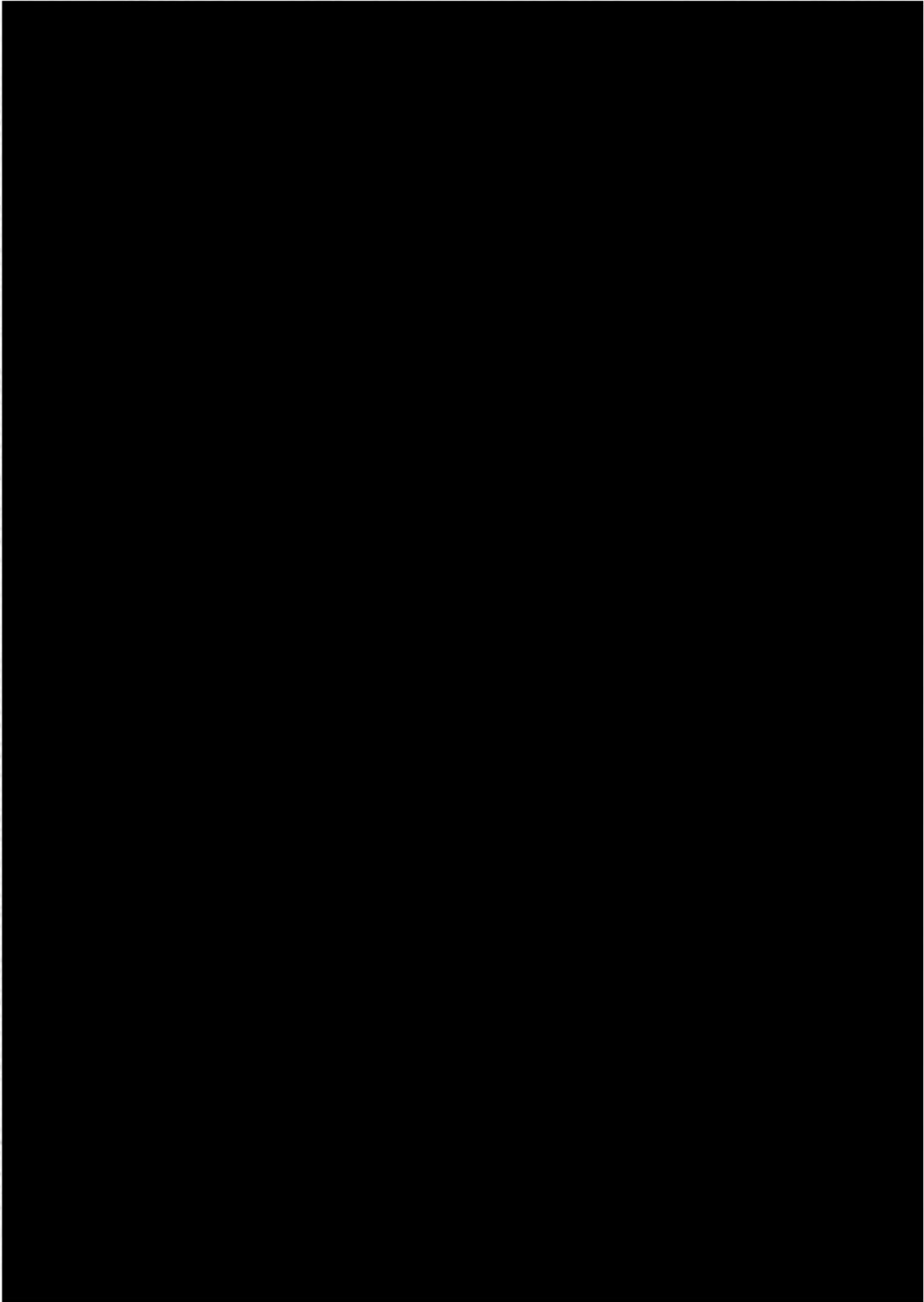
Publications shared by external media outlets are as follows:

21 September 2023
Narrandera Argus

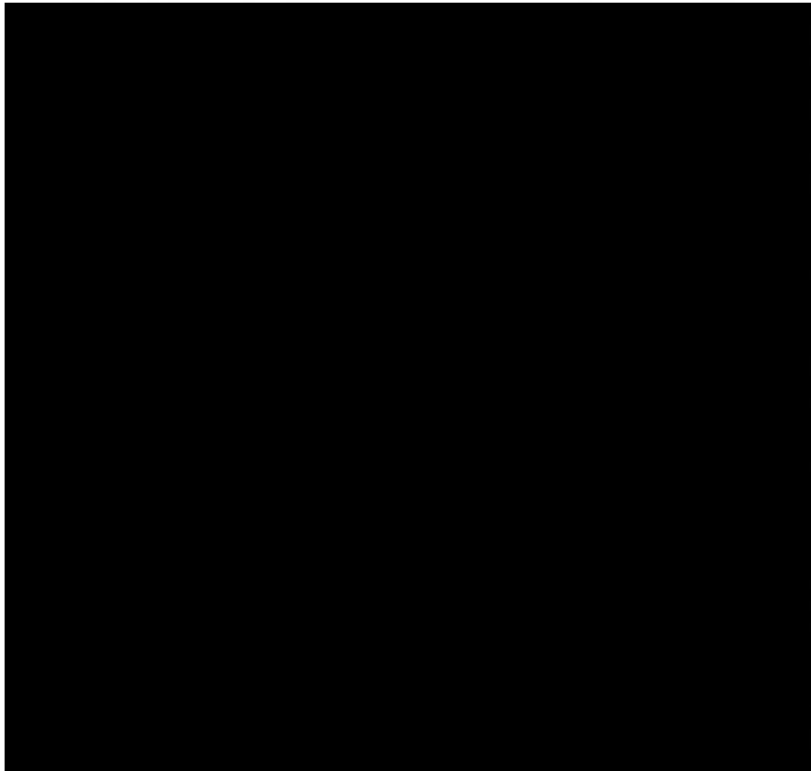
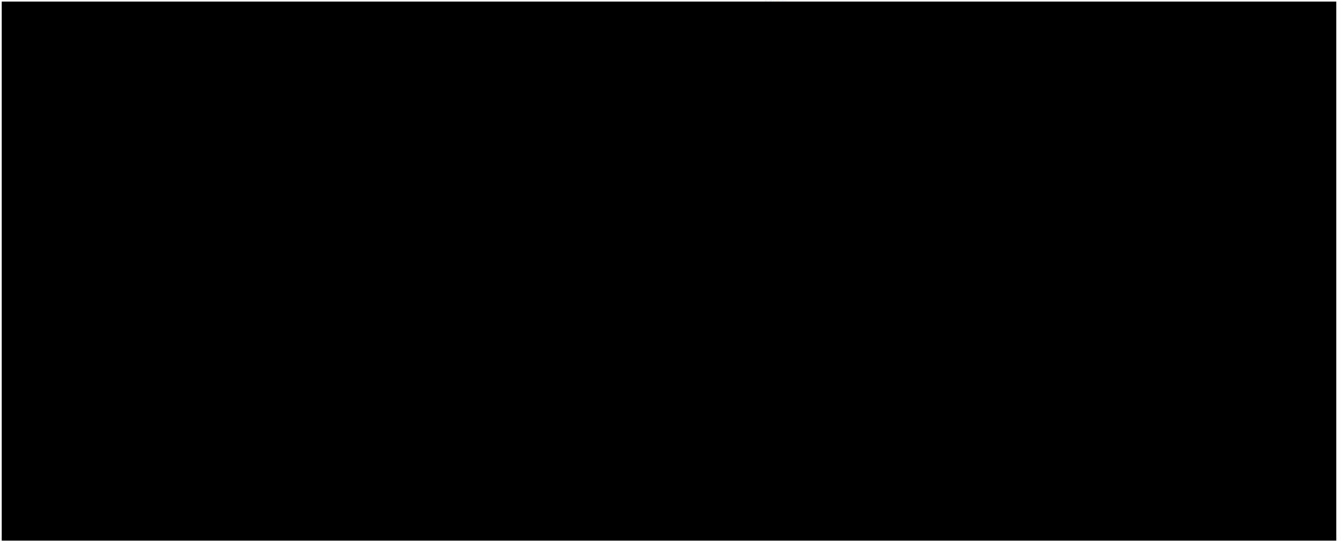


28 September 2023
Narrandera Argus

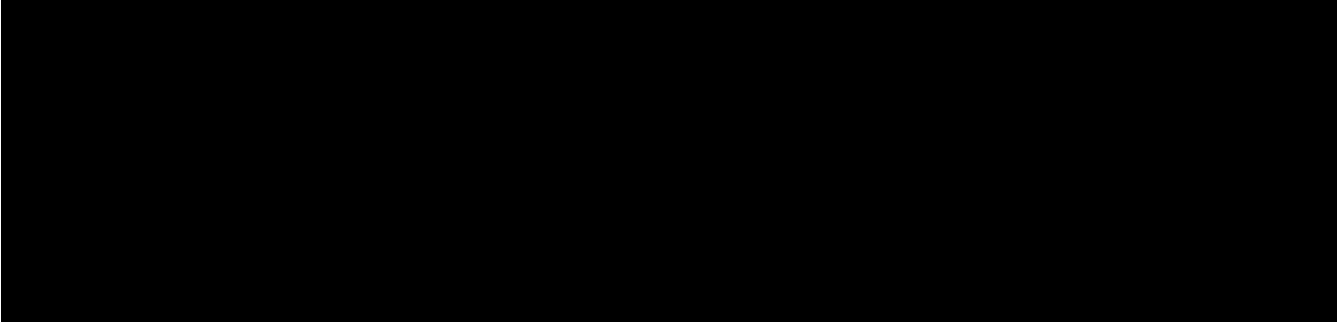




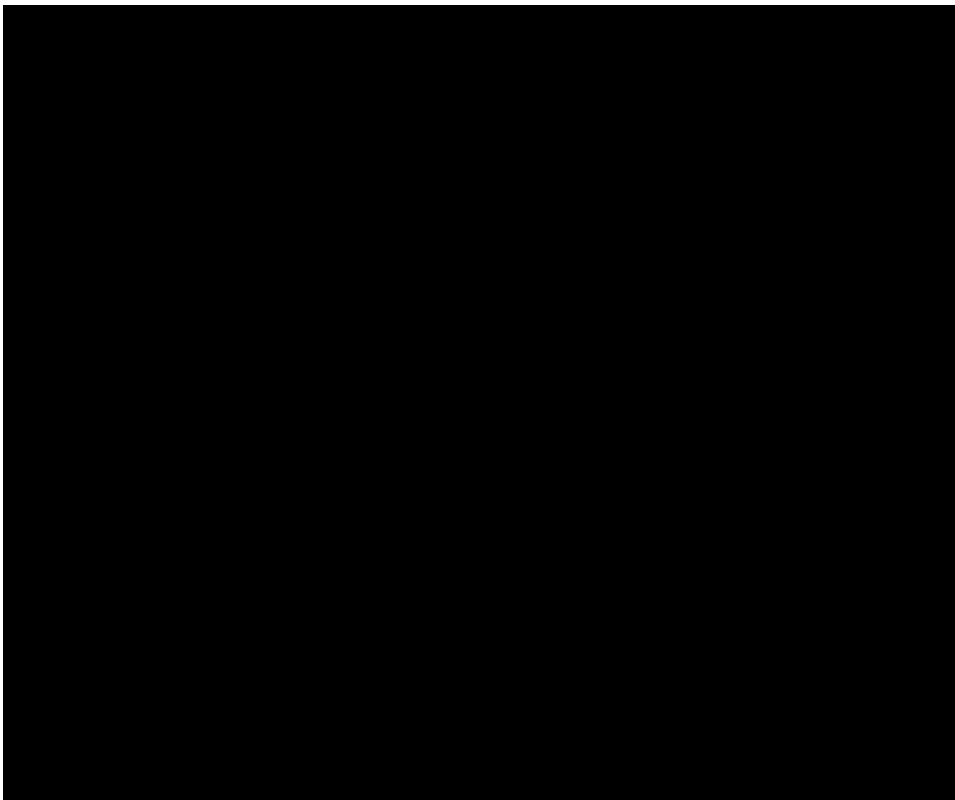
9/11/2023
Narrandera Argus



2/11/2023
Narrandera Argus



3/11/2023
Region Riverina



4.16 Live Streaming

Action:

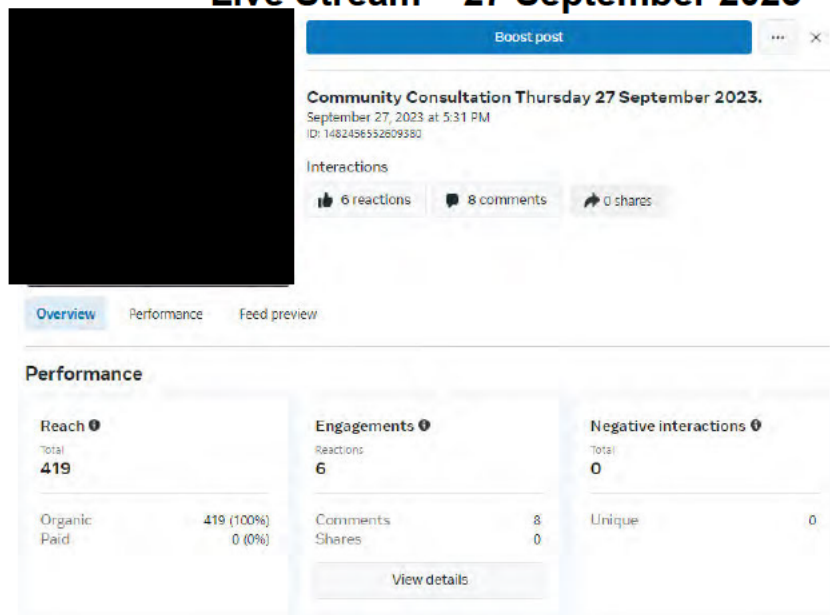
Consultations held on 27 September 2023 and 26 October 2023 were Live Streamed to the Narrandera Shire Council Facebook page.

Consultations held on 10, 11, 12 and 18 October 2023 were recorded and made available on the website.

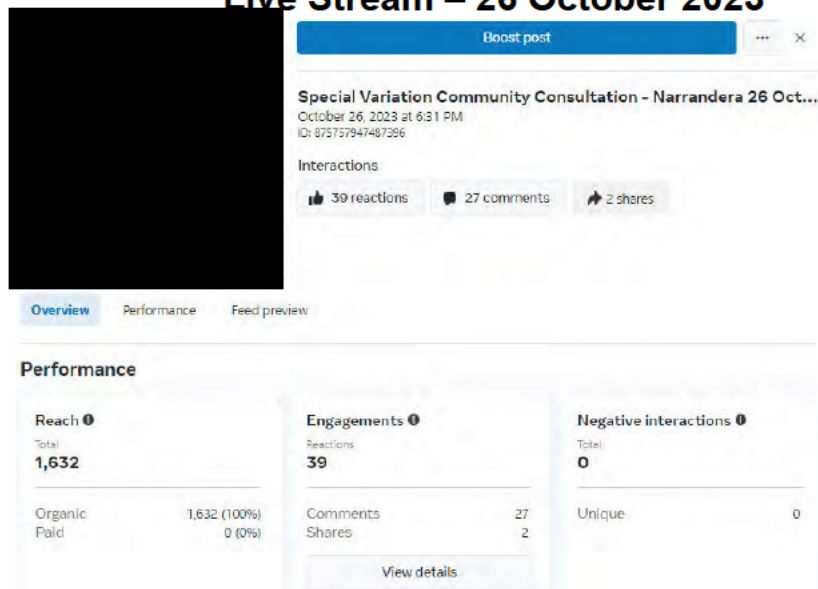
Outcome:

The live stream reach was 2,051 between the two live streams.

Live Stream – 27 September 2023



Live Stream – 26 October 2023



4.17 Television

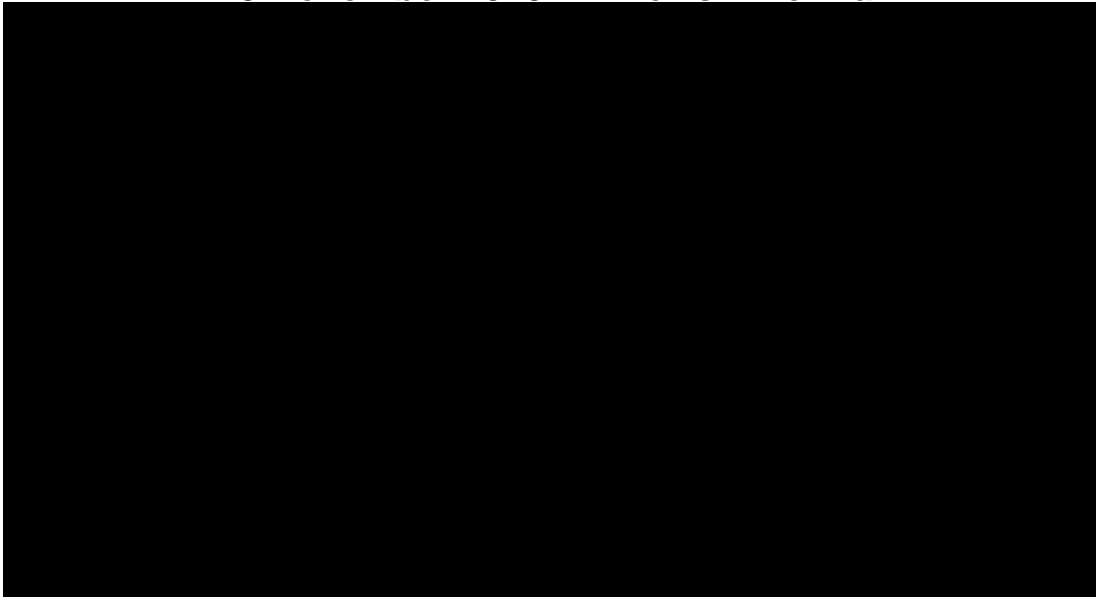
Action:

Narrandera Shire Council were approached by media outlet 7News, requesting interviews to be broadcasted on television.

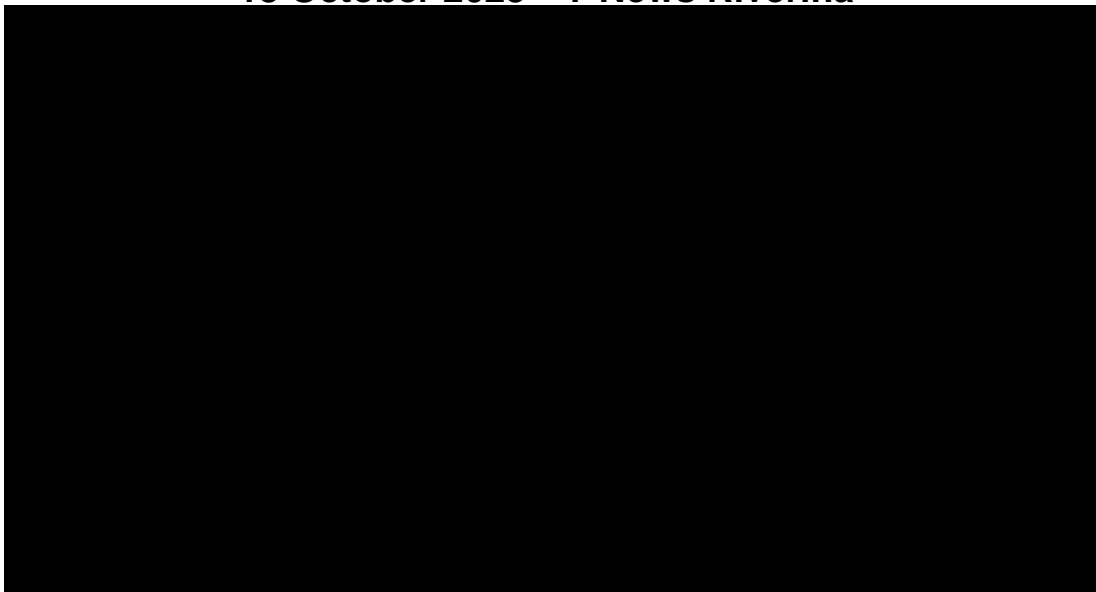
Outcome:

General Manager George Cowan provided two interviews that were broadcasted to 7News Riverina.

23 November 2023 – 7 News Riverina

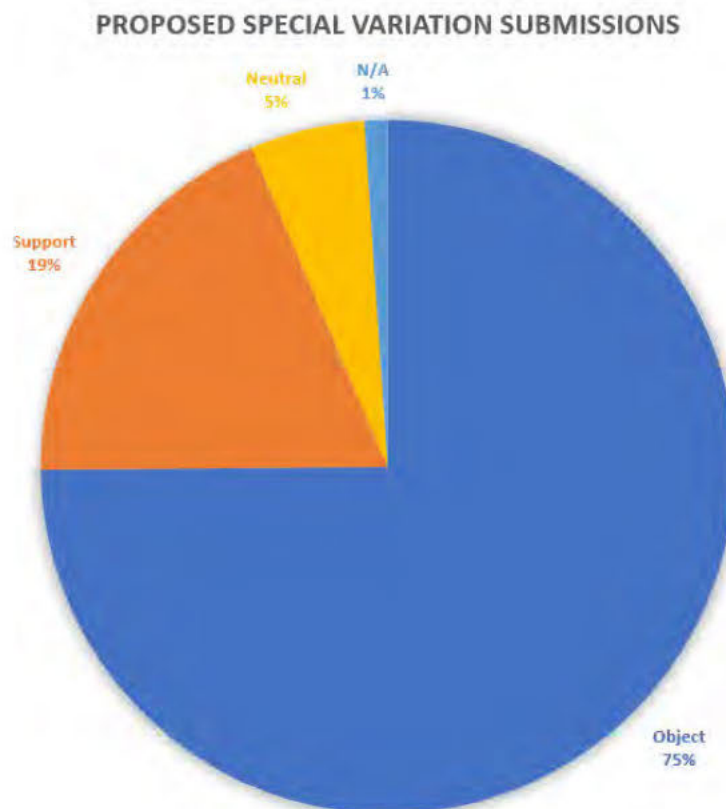


18 October 2023 – 7 News Riverina



4.18 Submissions

187 Submissions (Appendix 3) were received via email, website, and mail.



STANCE	AMOUNT
Support	35
Object	140
Neutral	10
Not Applicable (Empty submission)	2
TOTAL	187

Rateable Properties - 3612

Submissions - 187

Percentage of Submissions vs Rateable properties 5.17%

Average submissions per person 1.2

The following table summarises the submissions received.

Submission Reference	Issues
3, 11,13 ,19, 20, 1,25,28, 29, 30, 45, 53, 54, 55, 57, 59, 71, 72, 73, 74, 80, 89, 111, 119, 123, 134, 135, 139, 150, 154, 168, 170, 174, 176, 180, 183,	Object – unaffordable especially for renters and pensioners and single income earners, poor timing, high cost of living increases
5,7,18, 23,24, 32, 33, 34, 37, 44, 46, 47,48, 49, 58, 61, 62, 63, 75, 76, 82, 83, 93, 99, 102, 103, 104, 106, 109, 115, 117, 121, 136, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 155, 156, 184, 185, 186, 187,	Object – basis for the increase is unacceptable, damaging to Council approval rating, lack of services, poor financial management, more considered approach needed, recent investments reflect poor judgement, stop the wastage
12, 118, 128,	Object – poor long term financial management especially by Councillors
14, 16, 61, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 76, 87, 137,	Object – no reasons provided
26,	Object – seeking more information
35, 43, 51, 52, 90, 92, 95, 96, 105, 108, 129, 131, 146,147, 148, 149, 172, 175, 179,	Object – unaffordable for farmers
41, 69, 114, 133, 158, 159,	Object – wants more work done on the streets, economic development
151, 152, 153, 158, 159, 160, 161, 163, 164, 165,166,167	Object – impact on tenants, suggests consultation with residents on services to be reduced, staff cuts, more use of contractors, flood retention basins, less and deferred projects, sell residential assets and the arts centre
64, 94, 120, 122,	Object – based on increased land values
107, 169, 173, 181, 182, 184,	Object – defer and examine all other options – plan B
130	Object – use of consultant, lack of planning and no plans for East Street
1,2,4, 6, 36, 78, 81, 84, 85, 86, 177,	Support – understand the need for the variation, want to see the town prosper and grow
8, 9,10,17, 70, 97, 112, 113,	Support – two-year implementation
15, 56, 100, 116,	Support – one year implementation
22, 27,31, 39, 102,	Neutral – one year implementation
91, 132, 157,	Neutral – two-year implementation
38, 79, 88, 124, 125, 126, 127, 138, 171, 178,	Support – for a longer implementation or lower percentage
98	Neutral – recommends a shared service model with Leeton Council

5 Engagement Outcomes

Method	Outcomes
Submissions	187 submissions were received via email, website, or mail.
Website	Information regarding the Special Variation provided on Councils website www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au 794 views by 363 users, approximately 2.19 views per user, with an average engagement time of 2 minutes and 59 seconds. 355 PDFs were downloaded from the page for viewing.
Special Variation Estimator	The Special Variation Estimator page was viewed 625 times by 204 users, an average of 3.06 views per user with an average engagement time of 2 minutes and 36 seconds.
Community Consultations	7 community consultation sessions. 352 people attended in person.
Individual Meetings	The General Manager attended 7 individual meetings as requested.
Individualised Correspondence to Ratepayers	3612 letters were dispatched to Australia Post for ratepayers between 2 – 6 October 2023.
Media Releases	2 Media Releases were released during the consultation period. 1 Media Release was released prior to the consultation period.
Newsletters	A newsletter edition labelled ‘Special Variation’ (edition 21) was created and distributed. This edition shared information specific to the proposed special variation. 2,731 newsletters were distributed between 2 – 6 October 2023. The October Edition also included information for the proposed special variation. 2,731 Newsletters were distributed between 23 – 27 October 2023.
Electronic Newsletter	The electronic newsletter was sent to 427 recipients who have elected to subscribe to the service.
Social Media	34 posts were shared on Facebook and Instagram. The total post reach on 8 November 2023 is over 10,800. Posts were shared with I Live in Narrandera and Barellan Community Noticeboard.
Survey	50 responses were received.
Radio	5 Advertisements were run on Narrandera Community Radio (Spirit FM) between 13 October 2023 and 17 October 2023. The General Manager and Mayor Cr. Neville Kschenka discussed the SV with media outlets including Triple M and Spirit FM on 20 September 2023 x 2 and 25 October 2023.

Print	<p>Advertisements were placed in the Narrandera Argus on 28/9/2023, 12/10/2023, 19/10/2023, 2/11/2023.</p> <p>The council's newsletter is placed in the Narrandera Argus each month and appeared in the Narrandera Argus on 5/10/2023 and 26/10/2023.</p>
Special Variation Presentation	<p>The PowerPoint was presented at each community meeting, and the information added, including rate notices, was specific to each area where the consultation was held.</p>
Staff and Councillor Communication	<p>Councillor information sessions were held on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 May 2022 14 December 2022 15 August 2023 21 October 2023 7 November 2023 <p>Frontline staff information sessions were held on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 September 2023 14 September 2023 15 September 2023 x 2 Sessions <p>Dealing with difficult customer training was provided to frontline staff and councillors on 8 and 9 October 2023.</p> <p>An information session for all staff was held on the 12/10/2023, 88 staff attended.</p>
Live Streaming	<p>The live stream reach was 2,051 between the two live streams.</p>
Television	<p>General Manager George Cowan provided two interviews that were broadcasted by 7News Riverina on 27 September 2023 and 18 October 2023.</p>
Customer Service Loop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 phone calls were received by the Customer Service team and Revenue Officer. • 3 enquiries were received by the Customer Service team at the front counter. <p>Each individual was provided with explanations, further resources, and advised to make a submission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of the submissions received and the response were included in the report made available at the Council Meeting held Tuesday 21 November 2023. • An email was sent to attendees of the community consultations, and individuals who made a submission, on Monday 27 November 2023. A total of 202 emails were sent, with one response received.

6 Customer Service Loop

Narrandera Shire Council addressed community concerns regarding the proposed SV during and after the community engagement period. Responses were provided through various formats including:

- Addressing question directly at face-to-face community consultation sessions.
- Providing responses to Frequently Asked Questions (Appendix 2)
- Written responses to enquiries by email/letter.
- Verbal responses by telephone enquiry.

Phone and Front Counter enquiries

16 phone calls were received by the Customer Service team and Revenue Officer.

3 enquiries were received by the Customer Service team at the front counter.

Each individual was provided with explanations, further resources, and advised to make a submission.

Response to Submissions

The table summaries the submissions received and the response, included in the report made available at the Council Meeting held Tuesday 21 November 2023.

Submission Reference	Issues	Comment
3, 11,13 ,19, 20, 1,25,28, 29, 30, 45, 53, 54, 55, 57, 59, 71, 72, 73, 74, 80, 89, 111, 119, 123, 134, 135, 139, 150, 154, 168, 170, 174, 176, 180, 183,	Object – unaffordable especially for renters and pensioners and single income earners, poor timing, high cost of living increases	If the SV is implemented 77% of resident properties will face an increase in rates of less than \$350 or \$6.73 per week. A further 17% will face an increase of between \$350 and \$500 pa. As part of the process in preparing for the SV Council commissioned Morrison Low to prepare a Capacity to Pay report. That report has been made available and it shows that there will be sections of the community impacted by the proposals some of which are socio-disadvantaged. The report also shows that most residents including the majority of pensioners will face increases of less than \$350 p.a. Council has in place a Hardship Policy that applies to all dwellings that was reviewed in 2022.
5,7,18, 23,24, 32, 33, 34, 37, 44, 46, 47,48, 49,	Object – basis for the increase is unacceptable, damaging to Council approval	The financial position of the Council is the result of a number of factors including ongoing rate pegging. The decision to consider an SV has not been taken lightly and follows ongoing assessment and monitoring of operations. Council has developed and

<p>58, 61, 62, 63, 75, 76, 82, 83, 93, 99, 102, 103, 104, 106, 109, 115, 117, 121, 136, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 155, 156, 184, 185, 186, 187,</p>	<p>rating, lack of services, poor financial management, more considered approach needed, recent investments reflect poor judgement, stop the wastage</p>	<p>endorsed an improvement plan that includes initiatives to increase efficiencies and improve performance. The improvement plan is built around strategic objectives including – cost containment, productivity and process improvement, revenue generation and long term financial and operational sustainability.</p> <p>59 improvements have been delivered generating over \$939k in benefits per year. Work continues on 33 present improvements and a further 6 are planned for future years. Council is fully committed to implementing these and any other improvements that emerge.</p> <p>Whilst several major projects recently completed or underway are aimed at the tourism market Council has and is delivering a large number of projects, some grant funded that are specifically designed to improve facilities for residents. These include road and bridge upgrades, playground, parks and sporting facilities and community hall improvements.</p>
<p>12, 118, 128,</p>	<p>Object – poor long term financial management especially by Councillors</p>	<p>Council financial planning is robust, and Councillors play an important role in ensuring its effectiveness and delivery. They are part of the budget development process and monitor results on a monthly basis. Most Councillors have undertaken local government financial management training</p>
<p>14, 16, 61, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 76, 87, 137,</p>	<p>Object – no reasons provided</p>	<p>No comment needed</p>
<p>26,</p>	<p>Object – seeking more information</p>	<p>Additional information has been provided</p>
<p>35, 43, 51, 52, 90, 92, 95, 96, 105, 108, 129, 131, 146,147, 148, 149, 172, 175, 179,</p>	<p>Object – unaffordable for farmers</p>	<p>Farmland rates contribute 58% of the general rate income for the Council and the impact of the increase will be a substantial operational cost for some farmers. The question has been asked at forums as to whether the proportion of the total rate income paid by farmers is reasonable or whether the proportion paid by business and or residential should be increased. Council has the discretion to vary that composition when setting the rates annually but cannot do so within this process. If the SV is implemented the business rate across the shire would remain below the average for Group 10 councils. The report recommends that a review be conducted in conjunction with the 2025/2026 rating.</p>

41, 69, 114, 133, 158, 159,	Object – wants more work done on the streets, economic development	The SV is needed to maintain current service levels and will by way of improved funding of depreciation provide additional funds for asset renewal and better position Council to respond to requests such as these
151, 152, 153, 158, 159, 160, 161, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167	Object – impact on tenants, suggests consultation with residents on services to be reduced, staff cuts, more use of contractors, flood retention basins, less and deferred projects, sell residential assets and the arts centre	<p>The decision to pass on the increase to tenants is one for the landlords.</p> <p>Should Council resolve not to proceed with an SV application or if any application is unsuccessful then further consultation on service level cuts will occur and Council will consider assets sales as part of that process.</p> <p>Upgrades to the Narrandera stormwater system under those circumstances would be entirely grant dependent.</p> <p>None of these submissions suggest expenditure cuts or service level reductions at the Lake Talbot Water Park.</p>
64, 94, 120, 122,	Object – based on increased land values	Land values are determined by the NSW Valuer General and are based on market values or sales of similar nearby properties. Council is required to use those valuations, for rating purposes. Landowners have the opportunity to object to land values as they are assigned to their properties. Without an SV rate income as a whole can only increase by the rate peg limit. However individual properties may have changes in their rates in excess of those limits if their particular value increases by more than the average for that category of land.
107, 169, 173, 181, 182, 184,	Object – defer and examine all other options – plan B	Local government in NSW is funded largely from three sources – grants, rates and fees and charges. One off funding has been sourced in the past from asset sales and temporary transfer of water. Income from interest on investments fluctuates. The current levels of service and needed asset replacement cannot be sustained without a permanent increase in rate income. This will also assist Council in improving its own source revenue ratios. Council is committed to continue to examine alternative sources of income and cost reductions under the improvement plan.
130	Object – use of consultant, lack of planning and no plans for East Street	Consultants have been engaged in this process to work with Council on refining asset and financial plans and the Capacity to Pay report. The process has been led and owned by Council. The upgrade of Lake Talbot Water Park has been an outstanding success with record attendance putting pressure on available parking. Included as part of that process

		<p>has been the establishment of a very competent management team and the implementation of quality controls guaranteeing the highest standards of operation, safety and service delivery.</p> <p>Council has developed and adopted strategies for the future residential and employment lands and is currently developing plans for Lake Talbot and Narrandera stormwater. Council took a strategy for East Street upgrade to the community which was rejected. An audit of generally available parking spaces in the CBD is planned for the near future. A successful SV will allow Council to continue with its positive agenda for this community.</p>
1,2,4, 6, 36, 78, 81, 84, 85, 86, 177,	Support – understand the need for the variation, want to see the town prosper and grow	Positive
8, 9,10,17, 70, 97, 112, 113,	Support – two-year implementation	No comment needed
15, 56, 100, 116,	Support – one year implementation	No comment needed
22, 27,31, 39, 102,	Neutral – one year implementation	No comment needed
91, 132, 157,	Neutral – two-year implementation	No comment needed
38, 79, 88, 124, 125, 126, 127, 138, 171, 178,	Support – for a longer implementation or lower percentage	Council has the discretion, having been to the public, to apply for an SV over an extended period of implementation or of applying for a lower amount but cannot increase the amount sought above that which was advertised.
98	Neutral – recommends a shared service model with Leeton Council	<p>Narrandera and Leeton Councils share the cost of some services including community transport, regional library and arts and the Narrandera Leeton airport.</p> <p>Both councils work cooperatively in RAMJO to address other more regional issues and share in the Western Murrumbidgee economic zone. Narrandera also works closely with neighbouring councils in tourism with the Murrumbidgee Trails initiative.</p>

Email notification of Council Meeting outcomes

An email was sent to attendees of the community consultations, and individuals who made a submission, on Monday 27 November 2023. A total of 202 emails were sent, with one response received.

Our ref: [REDACTED]
Your ref: SV Submission



27 November 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

Special Variation

Thank you for your recent submission in relation to the special rate variation proposals. I wish to advise that at its meeting on Tuesday Council considered all the submissions and the General Managers report and resolved as follows...

10.1 SPECIAL VARIATION - DECISION WHETHER TO APPLY TO INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL (IPART)

RESOLUTION 23/208

*Moved: Cr Narelle Payne
Seconded: Cr Cameron Lander*

That Council: (option 3)

- 1. Receives and notes the Community Consultation report and thanks the respondents for their submissions.*
- 2. Makes application(s) to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART):*
 - i. under section 508A of the Local Government Act 1993 for increases to the ordinary rate income of 25.5% 2024-25 (including the rate peg), and 18.0% 2025-26 (including the rate peg) representing a total cumulative increase of 48.1% over a two-year period, with those increases to be permanent increases retained within the rate base and:*
 - ii. under section 548 of the Local Government Act 1993 for the Minimum ordinary rate for Residential Ordinary and Business Ordinary categories to be set at \$640.00 for 2024-25 (including the rate peg) and \$755.00 for 2025-26 (including the rate peg) and the minimum ordinary for Business Narrandera category to be set at \$715.00 for 2024-25 (including the rate peg) and \$845.00 for 2025-26 (including the rate peg) representing a cumulative increase of 48.1% (including the rate peg) with that increase to be a permanent increase retained within the rate base.*
- 3. Includes the submissions received during the community engagement process relating to the proposed special variation and the Community Consultation Outcomes Report in the application to IPART.*
- 4. Adopts the revised 2022-26 Delivery Program and LTFP with the Scenario two – Two-year Special Variation option – Long Term Sustainability.*

Address all correspondence to – The General Manager 141 East Street NARRANDERA NSW 2700

5. *Recognises that the LTFF so adopted shows Council as sustaining continuing operating surpluses from 2024 and having positive cash flow from 2023.*

6. *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.*


7. *Authorises the General Manager to implement the improvement plan as adopted by Council in June 2023 and to report to Council six monthly on outcomes of that implementation.*

An application will now be prepared for IPART's consideration.

All the material associated with this matter and a record of the live streaming of the meeting can be accessed on Council's web site at :-

<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/council/meetings/live-stream>

If you have any further enquiries concerning this matter, I can be contacted via Council's Executive Assistant on E council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au. Or
T 02-6959-5500


Mr George Cowan
General Manager

Enc: Nil

7 Appendices

1. Community Engagement Plan – Special Variation
2. Frequently Asked Questions
3. Submissions



Narrandera

Shire Council

Appendix 1

Community Engagement Plan – Special Variation

Community Engagement Plan Special Variation 2023



Contents

1. PURPOSE.....	3
2. APPROACH.....	3
2.1 Phase 1 – Create community awareness and provide information.	4
2.2 Phase 2 – Consultation	4
2.3 Phase 3 – Public Exhibition	5
3. KEY AUDIENCE	5
4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE – 19 SEPTEMBER 2023 TO 3 NOVEMBER 2023.....	6
5. ENGAGEMENT METHODS.....	6
6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	8
7. DETAILED ACTION PLAN.....	9
8. EXPECTED ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES	12
9. KEY MESSAGES.....	12
10. OTHER KEY POINTS	12
11. ENGAGEMENT REPORTING	13
12. REPORT TO COUNCIL	13
13. MONITOR RISK.....	14

1. PURPOSE

Council is committed to providing the community with accurate and timely information about Council activities, opportunities and initiatives that may impact or interest them.


The purpose of this community engagement is to ensure that the community is adequately informed and consulted about the impact of the proposed special variation and the impact of not applying for a special variation.

The objectives of this community engagement process include:

- To present the proposed SV.
- To identify the impact of the SV on the average rates across each rating category.
- To exhibit an updated LTFP demonstrating the impact of the proposed SV on Council's operating results from 2023-24 for feedback and final endorsement by Council.
- To communicate to the community the timeline and process for any potential SV application.
- To gather and consider the community's feedback to inform Council's final decision on whether and how to move forward with an SV application.

2. APPROACH

Council will utilise a three-phase approach to inform, consult, and conduct a public exhibition period, concerning the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum below as listed in Council's Community Engagement Policy.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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To meet the assessment criteria for an SV application, Council must:

- Demonstrate that the need and purpose of a different rate path for Council's General Fund is clearly articulated and identified in Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documents.
- Show evidence that the community is aware of the need for and the extent of a rate rise.
- Show that the impact on affected ratepayers is reasonable.
- Exhibit, approve and adopt the relevant IP&R documents.
- Explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies in its IP&R documents and/or application.
- Address any other matter that IPART considers relevant.

To meet criterion two, Council would only need to undertake engagement at the "inform" level, but a "consult" level would ensure it more fully meets criteria one and four.

2.1 Phase 1 – Create community awareness and provide information.

Council will release information through various communication channels:

- Advising that Council plans to apply for an SV.
- Explaining why Council proposes to apply for an SV.
- Providing details about what the SV is, and
- Providing an overview of the process, which includes a detailed proposal and consultation process with an accompanying timeline.

The process began with a report to the August 2022 Council meeting Revised Rating Methodologies and associated resolution 22/199. This was followed by announcements at 2023 Listening Posts information sessions held at Narrandera (Facebook live streamed), Barellan, Grong Grong and Sandigo.

2.2 Phase 2 – Consultation

The consultation phase will provide various avenues and opportunities for the public to provide their opinions and feedback on the SV proposal options and Council's existing service level regarding satisfaction versus expectation.

It will also provide multiple opportunities for the public to:

- Directly engage with Council on these matters
- Better understand Council's current financial position and existing service level ability, compared to the future feasibility of maintaining service levels should there be no application for an SV.

2.3 Phase 3 – Public Exhibition

This will consist of a comprehensive proposal detailing financial scenarios and the impacts on Council services and programs. It will include drafts of key documents, including the Revised Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan, fees, Long Term Financial Plan, Workforce Management Strategy, and revised Asset Management Strategy.

Council prepared a revised Asset Management Strategy with consultants Morrison Low which was presented to the April 2023 Council meeting, before being publicly exhibited between 19 April-17 May 2023. The Revised Asset Management Strategy was adopted at the September 2023 Council meeting.

3. KEY AUDIENCE

Stakeholder groups	Issues they will be concerned about
Residents of towns and villages, including Barellan, Binya, Grong Grong, Narrandera, and all rural localities and districts	Affordability, transparency and accountability, impact on services, alternatives, community engagement and opportunity to formally provide feedback.
Ratepayers	Affordability, transparency and accountability, impact on services, alternatives, community engagement and opportunity to formally provide feedback.
Councillors	Impact on the community, budget and financial planning, consultation and community engagement, transparency and accountability, alternatives.
Council staff	Managing workload, maintaining community trust, addressing political pressure, and communicating with the community.
Youth Advisory Councillors	Education and awareness, affordability, transparency and accountability, impact on services, alternatives, community engagement and opportunity to formally provide feedback, communication barriers.
Wiradjuri Elders and the local Aboriginal community	Affordability, transparency and accountability, impact on services, alternatives, community engagement and opportunity to formally provide feedback, respect for cultural heritage, inclusion, and participation.
Senior Citizens	Affordability, transparency and accountability, impact on services, alternatives, community engagement and opportunity to formally provide feedback, communication barriers.
Community Organisations	Increased operating costs, transparency and accountability, impact on services, alternatives, community engagement and opportunity to formally provide feedback.
Kurrajong Clients	Affordability, transparency and accountability, impact on services, alternatives, community engagement and

	opportunity to formally provide feedback, communication barriers.
Narrandera Business Group	Increased operating costs, transparency and accountability, impact on services, alternatives, community engagement and opportunity to formally provide feedback.
Media	Balancing unbiased reporting, ensuring transparency, and raising public awareness.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE – 19 SEPTEMBER 2023 TO 3 NOVEMBER 2023

5. ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Council will employ a range of engagement methods and many communication channels to ensure that target audiences are aware of the details of the proposed SV application and how they can have their say on the matter.

- Community information sessions at Narrandera, Barellan, Grong Grong and Sandigo, including live streaming at the Narrandera session.
- Dedicated webpage on the Council website, easily accessible with current and relevant content.
- Newsletter distributed monthly as a digital edition, local newspaper edition, and A4 double-sided flyer to all residences.
- Media releases.
- Newspaper advertisements.
- Social media content.
- Radio segments with the Mayor and General Manager through local community radio station Spirit FM.
- Radio interviews with regional stations.
- Meetings with listed community stakeholder groups.
- Video content.
- Fact sheets.
- Direct correspondence.
- Council reports.
- Online survey.

This community engagement will build from inform to consult:

- Inform: to raise awareness and inform all stakeholder groups of the options being considered.

- Consult: to seek considered community feedback on these options to inform Council in their final deliberations on a potential SV application.

The proposed mechanisms to be used for this engagement are outlined in the table below.

Mechanism	Level of consultation	Reach (stakeholder groups)
Direct mail-out	Inform	Residents, Ratepayers, Councillors, Council Staff, Youth Councillors, Wiradjuri Elders and local Aboriginal Community, Senior Citizens, Community Organisations, Kurrajong clients, Narrandera Business Group, Media
Newspaper and television advertisements	Inform	Residents, Ratepayers, Councillors, Council Staff, Youth Councillors, Wiradjuri Elders and local Aboriginal Community, Senior Citizens, Community Organisations, Kurrajong clients, Narrandera Business Group, Media
e-Newsletters	Inform	Residents, Ratepayers, Councillors, Council Staff, Youth Councillors, Wiradjuri Elders and local Aboriginal Community, Senior Citizens, Community Organisations, Kurrajong clients, Narrandera Business Group, Media
Video content	Inform	Residents, Ratepayers, Councillors, Council Staff, Youth Councillors, Wiradjuri Elders and local Aboriginal Community, Senior Citizens, Community Organisations, Kurrajong clients, Narrandera Business Group, Media
Social media channels	Inform	Residents, Ratepayers, Councillors, Council Staff, Youth Councillors, Wiradjuri Elders and local Aboriginal Community, Senior Citizens, Community Organisations, Kurrajong clients, Narrandera Business Group, Media
Have your Say page on the website	Inform & consult	Residents, Ratepayers, Councillors, Council Staff, Youth Councillors, Wiradjuri Elders and local Aboriginal Community, Senior Citizens, Community Organisations, Kurrajong clients, Narrandera Business Group, Media
Community public forums	Inform & consult	Residents, Ratepayers, Councillors, Council Staff, Youth Councillors, Wiradjuri Elders and local Aboriginal Community, Senior Citizens, Community Organisations, Kurrajong clients, Narrandera Business Group, Media
Consultative committees and working group meetings	Inform & consult	Residents, Ratepayers, Councillors, Council Staff, Youth Councillors, Wiradjuri Elders and local Aboriginal Community, Senior Citizens, Community Organisations, Kurrajong clients, Narrandera Business Group, Media
Drop-in sessions	Inform & consult	Residents, Ratepayers, Councillors, Council Staff, Youth Councillors, Wiradjuri Elders and local Aboriginal Community, Senior Citizens, Community Organisations, Kurrajong clients,

Mechanism	Level of consultation	Reach (stakeholder groups)
		Narrandera Business Group, Media

These external community engagement mechanisms will be coupled with internal communications to inform all staff about the proposed SV and process and provide them with information to direct questions from members of the public that may arise in their day-to-day interactions. This will include:

- A managers' briefing.
- Information and scripting for customer service and frontline teams.
- Updates in staff e-news.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles of councillors, Council officers and Morrison Low in the engagement process are defined in the table below.

Role	Responsibility
Morrison Low (consultant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the background paper on the SV. • Update the Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) and Delivery Program (DP) for exhibition
Narrandera communications and engagement team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop collateral for the various written mechanisms, based on information provided by Morrison Low to inform Council communications. • Facilitate public forums, assist the Council in preparing presentations and taking notes at each forum. • Publish and release materials in line with this community engagement action plan, including internal communications. • Gather community feedback and prepare a report on community engagement outcomes
Narrandera DCS and finance team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage the exhibition process and finalisation of the updated 2023/24 LTFP and DP (which includes the SV)
Narrandera executive and management team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief staff on SV, process, and community engagement activities • Attend public forums, where required.
Narrandera councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve community engagement plan
Narrandera General Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a community engagement plan, and approve any adjustments to the community engagement process as required. • Participate in media interviews and public forums, where required

7. DETAILED ACTION PLAN

Ref	Action	Responsible	By when	Dependency
1	Draft Background Paper for SV	Morrison Low (consultant)	19 Sept	
2	Finalise updated LTFP for exhibition	Morrison Low (consultant)	19 Sept	
2	Develop FAQs	Communications & Engagement team	31 Aug	1,2
4	Draft 'Direct Mail' content	Communications & Engagement team	31 Aug	1,2
5	Draft (and translate, where applicable) Newspaper advertisements	Communications & Engagement team	8 Sept	1,2
6	Draft e-Newsletter content	Communications & Engagement team	29 Sept	1,2
7	Develop advertisements	Communications & Engagement team	8 Sept	1,2
8	Develop survey	Communications & Engagement team and	1 Oct	1,2
9	Build 'Have Your Say' page	Communications & Engagement team	19 Sept	1,2
10	Schedule public forums	Communications & Engagement team	24 Aug	
11	Develop media releases and social media content for the commencement of engagement	Communications & Engagement team	19 Sep	1,2
12	Develop and distribute information and scripting for customer service and frontline staff	Communications & Engagement team	8 Sept	1,2
13	Council resolves to proceed to community consultation on an SV	Council	19 Sept	1,2
14	Brief managers on Council decisions and next steps	General Manager / Directors	19 Sept	14

Ref	Action	Responsible	By when	Dependency
15	Publish first newspaper advertisement on SV	Communications & Engagement team	28 Sept	5,14
16	Open the 'Have Your Say' page and Survey to the community	Communications & Engagement team	19 Sept	9,14
17	Engagement period commences		19 Sept	14
18	Publish e-Newsletter	Communications & Engagement team	5 Oct	6,17
19	Release direct mail out	Communications & Engagement team	2-6 Oct	4,17
20	Manage social media	Communications & Engagement team	19 Sept – 3 Nov	11,17
21	Manage media enquires	Communications & Engagement team	19 Sept – 3 Nov	11,17
22	Conduct public and roadshow forums	Communications & Engagement team	27 Sept 10 Oct 11 Oct 12 Oct 18 Oct	10,17
23	Publish a second newspaper advertisement	Communications & Engagement team	5 Oct	5,17
24	Release reminder of SV community engagement closing on 8 November: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media 	Communications & Engagement team	26 Sept	6,11,17
25	Close engagement, exhibition of updated LTFP and survey, and gathering all community feedback	Communications & Engagement team	3 Nov	17
26	Analyse submissions and survey results and draft a community engagement report	Communications & Engagement team	20 Nov	25

Ref	Action	Responsible	By when	Dependency
27	Finalise updated LTFP based on feedback over the exhibition period	Finance team	20 Nov	25
28	Draft report to Council	General Manager	20 Nov	25
29	Council resolves on whether to proceed with the SV application	Council	28 Nov	28
30	Council notifies IPART of intent to apply for SV (date tentative, TBC by IPART)	General Manager	1 Dec	29

8. EXPECTED ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

These methods will aid in the statistical and qualitative data analysis of the community opinion on the proposed SV options and community understanding of the level of investment required for service levels.

The community feedback will allow the Council to make informed decisions and, where necessary, amendments to the SV proposal, Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Resourcing Strategy as part of the Council's submission to the IPART.

9. KEY MESSAGES

It is important to communicate to the community those aspects that are negotiable and those that are not. Council has identified two non-negotiable aspects:

- The legislative requirement to adhere to sound financial management principles, and
- Addressing the current core deficits in the Council's base case scenario.

To ensure the community's opinion is considered, their feedback is sought on the level of SV required to ensure financial sustainability. Community engagement activities, and a background paper outlining the need for and financial impact of the SV, will be presented to facilitate communication.

Key messages in all community communications and collateral will include how members can gain additional information or have their questions answered, how to provide feedback regarding the proposed SV increase, and what to expect once the community engagement activities have been completed, including the IPART's public submission and assessment process.

10. OTHER KEY POINTS

To ensure the community is well-informed, the materials provided will have quality content, clarity, and timely delivery.

Key information to be included:

- Definition of an SV.
- Explanation of why an SV is under consideration.
- Explanation that the proposed SV is a permanent rate increase that will be maintained in the rating base.
- Explanation of what the additional income from the proposed SV will fund.
- Sufficient opportunity for ratepayers to gain an understanding of the proposal.
- Simplified presentation of information with clear and concise messaging.
- Easily accessible and informative material.

- Use of charts, tables, and explanatory text to make financial calculations easy to understand.
- Average annual rate increases, and total rate increases in dollars for residential, business, and farmland ratepayers.
- Actions by the Council to become more financially sustainable.
- Review options available for consideration.
- Overview of how ratepayers can provide feedback and participate in the process.

The goal of the communication plan is to provide clear, concise, and accessible information for the community, inviting them to actively participate in the decision-making process.

11. ENGAGEMENT REPORTING

To provide a comprehensive record of the community engagement process and ensure maximum participation, a final report will be generated. It will detail the planning, activities, outcomes, and extent of community engagement with all relevant stakeholder groups.

To gauge the level of participation in the engagement process, the following measures will be applied:

- Number of SV-related inquiries processed by customer service staff.
- Attendance records for public forums.
- Number of submissions received on the SV proposal.
- Number of unique survey responses.
- Click-through rate for the engagement site pages.

Where possible, demographic information will be collected from participants to ensure representation of the Shire community and that all relevant groups have been engaged, including those often harder to reach.

The aim is to obtain accurate data that assesses the level of community engagement, to provide a complete understanding of stakeholder participation in the SV decision-making process.

12. REPORT TO COUNCIL

Included in the report to Council are the results of community engagement, presented scenarios to be deliberated by the Council, as well as the determination whether to proceed in formally submitting an SV application to the IPART.

13. MONITOR RISK

Council’s communication and engagement team will monitor the level of engagement during the consultation process. Council’s General Manager must approve any proposed alterations to the plan before implementation.

This table contains the primary risks associated with community engagement, and the risk ratings reflect the residual risk after executing the documented risk responses.

Risk	Risk Response	Residual Likelihood	Residual Consequences	Residual Risk Rating
Engagement doesn’t meet IPART assessment Criteria	Engagement plan and activities. Analyse and integrate requirement to meet criteria.	Low	Medium	Low
Impact on ratepayers of raising rates at a time of increasing inflation and cost of living pressures	Clearly quantifying the impact of the SRV on average rates across all categories.	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Outlining measures taken to find efficiencies and cost savings within council operations before considering the SRV	Medium	Medium	Medium



Narrandera

Shire Council

Appendix 2

Frequently Asked Questions

Special Variation – Frequently Asked Questions

Background

At the Council meeting on 19 September 2023, Council resolved to go to the community and consult on a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Variation (SV) of either:

- a one-year SV of 41.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3%), or
- a two year SV of 25.5% in 2024-25 (including the forecasted rate peg of 3.5%) and 18.0% in 2025-26 (including the forecasted rate peg of 2.5%), representing a cumulative Special Variation of 48.1% over two years.

This Q&A is part of a suite of documents that can be accessed on Council's website [Special Variation | Narrandera Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au) and provides details of the proposal and the background information that led Council to make the decision.

SV Options	2024-25	2025-26	Cumulative increase over SV implementation period
Base Case	3.5%	2.5%	6.1%
Sustainability Scenario - 1 Year SV	41.5%	2.5%	45%
Sustainability Scenario - 2 Year SV	25.5%	18.0%	48.1%

1. What is a Special Variation (SV) and Rate-Pegging?

Normally general rates increase each year in line with an amount set by IPART. This amount is calculated annually based on methodology including a local government cost index and is commonly called the 'rate peg'.

For the 2023-24 financial year, the rate peg applied to NSW councils including Narrandera Shire Council is 3.7%. An assumed rate peg of 3.5% for 2024-25 and 2.5% for 2025-26 is being utilised as an estimate for the purposes of this consultation.

If a council's rate revenue is not sufficient to maintain service levels, undertake capital renewals and ensure sustainability, it can apply to IPART to increase general rate revenue by more than the rate peg. This is known as a Special Variation (SV).

To apply for an SV, councils must demonstrate to the community and IPART that they need the money and have implemented improvements to be as efficient and productive as possible. Since 2016-17 79 of the state's 128 general-purpose councils have applied to IPART for an SV. Those increases have varied from just 6.3% (Tweed) up to 92.8% (Strathfield). An annual list of approvals is published on the IPART website [Media Release \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au)

2. Is the SV increase permanent?

Yes, in this instance. If approved, the proposed SV will increase the general rate base permanently, commencing in 2024-25. The rate base as from 2025-26 for option one, or from the 2026-27 for option two, will increase by the annual rate pegging limit as set by IPART.

Special Variation – Frequently Asked Questions

3. What will the SV fund?

If implemented the special variation will generate an additional \$2.3m. These funds will be used as follows:

- Ensure financial sustainability.
- Upgrade of the Narrandera stormwater system (loan repayments on Council's share of that cost).
- Maintain existing service levels.
- Staff salary system improvements.
- Technology upgrades including cyber security and a new enterprise management system.
- Compliance including the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee and risk management.
- Infrastructure renewals to reduce the backlog in asset conditions.

4. Why is this increase in rates necessary?

Council's income from rates has not kept pace with increases in expenses and this has meant that Council has over time become unsustainable and almost totally dependent on grants for capital renewals. The need to upgrade the stormwater system in Narrandera is an important component of the challenge faced by Council, but it is only one of many factors impacting the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

The combined effects of ongoing rate pegging at levels below actual cost, fair value accounting for assets, increasing compliance costs, and growing community expectations fuelled by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal process have taken their toll.

5. If Council has \$36 million in the bank why is this increase necessary?

Council holds \$36,279,382 in reserves, but only a small proportion is unrestricted or unallocated.

- \$19,973,503 is externally restricted and belongs to waste, water, sewer and unexpended grants, bonds, and crown reserves.
- \$16,091,874 is internally restricted for plant and vehicle replacement, employee leave entitlements, incomplete works, and the pre-paid Financial Assistance Grant.
- Only \$214,006 remained unallocated on 30 June 2023.

6. How can I have my say?

Narrandera Shire Council values community input and actively seeks feedback during the consultation period for the Special Variation (open until Friday 3 November 2023) .

You can email council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au or write to 141 East Street Narrandera, 2700. You can also make an online submission through the website [Special Variation | Narrandera Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/special-variation)

Community Engagement Sessions will be held as follows:

27 September 2023	5.30pm- 7:00pm	Narrandera Ex-serviceman's Club
10 October 2023	5.30pm- 7:00pm	Barellan Hall
11 October 2023	5.30pm- 7:00pm	Grong Grong Hall
12 October 2023	5.30pm- 7:00pm	Sandigo Hall
18 October 2023	10:00am-12:00pm	Narrandera Ex-Servicemen's Club

Special Variation – Frequently Asked Questions

One on one meetings can be booked by telephoning Council on 02 6959 5510. The Mayor and General Manager would be happy to attend meetings of your organisation if invited.

Following extensive community consultation, should Council resolve to apply to IPART for a Special Variation, members of the public will also be able to make a submission to IPART in February 2024.

7. Will water and other charges increase?

The SV will apply to your general rates only and will not apply to the waste management, water, and sewerage services, which are all funded through separate fees and charges. Those fees and charges are likely to increase for other reasons but are not affected by the SV.

8. How much additional revenue will this generate in 2024/2025?

The proposed SV is anticipated to generate an additional revenue of \$2.3M which will be used to fund asset renewals, compliance costs associated with risk management, the Audit Risk and Improvement committee activities, a new enterprise management system that will allow contemporary access for the community and agencies and will equip Council to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

It will also help fund increases in staff salaries to keep pace with the local government market and allow Council to recruit and retain qualified and competent staff. Over time residents will see an ongoing improvement in assets as renewals occur.

9. Does this SV guarantee no future SVs?

This SV will allow Council to become financially sustainable in the General Fund to maintain existing services and provide the capability to grow. Future regulation changes, additional State Government cost shifting, and capital works programs as determined by the asset management systems and Councillors may influence the need for future SVs.

10. With the cost of living going up so much now, how can we be expected to manage this increase?

The proposed SV is not a decision taken lightly. Council recognises the delicate balance between providing essential services, maintaining infrastructure, and ensuring affordability for our residents. Council offers the Pensioner Rebate Scheme, which financially supports this important group in our community. Council also has a Hardship Policy to accommodate the special needs of those unable to pay their rates in full on time.

11. What is Council doing to remediate the situation?

Regardless of whether an SV proceeds, Councillors and staff are committed to continuing to ensure that Council operates as efficiently and effectively as possible. Every area of operation is under review – a process that commenced several years ago and is ongoing.

12. What do land valuations have to do with my rates?

The NSW Valuer General's Office is responsible for the valuation of all rateable land in NSW and land is revalued every three (3) years. Rateable land within the Narrandera LGA was revalued during 2022 and these values were used to calculate rates for the 2023-24 rates. Of itself, the land revaluation process does not provide any additional rate revenue for Council. The total increase in rate revenue to Council is capped on an annual basis by the IPART. For the 2023-24 year, the rate cap increase is 3.7% above the 2022-23 level.

Special Variation – Frequently Asked Questions

Changes to land values will impact the rate amount payable for individual properties, but the total increase in rate income received by Council for the year does not exceed the rate cap as determined by IPART.

Whilst we acknowledge that some individual assessments have moved by much greater than the 3.7% rate pegging figure, many have also increased by less and in fact, some assessments have reduced in line with new land valuations.

13. What is the alternative to the proposed rate increases?

Without a Special Variation, Council would need to reduce the levels of service provided to the community to save costs and would not have the resources to fund asset renewals. Council would be reliant on grants to fund asset replacements. The stormwater project could not proceed unless 100% grant funded, and similarly the new industrial estate, deepening Lake Talbot and the proposals at the airport could not proceed without grants. Fees for the use of facilities would have to be reviewed.

Examples of services that would be impacted include the library, visitor information centre, parks and gardens, road maintenance and administration services. Cutbacks in these areas would result in a substantial reduction in staff numbers.

14. How much will the rates change?

Estimated average rates to 2025-26 under each scenario.

Estimated average rates to 2025-26			
Rate Category	Average Rate 2023-24	Average Rate 2024-25	Average Rate 2025-26
Residential			
No SRV	743	769	788
1 Year SV	743	1,051	1,078
2 Year SV	743	932	1,100
Business			
No SRV	1,265	1,309	1,342
1 Year SV	1,265	1,790	1,835
2 Year SV	1,265	1,588	1,873
Farmland			
No SRV	3,957	4,095	4,198
1 Year SV	3,957	5,599	5,739
2 Year SV	3,957	4,966	5,860

Special Variation – Frequently Asked Questions

15. How do my rates compare to other councils?

The Office of Local Government groups councils with other similar councils for comparison. Narrandera Shire Council is in Group 10 with 22 other councils. This group of councils represents a diverse cross-section of geographies and communities across NSW. The neighbouring Councils of Leeton and Griffith have also been included in this graphic for comparative purposes. (We have utilised the 2021-22 figures as those are the most recent published)

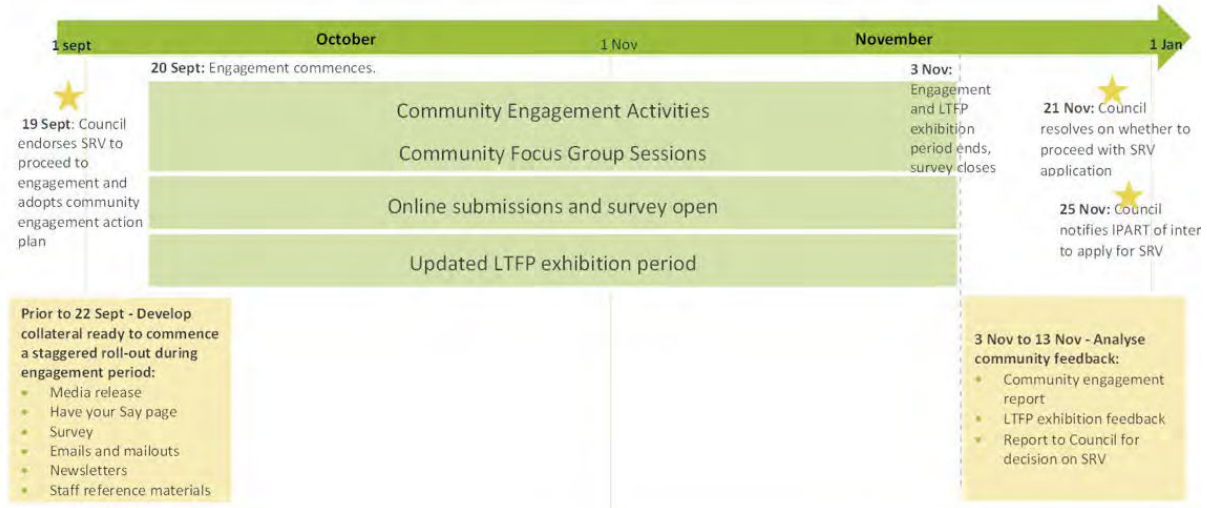
Rate Category	Average Rate 2021-22	Average Rate 2024-25 if the SV is implemented
Residential		
Narrandera	\$688	\$1,051
Group 10 average	\$848	\$971
Leeton	\$1,112	\$1,223
Griffith	\$1,078	\$1,260
Business		
Narrandera	\$1,233	\$1,790
Group 10 Average	\$1,679	\$1,941
Leeton	\$976	\$1,074
Griffith	\$2,865	\$3,350
Farmland		
Narrandera	\$3,669	\$5,599
Group 10 Average	\$3,106	\$3,580
Leeton	\$3,714	\$4,086
Griffith	\$3,815	\$4,461

A special variation estimator has been established and can be accessed by following this link <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/contact-us/have-your-say/special-variation> or you can make an appointment with council and sit down with a staff member to examine your circumstance.

Special Variation – Frequently Asked Questions

16. Timeline

Community engagement - program





Narrandera

Shire Council

Appendix 3

Submissions

IPART note: The council has appended submissions as part of this package, however, we have removed them in line with our privacy policy as they contain some personal information.

The submissions are available as part of the council's 21 November 2023 meeting *Attachments Under Separate Cover Part A* file via its website: <https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/council/about-council/council-meetings>