



WILLOUGHBY  
CITY COUNCIL

*City of Diversity*

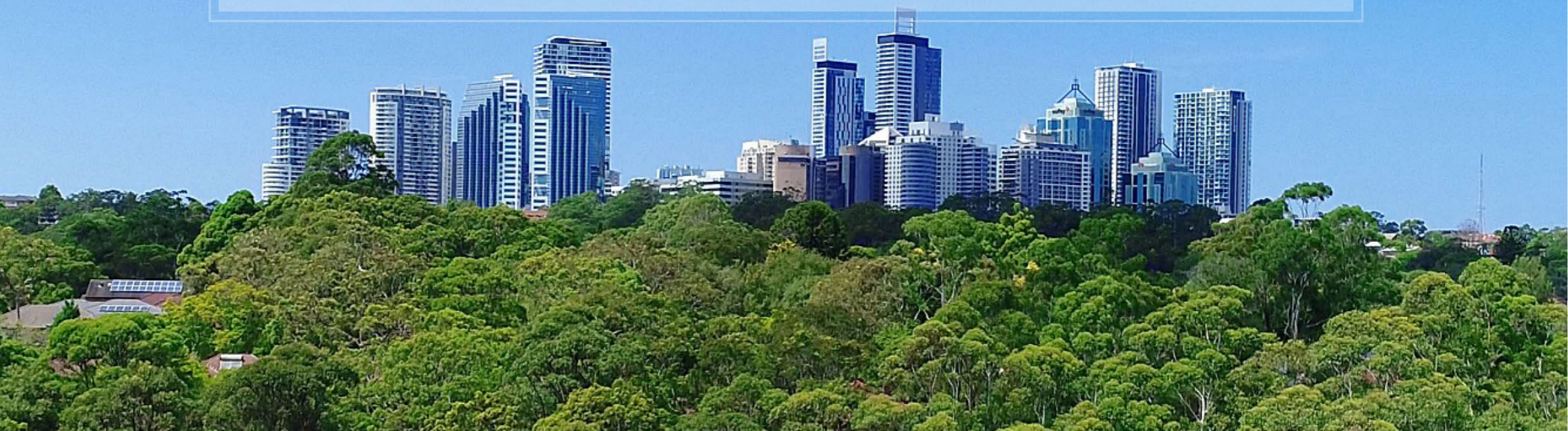
# Community Engagement Materials

Rate rise option engagement between 25 September to 5 November 2023



# Contents

Media Release .....	3	DL Flyer.....	26
Letter from Mayor to all ratepayers.....	4	Digital signage .....	27
Community brochure.....	5	Email signature .....	28
Webinar presentation - 10 October.....	8	Council website home page banners .....	29
Community noticeboard poster .....	22	Vision Times WeChat advertising banner .....	30
Social media tiles - Instagram.....	23	Promotional video .....	31
Social media tiles - Facebook.....	24	Newspaper advertisement .....	32
Pavement stickers.....	25	Engagement portal .....	33



# Media Release



## MEDIA RELEASE

25 September 2023

### Community feedback sought on rate rise options to secure Willoughby's future

Community members are being encouraged to have their say on four rate rise options designed to help Willoughby City Council's financial sustainability and guide its future funding priorities.

Willoughby Mayor Tanya Taylor said the rate rise options responded to Council's existing and future financial challenges, a growing and changing population and increasing community expectations.



"Historically, Council has a good track record delivering strong financial management and high community satisfaction levels with its services, despite having the second lowest average residential rates in Northern Sydney," Mayor Taylor said.

"However, Council has been impacted by recent extraordinary economic events.

"For instance, Council lost \$20.6 million in revenue during the COVID-19 period, while inflation has increased by 12.1% in the last two years. At the same time, Council's average rates have fallen by 3.2%.

"Financial forecasts show that, without substantial change, Council may get into financial difficulty by mid-2025.

"Our community has also made it clear it wants Council to investigate improving public area maintenance and deliver new community infrastructure.



## MEDIA RELEASE

"As a result, the Council is now seeking feedback on four very different rating options which respond to these pressures.

"This engagement process represents an historic and important opportunity for the Willoughby community to have its say on Council's short and long-term future."

The rate rise options are known as:

- Reduce Services
- Maintain Services
- Increase Services and;
- Increase Services and Infrastructure.

The **Reduce Services** option would involve Council undertaking widespread service reductions to balance its budget, while at the same time increasing rates from 1 July 2024 in line with the NSW Government rate revenue peg (assumed to be 3.5%).

Council will have limited ability to fund new services or community projects and will be vulnerable to the impact of future financial, climate and growth shocks.

The other three options would involve Council applying, to the NSW Government, for a Special Rate Variation (SRV).

The **Maintain Services** option would see Council maintaining highly valued services at current levels, through a 12% rate rise (including an estimated 8.5% SRV) which would catch-up on inflation losses over the last two years.

Under the **Increase Services** option, rates would rise by 15% (including an estimated 11.5% SRV) and Council would deliver an additional \$2 million a year for public area maintenance.

The **Increase Services and Infrastructure** option comes with a 20% rate rise (including an estimated 16.5% SRV) and would deliver both the additional \$2 million a year in public area maintenance together with the additional benefit of \$2.5 million a year for community infrastructure.

The three options which involve a SRV application will also allow Council to collect average annual surpluses of between \$4.77m to \$5.22m which, subject to financial shocks, could be re-invested in community services and projects.

Under the options:



## MEDIA RELEASE

- Average residential rates would rise between \$38 to \$218 a year, or between 73 cents to \$4.19 a week.
- Average business rates in the Chatswood Town Centre area would increase by \$273 to \$1,561 a year, or between \$5.25 to \$30.01 a week.
- Average business rates outside the Chatswood Town Centre would increase between \$228 and \$1,305 a year, or between \$4.38 to \$25.09 a week.

Mayor Taylor said the Council recognised the potential rate rises came at a time when many community members are facing cost of living pressures.

"Given this, Council has committed to continuing its existing work to cut unnecessary costs and find alternate revenue sources to reduce the impact of any special rate rise," she said.

"For instance, all the options seeking a special rate increase include a commitment that Council will find \$2m worth of savings and new revenue in 2024/25. Without these commitments, the potential rate increases would be around 3.7% higher."

Community members can have their say by going to [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au) before 5 November. At this website, community members can:

- Learn more about the proposed rate rise
- Fill out the online survey or upload a submission
- Register to attend one of ten engagement events
- If they have their latest rate notice handy, use an online calculator to calculate their potential rate increase under each option

Ends



For media enquiries please contact:

Public Relations, Willoughby City Council  
+61 2 9777 7696

E: [publicrelations@willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:publicrelations@willoughby.nsw.gov.au)

# Letter from Mayor to all ratepayers

00001 FR 25/210/00000



**Securing Willoughby's future: have your say**

Dear valued ratepayer

I am writing to seek your views on four rate rise options, which are designed to help Willoughby City Council's financial sustainability and guide its future funding priorities.

Despite having the second lowest average residential rates in Northern Sydney, Council has a good track record delivering strong financial management and high community satisfaction levels. The Council is now facing two challenges to this situation.

Firstly, due to a growing and changing population and increasing community expectations, Council is under more pressure to maintain and improve services.

Secondly, Council is finding it more difficult to respond to these pressures, due to a deteriorating financial position which has followed:

- \$20.6m in COVID-19 losses
- Wild weather requiring infrastructure repairs
- High inflation forcing up costs by 12.1% in the two years to June 2023
- The NSW Government capping rates well below inflation levels

We are now seeking community feedback on four rate rise options to respond to the above challenges, known as **Reduce Services, Maintain Services, Increase Services and Increase Services and Infrastructure**.

The **Reduce Services** option would involve Council undertaking widespread service reductions to balance its budget, while at the same time increasing rates from 1 July 2024 in line with the NSW Government rate revenue peg (assumed to be 3.5%).

The other three options would involve Council applying for a special rate increase.

The **Maintain Services** option would see Council maintaining highly valued services at current levels, through a 12% rate rise which would recoup inflation losses over the last two years.

Under the **Increase Services** option, rates would rise 15% and Council would deliver an additional \$2 million a year for public area maintenance.

The **Increase Services and Infrastructure** option comes with a 20% rate rise and would deliver both the additional \$2 million a year in public area maintenance together with the additional benefit of \$2.5 million a year for new community infrastructure.

Under the options, average residential rates would rise between \$38 to \$218 a year, or between 73 cents to \$4.19 a week.

The Council recognises the potential rate rises come at a time when many community members are facing cost of living pressures.

[www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL  
PO Box 57, Chatswood NSW 2057 | Head Office: 31 Victor Street, Chatswood NSW | Ph: 02 9777 1000

Given this, Council has committed to continuing its existing work to cut unnecessary costs and find alternate revenue sources to reduce the impact of any special rate rise.

The Council is now seeking detailed community feedback on these options.

I encourage you to read the attached brochure and to go to [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au) or scan the QR code on this page, to find out more and have your say between 25 September-5 November 2023. At the Have Your Say site, you can also register to attend a range of online and in-person engagement events.



I look forward to working with you to help secure Willoughby's future.

Yours Sincerely,



Tanya Taylor  
Mayor  
Willoughby City Council

## INFORMATION IN YOUR LANGUAGE

### English

Willoughby City Council is seeking community feedback on four options to help plan for its financial future and funding priorities, three of which involve a special increase in Council rates. More information, including a web page in your language, is available at the website below. [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

### 简体中文 (Simplified Chinese)

Willoughby 市议会正在就指导其未来财务运营的四个选项征求社区反馈意见。其中三个选项涉及到特别增加市政税。我们诚邀您于 10 月 26 日参加社区参与会议。我们会在会议上提供翻译服务。查询更多信息，包括简体中文网页，请访问以下网站：[www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

### 繁體中文 (Traditional Chinese)

Willoughby 市政府正在就指導其未來財務運營的四個選項徵求社區反饋意見。其中三個選項涉及到特別增加市政稅。我們邀請您於 10 月 17 日參加社區參與會議。我們會在會議上提供翻譯服務。查詢更多資訊，包括繁體中文網頁，請瀏覽以下網站：[www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

### 日本語 (Japanese)

ウィロビー・シティ・カウンシルでは、コミュニティの皆様から、カウンシルの将来の財政を導く 4 つの選択肢についてご意見を求めています。その 3 つには、カウンシル・タックスの特別増額が含まれています。詳しい情報は、日本語のウェブページを含めて、以下のウェブサイトでご覧いただけます。[www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

### 한국어 (Korean)

윌로비 시티 카운슬은 향후 재정을 계획하는 4 가지 방안에 대한 지역사회의 의견을 수렴하고 있습니다. 이 중 3 가지는 카운슬 지방세의 특별 인상과 관련된 것입니다. 한국어로 된 웹페이지를 포함한 자세한 정보는 아래 웹사이트에서 확인하실 수 있습니다. [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

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PO Box 57, Chatswood NSW 2057 | Head Office: 31 Victor Street, Chatswood NSW | Ph: 02 9777 1000

# Community brochure



**Willoughby City Council is inviting community members to have their say about four rate rise options.**  
 This brochure explains why Council is exploring these options, along with more detail about each option and how you can have your say.  
 Have your say by 5 November 2022 at [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

**Have your say on four rate rise options:**

- Reduce Services:** 3.5% rate increase
- Maintain Services:** 1.2% rate increase
- Increase Services:** 1.5% rate increase
- Increase Services and Infrastructure:** 2.0% rate increase

[www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

## Council's

### Have your say on these options

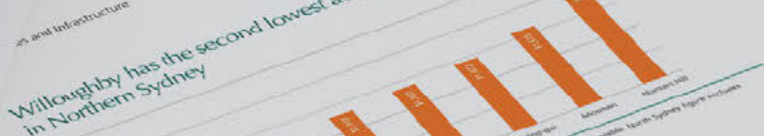
Willoughby City Council is currently reviewing residential rates and has identified that rates have increased by 15.3% since 2021. Council is exploring four options to manage this increase.

**12.1% Consumer price index increase since 2021**  
**3.2% Willoughby City Council average rate increase since 2021-22**

The Reduce Services option would involve Council undertaking widespread service cuts, while at the same time increasing rates in line with the NSW Government rate revenue and levies to be 3.5%.

The other three options would involve Council applying to the NSW Government for a special rate increase. Each of the options also include cost cutting and revenue targets. These targets will ensure Council can continue to fund its services, and help contribute revenue sources to reduce the impact of any rate increase.

Council has considered alternatives to these rate rises, including raising debt, selling assets or relying on government grants, but does not consider these to be feasible or timely.



As shown in the 2021/22 financial year, with the exception of Epping for which 2021/22 figures are the latest available, North Sydney figure includes infrastructure and environmental levy.

SECURING WILLOUGHBY'S FUTURE

#### KEY FIGURES

Proposed rate rise percentage  
 Council rating target  
 Average annual savings which, subject to Council approval, could be transferred to new Community Services and Projects  
 Additional \$2.2m a year for new community infrastructure

#### KEY OUTCOMES

Reduce rates in 2022/23  
 Allow Council to maintain future service levels and collect revenue for infrastructure  
 Maintain strong high quality services  
 Allow more savings and reinvest to the community  
 Provide a stable environment for staff operation  
 Additional \$2.2m a year for new community infrastructure

#### POTENTIAL INCREASE IN AVERAGE RATES

Residential properties  
 Business (excluding Town Centre ratepayers)  
 Business (including Town Centre ratepayers)

#### Reduce Services Option 1

Council will undertake widespread service cuts, while at the same time increasing rates in line with the NSW Government rate revenue and levies to be 3.5%.

Willoughby City Council is currently reviewing residential rates and has identified that rates have increased by 15.3% since 2021. Council is exploring four options to manage this increase.

As shown in the 2021/22 financial year, with the exception of Epping for which 2021/22 figures are the latest available, North Sydney figure includes infrastructure and environmental levy.

#### Maintain Services Option 2

Council will undertake widespread service cuts, while at the same time increasing rates in line with the NSW Government rate revenue and levies to be 1.2%.

As shown in the 2021/22 financial year, with the exception of Epping for which 2021/22 figures are the latest available, North Sydney figure includes infrastructure and environmental levy.

SECURING WILLOUGHBY'S FUTURE

#### Increase Services Option 3

Council will undertake widespread service cuts, while at the same time increasing rates in line with the NSW Government rate revenue and levies to be 1.5%.

As shown in the 2021/22 financial year, with the exception of Epping for which 2021/22 figures are the latest available, North Sydney figure includes infrastructure and environmental levy.

SECURING WILLOUGHBY'S FUTURE

#### Increase Services and Infrastructure Option 4

Council will undertake widespread service cuts, while at the same time increasing rates in line with the NSW Government rate revenue and levies to be 2.0%.

As shown in the 2021/22 financial year, with the exception of Epping for which 2021/22 figures are the latest available, North Sydney figure includes infrastructure and environmental levy.

SECURING WILLOUGHBY'S FUTURE

# Community brochure - Outer pages

## Why Council needs to secure Willoughby's future

Willoughby City Council entered the COVID-19 era in a healthy financial position, recording surpluses totalling \$48.3m in the three years to 2018/19.

Since that time, and as shown in the chart below, Council has been impacted by a range of external factors, including:

- \$20.6m in COVID-19 pandemic revenue losses
- Wild weather requiring infrastructure repairs
- High inflation forcing up costs by 12.1% in the two years to June 2023
- The NSW Government capping Council's rate revenue at just a third of these inflation levels and shifting costs onto local government

In addition, Council's temporary Infrastructure Levy ceased in June 2022. This action resulted in a \$2.96 million reduction in rate revenue and a \$38 fall in average residential rates in 2022/23.

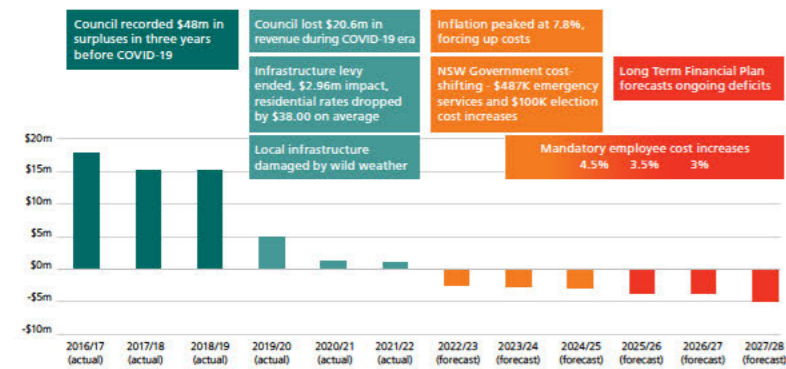
These and other issues have resulted in Council moving from surpluses (in other words profits) to deficits (in other words losses) – a financial situation that is not sustainable.

New forecasts show that, without substantial change, Council could get into financial difficulty by mid 2025.

In addition, with Willoughby's population estimated to grow by 12% between 2016-2036, and increased community expectations, Council is under more pressure to enhance services, particularly when it comes to caring for public areas and delivering new community infrastructure.

Council is now seeking community feedback on rate rise options to deal with the above challenges.

## Issues driving the Council from profits to losses



This chart shows Council's annual operating results (actual from 2016/17 to 2021/22 and forecast from 2022/23 to 2027/28). The forecast losses from 2024/25 assume that Council has not implemented any of the rate rise options outlined in this brochure.

HAVE YOUR SAY

## How to have your say

Council is undertaking a comprehensive community awareness and engagement program in relation to the rate rise options.

This will include a webinar on Tuesday, 10 October and in-person community engagement sessions for residents and businesses, with two translated sessions for Mandarin and Cantonese speakers, being held between 17 October and 2 November.

Please register for the above events and find out more about the proposed options at [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au) or by scanning the QR code on this page.

At the above website, you will also be able to:

- Learn more about the options
- Fill in our online survey, make a comment or upload a submission
- If you have your latest rates notice handy, calculate your exact potential rate increase using our online calculator

To provide feedback, participants will need to be able to either register with, or log into, our online Have Your Say portal. This is easiest to do on a desktop computer.

Alternatively, please send a submission to:

Willoughby City Council,  
PO Box 57,  
Chatswood NSW 2057, Australia  
(address the letter to Special Rate Variation Project Manager).

In addition, community members may receive a call from a research company conducting a randomly-selected survey.



Please have your say on or before Sunday 5 November 2023.

For queries (not submissions) please call (02) 9777 1000 or email - [email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au)

### INFORMATION IN YOUR LANGUAGE

#### Traditional Chinese

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#### Simplified Chinese

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#### Japanese

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[www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

#### Korean

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[www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)



## Securing Willoughby's future: have your say



Willoughby City Council is inviting community members to have their say about four rate rise options.

This brochure explains why Council is exploring these options, along with more detail about each option and how you can have your say.

Have your say by 5 November 2023 at [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

### Have your say on four rate rise options:



[www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

# Community brochure - Inner pages

## About your rates and Council's financial options

Around 43% of Council's revenue comes from rates paid by landowners. These rates pay for more than 70 services, including upgrading roads and stormwater infrastructure and caring for parks and sporting fields.

Some 95% of community members are satisfied with the services that the Council provides.

Over the past two years, because of low NSW Government rate peg limits and the cessation of Council's Infrastructure Levy in 2022, Willoughby ratepayers have seen their average rates fall by 3.2%. At the same time, inflation has risen by 12.1%. Council has the second lowest average residential rate in Northern Sydney.

Council has prepared four rate rise options for community feedback, each with an accompanying rate increase to apply from 1 July 2024.

These options are known as:

- Reduce Services
- Maintain Services
- Increase Services
- Increase Services and Infrastructure

**Inflation has outstripped Council's rates by 15.3% since 2021**



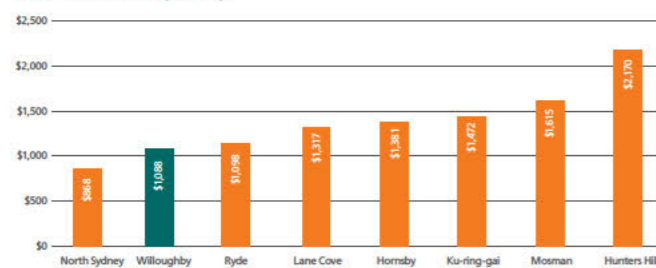
The Reduce Services option would involve Council undertaking widespread service cuts, while at the same time increasing rates in line with the NSW Government rate revenue peg (assumed to be 3.5%).

The other three options would involve Council applying to the NSW Government for a special rate increase.

Each of the options also include cost cutting and revenue targets. These targets will ensure Council continues its existing work to find savings, and new non-rate revenue sources, to reduce the impact of any rate increase.

Council has considered alternatives to these rate rises, including raising debt, selling assets or relying on government grants, but does not consider these to be feasible or timely.

### Willoughby has the second lowest average residential rates in Northern Sydney



All figures are for the 2023/24 financial year, with the exception of Ku-ring-gai for which 2021/22 figures are the latest available. North Sydney figure excludes infrastructure and environmental levy.



## Have your say on these options

Willoughby City Council is now seeking community feedback on four rate rise options.

### KEY FIGURES

Proposed rate rise percentage	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Proposed rate rise percentage	3.5%	12%	15%	20%
Cost cutting target <sup>1</sup>	\$2.8m	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m
New non-rate revenue target	\$0.5m	\$1m	\$1m	\$1m
Average annual surpluses which, subject to financial shocks, could be re-invested in new community services and projects	\$0	+\$5.22m	+\$4.77m	+\$5.05m

### KEY OUTCOMES

Removes deficits in 9 years between 2024/25 and 2032/33	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Removes deficits in 9 years between 2024/25 and 2032/33	✓ (5 out of 9 years)	✓ (all 9 years)	✓ (all 9 years)	✓ (all 9 years)
Allows Council to withstand future financial shocks and collect reserves for infrastructure	✗	✓	✓	✓
Maintains existing highly valued services	✗	✓	✓	✓
Allows asset upgrades and renewals to the level required	✗	✓	✓	✓
Provides a stable environment for staff retention and morale	✗	✓	✓	✓
Additional \$2m a year for public area maintenance and urban tree canopy	✗	✗	✓	✓
Additional \$2.5m a year for new community infrastructure	✗	✗	✗	✓

### POTENTIAL INCREASE IN AVERAGE RATES<sup>2</sup>

Residential ratepayers	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Residential ratepayers	\$38 / year   \$0.73 / week	\$130 / year   \$2.50 / week	\$163 / year   \$3.13 / week	\$218 / year   \$4.19 / week
Business (general) ratepayers	\$228 / year   \$4.38 / week	\$783 / year   \$15.05 / week	\$979 / year   \$18.82 / week	\$1,305 / year   \$25.09 / week
Business (Chatswood Town Centre) ratepayers	\$273 / year   \$5.25 / week	\$936 / year   \$18 / week	\$1,170 / year   \$22.50 / week	\$1,561 / year   \$30.01 / week

<sup>1</sup> Revenue and cost-cutting targets for the Reduce Services option would be met across 2024/25 and 2025/26. Targets for Maintain Services, Increase Services and Increase Services and Infrastructure options would be met in 2024/25  
<sup>2</sup> Shows proposed rate change in 2024/25, which would be built into the rate base and therefore stay in place permanently and increase in subsequent years in line with the NSW Government rate peg only



### Reduce Services

#### Option 1

Council will undertake service cuts and find new revenue sources to maintain a balanced budget, without increasing rates above the NSW Government rate revenue peg.

Council will have limited ability to fund new services or community projects and will be vulnerable to the impact of future financial, climate and growth shocks.



### Maintain Services

#### Option 2

Council will be able to recover from the 12.1% inflation increase from the last two years and continue to provide highly valued services.

In addition, Council will be able to accumulate modest funds for community projects and asset renewal, and have a buffer for future financial shocks, extreme weather and growth.



### Increase Services

#### Option 3

In addition to delivering all the outcomes under Option 2, Council will be able to set aside an additional \$2m a year for improved public area maintenance.

This funding will allow Council to invest in additional cleaning, care and beautification projects in parks, cycling and walking routes and town centres, and boost urban tree canopy, making our much-loved outdoor areas more attractive to use and enjoy.



### Increase Services and Infrastructure

#### Option 4

In addition to delivering all the outcomes in Option 3, Council will also be able to set aside an additional \$2.5m a year for improved public area infrastructure, particularly infrastructure which supports a healthy and connected community and caters for future growth.

This could include funding, for example, to upgrade sports pavilions, cycling and walking paths and parks and playground facilities, complete the Dougherty Centre upgrade or close the funding gap needed to build the Gore Hill Indoor Sports Centre.

### FIND OUT MORE

More detailed average rate change tables, including showing the potential Special Rate Variation percentage and changes in future years, are available as part of the analysis of each rate rise option at [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/swf](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/swf)

# Webinar presentation - 10 October





# Webinar presentation - Slides

## Securing Willoughby's future


10 October 2023  
7.00 - 8.40pm



WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL  
City of Diversity

## Securing Willoughby's future

7.50-8.30pm	Open mic and online Q&A session
8.30-8.35pm	Next steps
8.35-8.40pm	Closing remarks from Mayor




WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL  
City of Diversity

## Securing Willoughby's future

### Housekeeping

- After we go through the presentation, there will be an open mic Q&A.
- Please raise your (virtual) hand if you want to talk, then we will call and unmute you, and you can ask your question. We will then answer it.
- Please let us know your name and suburb.
- There will also be the opportunity at this time to ask questions using the online Zoom question function. We will seek to also answer these questions.
- Ask that comments and questions be respectful.
- If comments or questions are not related to the rate rise options, we would ask that you instead raise these by using the "Report or track an issue" tab on Council's website home page, [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au)



WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL  
City of Diversity

## Securing Willoughby's future

### Council representatives on-screen tonight

Tanya Taylor	Mayor
Debra Just	CEO
Mark Skelsey	Special Rate Variation Project Manager (facilitator)



WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL  
City of Diversity

## Acknowledgement of Country

Willoughby City Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we meet today, the Gamaragal People, and their connections to land, waters, and community.

We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including those who may be in attendance today



## Securing Willoughby's future



### Mayor Tanya Taylor

- Introductory remarks



## Securing Willoughby's future



### Reasons why council is exploring rate rise options

Debra Just - CEO



## Securing Willoughby's future

### Challenges: Cost



#### Inflation

Inflation up 12.1% in two years to June 2023



#### Extreme Weather

Storms from 2022-23 caused significant damage to:

- Retaining walls
- Roads
- Drains

Floods, heatwaves, droughts and other extreme weather events to become more severe and frequent

## Securing Willoughby's future

### Impacts of recent wild weather events on local infrastructure

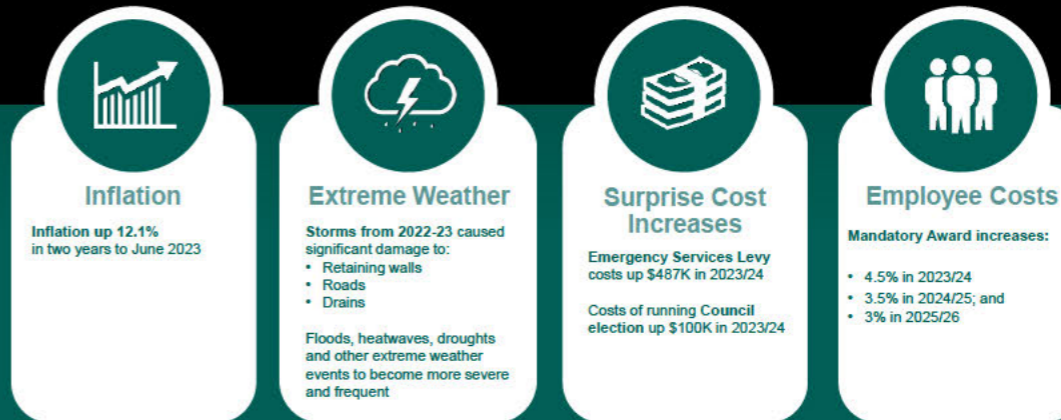


**The Outpost, Northbridge**  
Retaining wall collapse and stormwater pit blockage  
March 2022

**Waters Rd, Naremburn**  
Failed stormwater channel wall  
February 2023

## Securing Willoughby's future

### Challenges: Cost



## Securing Willoughby's future

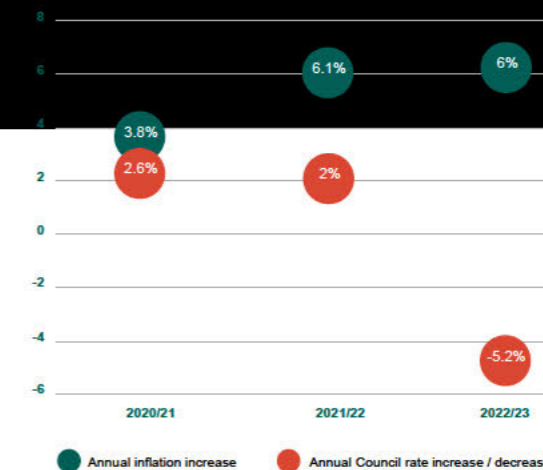
### Challenges: Income



## Securing Willoughby's future

### Council's rates have fallen well behind inflation

**16.5%** Cumulative gap between inflation and rates



### Growing Population

**12%** population increase projected from 2016 to 2036

### Changing Population

2021 Census found:

**54.5%** working from home (up from 6.2% in 2016)

**33.4%** aged 50 and over (up from 30.1% in 2016)

**17.3%** aged between 5-17 (up from 16% in 2016)

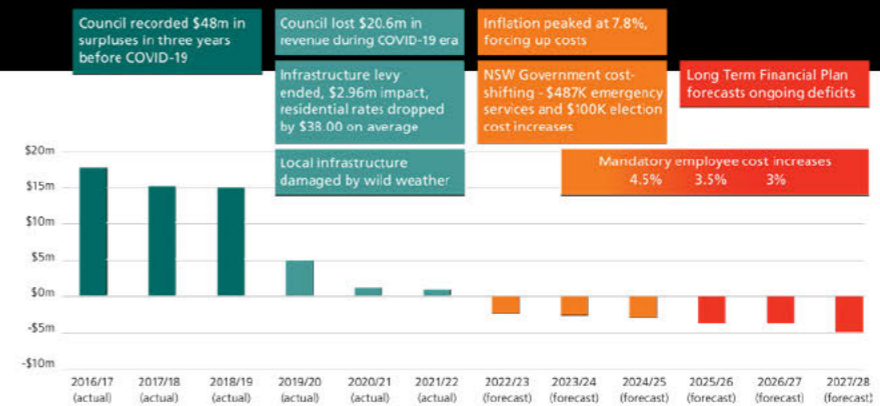
**46.5%** overseas born (up from 45.4% in 2016)

### Community Expectations

**95%** overall community satisfaction level recorded for Council services in late 2022

Growing community expectations in relation to public area maintenance, including tree management

### Recent impacts on Council's operating result



### Staff Costs

#### Organisational review

- In June 2015, Council approved an organisational review, which led to a reduction in the number of Directors and Managers.
- This review resulted in savings of **\$2m per annum** without a change in service standards.

#### Vacancy efficiency dividend

- Council has a staff cost efficiency dividend, achieved by targeting a 7.7% vacancy rate (equating to **\$3.9 million in 2024/25**).
- This ensures Council's budget for labour costs is not unrealistically high.

### Cost cutting

#### Ceased Loop Bus services

- Council voted to cease Loop Bus services from 1 July 2022
- These services had just 2-3 passengers per average trip
- **2022/23 saving: \$345,000**

#### Closed loss-making services

- Less demand for Out of School Hours (OOSH) care services as more parents work from home and due to increased competition
- Bales Park OOSH closed June 2022 and Chatswood OOSH to close in Dec 2023
- Opportunity to rent vacant space
- **2024/25 benefit: Around \$80,000**

#### Event changes

- From 2020/21, the Council discontinued small festivals and switched from Vivid to Culture Bites
- **2023/24 benefit: \$174,900**

#### Libraries

- Through natural attrition and process improvements, reduction of 5 positions in libraries since 2017 without a reduction in community service standards
- **2023/24 benefit: \$462,000**

# Webinar presentation - Slides

Securing Willoughby's future What we have done

## Outsourcing

**Outsourced Devonshire St child care centre**

- Total of \$3.9m in operating losses since 1980s
- \$364,000 loss in 2021/22
- Council resolved in June 2023 to support ten-year lease to private operator
- Agreement worth more than \$3m to Council, plus \$2m in loss avoidance

Securing Willoughby's future

## Council is NOT ALONE when it comes to considering a Special Rate Variation (SRV) application

Financial year	Number of Special Rate Variation applications
2019/20	13
2020/21	0
2021/22	8
2022/23	4 via Special Rate Variation 86 via Additional Rate Variation
2023/24	17
2024/25	13 (estimate)

Around one in five NSW councils have applied for SRV 2021-2023

Securing Willoughby's future

## Recent other Sydney council SRV approvals

Year	Council	Increase (including rate cap)
2021/22	Canterbury Bankstown	36.34% increase over 5 years
2021/22	Georges River	32.6% increase over 5 years
2022/23	Central Coast	Extension of 15.0% increase for further 7 years
2022/23	Hunters Hill	26.02% increase over 2 years
2023/24	Hornsby	31.05% increase over 4 years
2023/24	Canada Bay	32.53% increase over 4 years
2023/24	Strathfield	92.83% increase over 4 years
2023/24	Woollahra	22.23% increase over 2 years

Securing Willoughby's future

## May-June 2023 Revised Long-Term Financial Plan on exhibition

Review of Council's long-term financial scenario which considered a range of historic and future revenue and expenditure issues

Found Council will face financial challenges by 2025/26 if it continues to upgrade infrastructure to benchmark levels

Proposed two changes to strengthen Council's financial resilience:

- Apply for rate rise of either 18.5% or 23.5% (including a Special Rate Variation)
- Increase Operating Performance Ratio target



Securing Willoughby's future

### About the Operating Performance Ratio (OPR)

Operating Revenue  $\div$  Operating Expenditure  $=$  **0% NSW Government Benchmark**



Securing Willoughby's future

### About the Operating Performance Ratio (OPR)

Operating Revenue  $\div$  Operating Expenditure  $=$  **2% New Council Benchmark**



Securing Willoughby's future

### May-June 2023 Revised Long-Term Financial Plan on exhibition

Council considered:

- **Limited (23 submissions) community feedback** on LTFP, which generally asked for lower rate rises and reduced expenditure
- Opportunities for rate changes to **better respond to growing community expectations and population changes**
- Need for **further broad-based engagement** on rate rise options

Council voted in August 2023 to commence engagement on four rate rise options



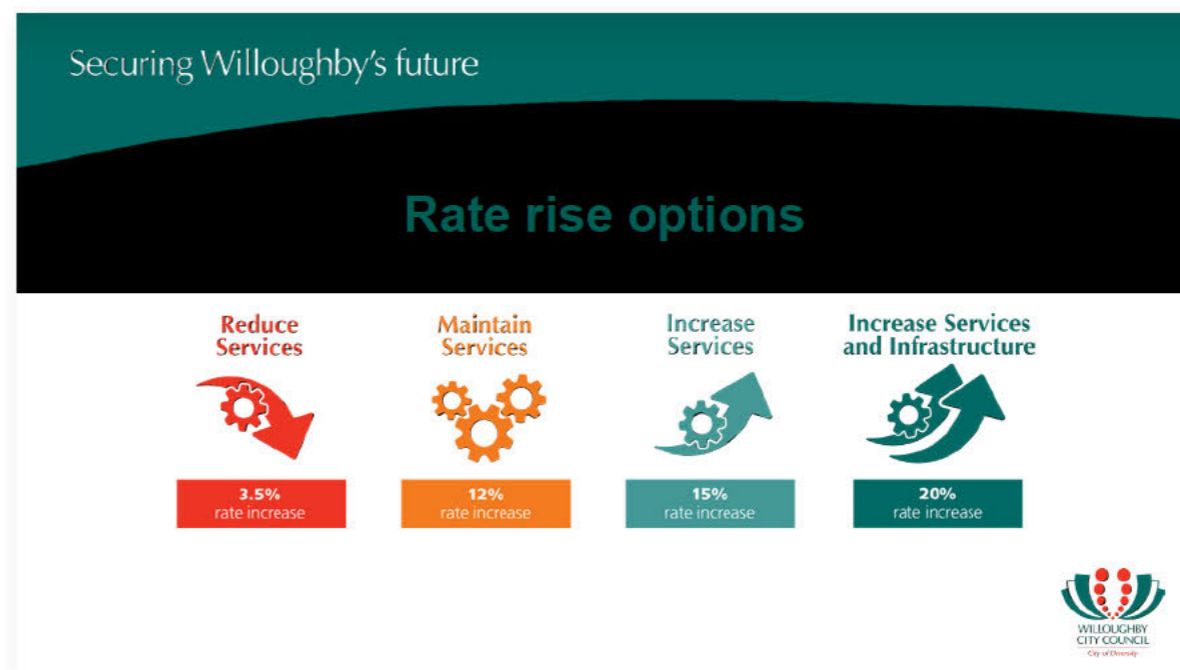
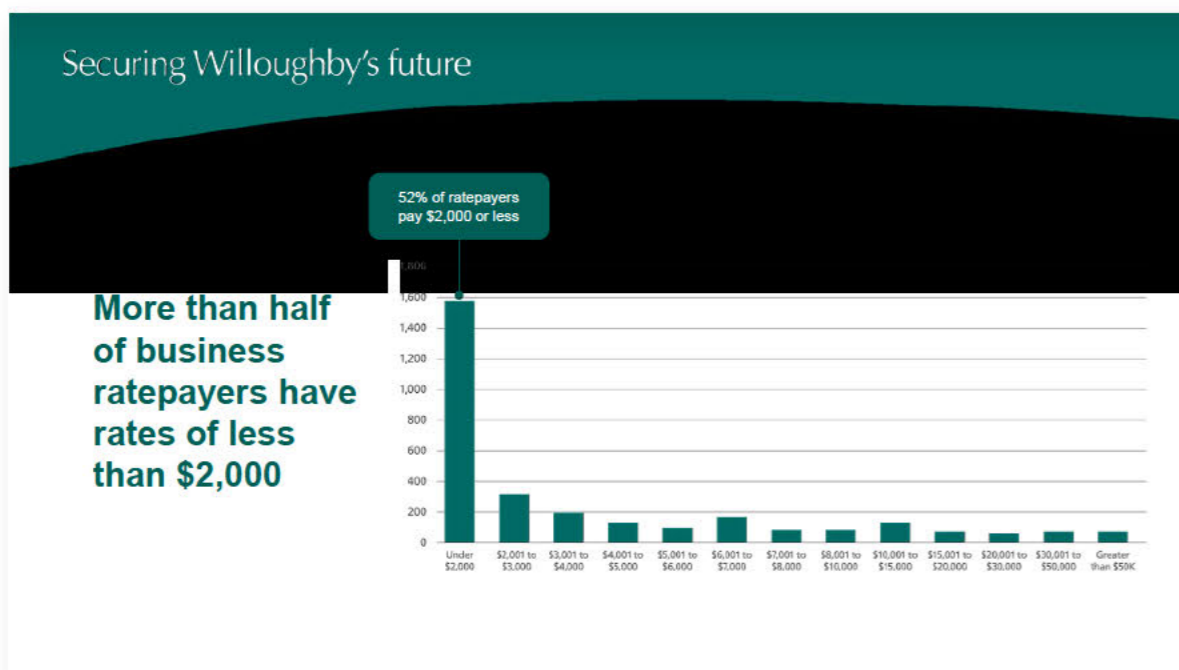
Securing Willoughby's future

### About the four rate rise options

Debra Just, CEO



# Webinar presentation - Slides



## Securing Willoughby's future

### Options comparison

Reduce Services Option 1   3.5% Increase	Maintain Services Option 2   12% Increase	Increase Services Option 3   15% Increase	Increase Services + Infrastructure Option 4   20% Increase
Community Infrastructure \$0.0m	Community Infrastructure \$0.0m	Community Infrastructure \$0.0m	Community Infrastructure \$2.5m
Maintenance \$0.0m	Maintenance \$0.0m	Maintenance \$2.0m	Maintenance \$2.0m
SRV 0%	Increase 12% (3.5% rate peg + 8.5% SRV)	Increase 15% (3.5% rate peg + 11.5% SRV)	Increase 20% (3.5% rate peg + 16.5% SRV)
Ratio / Margin 0%	Ratio / Margin 2.59%	Ratio / Margin 2.27%	Ratio / Margin 2.40%
Cost Cutting \$2.8m	Cost Cutting \$1.0m	Cost Cutting \$1.0m	Cost Cutting \$1.0m
Revenue \$0.5m	Revenue \$1.0m	Revenue \$1.0m	Revenue \$1.0m
Rate Peg 3.5%	Rate Peg + SRV	Rate Peg + SRV	Rate Peg + SRV

## Securing Willoughby's future

## Reduce Services



**OPTION 1: Reduce Services**  
3.5% rate increase

Make significant cuts to services to balance Council's budget

### Key outcomes

Community Infrastructure \$2.5m
Maintenance \$0.0m
SRV 0%
Ratio / Margin 0%
Cost Cutting \$2.8m
Revenue \$0.5m
Rate Peg 3.5%

### Operating results (\$m)



Four deficits and five surpluses over nine years

\$140,000 average deficit

## Securing Willoughby's future

## Reduce Services: Consequences



**OPTION 1: Reduce Services**  
3.5% rate increase

### Pros

Rates will stay low and in line with NSW Government rate peg

Council will try to match income with expenditure, while noting it will be in deficit in four out of the nine years between 2024/25 and 2032/33

### Cons

Cuts to services which could involve reduced maintenance, reducing or cutting services to the community, and putting at risk the timely renewal of assets

No accumulation of funds for increased community services or projects, to manage financial shocks, extreme weather events or for future growth

Future rate increases above the rate peg are highly likely

Reduced staff attraction and retention

## Securing Willoughby's future

## Reduce Services: Average rate impacts



**OPTION 1: Reduce Services**  
3.5% rate increase

	Residential		Business (General)		Business (CBD)	
	Yearly	Weekly	Yearly	Weekly	Yearly	Weekly
Existing average rate in 2023/24	\$1,088	\$20.92	\$6,524	\$125.46	\$7,803	\$150.05
Average rate increase due to rate peg (3.5%)	\$38	\$0.73	\$228	\$4.38	\$273	\$5.25
Average rate increase due to SRV (0.0%)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total Average Rate Increase (3.5%)</b>	<b>\$38</b>	<b>\$0.73</b>	<b>\$228</b>	<b>\$4.38</b>	<b>\$273</b>	<b>\$5.25</b>



# Webinar presentation - Slides

## Securing Willoughby's future Maintain Services

**OPTION 2: Maintain Services**  
12% rate increase

**Maintain highly valued services by increasing rates to match inflation**

**Key outcomes**

- Community Infrastructure \$0.0m
- Maintenance \$2.0m
- Increase 12% (3.5% rate peg + 8.5% SRV)
- Ratio / Margin 2.50%
- Cost Cutting \$1.0m
- Revenue \$1.0m
- Rate Peg + SRV

**Operating results (\$m)**

**Nine surpluses over nine years**

**\$5.22m average surplus**

## Securing Willoughby's future Maintain Services: Consequences

**OPTION 2: Maintain Services**  
12% rate increase

**Pros**

- Catch-up from 12.1% inflation increase losses over the last two years
- Continue to deliver highly valued services to the community
- Delivers surpluses all nine years between 2024/25 and 2032/33, with an average annual surpluses of \$5.22m. These surpluses, subject to future financial shocks, could be re-invested in community services and projects
- Increase responsiveness to resident and business enquiries
- Increase Council's ability to absorb future financial, extreme weather and growth shocks
- Provide capacity to maintain and renew community assets
- Provide a stable work environment for staff attraction and retention.

**Cons**

- Rates will increase at a level higher than the NSW Government rate peg.

## Securing Willoughby's future Maintain Services: Average rate impacts

**OPTION 2: Maintain Services**  
12% rate increase

	Residential		Business (General)		Business (CBD)	
	Yearly	Weekly	Yearly	Weekly	Yearly	Weekly
Existing average rate in 2023/24	\$1,088	\$20.92	\$6,524	\$125.46	\$7,803	\$150.05
Average rate increase due to rate peg (3.5%)	\$38	\$0.73	\$220	\$4.38	\$273	\$5.25
Average rate increase due to SRV (8.5%)	\$92	\$1.76	\$555	\$10.67	\$663	\$12.75
<b>Total Average Rate Increase (12%)</b>	<b>\$130</b>	<b>\$2.50</b>	<b>\$783</b>	<b>\$15.05</b>	<b>\$936</b>	<b>\$18.00</b>

## Securing Willoughby's future Increase Services

**OPTION 3: Increase Services**  
15% rate increase

**Provide a noticeable uplift in public area maintenance**

**Key outcomes**

- Community Infrastructure \$0.0m
- Maintenance \$2.0m
- Increase 15% (3.5% rate peg + 11.5% SRV)
- Ratio / Margin 2.27%
- Cost Cutting \$1.0m
- Revenue \$1.0m
- Rate Peg + SRV

**Operating results (\$m)**

**Nine surpluses over nine years**

**\$4.77m average surplus**

## Securing Willoughby's future

### Increase Services: Consequences



**OPTION 3: Increase Services**  
15% rate increase

#### Pros

Delivers surpluses in all nine years between 2024/25 and 2032/33, with an average annual surplus of \$4.77m. These surpluses, subject to future financial shocks, could be re-invested in community services and projects

Allocate an additional \$2 million a year to allow Council to invest in additional cleaning, care and beautification projects in parks, cycling and walking routes and town centres, and planting programs to boost Council's urban tree canopy.

All other benefits from Maintain Services

#### Cons

Rates will increase at a level higher than the NSW Government rate peg.

## Securing Willoughby's future

### Increase Services: Average rate impacts



**OPTION 3: Increase Services**  
15% rate increase

	Residential		Business (General)		Business (CBD)	
	Yearly	Weekly	Yearly	Weekly	Yearly	Weekly
Existing average rate in 2023/24	\$1,088	\$20.92	\$6,524	\$125.46	\$7,803	\$150.05
Average rate increase due to rate peg (3.5%)	\$38	\$0.73	\$228	\$4.38	\$273	\$5.25
Average rate increase due to SRV (11.5%)	\$125	\$2.40	\$750	\$14.42	\$897	\$17.25
<b>Total Average Rate Increase (15%)</b>	<b>\$163</b>	<b>\$3.13</b>	<b>\$979</b>	<b>\$18.82</b>	<b>\$1,170</b>	<b>\$22.50</b>

## Securing Willoughby's future

### Increase Services + Infrastructure

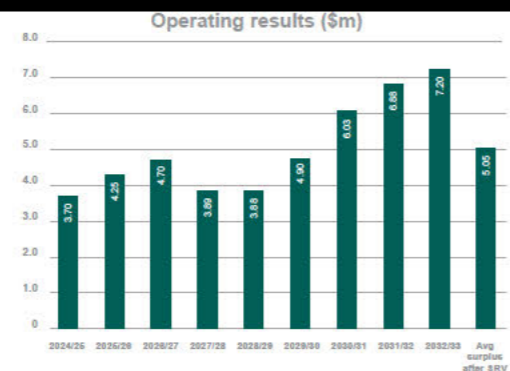


**OPTION 4: Increase Services and Infrastructure**  
20% rate increase

Accelerate the upgrade of community infrastructure

#### Key outcomes

Community Infrastructure	\$2.5m
Maintenance	\$2.0m
Increase 20% (3.5% rate peg + 16.5% SRV)	
Ratio / Margin	2.40%
Cost Cutting	\$1.0m
Revenue	\$1.0m
Rate Peg + SRV	



Nine surpluses over nine years

\$5.05m average surplus

## Securing Willoughby's future

### Increase Services + Infrastructure: Consequences



**OPTION 4: Increase Services and Infrastructure**  
20% rate increase

#### Pros

Delivers surpluses in all nine years between 2024/25 and 2032/33, with an average annual surpluses of \$5.05m. These surpluses, subject to future financial shocks, could be re-invested in community services and projects

Allocate an additional \$2.5 million a year to accelerate community infrastructure. This could include funding, for example, to upgrade sports pavilions, cycling and walking paths and parks and playground facilities, complete the Dougherty Centre upgrade or close the funding gap needed to build the Gore Hill Indoor Sports Centre

All other benefits from Increase Services.

#### Cons

Rates will increase at a level higher than the NSW Government rate peg.

## Securing Willoughby's future Increase Services + Infrastructure: Average rate impacts



### OPTION 4: Increase Services and Infrastructure 20% rate increase

	Residential		Business (General)		Business (CBD)	
	Yearly	Weekly	Yearly	Weekly	Yearly	Weekly
Existing average rate in 2023/24	\$1,088	\$20.92	\$6,524	\$125.46	\$7,803	\$150.05
Average rate increase due to rate peg (3.5%)	\$38	\$0.73	\$228	\$4.38	\$273	\$5.25
Average rate increase due to SRV (16.5%)	\$180	\$3.46	\$1,077	\$20.70	\$1,288	\$24.76
<b>Total Average Rate Increase (20%)</b>	<b>\$218</b>	<b>\$4.19</b>	<b>\$1,305</b>	<b>\$25.09</b>	<b>\$1,561</b>	<b>\$30.01</b>

## Securing Willoughby's future

### Options comparison

	Reduce Services Option 1   3.5% Increase	Maintain Services Option 2   12% Increase	Increase Services Option 3   15% Increase	Increase Services + Infrastructure Option 4   20% Increase
Community Infrastructure	\$0.0m	\$0.0m	\$0.0m	\$2.5m
Maintenance	\$0.0m	\$0.0m	\$2.0m	\$2.0m
SRV	0%	Increase 12% (3.5% rate peg + 8.5% SRV)	Increase 15% (3.5% rate peg + 11.5% SRV)	Increase 20% (3.5% rate peg + 16.5% SRV)
Ratio / Margin	0%	Ratio / Margin 2.59%	Ratio / Margin 2.27%	Ratio / Margin 2.40%
Cost Cutting	\$2.0m	\$1.0m	\$1.0m	\$1.0m
Revenue	\$0.5m	\$1.0m	\$1.0m	\$1.0m
Rate Peg	3.5%	Rate Peg + SRV	Rate Peg + SRV	Rate Peg + SRV

## Securing Willoughby's future

### Alternatives not supported



#### Raising Debt

- The equivalent of a household taking out a personal loan to pay for weekly groceries
- Does not address the underlying business fundamentals and, with extra interest and principal repayments, is not a sustainable option.



#### Selling Assets

- Asset sales don't give an ongoing source of funds for day-to-day operations (such as paying salaries, bills and invoices) and services.



#### Government Grants

- Not a stable form of income
- Usually tied to building new assets, which creates an ongoing maintenance burden
- Usually tied to a specific purpose and as such do not assist Council in closing the gap between costs and revenue.



#### Using internal reserves

- Removes funds from important infrastructure upgrade projects
- A short-term 'sugar hit' which doesn't address the underlying issues.

## Securing Willoughby's future

### Open mic and online Q&A



# Webinar presentation - Slides

Securing Willoughby's future

**Next steps**  
**Mark Skelsey**  
 Special Rate Variation Project Manager



Securing Willoughby's future IPART

**Role of Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in rate rise process**


*IPART is responsible for assessing and determining Council applications for Special Rate Variations.*

**IPART considers:**

- Community awareness
- Community capacity and willingness to pay
- Productivity and cost containment strategies

Securing Willoughby's future Process and Timeline

**Process and timeline**




**Timeline:**

- May:** Public Exhibition of Draft Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) and Operational Plan
- Jun:** Council meeting adopted LTFP and Operational Plan
- Aug:** Council resolves commence community engagement on four rate rise options
- 25 Sep:** Engagement commences on options
- 5 Nov:** Engagement concludes
- 27 Nov:** Council to decide on rate rise option
- Feb:** Council may submit application for SRV to IPART
- Feb - May:** IPART to exhibit application and then make decision
- 1 Jul:** Any rate rises come into effect

*Initial Public Visibility / Consultation of SRV options*

*Consultation on four rate rise options*



Securing Willoughby's future Engagement Process

**Engagement Process**

**Extensive awareness-raising campaign, including:**

- Letter and brochure sent to 30,000 landowners
- Around 20,000 emails to various databases
- 42 pavement stickers placed in ten local centres
- Flyers and posters in Council venues and noticeboards
- Translated text in brochure, letter and website



# Webinar presentation - Slides


Securing Willoughby's future Engagement Process

## Engagement Process

Ten engagement events being held, including nine in-person events from 17 October to 2 November

Council also conducting randomly-selected survey  
Go to [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au) to:

- Learn more about the options
- Respond to online survey
- Use online calculator to calculate rates increase

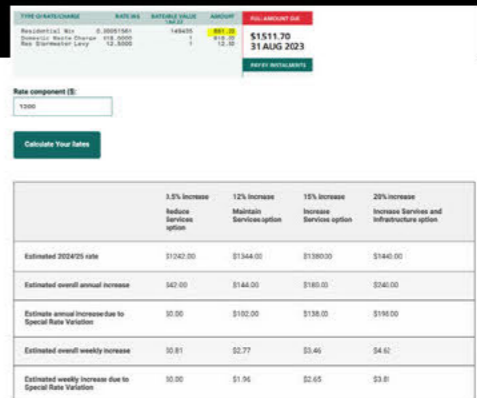


Securing Willoughby's future Engagement process

## Online calculator

If you have your rates notice available, calculate how your rates could increase under each of the four options.

Calculator direct link is:  
[www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Campaigns/Rate-rise-option-calculator](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au/Campaigns/Rate-rise-option-calculator)




	3.5% increase Reduce Services option	12% increase Multiple Services option	15% increase Increase Services option	20% increase Increase Services and infrastructure option
Estimated 2024/25 rate	\$1242.00	\$1344.00	\$1380.00	\$1440.00
Estimated overall annual increase	\$43.00	\$144.00	\$180.00	\$240.00
Estimated annual increase due to Special Rate Valuation	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$130.00	\$180.00
Estimated overall weekly increase	\$0.81	\$2.77	\$3.45	\$4.62
Estimated weekly increase due to Special Rate Valuation	\$0.00	\$1.96	\$2.65	\$3.81

Securing Willoughby's future

## Closing remarks from Mayor

Tanya Taylor, Mayor



# Community noticeboard poster

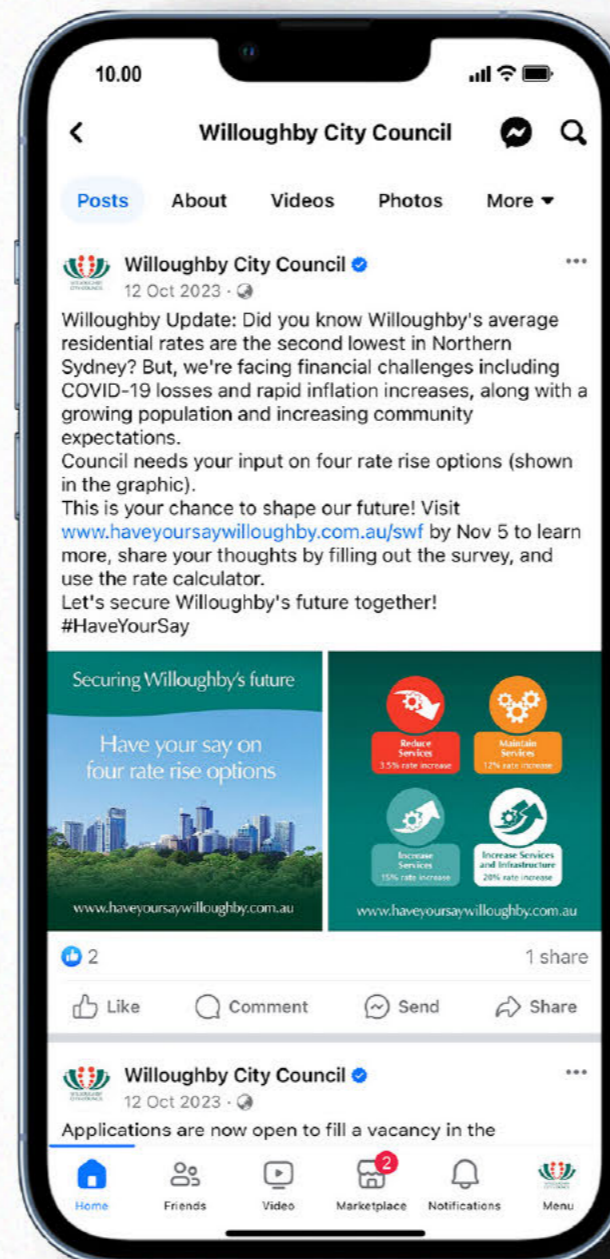


Poster in Castle Cove community facility noticeboard

# Social media tiles - Instagram



# Social media tiles - Facebook





# Pavement stickers



Round pavement sticker



Rectangular pavement sticker



# DL Flyer



**WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL**  
City of Diversity

## Securing Willoughby's future: have your say

From 25 September to 5 November 2023, Council is seeking feedback on four rate rise options to assist its financial sustainability and guide future funding priorities.

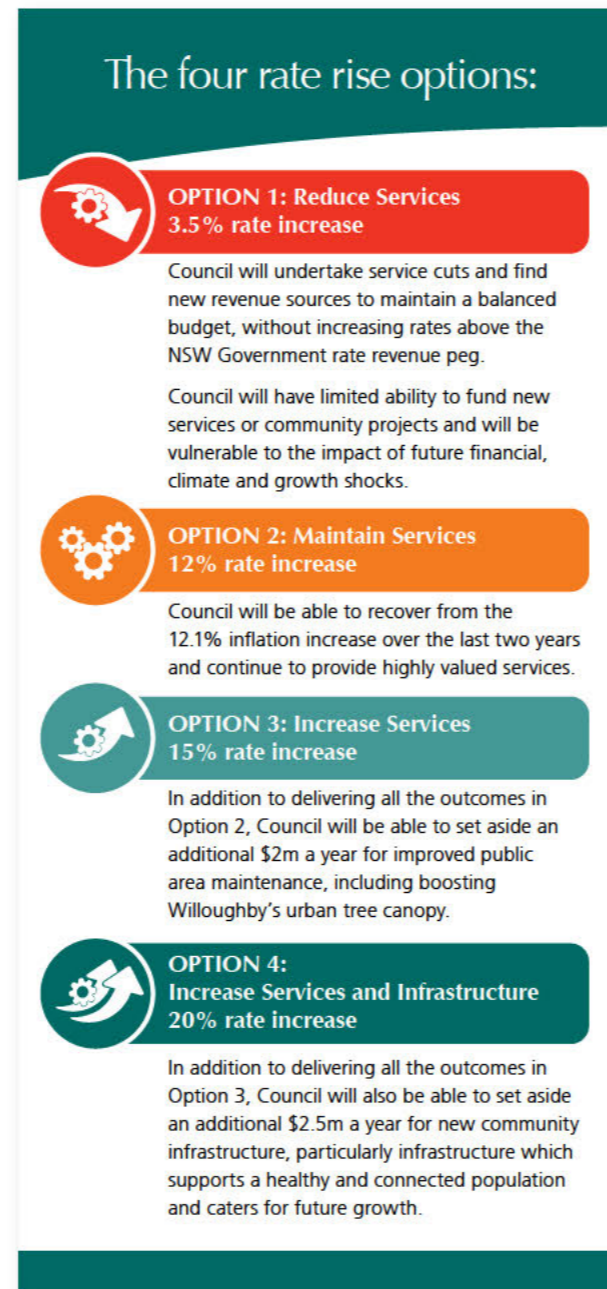
One of the options would involve Council undertaking service cuts, while increasing rates from 1 July 2024 in line with an assumed 3.5% NSW Government rate revenue peg.

The other three options would involve Council applying for special rate increases between 12-20% to either maintain or increase services and infrastructure.

To find out more and have your say go to [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

[www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

Front



### The four rate rise options:

**OPTION 1: Reduce Services**  
3.5% rate increase

Council will undertake service cuts and find new revenue sources to maintain a balanced budget, without increasing rates above the NSW Government rate revenue peg.

Council will have limited ability to fund new services or community projects and will be vulnerable to the impact of future financial, climate and growth shocks.

**OPTION 2: Maintain Services**  
12% rate increase

Council will be able to recover from the 12.1% inflation increase over the last two years and continue to provide highly valued services.

**OPTION 3: Increase Services**  
15% rate increase

In addition to delivering all the outcomes in Option 2, Council will be able to set aside an additional \$2m a year for improved public area maintenance, including boosting Willoughby's urban tree canopy.

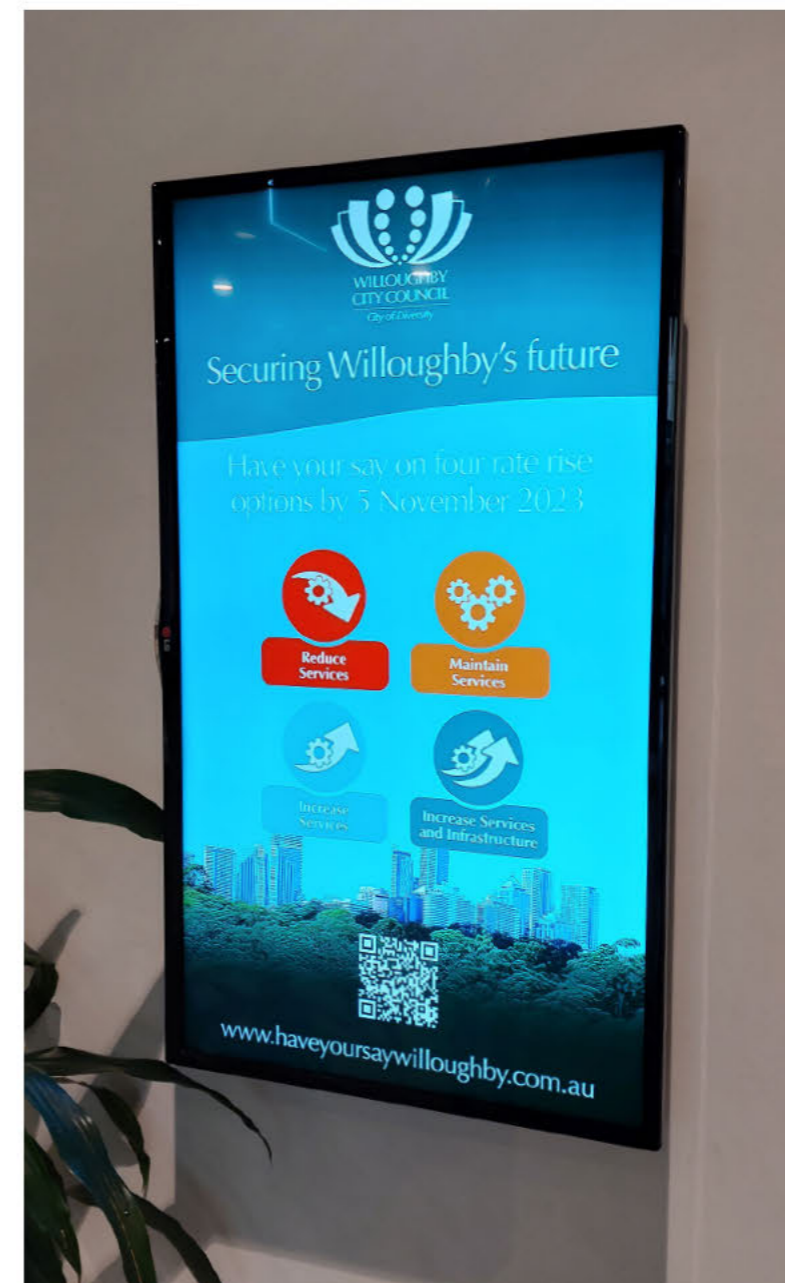
**OPTION 4: Increase Services and Infrastructure**  
20% rate increase

In addition to delivering all the outcomes in Option 3, Council will also be able to set aside an additional \$2.5m a year for new community infrastructure, particularly infrastructure which supports a healthy and connected population and caters for future growth.

Back



# Digital signage



Digital advertising at entrance to Council head office

# Email signature

**Mark Skelsey** - SRV Project Manager

**WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL**

PO Box 57 Chatswood NSW 2057

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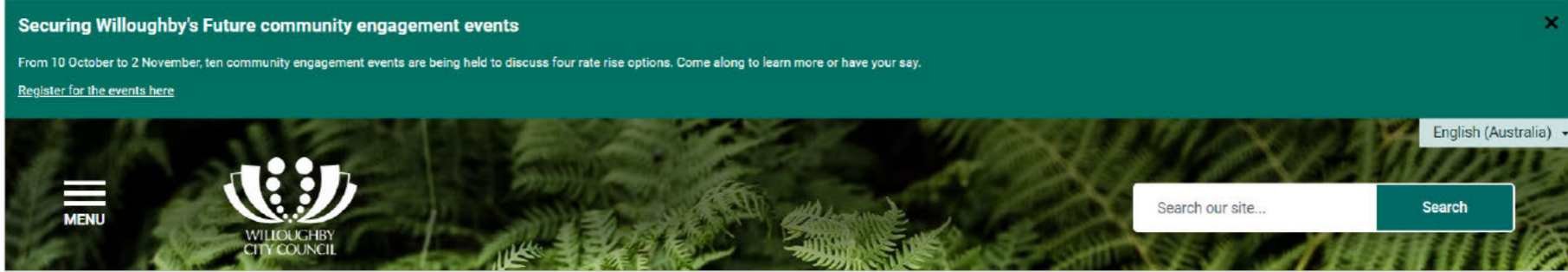
[willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://willoughby.nsw.gov.au) | [visitchatswood.com.au](http://visitchatswood.com.au) | [theconcourse.com.au](http://theconcourse.com.au)

Council acknowledges the Gamaragal People as the Traditional Owners of these lands. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Securing Willoughby's future: Have your say  
on four rate rise options **before 5 November**



# Council website home page banners



Top banner



Bottom banner

# Vision Times WeChat advertising banner

**為Willoughby的未來護航，我們需要你！**

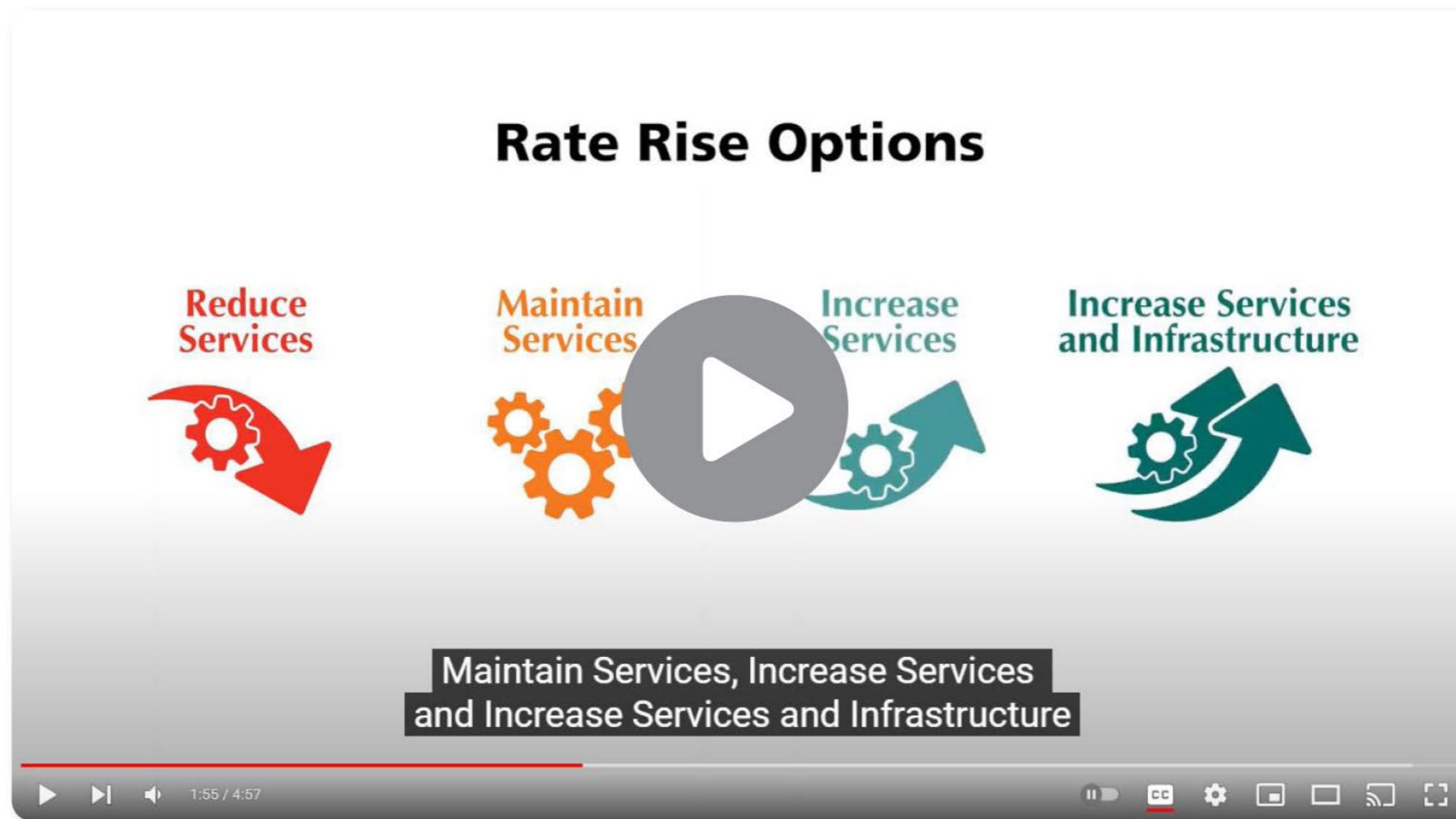


**參加中文講座  
了解四種市政費的漲價方案**



WILLOUGHBY  
CITY COUNCIL  
*City of Diversity*

# Promotional video



Click above image to view video. Can also be viewed via this link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwhlkuXjgBM&t=2s>

# Newspaper Advertisement

Willoughby City Council *City of Diversity*

## LIVING LOCAL





**MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR**



**IN FOCUS: SECURING WILLOUGHBY'S FUTURE**

From 25 September to 5 November 2023, Council is seeking feedback on four rate rise options to assist its financial sustainability and guide future funding priorities.

One of the options would involve Council undertaking service reductions, while increasing rates from 1 July 2024 in line with an assumed 3.5% NSW Government rate revenue peg. The other three options would involve Council applying for rate increases between 12-20% to either maintain or increase services and infrastructure.

Willoughby has among the lowest average residential rates in Northern Sydney. Council is encouraging community members to have their say about the options to help secure Willoughby's future.



**BEAT THE HEAT**

As the summer season approaches, we are committed to ensuring your safety and comfort during the inevitable heat. Our "Beat the Heat" resources serve as a comprehensive guide to help you navigate the challenges of high temperatures.

To find valuable tips for staying cool, whether it's seeking solace in our scenic parks or taking a refreshing dip in local swimming spots visit our Community health and safety page on [willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://willoughby.nsw.gov.au)

Watch our video on how to stay safe and prepare for an emergency like a heatwave.



**2023 REFERENDUM**

The Australian 2023 referendum is approaching and it's your chance to have your say. On Saturday October 14 all eligible citizens aged 18 years and over must vote by law.

Voting in a referendum is simple yet crucial. Enrolled voters will answer "yes" or "no" to a specific question, recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a Voice to Parliament.

Visit [aec.gov.au/referendums](http://aec.gov.au/referendums) for polling locations and open times, postal, remote and early voting options.

To enroll or update details, visit the Australian Electoral Commission website [aec.gov.au](http://aec.gov.au). Your voice matters, so cast your vote this October.

At our most recent meeting, Council reiterated its support for the 'Uluru Statement of the Heart' and committed to creating awareness in our community about the upcoming Voice to Parliament referendum. The motion supported building awareness in our community and providing venues in accordance with the Community Facilities Hire Policy in order to facilitate a fair and informed public debate on this issue. We also agreed to undertake community consultation on four rate rise options to secure Willoughby's future. The Council recognises potential rate rises come at a time when many community members are facing cost of living pressures. Council is doing everything possible to limit the impact of any rate rises, by continuing our existing work to cut unnecessary costs and find alternate revenue sources.

I encourage you to go to [haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au) to find out more and have your say between 25 September and 5 November 2023.

I look forward to working with the community to help secure Willoughby's future.

**Cr Tanya Taylor**  
Mayor, Willoughby City Council

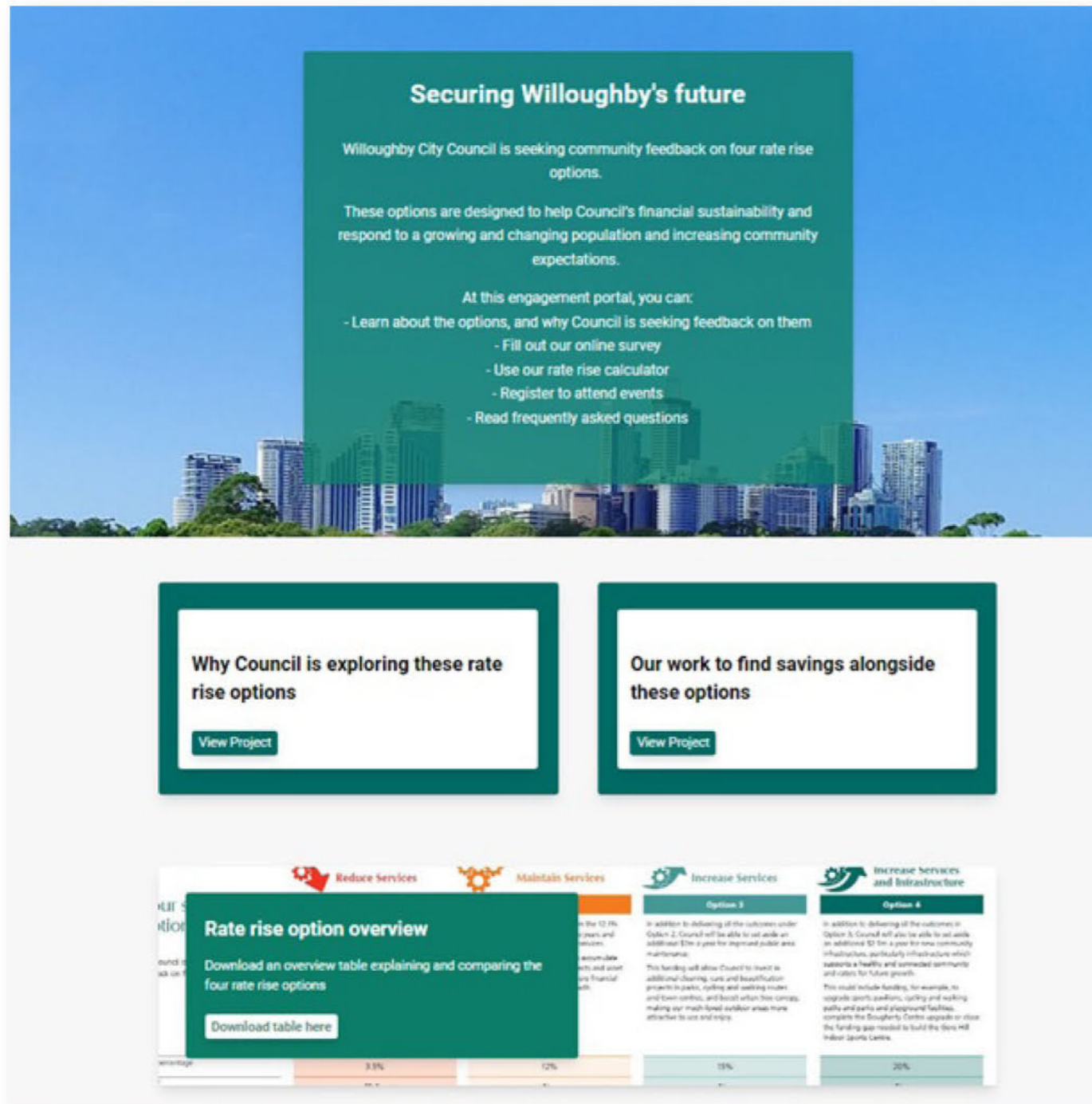



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Council *Living Local* advertisement mentioning rate rise options placed in North Shore Living (3 October 2023) and Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Post (1 October 2023)



# Engagement Portal



Portal was established at [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/swf](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/swf)