



Special Variation Application Form Part B

North Sydney Council

Application Form

2025-26

Local Government >>



Acknowledgment of Country

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

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

Contact details

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The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

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

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Council Information

Please fill out the table below.

Council name	North Sydney Council
Date submitted to IPART	10 February 2025

1 About this application form

This application form is to be completed by councils applying for a special variation (SV) to general income for 2025-26 under section 508(2) or 508A of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act). The application form is in two parts:

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

The SV Application Form Part B collects:

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

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

When completing this Application Form, councils should refer to:

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

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

2 Description and Context

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

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

In Table 1, please use the checkboxes to indicate the type of SV the council is applying for. In Table 2, please provide, rounded to **1 decimal place**, unless otherwise specified in Table 3:

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

The percentage increases applied for should match any percentages specified in the council resolution to apply for an SV. That is, the council resolution should be specified to 1 decimal place unless the council specifically wants a different number of decimal places.

Should an SV be approved, the instrument will list the approved percentage(s) and the maximum permitted cumulative increase. If the cumulative increase is not specified in the council resolution, we will use 1 decimal place unless a different number of decimal places is specifically requested in Table 3.

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

In Table 3, please explain if the council would like its instrument issued to a different number of decimal places and if it has used an assumed rate peg that is not 2.5%.

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

Table 1 Type of special variation

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

Table 2 The council's proposed special variation

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32
Is this year in the SV period?	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	no
Percentage increase	45%	29%					
Rate peg	4%	3% (assumed)					

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32
Cumulative percentage increase over the SV period for s 508A	87.05%						
Indicate which years are permanent or temporary	Permanent - Note this application includes the consolidation of the existing Infrastructure, Environment, Neutral Bay Mainstreet and Crows Nest Mainstreet Levies into the ordinary rates income.	Permanent					

Table 3 Further questions

Question	The council's response
Does the council wish its potential SV instrument to be issued with a different number of decimal places?	No.
If the council used an assumed rate peg that is not 2.5%, please briefly justify why it did so.	Based on recent inflation and the IPART rate pegs presented for 2025/26 being between 3.7% and 7.7%, 3% has been assumed for the ongoing rate peg.

Question 2: Is the council applying for a Crown Land Adjustment (CLA) in 2025-26?

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

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

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

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

The key purpose of Council's proposed SV is to create financial strength and sustainability to support the delivery of essential services, infrastructure maintenance, and community priorities.

The SV will do this by:

1. Undertaking immediate repair to liquidity position

Council's liquidity, through a forecast unrestricted current ratio of 0.83 in the 2025/26 financial year declining to negative 0.83 in 2034/35 indicates that it will not be in a position to meet its financial obligations as and when they fall due without intervention.

2. Fund infrastructure renewals

Council's forecast indicates insufficient funding is available to meet renewal needs. To ensure infrastructure assets continue to meet service delivery needs, annual renewal must be funded.

3. Reduce infrastructure backlogs by funding condition 4 (poor) and Condition 5 (very poor) infrastructure renewal backlogs

Council currently estimates \$146 million will be required to address a renewal backlog which has resulted in infrastructure conditions reducing to poor and very poor. Over the past two years, renewals have been deferred to provide funding for the North Sydney Olympic Pool, which has placed added pressure on this backlog. To reduce risk and ensure continued service delivery this backlog requires addressing.

4. Fund actions within ten-year strategic plans including Open Space and Recreation, Integrated Transport, Economic Development, Culture and Creativity, Social Inclusion, Environment, Housing and Governance

Council has undertaken an extensive process of engagement, research and strategy development to respond to challenges and opportunities over the next ten years in accordance with best practice and integrated planning and reporting requirements. A resourcing assessment has been made to determine the funding required, along with funding sources. In addition to grants and developer contributions, additional rate funding will be required to support these actions.

5. Replace Council's corporate systems

Council's current corporate technology systems are outdated, do not integrate and are at risk of becoming redundant. They do not support efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, decision making and reporting.

6. Build unrestricted reserves to ensure financial strength

A historical review of Council's financial position along with the currently critical liquidity levels indicate Council's finances were not able to withstand the financial shock associated with the COVID pandemic, and the increased cost of the North Sydney Olympic Pool. To ensure both financial strength and sustainability, it is important that Council builds its unrestricted cash reserves to a level that provides working funds for Council operations, supports liabilities

associated with employee leave entitlements and bonds and deposits, and provides the capacity to withstand future financial shock.

In addition, the SV aims to remove current special levies and to incorporate this income into ordinary rates to improve the administration of rating system and focus reporting towards the outcomes of Council's IPRF. In addition, this change improves equity between residential and business ratepayers.

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

Complete Table 4 if the council proposes to increase minimum ordinary and/or Table 5 if the council proposes to increase special rates in conjunction with the SV for 2025-26. Otherwise, leave it blank. IPART will also use data provided in Application Form [Part A](#) to understand the details of the proposed SV and minimum amounts of rates.

In some situations, a minimum rates increase will be subject to IPART approval. In these cases, councils will need to also complete *Minimum Rate Increase Application Form Part B 2025-26* (Word document) available on our [website](#). Please see Table 2.4 of the [Guidance Booklet - Special variations: How to prepare and apply](#) for further information on when an additional MR increase application may be required. Councils do not need to submit another Application form Part A (Excel document).

Table 4 Minimum rates increase for ordinary rates

Does the council have an ordinary rate(s) subject to a minimum amount?	Yes
Does the council propose to increase the minimum rate(s) above the statutory limit for the first time? (If yes, you must complete a separate minimum rate increase application form.)	Yes
Does the council propose to increase the minimum rate(s) above the proposed SV percentage(s)? (If yes, you must complete a separate minimum rate increase application form, even if the council has been approved to increase its minimum rate above the statutory limit in the past.)	Yes
Has the council submitted an application for a minimum rate increase?	Yes

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

Category	2025/26 Minimum	2025/26 % increase	2026/27 Minimum	2026/27 % increase	2027/28 Minimum
Residential	\$1,200	68%	\$1,548	29%	Rate peg
Business	\$1,400	96%	\$1,806	29%	Rate peg

It should be noted that the proposed minimums include the value of current special levies which are to be consolidated into the ordinary rates. Taking this into consideration, the actual 2025/26 increase is less than the percentages contained within the table above. For example, minimum residential rate payers pay an average of \$97 in levies per year, which would be incorporated into proposed \$1,200 minimum for 2025/26, meaning that the total increase would be less than the 68% represented above.

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

Table 5 Minimum rates increase for special rates

Does the council propose to increase the minimum amount of a special rate above the statutory limit?	Yes
What will the minimum amount of the special rate(s) be after the proposed increase?	\$1,200 residential, \$1,400 business
Has the council submitted an application for a minimum rate increase?	Yes

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

Question 5: Does the council have an expiring SV?

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

- on 30 June 2025, or
- at the end of any year in the period the requested SV would apply.

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

Does the council have an SV which is due to expire on 30 June 2025?	No
Does the council have one or more SV/s due to expire during the proposed SV period?	No
If Yes to either question: a. When does the SV expire?	Not Applicable
b. What is the percentage to be removed from the council's general income?	Not Applicable
c. What is the dollar amount to be removed from the council's general income?	Not Applicable
Has OLG confirmed the calculation of the amount to be removed?	Not Applicable

Attachments required:

- Instrument(s) approving any SV which expires at 30 June 2025 or during the period covered by the proposed SV.
- OLG advice confirming calculation of the dollar amount to be removed from general income as a result of the expiring SV.

Question 6: Does the council have an existing (ongoing) section 508A special variation which applies in 2025-26?

Complete this question if the council has an existing section 508A multi-year SV instrument which approves an increase to general income above the rate peg for 2025-26 and future years within the period covered by the council's SV application.

If the council has an ongoing section 508A SV and is seeking additional changes to general income during the term of that existing SV, IPART will need to vary the original instrument if the application is approved, rather than issuing a separate SV instrument to apply for 2025-26 (or later years).

Does the council have a section 508A multi-year SV instrument that applies in 2025-26?	No
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If yes to the above question, in the text box below:

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

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

Click here to enter text.

Attachments required:

- A declaration by the General Manager as to the council's compliance with the conditions specified in the SV instrument on the council's official letterhead.
- Supporting documents providing evidence of the council's actions to comply with the conditions in the instrument. For example, extracts from annual reports or any other publications in which compliance with the terms of the SV has been reported to ratepayers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Council has had approved SVs in the following years. Further details can be found in attachment 27, including the SV conditions and relevant Annual Report extracts. All projects funded by the SVs have been completed and all SV conditions met.

Year	Application type	Approved SV
2011/12	SV	5.5% each year from 2011/12 to 2017/18.
2012/13	SV	12.34% in 2012/13, 14.57% in 2013/14, 5.5% each year from 2014/15 to 2017/18.
2019/20	SV and minimum rates	7% each year from 2019/20 to 2021/22. Minimum rates (residential and business) increased from \$563 to \$644.
2022/23	Additional Special Variation	2% in 2022/23.

Attachments required:

- A declaration by the General Manager as to the council's compliance with the conditions specified in the SV instrument(s).
- Supporting documents providing evidence of the council's actions to comply with the conditions in the instrument(s). For example, extracts from annual reports or any other publications in which compliance with the conditions of the SV instrument has been reported to ratepayers.
- If applicable, supporting documents providing evidence of the corrective actions undertaken in the event of a failure to comply with the conditions in the SV instrument(s).

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

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

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

In the text boxes also explain:

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

Click here to enter text.

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

Click here to enter text.

c. How does this deferred income impact on the council's need for the SV and its cumulative impact on ratepayers' capacity to pay? The council may also wish to further expand on this question in Table 6 in the OLG Criterion 1 section below.

Click here to enter text.

3 OLG SV Criterion 1 – Financial need

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

In Table 6 below, please explain how the council met each component of Criterion 1. Please also provide a reference to evidence in the IP&R documents.

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

Table 6 OLG Criterion 1 components

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
<p>The need for, and purpose of, a different revenue path for the council's General Fund (as requested through the SV) is clearly articulated and identified in the council's IP&R documents</p>	<p>Council has taken a strategic and multi-faceted approach to the development of its Long Term Financial Plan and revenue path.</p> <p>Council's IP&R documents clearly outline the need for structural change to Councils revenue path for the General Fund, driven by both urgent financial challenges and long term sustainability. The response to these challenges has been spread over the long-term, with those requiring more immediate response prioritised first.</p> <p>Challenges include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Short-term liquidity criticality 2. User charges and fees and other revenue have not recovered to pre-covid levels due to societal and market changes 3. Increased capital and operating costs associated with the North Sydney Olympic Pool Project 4. Insufficient funding for infrastructure renewals and backlog 5. Insufficient funding to respond to changing community needs and additional infrastructure required for evolving community 	<p>Attachment 1 – Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035</p> <p>Attachment 2 – Amended Delivery Program 2022-26</p> <p>Attachment 5 – Asset Management Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 17 - 22 – Asset Management Plans (all asset classes)</p> <p>Attachment 9 – Open Space and Recreation Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 10 – Integrated Transport Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 11 – Social Inclusion Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 12 – Culture and Creativity Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 13 – Environment Strategy</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>6. Organisation improvement requires resourcing to generate real benefit</p> <p>Short-term liquidity – Without intervention, Council's unrestricted current ratio is forecasted to be 0.83 by 30 June 2026, below the OLG benchmark of 1.5. This follows actions to mitigate financial distress including reductions in asset renewal expenditure and an additional \$30M in loan funding between 1 June 2024 and 30 June 2025. Councils forecast unrestricted current ratio will take two years to recover through the proposed Special Rate variation, with the SRV proposal also limiting infrastructure renewal expenditure within these two years to 80% to reduce the overall impact and ensure a risk based and long-term approach to financial repair.</p> <p>Decline in user charges and fees and other income – For many years, North Sydney Council successfully diversified its income sources through avenues such as parking revenue, commercial rentals and advertising, which helped supplement relatively low rates. However, the financial impact of the 2020 pandemic, along with broader societal shifts and Council's sustainability initiatives, has significantly reduced these revenue streams.</p> <p>Traditionally, around 45% of total operating revenue was generated through user charges fees, and other non-rate income. This included on-street parking fees, fines, advertising revenue and commercial rental income. While this strategy has previously lessened the financial burden on residents and businesses, it has also exposed the Council to fluctuations in this income, which are influenced by a range of social, economic, policy, and environmental factors. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the risks associated with this level of revenue diversification.</p>	<p>Attachment 14 – Economic Development Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 15 – Governance Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 16 – Housing Strategy (Supplement)</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>Adjusting for inflation and assuming no change in user behaviour since 2019, income from user charges, fees, and other revenue streams would be \$9.9m higher than current levels. This includes \$4.5m in on-street parking revenue, \$1.2m in advertising fees, and \$1.8m in rental income. The cumulative impact of revenue reductions is estimated at \$47m since 2019.</p> <p>With over four years now past since the COVID pandemic, this revenue loss must be addressed to ensure financial sustainability.</p> <p>North Sydney Olympic Pool project – This project forecast has increased in cost from \$63.9M to over \$122M and is currently still under construction. The increased capital costs have placed pressure on Councils financial position, requiring \$61M in external loans, deferral of infrastructure renewals and draw down on limited unrestricted reserves. This increased capital cost has ongoing cost implications with \$61M in loans and associated interest requiring repayment. This is in addition to addressing Councils overall unrestricted liquidity position and asset renewal/backlog requirements. An independent review has been undertaken in relation to the project and has highlighted aspects of the project, including contract strategy which have created higher risk. Council has implemented a number of additional measures to mitigate risks, however contract risks remain.</p> <p>Insufficient funding for infrastructure renewal and backlog – Councils base case forecasts demonstrate an inability to fund renewals or address the current infrastructure backlog. Infrastructure renewal levels have reduced in recent years to address liquidity. Over the past year, Council has consolidated its asset management function and undertaken a review and redevelopment of its asset management plans. Infrastructure backlogs are based upon condition 4 (poor) and 5 (very poor) infrastructure.</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>This information is supported by Council's Asset Management Strategy and Plans for each asset class, which were recently reviewed and updated. To bring our assets to a satisfactory condition, the plans outline a cost of \$26.1 million for roads, \$9.2 million for footpaths, \$69.38 million for buildings, \$30.14 million for stormwater and \$11 million for other infrastructure.</p> <p>Building infrastructure is in considerable need, with \$62 million required for operational buildings. Crows Nest Community Centre, Kelly's Place Children's Centre, Stanton Library, Council Chambers and Offices, Crows Nest Indoor Sports Centre are all examples of properties included within the Property Asset Management Plan as having 'very high' risk.</p> <p>It should be noted that the renewal and backlog values for buildings are conservative and do not provide for improved standards as may be expected. Any improvements to standards will require funding through alternative sources of cashflow, including grants, other revenues, or additional cost savings in other areas.</p> <p>The Asset Management Strategy also highlights that without maintaining asset maintenance budgets, there will be reduced levels of service, particularly for local roads and kerbs. This is just to maintain current assets and does not include the additional cost of maintaining new assets as our population increases.</p> <p>Integrated Planning and Reporting responsibilities – Council is required by legislation and it is good practice to develop long term plans in consultation with the community to ensure proactive service delivery and infrastructure provision. This is particularly important within the current environment of housing reform and population increase planned for the next ten years.</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>Over the past year, in consultation with the community, Council has developed eight informing strategies to address the opportunities and challenges for the LGA. Considerable time and resource has been allocated to this project to ensure that the long term financial plan and resourcing strategy was not simply reactive, but one that would provide for future challenges and needs. In the absence of funding for actions contained within the strategies, it is likely that Council will continue to operate in a reactive cycle of financial repair.</p> <p>Other revenue sources have been assumed to contribute including grants and developer contributions. Should these sources not be forthcoming, the projects may not proceed.</p> <p>Organisational improvements require resourcing – Organisations cannot become more efficient without improved structures, systems, processes and capabilities. The costs of improvement to date have been absorbed within existing budgets. Over the past two years, Council has actively worked towards a step change in organisation improvement efforts, including two organisational restructures. While difficult to measure the total benefit through quantitative measures, the benefits of this structural change are significant, and have reduced organisational and financial risk and improved administration. Through this initiative and at no cost (\$2.3M in salary savings re-directed):</p> <p>An organisational improvement function has been introduced and has initiated service level reviews, process mapping along with the development of an improved Integrated Planning and Reporting framework response.</p> <p>A Chief Financial Officer position has been created and recruited, with improved financial monitoring and analysis.</p> <p>A risk management function has been introduced to develop and implement enterprise risk management framework across Council.</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>In addition, resources were created for services under pressure including building compliance, parks and gardens and strategic planning.</p> <p>To support workforce capability, a new performance and development framework has been implemented with a focus on goals and actions aligned to organisational performance.</p> <p>Despite the considerable improvements undertaken and commenced, Council's outdated systems limit the level of efficiency that can be achieved, and based on current resourcing levels, the organisation continues to be stretched to meet its responsibilities and service expectations.</p> <p>New corporate systems have been included within the SRV, however they will require both financial and workforce resource and will take some time to implement.</p>	
<p>In establishing need for the SV, the relevant IP&R documents should canvass alternatives to the rate rise.</p>	<p>Council's Long-Term Financial Plan 2025-2035 provides a base line scenario of rates income at the expected level of the rate peg over the next 10 years. This shows that Council's finances are unsustainable at current levels of revenue. The Plan highlights that, without an SV, infrastructure condition would continue to decline, significant adjustments to service levels would be required and council would not be able to respond to challenges and opportunities. Further, without the SV, delays in asset renewal programs would compromise long-term service delivery and ultimately increase long-term costs.</p> <p>Extensive community engagement and consultation have played a central role in shaping this proposal. Three SV options and their impact on Council's finances, services and assets, were presented to the community during consultation. This collaborative process assisted decisions align with community priorities.</p>	<p>Attachment 1 – Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035</p> <p>Attachment 2 – Amended Delivery Program 2022-26</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>In considering the need for SV, 'no SV' was not provided as an option following consideration of the following alternatives to repair and strengthen Councils financial position:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="779 475 1509 644">1. Other sources of income – Council has considered other sources of income including grants and contributions to reduce the overall level of SV required. For example, the actions in the informing strategies have been forecast to cost \$286 million, and \$60 million grant funding and \$34 million developer contributions have been assumed. <li data-bbox="779 676 1509 813">2. Loan funding – Council has considered the use of additional loan funding for short term liquidity purposes and to spread costs over a longer period, however the long-term cost would out way the short-term benefit and an SV would still be required. <li data-bbox="779 845 1509 1267">3. Sale of Council owned property – Council has considered the sale of property to reduce the level of SV required and has included \$5 million in the organisational improvement plan for further review. Outside of this, land sales are not considered in the best interests of the Council. Council holds \$53.7M in its property portfolio. Approximately 57% of this property provides future opportunities for public space and facilities, and if sold, would reduce Councils opportunity to provide for the growing population. Land within North Sydney is expensive and Council would not be in a position to buy again at a future date. 43% of the portfolio is held strictly for investment purposes, and the portfolio currently has a 6.9% income associated with it. This income, coupled with the current property market lows and the future opportunity cost associated with capital gains has been considered. 	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="779 363 1509 560">4. Delaying asset renewals was considered and some delays have been included in Year 1 and 2. Following consideration, further delays were not included as reducing the extent of poor and very poor infrastructure was considered necessary after factoring in possible public risk, increased maintenance costs and reduced service in an environment of growing population density. <li data-bbox="779 587 1509 842">5. Delaying actions contained within the informing strategies – following consultation, actions within the informing strategies were further reviewed with a view of reducing the impacts of the SRV. As a result of this review, a number of actions were rescheduled to later years to reduce the Year 1 impact. Removing strategic actions altogether was presented in Option 1, however this option has not been endorsed due to the importance of planning and responding proactively to community service and infrastructure needs. <li data-bbox="779 869 1509 1038">6. Removing funding for new corporate systems was considered, however factors such as increasing cyber risk, system redundancy risks, legislative compliance risks and customer satisfaction, workforce engagement and retention and cost efficiency determined that funding new systems is essential. 	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>7. Organisational improvement – Additional organisational efficiencies of between \$2-3M have been embedded within the Long-Term Financial Plan through the reduction in overheads associated with the operationalisation of the North Sydney Olympic Pool and increased forecast capital expenditure. It is assumed within the LTFP that improvements to processes within Councils administration will allow capacity to absorb these additional responsibilities. Council's organisational improvement plan also outlines a range of other productivity and efficiency improvements. These measures have generated a net benefit of approximately \$4.5 million a year, which is expected to increase to \$7 million a year following the introduction of key projects such as our IT system replacement. Realisation of improvement efforts will mitigate the financial risks and sensitivities outlined within the Long-Term Financial Plan.</p> <p>The Long-Term Financial Plan within the IP & R documents presented four rate path options, each providing an alternative response towards the challenges faced by Council. These options included:</p> <p>Option 1 – Maintaining service delivery, renewing assets and addressing infrastructure backlogs condition 4 and 5, improving corporate systems.</p> <p>Option 2A and 2B – Maintaining service delivery, renewing assets, improving corporate systems and addressing infrastructure backlogs condition 4 and 5 and delivering actions within council's long-term informing strategies.</p> <p>Option 3 - Maintaining service delivery, renewing assets, addressing infrastructure backlogs condition 4 and 5, delivering actions within council's long-term informing strategies and funding towards improving priority buildings to a 'good' level of service.</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
<p>In demonstrating this need, councils must indicate the financial impact in their LTFP by applying the baseline and special variation scenarios.</p>	<p>Council's revised Long Term Financial Plan outlines the financial sustainability challenges under the baseline and proposed SV scenarios. The baseline scenario indicates that Council's existing revenue streams are insufficient to maintain current service levels, address infrastructure renewal backlogs, or meet the demands of a growing population. Without intervention, the baseline scenario projects ongoing operating deficits, worsening liquidity, and an inability to reduce asset maintenance backlogs, highlighting the unsustainability of the current financial position.</p> <p>In contrast, the SV scenarios illustrate how the proposed rate increases, including adjustments to minimum rates, will significantly improve Council's financial outlook. The scenarios detail how the additional revenue generated from the SV will enable Council to deliver on financial performance benchmarks, fund critical infrastructure renewals, reduce debt levels, and address service delivery gaps. It emphasises Council's capacity to align spending with community priorities, maintain intergenerational equity, and support strategic initiatives.</p> <p>The comparative analysis in the LTFP demonstrates the improved financial performance benchmarks, cash flow stability, and enhanced ability to address infrastructure backlogs under the SV scenarios. This analysis provides a clear rationale for the proposed SV and its alignment with long-term community and financial sustainability goals, as further clarified through accompanying strategic documents and the public consultation report.</p>	<p>Attachment 1 – Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035</p>
<p>Evidence of community need/desire for service levels/projects and limited council resourcing alternatives.</p>	<p>In the 2023 Community Satisfaction survey, 92% of residents indicated that they are at least somewhat satisfied with the performance of council. 20 of the 28 services/facilities for residents and 9 of the 16 services/facilities for business received 'good performance scores.</p>	<p>Attachment 1 – Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035</p> <p>Attachment 2 – Amended Delivery Program 2022-26</p> <p>Attachment 9 – Open Space and Recreation Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 10 – Integrated Transport Strategy</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>In measuring the importance of council services/facilities, arts and culture, maintenance of parks, playgrounds, bushland and recreation areas, recreation facilities and amenities, environmental and sustainability initiatives, consultation and engagement and building height and town centres all recorded scores indicating a higher importance in North Sydney LGA as compared to benchmark, with arts and culture being 12% higher and maintenance of parks etc being 11% higher.</p> <p>Satisfaction with Council services/facilities recorded higher than benchmark in 11 out of 14 services areas. Recreation facilities and amenities, cycleways and wharves, boat ramps etc scored lower than benchmark in satisfaction.</p> <p>The survey reflects the community's expectations for high-quality service delivery and infrastructure maintenance, which are critical to supporting a growing population and addressing concerns about the impact of population and housing growth on local resources.</p> <p>To ensure compliance with Integrated Planning and Reporting obligations and alignment with the community need, a rigorous program of engagement, research and strategy development was undertaken prior to the development of Councils Long Term Financial Plan and SV application.</p> <p>Including this program in the process for long term planning and resourcing is considered best practice.</p> <p>Community engagement - Throughout the six-week consultation period in May and June 2024, Council undertook extensive consultation with the community and received over 1,000 responses to online surveys, and more than 600 individuals attended community forums. Additionally, thousands more were engaged both in-person and via online events which explored the challenges and opportunities for North Sydney.</p>	<p>Attachment 11 – Social Inclusion Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 12 – Culture and Creativity Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 13 – Environment Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 14 – Economic Development Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 15 – Governance Strategy</p> <p>Attachment 16 – Housing Strategy (Supplement)</p> <p>Attachment 30 – Community Satisfaction Survey 2023</p>

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>To ensure Council heard from unique and diverse voices, Council held dedicated workshops for specific groups including a demographically selected group of 60+ residents, a First Nations workshop in partnership with Indigenous consultancy Murawin, a Voice of Youth workshop with over 50 primary and secondary students, and sessions with relevant key stakeholders. There was widespread support and engagement from a wide cross-section of the community in the development of this campaign and in the proposed initiatives that came out of it.</p> <p>Independent Research – to inform the development of strategic actions, Council engaged independent specialist consultants to undertake research into five key areas including; open space and recreation, integrated transport, culture and creativity, social inclusion and economic development.</p> <p>Strategy Development – Using the results of community engagement, combined with the independent research, eight informing strategies were developed to ensure clear community aligned direction for the next ten years. These strategies included open space and recreation, integrated transport, culture and creativity, social inclusion, economic development, environment, as well as a Governance Strategy to improve decision-making and administration of the Council.</p> <p>Following consideration by Council on 25 November 2024, the draft informing strategies were placed on public exhibition from 27 November 2024 to 10 January 2025. A total of 501 YourSay survey responses and 13 emailed submissions were received and considered.</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>Strong community support was received for the Integrated Transport, Environment, Governance, Social Inclusion, and Culture and Creativity strategies (an average of over 80% support). Mixed support was received for the Economic Development Strategy with 50% support from 12 respondents, and the Open Space and Recreation Strategy which received 35% support from 397 respondents. The Open Space and Recreation Strategy results may not accurately reflect the views of the broader population as approximately 90% of the 'No' responses were received from golfing supporters who voted 'No' based on a single action within the strategy.</p> <p>Council undertook a workshop on Saturday 7 December 2024 with a demographically selected group of 42 community members to discuss Council's finances and proposed SV options. The participants were independently recruited and demographically selected to engage a diverse and representative group of community members who might not otherwise participate in Council engagements or decisions.</p> <p>Participants were presented with the information on Council's financial position, asset conditions and the rationale for proposed rating changes and discussed their views on the proposal. The results of this session are provided in the attached Community Engagement Outcomes report.</p> <p>When asked the importance of addressing the current financial challenges, 84% said it was important to ensure continued service delivery.</p> <p>Participants were asked to rate on a scale of one to ten whether they believed the community would benefit from the actions contained within the strategies. The average rating was 7.3, indicating participants believe there is benefit in the actions.</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>When ask about their expectations for the condition of infrastructure within North Sydney, 81% indicated that infrastructure should be maintained to a good or very good condition, with 19% suggesting a 'fair' condition, and no one accepting poor or very poor condition.</p> <p>A YourSay webpage was created to seek feedback on both the SV and the informing strategies. Of the 4,494 people that visited the webpage, 17.6% completed the SV survey which contained a question in relation to willingness to pay. This would suggest a level of ambivalence or tacit support. Of the 792 surveys completed, when asked if the respondent was willing to pay for actions contained within the strategies, 78% of respondents said 'no', 21% 'yes', and 1% 'unsure'. This differs to the results of both the demographically selected workshop and the engagement on the informing strategies.</p> <p>The revised Long Term Financial Plan highlights the limited resourcing alternatives available to the Council. Existing revenue streams are insufficient to sustain current service levels, address the infrastructure renewal backlog, or fund essential upgrades. Cost increases incurred during a high-inflation environment have outpaced both the rate peg and our fees and charges revenue, increasing the pressure on Council's budget. While Council has implemented cost-saving measures and efficiency improvements, the LTFP confirms that these actions alone are insufficient to ensure financial sustainability.</p> <p>Several of the initiatives in the informing strategies are dependent on receiving funding in the form of grants or developer contributions to progress. The funding for the informing strategies assumes receipt of \$33.6m of developer contributions and \$60.3m of grants to fund projects in addition to rates.</p>	

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion from the council's IP&R documents	Reference to IP&R documents
	<p>As part of the Governance Strategy Council has committed to a strategic review of its investment properties to determine if they are delivering maximum value to Council, and through the Organisational Improvement Plan Council will seek additional opportunities to generate revenue through appropriate sponsorship and advertising opportunities.</p>	
<p>Evidence could also include the analysis of the council's financial sustainability conducted by Government agencies</p>	<p>There have been no reviews undertaken by other Government agencies.</p> <p>In considering the Draft Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2024, Council's Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee (consisting of three skills-based independent members) noted the need for 'a complete strategic overhaul of Council's finances is urgently required to ensure the ongoing viability of the Council'.</p>	<p>Attachment 31 – Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee minutes</p>
<p>If applicable, has the council not applied the full percentage increases available to it in one or more previous years under section 511 of the Local Government Act? If a council has a large amount of revenue yet to be caught up over the next several years, it should explain in its application how that impacts on its need for the SV.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Click or tap here to enter text.</p>

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

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

North Sydney has no existing SVs.

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

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

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

There is over 890,000m² of non-rateable property in North Sydney (excluding Council land). This has an unimproved land value of approximately \$1.1 billion and equates to approximately 8.5% of the LGA.

If this was to pay business rates at the current level of rates this would be an additional \$4.85 million a year. At the proposed 2025/26 business rate this would be \$7.7 million a year and at the 2026/27 levels \$9.3 million a year.

North Sydney is one of the densest education precincts in the country, with 21 primary and secondary schools and two universities within the 10.5km² boundary.

The nature of this density results in considerable challenges for Council including:

- Open space demands, noting that the most recently opened school has no open space and many schools use Council parks for sporting and recreation, and in some cases general playground use.
- Traffic and transport – pressure is placed on the transport system through safety requirements and congestion. Behavioural change programs to reduce the impacts have been included in Council strategies.

If education providers alone were to pay rates at the current level of business rates, it would contribute \$1.41 million a year to Council. Under the 2026/27 proposed business rate this would increase to \$2.89 million a year.

Another factor for consideration when comparing North Sydney to other LGA's is the unique influx of visitors for work or education each day. 80,715 local workers are recorded as at 2021 census, with only 10,707 living in the LGA. When considering the LGA's resident population in the same year of 68,950, it demonstrates that the population more than doubles when the working community is included.

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

4 OLG SV Criterion 2 – Community awareness and engagement

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

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

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

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

Criteria	Evidence of meeting this criterion	Reference to application supporting documents
<p>Evidence that the community is aware of the need for and extent of a rate rise.</p>	<p>A variety of engagement methods were used to reach the community, as detailed in the Community Engagement Outcomes Report.</p> <p>Council undertook thorough engagement with resident households as well as non-resident ratepayers and businesses, through in-person sessions, print and digital channels, and social media.</p> <p>To assist the community's understanding of the need for the rate rise, the proposals, and to address questions and concerns, Council held community forums, conducted targeted workshops, and responded directly to enquiries for further information.</p> <p>A total of 44,100 physical information packs were distributed to households, businesses, and non-resident ratepayers. Printed advertisements appeared in the Mosman Daily and the North Shore Times. Council also advertised in The Living Collective, including a social media post in the North Sydney Living group and an e-newsletter inclusion. Advertisements were displayed on bus shelters and a billboard, and posters were also placed on 60 community noticeboards throughout the local government area.</p>	<p>Attachment 1 – Long Term Financial Plan 2025 -2035</p> <p>Attachment 3 – Community Engagement Outcomes Report (including Community Engagement Plan)</p>

	<p>Council incorporated the proposal into its communication channels, adding a promotional email signature on all Council emails during the engagement period. Additionally, an "on hold" message on Council's customer service phonenumber directed callers to the Your Say North Sydney website to learn more and provide feedback.</p> <p>Council established an SRV webpage on our YourSay website at https://yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/srv which provided an overview of the proposal and functioned as a centralised hub for resources and documents related to the proposal. The site's accessibility widget allowed the page to be read in a range of other languages, including all the languages other than English which are most used within the North Sydney local government area, as well as providing accessibility adjustments including a screen reader, dyslexia-friendly text, and options to adjust contrast, font size, and spacing. The webpage had 11,801 views, 5,223 visits, and 4,494 unique visitors.</p> <p>Two public community forums, one online and one in person, were advertised on Council's YourSay webpage and on Council's social media channels. 30 people registered and 23 people attended the in-person forum, and 167 people the online forum.</p> <p>A workshop was conducted with 42 demographically-selected residents, with outcomes presented below and captured in a detailed workshop report (attached to the Community Engagement Outcomes Report).</p> <p>A Precinct Committee Forum was attended by 18 representatives from 12 of the 17 active Precincts. The Mayor also spoke about the SRV at four individual Precinct Committee meetings: Lavender Bay (44 attendees), Milson (38 attendees), Wollstonecraft (80 attendees), and Willoughby Bay (32 attendees). Council's CEO presented to the Wollstonecraft precinct.</p> <p>Council emailed 770 people who had asked to be kept informed following our Next Ten Years engagement earlier in 2024, asking for their feedback on the informing strategies and special rate variation proposal, as well as our updated Long-Term Financial Plan, Delivery Program, and Asset Management Strategy. The email had a 75.83% open rate. The SRV consultation was also communicated in our Council e-newsletter (sent to 1,911 subscribers, 66.5% open rate); events e-newsletter (3,359 subscribers, 56.26% open rate); and three weekly precinct e-newsletters (270+ subscribers, >58.5% open rates). Council emailed a total of 6,310 people during the engagement period.</p>	
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	<p>Council also used traditional methods and social media to raise awareness among the community of the need for a rate rise and the proposed options. A media release was sent to 33 local media contacts, and the story was covered in North Shore Living, North Sydney Living, the North Sydney Sun, and the North Shore Lorikeet, and discussed on the radio on 2GB and ABC. We responded to four enquiries from the Sydney Morning Herald, North Sydney Sun (two enquiries) and North Shore Living. A six-post social media campaign focused on raising awareness about the proposal and encouraging the community to attend the online and in person community forums, and to provide their feedback. Over the course of the campaign, these posts were viewed 6,879 times on Facebook, 7,265 times on Instagram, and 2,177 times on LinkedIn.</p> <p>Council's special rate variation proposal was featured in several news articles including in the Sydney Morning Herald, the Daily Telegraph, ABC News Online, and the Daily Mail, further increasing the reach and awareness of the proposal.</p> <p>During the engagement period, a number of frequently asked questions emerged from the community. As these questions emerged Council developed responses and published these on the special rate variation section of its website for all community members to view, to increase transparency. By the close of consultation, there were 34 frequently asked questions, with detailed responses listed on the special rate variation website.</p> <p>Of the 792 online submissions through Council's YourSay page, 89% stated they had read Council's Long Term Financial Plan, demonstrating high awareness of the proposed SV and background.</p>	
<p>The council need to communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed SV in percentage terms, and the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer, by rating category.</p>	<p>The full cumulative increase of the proposed SRV options, in both percentage terms and dollar terms for the average ratepayer, were communicated in the Special Rate Variation Factsheet, distributed to all ratepayers and available via Council's YourSay webpage: yoursay.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/srv</p>	<p>Attachment 3 – Community Engagement Outcomes Report (includes fact sheet and other communications materials).</p>
<p>The Delivery Program and LTFP should clearly set out the extent of the General Fund rate rise under the SV, for the average ratepayer, by rating category.</p>	<p>The Delivery Program and Long-Term Financial Plan were prepared in accordance with the Office of Local Government's IP&R guidelines and requirements. The Long-Term Financial Plan references the impact of the SV on Council and community. The impact on average rates for all rating categories was clearly set out as part of the community consultation information, noting that the final SV (with which Council resolved to proceed with an application for) is cumulatively slightly lower than was consulted on, due to the deferral of some projects in year one and the addition of a \$10m loan in 2024/25 to fund the North Sydney Olympic Pool project.</p>	<p>Attachment 1 – Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035 Attachment 2 – Amended Delivery Program 2022-26</p>

<p>Council should include an overview of its ongoing efficiency measures and briefly discuss its progress against these measures, in its explanation of the need for the proposed SV.</p>	<p>Council has undertaken considerable review and improvement since 2022. This is outlined in response to SV Criterion 5 and through the Organisational Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Once fully implemented, this will represent approximately \$7 million a year benefit to Council and a potential \$5 million one-off through the sale of land.</p> <p>In addition, organisational efficiencies estimated at between \$2M - \$3M have been embedded within the Long-Term Financial Plan through the reduction in overheads associated with the operationalisation of the North Sydney Olympic Pool and increased capital works programs. It is assumed within the LTFP that improvements to processes within Councils administration will allow capacity to absorb these additional responsibilities.</p> <p>The plan assumes improved governance and administration measures will lead to efficiency gains that absorb these costs. In addition, a capital sinking fund will be developed for rescheduled projects, and this will also receive funding through any new revenue sources and increases in organisational efficiency. This funding will be used to further improve Council's assets. Council will report on this to the community six-monthly to show progress being made.</p>	<p>Attachment 8 – Organisational Improvement Plan</p>
<p>The council's community engagement strategy for the SV must demonstrate an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness and input occur.</p>	<p>Council followed its Engagement Protocol and adopted an "inform and consult" approach, guided by the IAP2 Community Engagement Framework. A comprehensive program of engagement activities was designed to raise awareness about Council's financial sustainability and the necessity of an SV. As outlined in the Community Engagement Outcomes Report, efforts were made to ensure all stakeholders - including resident households, non-resident ratepayers, and businesses - were informed about the proposals and had opportunities to provide feedback.</p>	<p>Attachment 3 – Community Engagement Outcomes Report (including Community Engagement Plan)</p>
<p>Explain the action, if any, the council took in response to feedback from the community</p>	<p>Council continuously updated its Frequently Asked Questions to ensure timely response to community feedback and/or third party publications to address any areas of concern or confusion.</p> <p>In consideration of community feedback, Council will seek additional borrowings of \$10 million in the 2024/25 financial year to support the completion of the North Sydney Olympic Pool.</p> <p>Council has also assessed the programs of work to determine what work could be deferred until later years to reduce the rates increase required in year one. This review deferred \$4.9 million of work until later years. This change resulted in a reduction in the Year 1 SV proposal from 50% to 45%, and a reduction in the residential minimum from \$1,300 to \$1,200.</p>	<p>Attachment 1 – Long Term Financial Plan 2025-2035</p> <p>Attachment 2 – Amended Delivery Program 2022-26</p> <p>Attachment 3 – Community Engagement Outcomes Report</p>

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

N/A

4.2 Proposed average rates outlined in the council's community consultation materials

Are the average rates provided in the council's community consultation materials the same as what has been inputted into Table 7.2, Worksheet 7 of the Part A application form?	No
If no, please explain why.	As outlined above, a \$10m loan will be sought in 2024/25 and \$4.9m of work has been deferred from year one to reduce the SV amount in year one.

4.3 Additional information (optional)

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

N/A.

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

Table 8 Other Criterion 2 attachments

Attachment number	Name of document	Page references
Attachment 4	Response to engagement key themes	All
Attachment 33	Frequently asked questions during engagement	All

5 OLG SV Criterion 3 – Impact on ratepayers

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

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

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

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

The increase in rates is shown in the LTFP and the amended Delivery Program and was provided in the communications material sent to rate payers and the community. This included the increase to minimums, the ad valorem, and the inclusion of current special rates.

As questions were asked by the community on the impact of the SV, Council posted detailed responses to frequently asked questions on the SV website. By the completion of the engagement there were 34 answers to these frequently asked questions.

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

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

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

An independent capacity to pay analysis was undertaken which shows the impact of the changes to rates to the community and their capacity to pay. This report is attached to the SV application.

The analysis found that there is significant advantage across the LGA, with some slightly increased disadvantage within the suburb of Kirribilli, although this is still much lower than Greater Sydney averages and the level of advantage within this suburb is still in the top 2% of suburbs across Australia. Due to the high levels of advantage and relatively low potential for mortgage and rental stress, in addition to comparably low levels of pensioners and individuals requiring core assistance, it is considered that there is capacity to pay across all groupings in North Sydney.

As noted previously the willingness to pay was high in both the informing strategies and demographically selected SV workshop, but little willingness was recorded in the online survey as part of the broad SV consultation.

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

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

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

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

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

Council offers a \$250 pensioner concession on rates if a ratepayer holds a pensioner concession card or Seniors Health Care Card and the property is a sole or principal residence.

Council will also review and implement its financial Hardship Policy, which sets out how Council can assist ratepayers who are experiencing difficulty in paying rates on time. Dependent on certain circumstances, the policy allows Council to write-off interest charges accrued.

Council will advertise this hardship policy when communicating with the community on the SV progress.

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

The pensioner concession and hardship policy are outlined in Council's 2024-25 Operational Plan (page 57).

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

The hardship policy is available on Council's website. Council advises residents of the hardship policy when they request assistance or an extension on their rates.

When communicating the SV to residents, Council will advertise the hardship policy for those in need.

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

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

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

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

The SV proposal includes the roll up of existing special levies into one ordinary rate. This can distort the impact when comparing minimum rates with proposed minimum rates as detailed in Question 4.

Non-rateable property - There is over 890,000m² of non-rateable property in North Sydney (excluding Council land). This has an unimproved land value of approximately \$1.1 billion.

If this was to pay business rates at the current level of rates this would be an additional \$4.85 million a year. At the proposed 2025/26 business rate this would be \$7.7 million a year and at the 2026/27 levels \$9.27 million a year.

Private schools alone own approximately 152,566m² in the LGA.

If education providers alone were to pay rates at the current level of business rates it would contribute \$1.41 million a year to Council. Under the 2026/27 proposed business rate this would increase to \$2.89 million a year.

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

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

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

Table 9 IP&R documents

IP&R Document	Exhibition dates	Link to council minutes that outlines the resolution to publicly exhibit	Adoption date	Link to council minutes that outlines the resolution to adopt	Link to the adopted IP&R document on the council's website
Community Strategic Plan	27 April to 8 June 2022	document-9928007	27 June 2022	Microsoft Word - Minutes 27 June 2022	Community Strategic Plan - North Sydney Vision 2040 - Policies, Plans and Strategies directory – North Sydney Council
Delivery Program	27 November 2024 to 10 January 2025	document-11303486	10 February 2025	10/02/2025 Council Meeting – North Sydney Council	Delivery Program - Policies, Plans and Strategies directory – North Sydney Council
Long Term Financial Plan	27 November 2024 to 10 January 2025	document-11303486	10 February 2025	10/02/2025 Council Meeting – North Sydney Council	long-term-financial-plan-2025
Asset Management Plan (which contain long-term projections of asset maintenance, rehabilitation and replace, including forecast costs).	27 November 2024 to 10 January 2025	document-11303486	10 February 2025	10/02/2025 Council Meeting – North Sydney Council	https://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/3869/asset-management-strategy-2025

Note: The exhibition and adoption dates must match the dates recorded in the council resolution.

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

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

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

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

Council approach to improving productivity is centred around cultural change, and the enablers of change including structures, systems and processes and capabilities. In 2023, Council undertook a culture survey using Human Synergistics, a globally recognised methodology for culture change. The results of this survey allowed Council to prioritise its improvement efforts to achieve improved productivity.

The key focus areas for improvement included:

Strategic direction – A review of Council's existing strategies revealed a lack of integration between strategies, unclear priorities and an inconsistency between informing strategies, plans and community expectations and Council's Delivery, Operational Plan and Resourcing Strategy. COVID had changed the way we work, live and play and it was important to analyse the changes and align direction with community needs.

Over the past year, an extensive program of engagement and independent research has been undertaken to inform strategies for the following key areas: Open Space and Recreation, Integrated Transport, Economic Development, Culture and Creativity, Social Inclusion, Environment, Housing and Governance.

Having clear strategies aligned to resourcing strategy assists in improving overall performance by ensuring our workforce has its efforts on those activities that will make the most impact in delivering on Council's commitment to the community.

In addition to contributing towards culture change, the new strategies aim to create an improved level of transparency for the community by ensuring clarity in relation to priority areas, key projects and initiatives, along with business-as-usual services and governance actions.

Organisational structure – Council's structure consisted of a six-division structure, which had created a siloed culture that influenced the prioritisation of resources and a fragmented decision-making system. Asset management was undertaken by multiple teams dependent upon asset class.

Over the past two years, Council has focused on reviewing and restructuring the organisation. In 2023, the senior staffing structure (tier 1 and 2) was reduced from a seven (7) to four (4). Further streamlining has also occurred at Tier three level management. In comparison to other Councils, this leadership structure is lean based upon the number of discreet services provided.

The change in structure has streamlined service delivery, improved accountability, reduced duplication and improved communication and collaboration.

Process improvement – Ensuring good processes are in place is key to achievement. Effective processes ensure our time and resources are used in the most efficient and effective way.

North Sydney Council has not traditionally mapped processes, and many are reliant on individual knowledge and application. This presents both risk and cost to council

Process mapping is a strategic planning and management activity designed to document every step of a business process. Process mapping aims to streamline business activities, improve efficiency and customer service, while reducing costs.

The benefits of process mapping include:

- Reduced costs and improved customer experience
- Minimised compliance risks, and ease auditability and accreditation
- Increased accountability
- Improving employee communication and collaboration
- Retain staff knowledge and avoid knowledge debt from employees that leave
- Ensure employees understand their role and what is expected of them
- Provide a single source of truth outlining the right way to do something
- Reduce the number of mistakes, process deviation and operational risks
- Exposure to inefficiencies and new opportunities to deliver benefits and improvements
- Eliminate undocumented or inefficient paper-based processes.
- Yield significant operational efficiencies and excellence to boost value for the community.

In 2023, Council introduced a process mapping solution called Nintex ProMapp. 150 employees have been trained to draft process maps and have commenced the drafting of 'as is' process maps. Once processes are mapped in 'as is' condition, process improvements can be identified.

To date Council has mapped approximately 250 high priority processes, however in total over time we expect the number of process maps to be approximately 1,000.

Outdated Systems - The technology and systems at Council are currently fragmented, with a significant lack of integration and functionality. This disjointed approach necessitates repetitive data entry across multiple systems, which not only hampers efficiency but also heightens the risk of errors. Additionally, the outdated systems depend heavily on manual intervention, further diminishing productivity.

Recognising these issues, Council staff are developing an Information Technology Strategy aimed at overhauling and prioritising system improvements. This initiative will require substantial investment and will take some time but is crucial for bringing the Council's systems up to contemporary industry standards.

Looking to the future, the Council is not only focused on system upgrades but is also exploring innovative solutions to enhance service delivery. A recent collaboration with a local tech company to pilot a new Development Assessment solution and decision making platform, is a prime example of this forward-thinking approach.

Asset Management - Council has historically developed 15 asset class management plans, which have been managed, considered and funded in different ways over the years. Generally, the plans have focused on asset renewals. To improve consistency, asset management functions and responsibilities were centralised as part of the organisational realignment.

Over the past year, the 15 plans have been consolidated into 6 which present information at asset class level and ensure inclusion of both new and existing assets to best align with Council's long-term plans. Consolidation and improvement in the plans will allow for more regular reporting and analysis. Funding will be critical to the performance of our assets.

Organisational capability and capacity – As a result of the organisational review and restructure, Council was able to introduce an organisational improvement function at no additional cost. This team is focused on the improvements outlined in this application. In addition, a new Chief Financial Officer position was created to improve financial management and reporting. In total \$2.3M in new resources were created through the restructure to increase organisational capability and capacity.

Performance and development frameworks – Council's workforce performance frameworks were not aligned to organisational goals and did not result in strategic use of learning and development resources. A new 'Personal Best' performance and development framework has recently been implemented to support a learning culture and align individual growth to organisational outcomes.

Service reviews – Like many Councils, service reviews have been largely reactive based upon community feedback.

Council's staff have now developed a new service review framework to using the Australian Centre for Excellence for Local Government (ACELG) Service Delivery Review guidance. In 2024, a service review pilot was initiated to test and refine our new service review framework before its formal adoption in June 2025. Key learnings from the pilot will be incorporated into the Service Review Framework as part of Council's commitment to improving the quality of services and ensuring resources are used more effectively now and into the future.

This framework guides regular evaluations of our operations, ensuring they align with community expectations, statutory obligations and strategic priorities. A rolling program of service reviews can also put Council and Councillors in a better position to:

- Respond to changing customer priorities and needs
- Determine the right mix of services and align the services with the Council's vision
- Define statutory and non-statutory services and consider the potential for divestment of services

- Generate financial savings
- Review and optimise service levels and build staff capacity and skills

Service Unit Planning - The balanced scorecard considers customer service, financial, system and process, and learning and development as different levers to find the most effective way of delivering continuous improvement. Service unit planning will sit under the operational plan in the overall strategic framework and is used as a best practice management tool focusing on the functions, activities, processes and tasks required to deliver operational plan outcomes. Service unit planning will identify priorities for system and process improvements, resourcing, and improved performance through learning and development and/or succession planning, as well as identifying and mitigating operational risks.

The development and implementation of this level of planning will reduce reactivity, improve efficiency and effectiveness, contributing to our preferred culture and improve both employee and customer satisfaction. This project will commence this calendar year.

SV Organisational Improvement Plan - Council has undertaken a review of its long-term financial sustainability and services to identify improvement opportunities, the outcome of which is the attached Organisational Improvement Plan to deliver costs savings, more efficient operations and/or increased revenue. The plan aimed at identifying improvements to Council's financial position and operational productivity. The plan prioritised opportunities, quantified savings already implemented, and outlined savings planned for the current and future financial years.

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

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

a. Explain initiatives undertaken and/or processes put in place in the past few years to improve productivity and contain costs.

In the context of the strategic approach to improving productivity outlined above, the following task level initiatives have been implemented in the last two years or are currently being implemented.

These are individually detailed in the attached organisational improvement plan and the attachments to the report to the 10 February 2025 Council meeting.

- Organisational realignment, including the introduction of \$2.3 million in required resources including new strategic roles including a Chief Financial Officer and Organisational Performance function at no increased cost to Council.
- The introduction of a new Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter and recruitment of three independent expert members appointed in May 2024, with quarterly meetings.
- The introduction of a new service review framework, initial reviews focussed on North Sydney Oval, Street Sweeping and Development Assessments. 2025/26 reviews to be Legal Services, Procurement and Tree Management.

- The introduction of process mapping, with 250 high priority processes mapped and including the implementation of a centralised repository and documentation
- The introduction of a new workforce performance and development framework
- Solar power generation
- Internal borrowing to reduce ongoing borrowing costs
- Excess leave management
- Cybersecurity system consolidation
- Mobile telephone network provision review
- North Sydney Olympic Pool business plan enhancement
- Review of Community Transport service
- Introduction of new contact centre customer experience system

In addition, and to contain costs to fund the escalation of costs associated with the North Sydney Olympic Pool, asset renewals have been deferred, and staff vacancies have been held where possible.

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

It is difficult to quantify the full benefit of productivity improvements over the past two years. The progress towards organisational change including the development of improved frameworks and continuous improvement initiatives as listed in Criterion 5 (1) is significant. Except for independent research to inform strategies, all improvement work has been undertaken within existing resources.

Organisational restructures resulted in an additional \$2.3 million of required resources that would otherwise have had to be funded from increased rates. The introduction of an organisational improvement function will have cumulative benefits over many years.

A review and redevelopment of the North Sydney Olympic Pool business plan, along with changes to lane design within the facility is expected to improve the financial outcome by \$1.08 million. This has been incorporated within the Long Term Financial Plan.

Based upon the improvement initiatives outlined in Criterion 5 (1), the following outcomes have been achieved:

- financial savings that were reinvested in services and infrastructure
- substantial productivity savings
- increased efficiencies for staff
- improved sustainability and energy and water efficiencies
- smoother and faster customer service processes
- anticipated improved revenue from North Sydney Olympic Pool, advertising and commercial sponsorships

The past and current improvements total \$4.85 million per year in financial benefits, plus additional efficiency and productivity savings, as outlined above. A full breakdown of the gains achieved is included in the Organisational Improvement Plan.

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

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

The response should, wherever possible:

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

In the text boxes below:

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

The future initiatives to be undertaken in the next two years include:

- Continued process mapping and improvement
- Leadership development program
- Property review
- Systems review and implementation
- Advertising review
- Sponsorships and commercial partnerships
- Review of Community Transport service
- Fleet review
- Events review
- Consider sales of land.

It is expected these initiatives could generate a minimum of \$2.4 million of benefits to Council each year, including improved operating efficiency and customer experience.

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

The expected savings have not been directly listed as line-item reductions in spending within the Long-Term Financial Plan.

Additional organisational efficiencies of between \$2-3M have been embedded within the Long-Term Financial Plan through the reduction in overheads associated with the operationalisation of the North Sydney Olympic Pool and increased capital works programs. It is assumed within the LTFP that improvements to processes within Councils administration will allow capacity to absorb these additional responsibilities.

Savings made through improvement reviews will result in productivity improvements through improved outputs such as customer response times or financial savings. While it is estimated \$1.5 million in cost savings and \$900 thousand in additional revenue could be achieved, these are estimates only and may increase or decrease as the process is worked through. These amounts have not been specifically included within the Long Term Financial Plan and rather will support the mitigation of risks outlined within the Plan.

Where additional cost savings are made or where additional revenue is generated as a result of improvement, this will be directed towards a capital sinking reserve fund to support emerging priorities and/or improved asset condition.

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

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

For the purposes of this response, Council has compared its productivity and efficiency over time with Councils who have a population plus or minus 50,000 as compared with North Sydney, and excluding Councils who were amalgamated. These Councils include: City of Canada Bay, Ku-ring-gai, Randwick, Ryde, Waverley, Willoughby and Woollahra.

Before providing comparative data, it is important to note that it is difficult to measure and compare productivity in the absence of output data. Output data refers to the outputs of each Council for the financial resources used in creating the outputs. The only data available is financial data, which provides an indicator but not a measure, and further analysis would be required for decision making purposes. This level of analysis is being undertaken as part of Council's service review framework as each service is reviewed.

Traditionally North Sydney Council has provided a high level of service to the community.

Councils' customer satisfaction scores suggest North Sydney residents place a higher level of importance on council services when compared to benchmark. Higher satisfaction is also recorded which when compared with financial benchmarking, indicates good comparative productivity.

Employee costs

The following table outlines historical annual growth in employee costs between 2013/14 and 2023/24. North Sydney's data has been adjusted to remove historical North Sydney Olympic Pool employee costs and recent termination costs as a result of organisational restructure. This adjustment has been made to normalise the data. Supporting data is provided in attachment 28.

Employee costs has been used as a measure rather than Full Time Equivalent positions due to the inconsistency in calculation of FTE in reporting amongst councils.

The analysis below demonstrates that over the long term, North Sydney Council employee costs and benefits has risen in line with the average at 3.74% when compared to the comparison council group. Between 2020/21 and 2023/24, Council's average increase in cost has been 2.29% as compared to the group average of 3.53%. This is a result of temporary staff reductions following the COVID pandemic.

EMPLOYEE COSTS AND BENEFITS HISTORICAL AVERAGE ANNUAL INCREASE		
	2021-2024	2014-2024
North Sydney	2.29%	3.74%
City of Canada Bay	5.94%	4.94%
Ku-ring-gai	4.18%	3.46%
Randwick	4.45%	3.79%
Ryde	2.99%	4.28%
Waverley	2.70%	3.82%
Willoughby	3.80%	2.27%
Woollahra	1.88%	3.33%
Average	3.53%	3.70%

The following table outlines a comparison of employee costs as a percentage of operating costs (excluding depreciation and fair value adjustments). The comparison demonstrates North Sydney Councils employee costs and benefits percentage of 45.98% is lower than the average.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AS % OF COST	
	2023/24
North Sydney	45.98%
City of Canada Bay	47.60%
Ku-ring-gai	38.60%
Randwick	48.07%
Ryde	48.15%
Waverley	57.47%
Willoughby	43.20%
Woollahra	45.55%
Average	46.83%

Over the past two years, Council has undertaken an organisational review and restructure to improve productivity and efficiency. The first restructure reduced Tier 2 (Director level) positions from six to three, while the second focused on Tier 3 (Management level) positions, streamlining the organisation into 16 service units. As a result, \$2.3 million in employee cost budgets were redirected to enhance productivity and efficiency, including the development of an organisational improvement function and the introduction of key positions such as the Chief Financial Officer and Risk Co-ordinator. To improve responsiveness in critical areas, additional resources were allocated to the information technology unit, building compliance, strategic planning, volunteer management, and parks and gardens. This realignment has led to immediate productivity improvements, including enhanced integrated planning and reporting, financial analysis and planning, process mapping and improvement, and the implementation of a service level review framework.

Operating costs (excluding depreciation and fair value)

The following table outlines historical annual growth in operating costs between 2013/14 and 2023/24. North Sydney’s data has been adjusted to remove historical North Sydney Olympic Pool employee costs and recent termination costs as a result of organisational restructure. This adjustment has been made to normalise the data.

The analysis below demonstrates that over the long term, North Sydney Council operating costs has risen below annual average at 4.38% when compared to the comparison council group. Between 2020/21 and 2023/24, Councils average increase in cost has been 4.08% as compared to the group average of 4.86%.

OPERATING COSTS HISTORICAL AVERAGE ANNUAL INCREASE		
	2021-2024	2014-2024
North Sydney	4.08%	4.22%
City of Canada Bay	5.78%	4.58%
Ku-ring-gai	3.94%	4.51%
Randwick	6.85%	4.95%
Ryde	4.14%	4.87%
Waverley	3.85%	3.84%
Willoughby	5.29%	2.99%
Woollahra	4.90%	5.12%
Average	4.86%	4.38%

Table 10 Criterion 5 attachments

Attachment number	Name of document	Page references
28	Supporting data for 7.4	All

8 Council certification and contact information

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

8.1 Certification of application and declaration

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

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

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

General Manager (name):	Therese Cole
Signature and Date:	 10 February 2025
Responsible Accounting Officer (name):	Aigul Utegenova
Signature and Date:	 10 February 2025

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

8.2 Council contact information

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

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

General Manager

General Manager contact phone	[REDACTED]
General Manager contact email	[REDACTED]

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

Primary council contact

Council contact phone	[REDACTED]
Council contact email	[REDACTED]
Council email for inquiries about the SV application	[REDACTED]

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

Secondary council contact

Council contact phone	[REDACTED]
Council contact email	[REDACTED]
Council email for inquiries about the SV application	[REDACTED]

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

9 List of required attachments

To complete (adding rows as necessary):

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

Table 11 Required attachments checklist

Name of attachment	The document is included	The document is not applicable
Mandatory forms/ attachments:		
Application Form Part A (Excel spreadsheet)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Application Form Part B (this Word document)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Council resolution to apply for the special variation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Completed certification and declaration (see 8.1)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
If applicable, to support the responses provided in Question 5 of Description and Context (see section 2) provide:		
Instrument for expiring special variation/s	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
OLG advice confirming calculation of amount to be removed from the council's general income	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If applicable, to support the responses provided in Questions 6 AND/OR 7 of Description and Context (see section 2) provide:		
Declaration of compliance with conditions in past instruments (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evidence of compliance with conditions in past instruments (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mandatory public supporting material (i.e. to be published on IPART's website):		
Community Strategic Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Delivery Program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Long Term Financial Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Asset Management Plan(s) (required if a key purpose of the SV is related to assets and capital expenditure)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultation materials, e.g. copies of media releases, notices of public meetings, newspaper articles, fact sheets used to consult on rate increase and proposed special variation (combined into one document)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA

Name of attachment	The document is included	The document is not applicable
Community feedback (including surveys and results). Confidential information should be redacted, or the entire document marked as confidential.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Willingness to pay study (if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hardship policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NA
Other public supporting materials:		
Government agency's report on financial sustainability e.g. NSW Treasury Corporation (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(List the additional documents)		
Confidential supporting material (i.e. not to be published on IPART's website):		
(List the documents)		

10 Checklists

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

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

Table 12 Part A Application Form Checklist

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

Table 13 SV Part B Application Form Checklist

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

Important information

Submitting online

Applications must be submitted through IPART's [LG Portal](#) by 11:59pm on Monday, 3 February 2025. Councils should note a file size limit of 150MB applies to any individual document uploaded in the portal.

Confidential content

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

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

Publishing the council's application

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