



Media Release

19 August 2019

UNDERSTANDING YOUR RATES

2019/2020 Annual Rates Notices were issued at the end of July 2019 and since that time Council has received many enquiries regarding the perceived large rates rise and the new water infrastructure charge of \$77.00 per annum to part fund the new Tenterfield Water Treatment Facility.

In order to offer some understanding of the reasons, ratepayers and residents may not be aware that Local Government accountabilities have grown from roads, rates and rubbish to encompass 77 sub-programs:

No.	Accountability	No.	Accountability
1.	Strategic direction & planning	2.	Corporate relations and intergovernmental affairs
3.	Corporate planning & reporting	4.	Workforce planning
5.	Workforce culture	6.	Workforce performance
7.	Business process improvement	8.	Corporate communications
9.	Legal services	10.	Procurement & tendering
11.	Internal audit	12.	Business continuity and risk
13.	Disaster/emergency management	14.	Workplace health and safety
15.	Community services	16.	Tourism
17.	Culture, theatre and museum	18.	Library
19.	Community grants	20.	Sponsorship
21.	Community capacity building	22.	Road safety & Traffic Committee
23.	Community & corporate buildings	24.	Community buildings hire
25.	Community events	26.	Community engagement
27.	Media, branding, marketing & communications	28.	Social media and web
29.	Customer services	30.	Sport and recreation (passive and active)
31.	Aquatic	32.	Open space amenities
33.	Saleyards	34.	Feral pests
35.	Tree management	36.	Street and public domain lighting
37.	Place (public domain)	38.	Information and knowledge management
39.	Information technology and communications	40.	Land and mapping information
41.	Business systems/solutions technology	42.	Financial planning and management
43.	Human resources	44.	Workers compensation
45.	Recruitment and selection	46.	Depot, store, fleet, plant and equipment
47.	Assets and project planning	48.	Business support
49.	Civic	50.	Governance
51.	Land use planning	52.	Urban design
53.	Land use data management and mapping	54.	Land use reporting

No.	Accountability	No.	Accountability
55.	Heritage	56.	Regulating premises
57.	Assessment	58.	Built form compliance
59.	Environmental regulation	60.	Public health
61.	Noxious plants	62.	Roads and footpath enforcement
63.	Illegal dumping	64.	Domestic animal management
65.	Transport (roads, bridges and airstrip)	66.	Water supply, filtering and distribution
67.	Sewer	68.	Waste management and recycling
69.	Economic development	70.	Storm water
71.	Natural waterways	72.	Property investments and divestments
73.	Private works	74.	Cemeteries
75.	Quarries	76.	Cycleways, pedestrian paths and footpaths
77.	Crown Lands (including Native Title)		

Most of this list covers legislated responsibilities, meaning Council has no choice. Others are things that if not managed, the cost escalation from risks incurred would far outweigh the perceived savings. There are very few "nice to haves" in this list.

Due to "cost shifting" by the NSW State Government to Local Government, the list of accountabilities continues to grow, one recent example being the recent handing over of responsibility for management of Crown Lands from the State to Local Government which has huge ramifications both in terms of risk and finance.

Despite the increase in rates of 2.7% (determined by the Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal or IPART), it should be noted that Council has by far the lowest level of rates (not including fees and charges) of all Councils in the region.

Other charges have increased by more than this to ensure that the waste, water and sewer funds are sustainable into the future. While these charges may be higher than other Councils in our region, given our smaller population, this is to be expected.

The new \$77.00 Water Treatment Facility Infrastructure charge (line S14 on your rates notice) is a cost which has been spread over all ratepayers in the Shire to part fund the cost of a new \$9.350 million water treatment facility, the current facility being built in the 1950's and very quickly reaching the end of it's useful life.

In this regard, Mayor Peter Petty and Chief Executive Terry Dodds are working very closely with the NSW Government to fund the forecast shortfall of around \$7 million, a cost which Council is aware, our ratepayers would be unable to meet.

Council understands the concerns that any additional cost imposts may have on ratepayers, especially pensioners, business and rural land holders given these uncertain and dry times. A range of options are available to assist by way of Pensioner Concession rebates, flexible repayment plans, contacts for financial counselling and interest relief under Council's Hardship Policy.

Council complies with the Debt Management & Hardship Guidelines issued by the Office of Local Government in 2018 to outline best practice approaches for Councils to better manage ratepayer debt and respond to genuine hardship.

Council's draft Operational Plan and Revenue Policy (containing all rating and fees and charges) was advertised for public consultation/submissions during April and May 2019 in the local papers as well as in Council's fortnightly newsletter "Your Local News" and on our website. Following this consultation period, the 2019/2020 Operational Plan was adopted by Council in June 2019.

In addition, each month an update on each of the 77 accountabilities is provided to Council (the Monthly Operational Report) and placed on Council's website for public scrutiny.

In the past 2 years, Council has been extremely proactive in seeking additional non-ratepayer funding for various matters, in particular bridge and road upgrades, drought and other community infrastructure. It should be noted that the income generated from these grants is significantly more than Council's own source revenue from rates, fees and charges in any one year.

Our ratepayers could not afford to pay for the upgrades to our ageing infrastructure that are necessary to keep our Shire communities healthy, connected and safe.

To assist ratepayers with waste disposal costs, each rates assessment has been allocated 3 waste vouchers for this financial year (1 July 2019 to 31 July 2020). Please note that vouchers will not be replaced if lost or destroyed and regular audits of redeemed vouchers are performed.

Payment of the 1st instalment of rates is due for payment on 31 August 2019.

Should you wish to discuss an outstanding account, make a suitable repayment arrangement or have not received your annual rates notice, please contact Council's Rates Department on (02) 6736 6000.

ENDS