



QUALITY NATURE - QUALITY HERITAGE - QUALITY LIFESTYLE

ADDENDUM ITEMS FOR ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 26 OCTOBER 2022

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Clause 7(1) of Council's Code of Meeting Practice that an **Ordinary Council Meeting** will be held in the Koreelah Room, Council Administration Building, Tenterfield, on **Wednesday 26 October 2022** commencing at **9:30 am**.

Daryl Buckingham
Chief Executive

AGENDA

10. URGENT, LATE & SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- (ITEM GOV92/22) TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL - CONSIDERATION OF PROVIDING CREDIT / CREDITS TO ASSESSMENTS / RATEPAYERS ARISING FROM APPLICATION OF WATER INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGE..... 2
- (ITEM GOV93/22) NOTIFICATION TO IPART OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR A SPECIAL RATE VARIATION..... 7

Department:	Office of the Chief Corporate Officer
Submitted by:	Manager Finance & Technology
Reference:	ITEM GOV92/22
Subject:	TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL - CONSIDERATION OF PROVIDING CREDIT / CREDITS TO ASSESSMENTS / RATEPAYERS ARISING FROM APPLICATION OF WATER INFRASTRUCTURE CHARGE.

LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK	
CSP Goal:	Leadership - Council is a transparent, financially-sustainable and high-performing organisation, delivering valued services to the Community.
CSP Strategy:	Ensure the performance of Council as an organisation complies with all statutory Guidelines, supported by effective corporate management, sound integrated planning and open, transparent and informed decision making.
CSP Delivery Program	Collaborate and deliver resources with other organisations to ensure a variety of cost effective services across the service area.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to provide a credit/credits to the selected property assessments in the 2023/2024 budget for those ratepayers who have paid a water infrastructure charge originally levied for the purpose of part funding a loan required for the Tenterfield Water Treatment Plant and also charges levied on localities which did not form part of the previous written resolutions regarding the infrastructure charge.

The impact of this credit will be reflected in adoption of Operational Budget 2023/2024.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- 1. Note the review of water charging in relation to the NSW Local Government Act 1993 Section 502 levies for the past four years, acknowledging that the wording of this charge was specific in year one (2019/2020) and that the funding was not required for the intended purpose;**
- 2. Note the specifics of the application of the resolutions relating to water Charges under Section 502 in years (2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023) which have been impacted by lack of clarity due to phrasing of resolutions from year 2;**
- 3. Approve the inclusion of a credit to the value of \$77, in the operational budget FY 2023/2024 for assessments charged the water infrastructure charge of \$77.00 under resolution (101/19) as part of the Operational Plan adopted on 24 May 2019 and impacted the localities of Tenterfield, Urbenville and Jennings.**

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- 4. Approve the inclusion of credit to the value of \$77, in the operational budget FY 2023/2024 for assessments within Urbenville and Jennings localities in line with Council resolution (116/20) as part of the Operational Plan adopted on 24 June 2020.**
- 5. Approve the inclusion of credit to the value of \$77, in the operational budget FY 2023/2024 for assessments within Jennings locality in line with Council resolution (120/21) as part of the Operational Plan adopted on 31 May 2021.**
- 6. Approve the inclusion of credit to the value of \$77, in the operational budget FY 2023/2024 for assessments associated with Jennings locality in line with Council resolution (100/22) as part of the Operational Plan adopted on 25 May 2022.**
- 7. Approve the reflection of credit provided as a separate line item on the rate notice for assessments impacted issued in July 2023.**

BACKGROUND

The initial purpose for the water infrastructure charge was for constructing a new Water Treatment Plant in the Tenterfield Local Government Area in 2019 at a cost of approximately \$9.645 Million. Council secured a NSW State Government Grant of \$7 Million through the Safe and Secure Program. To fund the gap of remaining \$2.645 Million Council had intended to borrow from external banking institutions a long- term loan in line with Council Borrowing Policy over a 20 year period. At this time future funding, subsequently obtained for the project, was not available to Council.

To fund the servicing of this loan a Water Infrastructure Charge of \$77.00 was calculated to be added on assessments across the Shire with the intent that the service charge provided was for Tenterfield Shire as a Local Government Area not just the Tenterfield village locality.

REPORT:

Based on the above intention Council on 29 May 2019 resolved through resolution (101/19) as part of Operational Plan 2019/2020 that:

"In accordance with Section 502 of the Local Government Act 1993, makes, fixes and levies a Water Infrastructure Charge per assessment connected to the Tenterfield Water Treatment Plant of \$77 to part fund the loan associated with the new Water Treatment Plant".

The charge came into effect for the financial year commencing 2019/2020 and was charged to assessments in Tenterfield, Urbenville and Jennings connected to Council's Water Supply Network.

On 24 June 2020 as part of the adoption of Operational Plan 2020/2021 Council resolved through resolution (116/20) that:

"In accordance with Section 502 of the Local Government Act 1993, makes, fixes and levies a Water Infrastructure Charge per assessment connected to the Tenterfield Water Treatment Plant of \$77 to part fund infrastructure associated with Council's Water Network".

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The charge continued for the financial year commencing 2020/2021. It is important to note the difference between the two resolutions is the omission of the word loan associated and inclusion of Council's water network.

It is during the course of the financial year 2020/2021 that Council was advised by the Federal Government that it would fund the \$2.645 Million gap for the purpose of constructing a new Water Treatment Plant in Tenterfield.

This formal grant agreement came into effect on 09 October 2020. Due to this confirmation Council was not required to take a loan of \$2.645 Million.

Council continued to charge the \$77.00 to assessments in Tenterfield, Urbenville and Jennings connected to Council's Water Supply Network.

On 31 May 2021 as part of the adoption of Operational Plan 2021/2022 Council resolved through resolution (120/21) that:

"In accordance with Section 502 of the Local Government Act 1993, makes, fixes and levies a Water Infrastructure Charge per assessment connected to the Tenterfield and Urbenville Water Treatment Plants of \$77 to part fund infrastructure associated with Council's Water Network".

It is important to note that at this time the Urbenville Water Treatment Plant was included as part of the adoption.

Council continued to charge the \$77.00 to assessments in Tenterfield, Urbenville and Jennings connected to Council's Water Supply Network.

On 25 May 2022 as part of the adoption of Operational Plan 2022/2023 Council resolved through resolution (100/22) that:

"In accordance with Section 502 of the Local Government Act 1993, makes, fixes and levies a Water Infrastructure Charge per assessment connected to the Tenterfield and Urbenville Water Treatment Plants of \$77 to part fund infrastructure associated with Council's Water Network"

Council continued to charge the \$77.00 to assessment in Tenterfield, Urbenville and Jennings connected to Council's Water Supply Network.

Having investigated the specific charge and its application within the water fund it is clear that the wording of each resolution since adoption in May 2019 was not in line with the original intent to what the charge was levied for in year 1. Additionally the impact on assessments/ratepayers who were charged this fee despite not being part of the locality mentioned in resolutions in year 2, 3 and 4 has also been addressed.

From year two onwards after the formal agreement of grant funding by the Federal Government was finalised it was concluded by Council that this charge would be amended to the purpose of contributing to the funding of infrastructure associated with Council's water network.

The water fund is a separate Council fund and requires considerable financial investments to oversee the maintenance, asset renewal, asset upgrade and installation of new infrastructure to serve the Tenterfield Shire Local Government Area, whilst also

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being required to maintain an operating surplus to conduct an efficient and self-funding service to the Shire as a whole. The financial impact of providing the recommended credits will reduce revenue required for the provision of efficient water supply. Council will need to consider at the time of adopting the operational budget for financial year 2023/2024 the impact of this reduction and how to sustainably manage the water fund.

COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS:

1. Community Engagement / Communication (per engagement strategy)

Nil.

2. Policy and Regulation

In accordance with Section 502 of the Local Government Act 1993, Local Government (General) Regulation 2021.

3. Financial (Annual Budget & LTFP)

- Total Credits to be provided if recommendation adopted – approximately \$199,353.00.
- Council water revenue to be reduced by \$199,353.00 as part of Operational Budget 2023-2024.
- Assessment to be undertaken regarding Availability and Consumption Charge for the Operational Budget 2023-2024 and into the future.
- As at 30 June 2022 Water Infrastructure Network had a Gross Replacement cost of \$66.057 Million. It was identified that 20% of Council's water asset infrastructure is in extreme poor condition and requires urgent renewal or upgrading. This equates to approximately \$13.21 Million.
- The long-term financial plan for water fund over the next four years show an average net operating result of \$1.2 Million before grants and contribution for capital purpose which is significantly lower than the cost required to replace water infrastructure which are at high risk of failure.

4. Asset Management (AMS)

Lack of funding for upgrading plant and equipment, delay in project delivery and potential failures may result in impact on residents with service unavailability.

5. Workforce (WMS)

Nil.

6. Legal and Risk Management

Reduced operational revenue may result in a reduction in service level and asset maintenance and renewals, which may potentially lead to increase instances for New South Wales Health to impose boiled water alerts.

7. Performance Measures

A reduction in water revenue may result in an operating deficit for the water fund if no counter measures are introduced as part of adoption of Operational Budget 2023-2024.

8. Project Management

Nil.

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Kylie Smith
Chief Corporate Officer

Prepared by staff member:	Roy Jones
Approved/Reviewed by Manager:	Kylie Smith, Chief Corporate Officer
Department:	Office of the Chief Corporate Officer
Attachments:	There are no attachments for this report.

Department:	Office of the Chief Corporate Officer
Submitted by:	Manager Finance & Technology
Reference:	ITEM GOV93/22
Subject:	NOTIFICATION TO IPART OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR A SPECIAL RATE VARIATION.

LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

CSP Goal:	Leadership - LEAD 14 - Resources and advocacy of Council are aligned support the delivery of the community vision outlined in the Community Strategic Plan.
CSP Strategy:	Council is a financially sustainable organisation, delivering value services to the Community.
CSP Delivery Program	Ensure that financial sustainability and the community's capacity to pay inform adopted community service levels.

SUMMARY

This report recommends that Council proceed with commencement to notify IPART (Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal) of Council's intention to apply for a Section 508 A (Permanent) Special Rate Variation (SRV) for the Financial Year commencing 2023/2024 and 2024/2025.

The proposed Special Rate Variation comprises a permanent Special Rate Variation of 43% (including rate peg) in 2023/2024 and 43% (including rate peg) in 2024/2025, representing a cumulative increase of 104.49%.

The Special Rate Variation is to ensure council maintains and renews assets, maintains service levels to a satisfactory level and condition, ensures and improves financial sustainability and is all the more urgent in the current uncertain economic and environmental conditions, with significant investments required in Council's transport network.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- (1) Request the Chief Executive Officer notify the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of its intent to apply under section 508A of the Local Government Act 1993 for a Special Rate Variation of 43% (including the rate peg) in 2023/2024 and 43% (including the rate peg) in 2024/2025 to be a permanent increase retained within the rate base, for the purpose of maintaining current service levels, maintenance and renewal of assets and enhancing financial sustainability.**
- (2) Receive the report on Notification to IPART of Intent to Apply for a Special Rate Variation**
- (3) Receive the report on community engagement undertaken between April 2022 to September 2022 and its outcomes.**

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- (4) Receive a further report that will include a draft Application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) under section 508A of the Local Government Act 1993 for an increase to the ordinary rate income, on the confirmed percentage increase as resolved by Council as part of this meeting.**

BACKGROUND

Council recognises it must address its current financial sustainability and level of service to address community expectation. Over the last several years, and as recently as March 2022 as part of the quarterly budget review process Council resolved:

"(e) That a plan be developed to increase operational income and further reduce operational expenditure as per previous discussions and comments in Council Reports, may include a Special Rates Variation request with a view to returning Council's operating position to surplus." (resolution 103/22).

As at 30 June 2022 Council's Own Source Operating Revenue was 32.79% which is significantly below the Office of Local Government benchmark of greater than 60%. This indicates that Tenterfield Shire Council is highly dependent on external grants and contributions for operational purposes.

The current Council was elected in December 2021 and inducted in mid – January 2022 and initially conducted a community consultation process as part of the Community Strategic Plan in late January 2022, to understand community needs and expectations of Council. Following this, a second round of community consultation was held in April 2022 across the Shire, with attendance at these events higher than at previous consultations due to the inclusion of the Special Rate Variation scenario in the Long Term Financial Plan to address community expectations.

Council resolved through resolution (156/22) on 27 July 2022 to commence community engagement to support an application to IPART for a proposed Special Rate Variation comprising of a permanent increase of 43% (including rate peg) in 2023/24 and 43% (including rate peg) in 2024/25, representing a cumulative increase of 104.49% using the current rating structure to determine yield.

Community consultations and information sessions were held in September 2022 where Council requested community feedback and provided face to face meetings with executive staff to go through concerns and/or comments regarding the Special Rate Variation.

Additionally, several Councillor Workshops have been held between January 2022 and September 2022 discussing community feedback and the impact of Special Rate Variation on Council's financial sustainability and the impact on community.

The SRV proposed is focused on Council being able to fund asset maintenance and renewal.

The SRV timeframe proposed has been driven by the need to achieve an increase in revenue in a short period. This is to ensure that Council has sufficient cash to fund renewal and maintenance of its assets that have been under pressure due to natural

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disaster in recent years, and prolonged reduction in maintenance and renewal due to budget constraints. There are also cash management difficulties associated with grant expenses compared to the timing of the income and Council's lack of reserves. The extra financial burdens include, but are not limited to:

1. The rate peg for the 2023/24 financial year (4.2% for the FY 2023/24) which will not cover Council's exponential increase in operating expenditure due to high inflation primarily driven by economic conditions.
2. Additional audit and internal costs,
3. Rising emergency services levy costs,
4. Cost shifting proposed by State Government to Tenterfield Shire Council by transferring Rural Fire Service assets and associated depreciation to Council,
5. Increasing inflationary pressures, including but not limited to cost of materials, transport and contract cost, and
6. Real declining value of Financial Assistance Grants by the Commonwealth to Council.

REPORT:

The New South Wales Local Government Act 1993 requires Council to sustainably manage its assets, resources, and finances.

Council on 25 May 2022 adopted its ten year long term financial plan as part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (Resolution 98/22). The plan forecasts a 'Net Operating Result before Grants and Contributions provided for Capital purposes' deficit range between \$3.5M and \$5.7M in the general fund for the next ten years without a special rate variation.

With this in mind, and noting Council's current financial position, Council has little option but to increase its revenue or significantly reduce costs through service reductions to close the financial gap of continuing forecasted operational deficits. The community engagement undertaken through Councils CSP process has shown strong opposition to service reductions and a preference to see no increase or a decreased percentage increase in rates. In combination, these views result in a financially unsustainable Council. Even with additional income proposed, the current inflationary environment may make it difficult to achieve current service levels used to forecast the increase in income for the application.

This significant challenge is forecasted as a result of:

1. Upgraded core infrastructure assets for Council as a result of grant funded works (e.g. replacing timber bridges with concrete bridges, and widening and sealing of Mount Lindesay Road),
2. New and upgraded community assets (e.g. public toilets, playgrounds and community halls),
3. The increased cost of asset replacement,
4. Increasing cost of managing grants applications and acquittals, and
5. Increased costs due to meeting regulated requirements (e.g. audit costs, emergency services levy, and ongoing disaster recovery management).

For Council to address this type of operating result it has four options available to it. These are:

1. Reducing service levels,
2. Sell and/or dispose of assets that will reduce the associated on-going expenses,

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3. Increase income raised through rates, user fees and charges,
4. A combination of the above options.

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART) is responsible for setting the amount by which Council may increase its general income, which mainly comprises rate income. This increase is known as the rate peg.

Council's income base from rates is fixed. Any increase is limited to an annual 'rate peg' amount set by the State Government. The rate peg for 2022/23 is 0.7% which is much lower than obligated expense increases (e.g. award wage increases). The rate peg for 2023/2024 determined by IPART is 4.2% for Tenterfield Shire Council. In real terms, the cost to deliver services and maintain community assets to current service levels increases above the rate peg amount each year, compounding the impact on Council's financial position over a number of years leading to the need for additional income.

Councils are under constant pressure to deliver the same services for less which is an unsustainable model. This includes mandatory requirements and costs associated with it to function as a Local Government entity. Tenterfield Shire Council has very limited opportunity to materially increase own source revenue and as a result an increase in rates, combined with further operational efficiencies, is the most viable solution for a financially sustainable Council.

How much does Council need:

Based on current service levels, known asset data and Council's current estimated forecast operating result, the gap in the General Fund between what Council should be spending on assets, compared to current budgets is currently approximately \$4.5m per annum.

This deficit has the potential to be reduced by capital grant income that can be used to offset any operational works, but currently grant funds do not generally allow for undertaking operational works.

This value does not include any funds to address the backlog of works (approximately \$15 million, with the largest areas being roads and buildings).

Council applied for and received an SRV in 2013/14. This application made allowances for \$47 million+ of service level reductions and deferrals of renewals. As a result of this, adjusting service levels will adjust the value of increased income required, however based on current known data there is not enough capacity to cover the full amount through efficiency gains alone.

The Proposed Increase:

A Special Rate Variation (SRV) of 43% in FY 2023/2024 and a 43% Special Rate Variation in Financial Year 2024/2025, resulting in a compound (accumulative) impact of 104.49%.

This will result in an additional income of approximately \$2.081M in the financial year 2023/24 and a further \$2.976M in financial year 2024/25 providing an additional income from rates of \$5.057M over two years. This will be in addition to Council's current rate income of approximately \$4.8M per year.

Attachment -1) Proposed rate model outlining Average Rates per assessment. Please note this model is calculated based on unimproved land values with the 2019 base year.

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Council is due to receive the new unimproved land value in November -December 2022 which may alter the average rate calculation per category.

Overall, it is estimated that average residential rates will increase by \$5 per week over what they would under normal rate increase in 2023/2024. There will be a further average rise of \$8 per week in 2024/2025 compared to the normal rate increase.

Farmland rates are estimated to increase by an average of \$12 in the first SRV year, and a further \$18 per week in the second year. Business rates are estimated to increase by an average of \$7 per week in the first SRV year, with the second year expected to see a further average increase of further \$10 per week.

This additional income will be spent on the maintenance of Council assets. Based on the current information at hand the distribution of this additional income will be as follows;

75% of additional income – Roads, Transport, Stormwater and Drainage.

15% of additional income – Buildings Renewal and Maintenance

10% of additional income – Other assets (e.g. swimming pool, parks and open spaces)

With this, Council will ensure:

- Improved financial sustainability by reducing the General Fund operating deficit,
- Provide additional funding to meet asset renewal funding requirements,
- Improve Council current cash position (unrestricted cash),and
- Meet compliance obligations under the Local Government Act 1993 and other forms of legislation.

In addition to the above, Council has already commenced significant efficiency measures and reduction in operational expenses. This is reflected by Council currently undertaking organisational structural changes to align skills and qualifications of employees to better align with service delivery and organisational requirements. This includes redeployment and internal transfers of employees in consultation with employees, which has also reduced services in some areas.

Council has kept the concerns of ratepayers at the forefront of transparent decision making whilst balancing the challenging financial situation council currently faces and will face in the future. In March 2022, IPART allowed Council to conduct an Additional Special Variation for 2022/2023 of 1.8%. However Council on 27 April 2022 resolved not to proceed with the additional special rate variation of 1.8% for 2022/23 financial year (Resolution 81/22) allowed under IPART, considering that the community engagement had commenced through the IPR Process and flagged the need for the SRV for FY2023/2024 onwards.

Feedback from Community Engagement:

Overwhelmingly the people who engaged with Council through Community Engagement Information Sessions or through submissions were against a Special Rate Variation. The feedback related to how Council were in a position to consider a Special Rate Variation and concerns around the community's capacity to pay.

Many agreed that the road and infrastructure network needs greater maintenance and renewal, however, as demonstrated in the Customer Satisfaction Survey the community regards 'soft services' such as Cinema, Museum, Library, Park, Playgrounds and Cemeteries very highly and do not want a reduction in these services.

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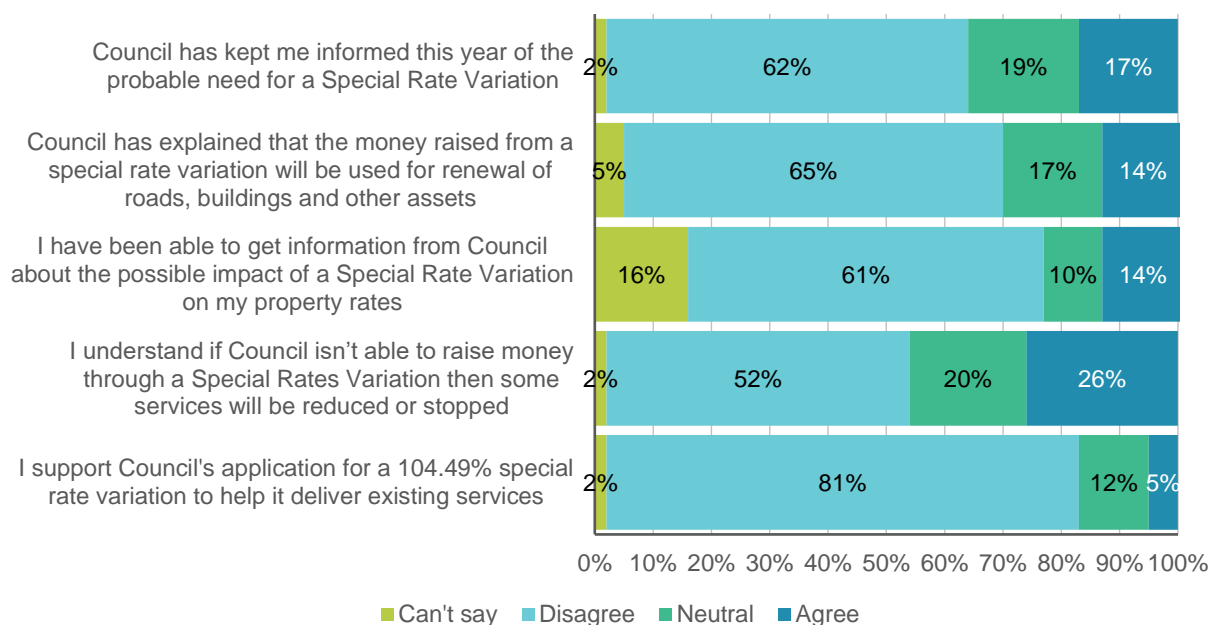
Attachment 2) Tenterfield Shire Council 2022 Community Engagement Report.

Customer Satisfaction Survey:

As part of Council's biennial Community Satisfaction Survey 2022 undertaken between 7 August 2022 and 19 August 2022, 300 residents were surveyed on the requirement for a Special Rate Variation. The following results indicated that the majority of those surveyed did not support a Special Rate Variation.

E2. AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH SPECIAL RATES VARIATION STATEMENTS

BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS 2022 (N=300)



The Special Rate Variation was opposed by 81% of residents surveyed, while 5% supported it. 26% of residents surveyed agreed that without the Special Rate Variation, some Council services will need to be reduced or removed.

Tenterfield Shire Council Rate Payers Capacity to Pay

Council engaged an independent firm Morrison Low to undertake a Capacity to Pay assessment to understand the potential impact on the community if the SRV was accepted, to ensure Council can maintain existing service levels into the future. The report provides an analysis and evaluation of relative wealth and financial capacity; and looks at the financial vulnerability and exposure of different community groups within the local government area.

Attachment -3) Tenterfield Shire Council – Capacity to Pay Report prepared by Morrison Low Consultants.

Key Highlights of the report:

- Tenterfield Shire Local Government Area has some of the lowest rates amongst NSW large rural Councils. The average residential rate is in the bottom five of average residential rates for all NSW large rural Council's.
- Council's total rates revenue as a percentage of total operating expenditure, for the LGA is only 16%, well below most comparable Councils. This is a strong

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indication that Council's rates are below the level required to service the community.

- Tenterfield Shire Council has a relatively low proportion of outstanding rates at 4.4% (2021) and 4.0% (2022), ranking 5th best amongst all large rural councils compared to Office of Local Government benchmark of 10%. This provides a strong indicator of both capacity and willingness to pay.
- High proportion of fully owned homes (50%) relative to NSW regional averages, and relative low values when it comes to monthly mortgage repayment.
- However, Tenterfield Shire Local Government Area experiences significant levels of disadvantage. This is demonstrated through indicators such as equivalised household income, which measures the economic resources available to a standardised household (77% of the LGA within the lowest two quartiles) and SEIFA (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas) index, which rank the LGA in the 11th percentiles when measuring socio-economic disadvantages and advantage. This means that 11% of Australia's suburb have a SEIFA index lower than this are (more disadvantaged), while 89% are higher. Individuals in social housing are unlikely to be impacted by a change in rates.

Council acknowledges the disadvantage within the community when bringing rates revenue up to levels required to fund our services similar to other large rural councils. Council proactively monitors its outstanding rates and will continue to proactively review its hardship policy to support the needs of the community.

COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS:**1. Community Engagement / Communication (per engagement strategy)**

Initial Community Engagement took place in January 2022, as part of the Community Strategic Plan process.

Community Engagement regarding SRV took place in April 2022 across Shire, with the long term financial plan and Delivery program established.

Council commenced engagement on a Special Rate Variation (SRV) of 43% in FY 2023/2024 and a 43% Special Rate Variation in Financial Year 2024/2025, resulting in a compound (accumulative) impact of 104.49%, in September 2022.

In this period Council conducted Special Rate Variation specific community engagement sessions, in the format of drop in sessions in September 2022 and community sessions.

A copy of Councils 2022 Community Engagement Report is attached – Attachment 2

2. Policy and Regulation

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2005
- NSW Local Government State Award
- An SRV requires compliance with S508(a) of the Local Government Act 1993 and associated guidelines and regulations.
- Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) processes

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3. Financial (Annual Budget & LTFP)

Nil at the time of the writing of the report, however significant work and staff time is required to consult and develop the proposed application. These costs will be absorbed in current operational budgets through deferral of non-urgent tasks.

Council delayed a consideration for an SRV in FY 2022/2023, which resulted in borrowings in the current operational plan. Council continues to borrow funds from external sources to fund a number of its current Capital Projects as per Council Borrowing Policy, however this is not a viable solution in the long run and will impact Council financial sustainability and Office of Local Government benchmark against the debt service coverage ratio.

4. Asset Management (AMS)

Nil at the time of the writing of the report, however significant work would be required subject to the outcome of the proposed application as it is all focused on meeting the Asset Maintenance and Renewal outlined in the Asset Management Strategy.

5. Workforce (WMS)

Nil at the time of the writing of the report, however significant work would be required subject to the outcome of the proposed application.

6. Legal and Risk Management

Council's operations and rating structure are quite complicated and detailed. There is a risk that SRV information is not well understood by the community.

Should Council not achieve the level of income required to service its asset base, the risk is that assets will deteriorate much quicker and not provide the level of community service required. Without appropriate intervention Council will see an increase in the asset maintenance and renewal gap required for future works.

7. Performance Measures

Nil.

8. Project Management

Nil.

Kylie Smith

Chief Corporate Officer

Prepared by staff member:	Roy Jones	
Approved/Reviewed by Manager:	Kylie Smith, Chief Corporate Officer	
Department:	Office of the Chief Corporate Officer	
Attachments:	1 Council Rate Structure and Rate Model 2 Community Engagement Report Part A - January 2022 3 Community Engagement Report Part B - April - May 2022	4 Pages 5 Pages 114 Pages

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4	Community Engagement Report Part C - August - September 2022	129 Pages
5	Capacity to Pay Report - Morrison Low Consultants	28 Pages

Ordinary Council Meeting - 26 October 2022
NOTIFICATION TO IPART OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR A SPECIAL RATE VARIATION.

Attachment 1
Council Rate Structure and Rate Model

TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL												
Ordinary Rating Structure 2022-2023 - 0.7% INCREASE												
Rate Code	Rate Category	Total No of Assess	Land Value	Percentage of Total Land Value	Base Rate	Total Base Amount	Ad Valorem Dollar Rate	Total Ad Valorem	Total Rate Levy	Average Rates Per Assessment	% of income from the base	Actual % Yield per Category
1	Residential Tenterfield	1595	89,316,460	9.34%	\$329.00	\$524,755.00	\$0.00599576	\$ 535,520.06	\$ 1,060,275.06	\$ 664.75	49.49%	21.91%
4	Residential Tenterfield (Urban)	8	1715000.00	0.18%	\$329.00	\$2,632.00	\$0.00494219	\$ 8,475.86	\$ 11,107.86	\$ 1,388.48	23.69%	0.23%
5	Residential Other	1452	140435713.00	14.69%	\$155.00	\$225,060.00	\$0.00459599	\$ 645,441.13	\$ 870,501.13	\$ 599.52	25.85%	17.98%
6	Residential Urbenville	130	5152200.00	0.54%	\$294.00	\$38,220.00	\$0.00781108	\$ 40,244.25	\$ 78,464.25	\$ 603.57	48.71%	1.62%
7	Residential Jennings	106	3886300.00	0.41%	\$294.00	\$31,164.00	\$0.00827829	\$ 32,171.92	\$ 63,335.92	\$ 597.51	49.20%	1.31%
8	Residential Drake	80	2420280.00	0.25%	\$294.00	\$23,520.00	\$0.01005773	\$ 24,342.52	\$ 47,862.52	\$ 598.28	49.14%	0.99%
9	Farmland General	1464	698413770.00	73.04%	\$423.00	\$619,272.00	\$0.00250159	\$ 1,747,144.90	\$ 2,366,416.90	\$ 1,616.40	26.17%	48.89%
10	Business Tenterfield	193	10920010.00	1.14%	\$567.00	\$109,431.00	\$0.01749100	\$ 191,001.89	\$ 300,432.89	\$ 1,556.65	36.42%	6.21%
11	Business Other	16	2695070.00	0.28%	\$288.00	\$4,608.00	\$0.00500483	\$ 13,488.37	\$ 18,096.37	\$ 1,131.02	25.46%	0.37%
12	Business Urbenville	14	563400.00	0.06%	\$270.00	\$3,780.00	\$0.00731999	\$ 4,124.08	\$ 7,904.08	\$ 564.58	47.82%	0.16%
13	Business Jennings	2	124200.00	0.01%	\$270.00	\$540.00	\$0.00499813	\$ 620.77	\$ 1,160.77	\$ 580.38	46.52%	0.02%
14	Business Drake	8	272000.00	0.03%	\$270.00	\$2,160.00	\$0.00839407	\$ 2,283.19	\$ 4,443.19	\$ 555.40	48.61%	0.09%
15	Mining	10	279640.00	0.03%	\$459.00	\$4,590.00	\$0.01999700	\$ 5,591.96	\$ 10,181.96	\$ 1,018.20	45.08%	0.21%
	TOTALS	5078	956,194,043	100%		\$1,589,732.00		\$ 3,250,450.90	\$ 4,840,182.90			100.00%

Ordinary Council Meeting - 26 October 2022
NOTIFICATION TO IPART OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR A SPECIAL RATE VARIATION.

Attachment 1
Council Rate Structure and Rate Model

TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL														
Ordinary Rating Structure 2023-2024 - 4.2% RATE PEG														
Rate Code	Rate Category	Total No of Assets	Land Value	Percentage of Total Land Value	Base Rate	Total Base Amount	Ad Valorem Dollar Rate	Total Ad Valorem	Total Rate Levy	Average Rates Per Assessment	% of income from the base	Actual % Yield per Category	Average Increase from 2022/2023	Average increase weekly from 2023/2024
1	Residential Tenterfield	1602	89,998,380	9.38%	\$342.00	\$547,884.00	\$0.00622758	\$ 560,472.28	\$ 1,108,356.28	\$ 691.86	49.43%	21.98%	\$ 27.11	\$ 0.52
4	Residential Tenterfield (Urban)	8	1715000.00	0.18%	\$342.00	\$2,736.00	\$0.00512976	\$ 8,797.54	\$ 11,533.54	\$ 1,441.69	23.72%	0.23%	\$ 53.21	\$ 1.02
5	Residential Other	1479	142529833.00	14.86%	\$161.00	\$238,119.00	\$0.00476902	\$ 679,727.85	\$ 917,846.85	\$ 620.59	25.94%	18.20%	\$ 21.07	\$ 0.41
6	Residential Urbenville	130	5152200.00	0.54%	\$305.00	\$39,650.00	\$0.00811915	\$ 41,831.46	\$ 81,481.46	\$ 626.78	48.66%	1.62%	\$ 23.21	\$ 0.45
7	Residential Jennings	105	3874200.00	0.40%	\$305.00	\$32,025.00	\$0.00860598	\$ 33,341.28	\$ 65,366.28	\$ 622.54	48.99%	1.30%	\$ 25.03	\$ 0.48
8	Residential Drake	81	2452680.00	0.26%	\$305.00	\$24,705.00	\$0.01046015	\$ 25,655.41	\$ 50,360.41	\$ 621.73	49.06%	1.00%	\$ 23.45	\$ 0.45
9	Farmland General	1467	698510770.00	72.84%	\$441.00	\$646,947.00	\$0.00258729	\$ 1,807,252.03	\$ 2,454,199.03	\$ 1,672.94	26.36%	48.68%	\$ 56.53	\$ 1.09
10	Business Tenterfield	192	10835610.00	1.13%	\$590.00	\$113,280.00	\$0.01820562	\$ 197,269.02	\$ 310,549.02	\$ 1,617.44	36.48%	6.16%	\$ 60.80	\$ 1.17
11	Business Other	16	2695070.00	0.28%	\$299.00	\$4,784.00	\$0.00519503	\$ 14,000.98	\$ 18,784.98	\$ 1,174.06	25.47%	0.37%	\$ 43.04	\$ 0.83
12	Business Urbenville	14	563400.00	0.06%	\$280.00	\$3,920.00	\$0.00760743	\$ 4,286.03	\$ 8,206.03	\$ 586.14	47.77%	0.16%	\$ 21.57	\$ 0.41
13	Business Jennings	2	124200.00	0.01%	\$280.00	\$560.00	\$0.00518805	\$ 644.36	\$ 1,204.36	\$ 602.18	46.50%	0.02%	\$ 21.79	\$ 0.42
14	Business Drake	8	272000.00	0.03%	\$280.00	\$2,240.00	\$0.00872862	\$ 2,373.84	\$ 4,613.84	\$ 576.71	48.55%	0.09%	\$ 21.31	\$ 0.41
15	Mining	10	279640.00	0.03%	\$477.00	\$4,770.00	\$0.02081687	\$ 5,821.23	\$ 10,591.23	\$ 1,059.12	45.04%	0.21%	\$ 40.93	\$ 0.79
	TOTALS	5114	959,002,983	100%		\$1,661,620.00		\$ 3,381,473.10	\$ 5,043,093.10			100.00%		

Ordinary Council Meeting - 26 October 2022
NOTIFICATION TO IPART OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR A SPECIAL RATE VARIATION.

Attachment 1
Council Rate Structure and Rate Model

TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL														
SRV Ordinary Rating Structure 2023-2024 - 43.0% INCREASE INCLUDING RATE PEG														
Rate Code	Rate Category	Total No of Assess	Land Value	Percentage of Total Land Value	Base Rate	Total Base Amount	Ad Valorem Dollar Rate	Total Ad Valorem	Total Rate Levy	Average Rates Per Assessment	% of income from the base	Actual % Yield per Category	Average Increase from 2022/2023	Average increase weekly from 2023/2024
1	Residential Tenterfield	1598	89,687,760	9.36%	\$465.00	\$743,070.00	\$0.00857394	\$ 768,977.19	\$ 1,512,047.19	\$ 946.21	49.14%	21.85%	\$ 281.46	\$ 5.41
4	Residential Tenterfield (Urban)	8	1715000.00	0.18%	\$465.00	\$3,720.00	\$0.00706733	\$ 12,120.47	\$ 15,840.47	\$ 1,980.06	23.48%	0.23%	\$ 591.58	\$ 11.38
5	Residential Other	1474	142074038.00	14.83%	\$220.00	\$324,280.00	\$0.00657227	\$ 933,748.33	\$ 1,258,028.33	\$ 853.48	25.78%	18.18%	\$ 253.96	\$ 4.88
6	Residential Urbenville	130	5152200.00	0.54%	\$417.00	\$54,210.00	\$0.01116984	\$ 57,549.27	\$ 111,759.27	\$ 859.69	48.51%	1.61%	\$ 256.12	\$ 4.93
7	Residential Jennings	105	3874200.00	0.40%	\$417.00	\$43,785.00	\$0.01183795	\$ 45,862.60	\$ 89,647.60	\$ 853.79	48.84%	1.30%	\$ 256.28	\$ 4.93
8	Residential Drake	82	2463880.00	0.26%	\$417.00	\$34,194.00	\$0.01438255	\$ 35,436.89	\$ 69,630.89	\$ 849.16	49.11%	1.01%	\$ 250.88	\$ 4.82
9	Farmland General	1463	698419270.00	72.89%	\$602.00	\$880,726.00	\$0.00357727	\$ 2,498,436.89	\$ 3,379,162.89	\$ 2,309.75	26.06%	48.82%	\$ 693.34	\$ 13.33
10	Business Tenterfield	192	10835610.00	1.13%	\$806.00	\$154,752.00	\$0.02501213	\$ 271,021.69	\$ 425,773.69	\$ 2,217.57	36.35%	6.15%	\$ 660.92	\$ 12.71
11	Business Other	16	2695070.00	0.28%	\$409.00	\$6,544.00	\$0.00715691	\$ 19,288.37	\$ 25,832.37	\$ 1,614.52	25.33%	0.37%	\$ 483.50	\$ 9.30
12	Business Urbenville	14	563400.00	0.06%	\$382.00	\$5,348.00	\$0.01046759	\$ 5,897.44	\$ 11,245.44	\$ 803.25	47.56%	0.16%	\$ 238.67	\$ 4.59
13	Business Jennings	2	124200.00	0.01%	\$382.00	\$764.00	\$0.00714733	\$ 887.70	\$ 1,651.70	\$ 825.85	46.26%	0.02%	\$ 245.47	\$ 4.72
14	Business Drake	8	272000.00	0.03%	\$382.00	\$3,056.00	\$0.01200352	\$ 3,264.96	\$ 6,320.96	\$ 790.12	48.35%	0.09%	\$ 234.72	\$ 4.51
15	Mining	10	279640.00	0.03%	\$652.00	\$6,520.00	\$0.02859571	\$ 7,996.50	\$ 14,516.50	\$ 1,451.65	44.91%	0.21%	\$ 433.45	\$ 8.34
	TOTALS	5102	958,156,268	100%		\$2,260,969.00		\$ 4,660,488.28	\$ 6,921,457.28			100.00%		

Ordinary Council Meeting - 26 October 2022
NOTIFICATION TO IPART OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR A SPECIAL RATE VARIATION.

Attachment 1
Council Rate Structure and Rate Model

TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL																	
SRV Ordinary Rating Structure 2024-2025 - 43.0% INCREASE INCLUDING RATE PEG																	
Rate Code	Rate Category	Total No of Assess	Land Value	Percentage of Total Land Value	Base Rate	Total Base Amount	Ad Valorem Dollar Rate	Total Ad Valorem	Total Rate Levy	Average Rates Per Assessment	% of income from the base	Actual %Yield per Category	Average Increase from 2023/2024	Total average increase of rates over the 2 years	Average increase weekly of 2024/2025		
1	Residential Tenterfield	1598	89,687,760	9.36%	\$666.00	\$1,064,268.00	\$0.01226073	\$ 1,099,637.38	\$ 2,163,905.38	\$ 1,354.13	49.18%	21.86%	\$ 407.92	\$ 689.38	\$ 7.84		
4	Residential Tenterfield (Urban)	8	1715000.00	0.18%	\$666.00	\$5,328.00	\$0.01010628	\$ 17,332.28	\$ 22,660.28	\$ 2,832.53	23.51%	0.23%	\$ 852.48	\$ 1,444.05	\$ 16.39		
5	Residential Other	1474	142074038.00	14.83%	\$316.00	\$465,784.00	\$0.00939834	\$ 1,335,260.11	\$ 1,801,044.11	\$ 1,221.88	25.86%	18.20%	\$ 368.40	\$ 622.36	\$ 7.08		
6	Residential Urbenville	130	5152200.00	0.54%	\$596.00	\$77,480.00	\$0.01597288	\$ 82,295.46	\$ 159,775.46	\$ 1,229.04	48.49%	1.61%	\$ 369.36	\$ 625.47	\$ 7.10		
7	Residential Jennings	105	3874200.00	0.40%	\$596.00	\$62,580.00	\$0.01692828	\$ 65,583.52	\$ 128,163.52	\$ 1,220.60	48.83%	1.29%	\$ 366.82	\$ 623.10	\$ 7.05		
8	Residential Drake	82	2463880.00	0.26%	\$596.00	\$48,872.00	\$0.02056705	\$ 50,674.75	\$ 99,546.75	\$ 1,213.98	49.09%	1.01%	\$ 364.83	\$ 615.70	\$ 7.02		
9	Farmland General	1463	698419270.00	72.89%	\$858.00	\$1,255,254.00	\$0.00511550	\$ 3,572,764.75	\$ 4,828,018.75	\$ 3,300.08	26.00%	48.78%	\$ 990.33	\$ 1,683.68	\$ 19.04		
10	Business Tenterfield	192	10835610.00	1.13%	\$1,155.00	\$221,760.00	\$0.03576735	\$ 387,561.01	\$ 609,321.01	\$ 3,173.55	36.39%	6.16%	\$ 955.98	\$ 1,616.90	\$ 18.38		
11	Business Other	16	2695070.00	0.28%	\$586.00	\$9,376.00	\$0.01023438	\$ 27,582.36	\$ 36,958.36	\$ 2,309.90	25.37%	0.37%	\$ 695.37	\$ 1,178.87	\$ 13.37		
12	Business Urbenville	14	563400.00	0.06%	\$548.00	\$7,672.00	\$0.01496865	\$ 8,433.34	\$ 16,105.34	\$ 1,150.38	47.64%	0.16%	\$ 347.14	\$ 585.80	\$ 6.88		
13	Business Jennings	2	124200.00	0.01%	\$548.00	\$1,096.00	\$0.01022088	\$ 1,269.41	\$ 2,365.41	\$ 1,182.70	46.33%	0.02%	\$ 356.86	\$ 602.32	\$ 6.86		
14	Business Drake	8	272000.00	0.03%	\$548.00	\$4,384.00	\$0.01716503	\$ 4,668.89	\$ 9,052.89	\$ 1,131.61	48.43%	0.09%	\$ 341.49	\$ 576.21	\$ 6.57		
15	Mining	10	279840.00	0.03%	\$933.00	\$9,330.00	\$0.04089187	\$ 11,435.00	\$ 20,765.00	\$ 2,076.50	44.93%	0.21%	\$ 624.85	\$ 1,058.30	\$ 12.02		
	TOTALS	5102	958,156,268	100%		\$3,233,184.00		\$ 6,664,498.25	\$ 9,897,682.25			100.00%					



Tenterfield Shire Council

2022 Community Engagement Report

**Integrated Planning & Reporting Documents & Proposed Special Rates
Variation**

First Round - January 2022 (Reported Previously)

Second Round April – May 2022

Third Round August – September 2022

Executive Summary

Tenterfield Shire Council's Community Engagement Strategy provides the framework to **Inform** and **Consult**. Following our Community Engagement Report which outlined the Community engagement to develop the Community Strategic Plan in January, this report outlines the next two rounds this communication and engagement to include Council's Integrated Planning & Reporting Documents (IP&R) and Proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV).

Council has made a commitment to the community to keep it informed with balanced, accurate and relevant information on decisions, plans and strategies, to facilitate two-way communication between Council and the community. At this level, Council sought feedback to identify important community issues and perspectives that can influence and assist decision making. Informing is a prerequisite for consultation.

In the second Round of community consultation we were able to provide information regarding our IP&R documents that were partly informed by the Community Consultation and feedback received in the first round of engagement in January 2022. These documents included;

- TSC Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032
- TSC Delivery Program 2022-2026
- TSC Operational Plan 2022-2023
- TSC Long Term Financial Plan 2022-2032
- TSC Statement of Revenue Policy & Fee's & Charges 2022-2023
- TSC Asset Management Strategy 2022-2032
- TSC Workforce Management Strategy 2021-2025
- TSC Community Engagement Strategy

Council also started the conversation around the possibility of Council applying for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years and differing scenarios. The Long Term Financial Plan put forward 3 scenarios, a) Current Model, b) Current Model and SRV implemented over 2 years and c) Current Model and SRV implemented over 3 years.

Initial discussions with the community identified that participants do not want to see service levels reduced and, in some cases, want to see service levels increased. The three scenarios set out in the Long Term Financial Plan were used to drive community discussion to ensure the community fully understood the impacts of SRV values and service level impacts.

In the second round of Community Consultation which took place in April and May 2022. A series of face-to-face sessions were held across the shire to allow residents to communicate directly with Councillors and staff. Following these meetings, Council resolved (Res No. 156/22) to commence further Community Consultation – Special Rate Variation 2023/24 and 2024/25. The third round as per the feedback received from round two, specifically focused on information around the Proposed Special Rate Variation.

Later in this report you can see the methods of direct engagement used as well as detailed submissions from individuals and groups. The bi-annual Customer Satisfaction Survey was also included as Council took the opportunity to have SRV related questions included, and is impacted by the current conversation based on the wider consultation process.

The submissions and engagement generally objected to a Special Rates Variation but also put forward that if there were to be a rate rise that the service level priorities should be;

- Maintenance and improvement of roads and transport infrastructure,
- Strong leadership (good communication, financial management and advocacy),
- Council operations being run transparently, efficiently and sustainably,
- Stormwater and Drainage infrastructure, and
- Waste management

It should be noted that it became apparent that there was a core group of residents that engaged with the consultation process both in the community meetings, and through submissions. Which indicated the above service level priorities, however the analysis of the Tenterfield Community Satisfaction Survey 2022 which was taken across the whole shire, age and gender weighted revealed that the top-rated services/facilities for satisfaction were:

- School of Arts Theatre/Cinema
- School of Arts Museum
- Library Services
- Cemeteries
- Parks and playgrounds
- Livestock saleyards

And the lowest rated:

Overall condition of the road network and planning and development.

This information also came through strongly in the initial community engagement which informed the Community Strategic Plan, and mirrored the desire of the community to have both well maintained roads and infrastructure and services that support social cohesion.

The detailed and extensive information provided to Council for their consideration of the Proposed Special Rate Variation, and will be included in any application made to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

Methods of Engagement

Tenterfield Shire Council's Community Engagement Strategy matrix was employed to plan and execute its engagement and information communications in the following ways:

Community Consultation Meetings January 2022

Community engagement in January 2022 does not form part of this report as it was previously provided.

Community Consultation Meetings April 2022

Sign In sheets were provided however these did not capture all participants the Tenterfield PM meeting which only has 42 people, was observed to be closer to 100 people excluding staff. The Tenterfield AM breakfast meeting was primarily for business and working people, as had been suggested by the community, the expectation was that the turnout would be higher and therefore the ratio of staff to attendees reflected this expectation.

Promoted through TSC Website, Your Local News, Facebook (via Mayor) Flyers distributed throughout the shire, Council App, All Progress Associations and Hall Committees.

Date	Place	Signed In
Tuesday 5 April	Jennings Community Hall	11
	Sunnyside Community Hall	15
Wednesday 6 April	Bolivia Community Hall	17
	Torrington Community Hall	17
Thursday 7 April	Tenterfield 7.30am RSL	5
	Drake Community Hall	12
Friday 8 April	Mingoola Community Hall	14
	Tenterfield 4pm RSL	42
Saturday 9 April	Urbenville Community Hall	27
	Legume Community Hall	16
	Liston Community Hall	22
		Total 198 people signed in

Community Information Sessions September 2022

Using feedback gained by the previous round of community meetings Council asked the community to submit their questions to be answered first then the forum was opened for supplementary questions and two-way information. This allowed for everyone to ask their questions and for no single view to dominate.

Promoted through Facebook, Your Local News, Website, TSC App, Media Releases, Community Noticeboards, Digital Display, Newspaper advertising and Radio.

Date	Place	Signed In
Saturday 3 Sept	Tenterfield RSL	102
Saturday 24 Sept	Urbenville Community Hall	13
Saturday 24 Sept	Legume Community Hall	3

Monday 26 Sept	Mingoola Community Hall	19
Saturday 1 Oct	Urbenville Community Hall	26
		Total 163 people signed in

It is noted that people with an interest attended multiple sessions and although every effort was made to engage with the 7000 residents of the shire, feedback needs to be measured against the level of participation. Care should be taken that the feedback may not be representative of the majority of residents who chose not to participate.

Tenterfield Shire Council Website

Frequently Asked Questions page on website including a Rates Calculator and weekly Mayoral video, and promoted through Facebook, TSC App, Media Releases, Community Noticeboards, Digital Display, Newspaper advertising and Radio.

Media	Views to 12 October 2022
Website SRV & Frequently Asked Questions	486
Website SRV Rates Calculator	607
Mayoral Videos - Website	189
Facebook SRV posts	2859

Your Local News (proposed Special Rates Variation edition)

Information and FAQ's distributed to 4000 households throughout the shire.

Community Briefings & Appointments

30 – 90min Appointments with the Mayor, Councillors and Senior Staff to have one on one meetings with members of the community and small groups over an eight week period between 1 August and 30 September. Appointments were promoted through Facebook, TSC Website, TSC App, Media Releases, Community Noticeboards, Digital Display, Newspaper advertising and Radio.

17 Appointments were conducted.

Biannual Community Satisfaction Survey

Included questions related to the SRV. 300 people surveyed by Taverner Research Group.

SRV questions:

Council is considering an application to the New South Wales Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a Special Rate Variation of 43% in 2023/24, including rate peg, and a further 43% in 2024/25, again including rate peg. This represents a cumulative increase of 104.49%, to increase general rates income for the payment of roads and building maintenance costs from financial year 2023/24.

I now have a series of questions about this proposed increase.

- Council has kept me informed this year of the probable need for a Special Rate Variation?
- Council has explained that the money raised from a Special Rate Variation will be used for renewal of roads, buildings and other assets?
- I have been able to get information from Council about the possible impact of a Special Rate Variation on my property rates?

- I understand if Council isn't able to raise money through a Special Rates Variation then some services will be reduced or stopped?
- I support Council's application for a 104.49% Special Rate Variation to help it deliver existing services?

Feedback from the Engagement

Overwhelmingly the people who engaged with Council either through Community Engagement or Information Sessions or through submission were against a Special Rate Variation as the scenarios given. The feedback related to how Council were in a position of having to consider a SRV and concerns around the communities' capacity to pay, particularly pensioners.

Many agreed that the road and infrastructure network needs greater maintenance and renewal, however as demonstrated in the Customer Satisfaction Survey the community regards 'soft services' such as the Cinema, Museum, Library, Park, Playgrounds and Cemeteries very highly and do not want a reduction in these services.

Many cite the council's administration costs and would like to reduce staff further than the current 25% reduction, but do not want to see people out of work or leaving town for employment elsewhere, nor do the community fully understand the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework that Council must adhere to or other reporting regimes in place. Because of this disconnect, Council in the third series of engagement employed Information Sessions, and other Information channels as discussed to bridge the education gap. Current requests for services are still occurring at normal levels, however despite responding to this, complaints are increasing and any further staff reductions will impact further on service delivery and reporting as service delivery and staff are mutually dependent.

It is also worthy of mention that an organised group of residents and ratepayers incorporated under the name Our Shire Our Council Initiative (OSOCI). OSOCI delivered systematic and targeted statistics seeking to support their view, without context in many cases, via public forums, radio and newspaper interviews and their own social media platforms. This prolonged and sustained campaign forced Council to spend much of its focus on countering this narrative which diluted and distracted the broader issues under discussion.



Tenterfield Shire Council
2022 Community Strategic Plan
Community Engagement Report
Integrated Planning & Reporting Documents
Community Consultation
April – May 2022
Attachments 1 - 22

Community Consultation Meetings:

Tuesday 5 April 2022	Jennings – 11 people signed in Sunnyside – 15 people signed in
Wednesday 6 April 2022	Bolivia – 17 people signed in Torrington – 17 people signed in
Thursday 7 April 2022	Tenterfield – 7.30am – 5 people signed in Drake – 12 people signed in
Friday 8 April 2022	Mingoola – 14 people signed in Tenterfield – 4pm – 42 people signed in
Saturday 9 April 2022	Urbenville – 27 people signed in Legume – 16 people signed in Liston – 22 people signed in Total – 198 people signed in

Sign In Sheets: ALTUS IN22/2B84353C

Sign in sheets were provided however these did not capture all participants from my observation, particularly the PM Tenterfield meeting which only 42 people signed in however I observed that it would have been closer to 100 people not including staff. Also the high number staff to participant rate at the Tenterfield AM meeting was due to a general belief that more than 5 people would turn up.

Community Engagement Consultations dates, places and times were communicated on the TSC website, the "Local News" and flyers were distributed to the following with all dates and topics to be discussed:

- Thomas Rural
- Ten FM Radio
- Tenterfield Star Newspaper
- ABC Radio New England North West
- ABC Radio North Coast
- Killarney Co-op
- Norco Tenterfield
- Wilshire & Company
 - Tenterfield
 - Mingoola
 - Deepwater
 - Stanthorpe
- Facebook – via The Mayor
- All Councillors
- Tenterfield Business Chamber
- Main Street Businesses that take flyers and who were open

- Council's App – Push alert notification
- TSC website Engagement Hub
- All Progress Associations
 - Drake
 - Legume
 - Liston
 - Urbenville
 - Drake Resource Centre
 - Drake Lunatic Hotel
 - Mingoola
 - Wallangarra/Jennings
 - Steinbrook
- Hall Committees
 - Drake
 - Bolivia
 - Sunnyside
 - Torrington

The Submissions below are what has come directly to Council, this table **DOES NOT** include any submissions received from Councillors which have not been passed on to council for inclusion.

Meeting/General Submission	Comments
General Submissions	
Resident Re: Lighting IN22/57312D50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider installing lighting along footpath between Molesworth St Bridge and Hockeyfields Parklands.
Resident Submission IN22/5D5014EA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 1 (2x provided) • April 6 & May 4
Resident Submission: IN22/3ADA563C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 2 • April 26
Resident Submission IN22/3AB6881A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 3 • April 26

OSOCI Submission IN22/3CSA8544 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IN22/3036A757 IN22/30127969 IN22/358CC98E IN22/2ACD8B4D IN22/2D67DD2C IN22/2DBB8B9D IN22/2E948450 IN22/248EC022 IN22/2263C9D0 IN22/2A467614 IN22/2150CC7C IN22/19A6AB0 IN22/2E529CC1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 4 – all submissions in this category are the same OSOCI document verbatim. As above
Submission IN22/30212DFC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 5 Feedback on IP&R and Workforce Management Strategy April 15
Letter OSOCI – hand delivered IN22/7CE4D3A0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 6 April 13
Submission IN22/72E6D6C5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 7 Feedback on Asset Management Strategy April 15
Submission IN22/2438D0A4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 8 Feedback on Community Strategic Plan & other IP&R Docs May 2
Submission	

IN22/2585C083	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 9 • May 2
Submission IN22/2AE8E75A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 10 • April 29
Submission IN22/58CD30AC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 11 • April 7
Submission IN22/4F99CB7E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 12 • April 11
Submission IN22/4EA3B46D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 13 • April 11
Submission IN22/421AAA5B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 14 • April 12
Resident, via Portal & Emailed IN22/66CE5FBE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 15 • April 12
Submission IN22/19F41D9F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 16 • April 19
Submission: IN22/691AE39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 17 • April 25
Submission IN22/2BE50B78	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 18 • April 29
Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 19

IN22/3729FB03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 28
Submission IN22/1CF3A9B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 20 • April 18
Submission IN22/6C4DCF89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 21 • Dated May 1 • Arrived Council May 16 • Includes a survey created by OSOCI
Meeting Notes	
General Meeting Notes – Councillor IN22/25B3F581	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups generally understood that the State Government has been passing on costs. • The need to more actively push for return of high cost roads to the appropriate body, perceived inactivity on this scenario relative to level of required rate rise. • Sale of 'Sale Yard' mentioned. • Participating in future development as a means of increasing revenue. • Looking to use perceived quality of 'Local Skill Bank'- Professional/Commercial to augment future growth prospects. • Local Air Strip considered as available land for own development agenda or sale. • % of National Parks within our Shire not generating rates, greater lobbying of State Government of off-sets to reflect this loss of income. • The need to properly quantify recognizable cost savings within Shire Non-capital budget. • Development of other revenue sources. • Feeling that Rate Rise is inevitable but question level of rate rise. • Review productivity especially in areas of Compliance. • Usage of 'Grass Roots resources' available locally to lobby State Government for change in areas that are impacting costs to rate position, funding scenario. • Believe there is strong group of reasonable locals that are looking for measured cost reductions in areas that don't generate or have the ability to generate a ROI. Council has to give something back if Community is going to have to bear a rate rise. • Noticed that large sector community does not comprehend the funding requirements relevant to Grant Income and usage of general rates annually.

General Meeting Notes - Councillor IN22/25B3F581	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent message from ratepayers was that they are looking for Councillors and Council to commit to reduced expenditure and increased income (other than rates, fees and charges paid by ratepayers) so as to reduce the magnitude of any SRVs.
Tenterfield AM - Staff Notes IN22/25B3F581	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many TSC staff at the meeting – only 5 attendees who were not TSC employees. Lack of communication regarding meetings. Send note out with Meals on Wheels to let elderly/diabled know meetings are being held. Hold meetings in middle of the day for single mothers – who'd have opportunity to attend with children in care/at school.
Tenterfield PM – Staff Notes IN22/25B3F581	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building projects need to be properly investigated and scoped before starting large construction works. Need qualified people to arrange projects. Need to plan major projects better. Scavenger shed shop needed at the Waste Transfer Station to recover funds from reused waste products. Bridge maintenance and upgrades were not supported by Council (10-20 years ago), so we need to continue a program of maintenance and renewals. Council light vehicles need to have identification logos on them. Need to support business that want to establish such as goat meat enterprises. Economic development contribution discounts are ending which may impact business proposals. Need to consider impacts of shortage in available homes for rent and purchasing in the community. Did not want development of large scale small blocks as the culture around Tenterfield is for more open area, larger blocks. Residents would like recycling of products to minimize resource use, such as using fly ah products in roads. Make better use of resources with recycling of building materials where possible. Tenders should be transparent to the community when projects are issued to external contractors. Grants need to be spent on tangible assets for the community. Sale of Council assets should be noted as a short term benefit only with a single financial gain. Renters and businesses will bear the Rate Increase as landlords will simply increase Rents.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of staff numbers and performance needs to be carried out to try and find efficiencies.
Jennings Staff Meeting Notes – IN22/25B3F581	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elderly residents on pensions can't afford rates rise. • Poor roads/potholes. • Drainage. • Water Mains need upgrading. • High Cost of water.
Drake Staff Meeting Notes – IN22/25B3F581	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mud Flat Road in poor condition. • Review of grading practice along Mud Flat Road was suggested to bring gravel off the sides back onto the road, seek to have equipment work longer hours and grade more often. • Patching truck work on Rocky River Road makes the road surface loose and breaks up again. • Need better drainage and more parking. • Need to fix stormwater drainage around the school • Curb and gutter around the school – Allison Street. School Road. • Public toilets – road into the parking area in very poor condition with big hole. • Drainage – block of land in the village have been turned into swamps by roadworks. • TSC needs to come up with a proper drainage plan and work with RMS to stop road run-off water ending up on village properties. •
Liston Meeting Notes IN22/25B3F581	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads top of priority list. • Tourism funds should be reduced and more funds on roads. • Council produced Tourism brochures are a waste of resources. • Works programs that have a steady expenditure. • Cullendore Rd causeway two sharpbends (1Km back from border should be prioritized for upgrading. • Faggs Rd needs maintenance. • Faggs Rd naming should be reviewed and named Lincoln Hills Road. • Not all residents in Liston area receives "Your Local News" • Liston transfer station not open enough. • Transfer station takes a voucher even for small quantities, could they be used in part for small quantities? • Communications – poor mobile phone services. Need a mobile tower at Sugarloaf. • Better planning needed for next 50 yrs for the upgrading Mt Lindesay Highway.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mt Lindesay Highway needs to be taken over by State Government. • Need to retain expertise in rural area. • Mingoola Dam? Water for irrigation will bring investment and jobs to Tenterfield. • No proper recognition of the value of Tourism in the TSC documents presented to the meetings. • VIC should not be sold. • Volunteers at Railway Museum don't want the VIC to be moved to the Railway Museum. • VIC volunteers know what to do – to get visitors to stay an extra day to see all the attractions – stay 2 nights. • Council needs to understand/appreciate the importance of the VIC – coach tour companies contact the VIC and ask staff to put together itineraries for groups. • TSC needs to recognize the valuable service that volunteers do at the VIC and Railway Museum. Council and senior staff need to come and see what happens. • Many Tenterfield residents are over 65, retired and many on fixed incomes – pensions and cannot afford rate rise. • Rates are cheaper in Ballina. • Needs to be more/better communication with residents about what TSC is doing. • TSC's public relations efforts are very poor – need to have FB and website running side-by-side with updates about what's happening.
Legume Meeting Notes IN22/25B3F581	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage – blocks of land in the village have been turned into swamps by roadworks. • TSC needs to come up with a proper drainage plan and work with RMS to stop road run-off water ending up on village properties.
Resident Submission IN22/3729FB03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oppose any rate rise above the CPI increase until council efficiencies are gained.
Sunnyside Meeting Notes IN22/25B3F581	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut unwanted staff/services/sell unwanted assets/raise rates. • Land development to generate income. • Parks and gardens do a great job. • Political pressure on State Government to axe rate-pegging. • Water treatment Plant – separate fund and grant funded.
Torrington	

Meeting Notes - staff IN22/25B3F581	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Community examples and Torrington could be set up as a trial site, i.e. solar, composting. • Use recycling of plastics in Roads. • Excepting of Rate rise but want improvements in roads. • Council needs to promote what is being done to save resources i.e. Stabilizing existing gravel.
Urbenville Progress Assoc IN22/6287CA3C	Who is responsible for mowing nature strips & footpaths outside residential addresses? What are the expectations of TSC?
Urbenville – Staff meeting notes IN22/25B3F581	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaury Creek Road in poor condition with potholes. • Would like to see TSC workers spend more time on poor roads, less on flower beds. • Recycling practices like the reuse of plastics in roadworks • Roads need maintaining. • Community has been hit by COVID and floods and tourism has gone down the drain. • Lots of pensioners in town can't afford rate rise. • Gravel used on M633 – road to Woodenbong – no good, doesn't have any 'fines' in it and will not compact. • North Coast Health District can't support the level of home care that's needed around Urbenville – services including house cleaning, podiatry, in-home help etc. • Shortage of rental properties for health staff, nurses. • Tourism signs at Woodenbong – there needs to be a sign to Urbenville/Tooloom National Park. • Two large gum trees at 14 Boomi, Urbenville – planted by Greening Australia, now dangerous. • Urban Street footpaths need tidying up. • More public seating is needed around town – at bus stop. • Internet/NBN services are poor. Optus tower as never been connected. • TSC needs FB page – similar to Kyogle Shire which does not allow comments.
Engagement Hub Survey INT22/14FB4A6	Attachment 22 Have your say on our Community Strategic Plan
Resident email: IN22/3659E553	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads • Drainage

- ① AI
- * WHERE HAS THE MONEY GONE.
PRESS RELEASE ON COUNCIL SITE 6 JULY 2021. GRANT MONEY TO FINISH ROAD WHERE HAS THAT GONE
 - * NO ANSWER FROM C.O. TO MY G/MAIL QUESTIONS
 - * AMOUNT OF DEFICIT. 3.2, 3.9, 111.8 4028 TO PER PERSON INTENT SHIRE.
 - * MISMANAGEMENT,
 - * SAVINGS DO NOT HIRE 2 STAFF ADVERTISED \$131,000.00
 - * WAY AND HOW CAN WE TRUST YOUR DECISIONS IN THE FUTURE
 - * 25% REDUCTION IN ROAD MAINTENANCE BUDGET IS A
⊕ BACKWARD STEP. IN THE FUTURE YOU WILL NEED TO CATCH-UP.
 - ⊕ ANY STAFF, COUNCILLOR, PEOPLE WHO ADVOCATE A BACKWARD STEP SHOULD FIND ANOTHER AREA WHO WANT TO GO BACKWARDS
 - * DON'T TREAT RATE PAYERS AS YOUR BANK
- CONTINUED FROM ① [REDACTED] ②
- YOUR PROBLEM YOU FIX WITHIN REASONABLE TIME, MONEY.
ADVOCATE TO GOV FOR MORE FUNDS.
DON'T FILL CURRENT ADVERT POSITIONS
- * TOURISTS. WON'T RECOMMEND BACK ROADS (WORK 0 MONTH.)
BECAUSE OF POOR STATE.
 - * HOW CAN YOU EXPECT OUR RESPECT, CONFIDENCE, TRUST.
IF YOU HAVE OVER SPENT \$3.2 MILLION IN A YEAR.

Submission to Council on Community Strategic Plan

The Plan, in its current form, is rejected.

It is outlandish to imagine that this community could possibly be in favour of a rates increase of over 100% over a period of three years, and potentially a 300% increase over a period of a decade.

Reasons for rejecting the Plan

The Plan puts forward a sudden and unimaginative solution to a problem that could only have been in the making for some time.

It is inconceivable that a reasonable and competent financial manager wouldn't have been able to foresee a looming deficit of between 48%, and possibly as much as 300%, over the coming decade. It is scandalous if it is indeed the case that this deficit was unforeseen.

There has been no indication in the community – as far as members of our (Mingoola) community are concerned – that this enormous deficit was already on the books.

We are told that there is a shortfall of some \$4m - \$5m in the current funding requirements. "The gap between Council's income and the required expenditure to maintain *key assets* (my emphasis) and services at a current service levels (sic) is currently between \$4m and \$5m." [Council's PowerPoint presentation handout sheets p9]. Obvious questions arise from this information:

- This deficit could not have occurred overnight. Why was the community not made aware of this huge financial problem before being presented with the possibility of a sudden, enormous and unexpected rates rise?
- What are the *key assets* and who has decided what assets are key?

The options presented by Council to ratepayers to alleviate this financial problem are fourfold:

1. "Reducing service levels, which will impact the local economy.
2. Sell and/or dispose of assets that will reduce the associated on-going expenses.
3. Increase income raised through rates, user fee and charges, and other sources.
4. A combination of the above options." [Council's PowerPoint presentation handout sheets p 7].

There is no analysis of what effect on services that either option 1 or 2 would have on the ratepayers. Instead of presenting data to allow a ratepayer to make an intelligent response to the four options provided, the Plan immediately launches into a justification as to why option 3 is superior. [

To be able to consider which, if any, of the options are palatable to ratepayers a detailed analysis of the ramifications of each option is essential. Please provide it.

There is also no discernible justification for why the Ratepayer Category of Farmland shoulders the heaviest burden of the proposed rates rises.

It is outlined in the Plan that even with the proposed rates rise (100%+ over three years or up to 300% over a decade) there will be no solution to the funding shortfall into the future. The Plan specifies that both Scenario 2 and Scenario 3 (which outline the exorbitant rates rises) "...do not allow for any capacity to deal with any asset backlog or future cost shifting, ...(they) purely address the current operating deficit." [Long Term Financial Plan p 10].

What is the solution to this problem? There is none present in this Plan. One can only assume, therefore, that to continue with the current level of service into the future enormous rates rises will be regularly required. This is untenable.

Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) p 11: "Should any further shocks come to be known, these plans would need to be reviewed to ensure the full implications could be forecast. Examples of unknown shocks would be:

- if the Government Financial Assistance Grant (FAG) were frozen or reduced or if the rate peg value was significantly lower than the estimate rates and the true inflation rate..."

As well, other risk factors to undermining the budget bottom line are outlined (LTFP p 11):

- "Rates increase being lower than anticipated;
- Construction costs being higher than anticipated;
- Utility expenses being higher than estimated;
- Significant fluctuations in the rate of return for investments, ..." etc.

Is it likely that the rates increase will be lower than anticipated? YES.

Is it likely that constructions costs will rise higher than expected? YES.

Is it likely that utility expenses will be higher than estimated? YES.

Is it likely that there will be significant fluctuations in the rate of return for investments? YES.

These are not Risk Factors, they are certainties. Therefore, the Plan is fundamentally flawed.

Whoever has put this Plan together is not thinking inside the world in which we have come to live. They are thinking inside the world:

- before enormous climate change-caused natural disasters,
- before a pandemic caused worldwide supply chains to unravel;
- before the same pandemic caused the Australian economy to be instable and insecure;
- before a war in Europe caused the shortage of (potentially) products necessary to the farming industry.

This kind of world requires a creative financial response rather than the easy, unacceptable solution of passing on enormous rates increases to ratepayers who are already struggling in this new world in which we all find ourselves.

Some obvious solutions:

Cut back services;

Define what non-essential services are and charge users for those services;

Address the biggest cost item in the budget: staffing costs. Do a cost benefit analysis to determine the minimum number of staff (at all levels) required to run a small operation like Tenterfield Shire Council, and act accordingly.

We suggest that a Committee of Councillors be formed to address these issues and put recommendations to the Senior Staff of Council to go back to the drawing board to more realistically and reasonably address the serious budgetary circumstances in which they find themselves.

From **[REDACTED]** and **[REDACTED]**, Rates Assessment Number **[REDACTED]**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

25 April 2022.

A3

17 April 2022

Daryl Buckingham
Chief Executive Officer
Tenterfield Shire Council
PO Box 214
TENTERFIELD NSW 2372

TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL		
26 APR 2022		
	Action	Info
CE		
CCO		
DI		

Dear Mr Buckingham

Re: Tenterfield Shire Council's *Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032* – Special Rates Variation Increase

I am writing to bring to your attention my concerns related to Tenterfield Shire Council's (the Council) proposal to introduce a Special Rates Variation (SRV) to local ratepayers, under its *Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032*, of either a 43 per cent increase *per year* over two years (i.e., from 2023/24 to 2024/25), or alternatively, a 28 per cent increase *per year* over three years (from 2023/24 to 2025/26). I note under either proposal, there will be a compound effect on rates, raising them permanently by 109 per cent.¹

Background to the proposed SRV increase

The Council has indicated that its general fund is currently in a weak financial position and that it is heavily reliant on New South Wales and Commonwealth Government grants. In particular:

- The Council estimates a \$4 million to \$5 million deficit between income and expenditure to maintain current service levels in the forward years.
- As at 30 June 2021, the Council had a negative cash result.
- The Council does not have sufficient cash reserves to meet asset renewal and maintenance requirements.
- To reduce the funding gap, the Council is proposing (in addition to the proposed increase to the SRV) to potentially reduce service levels, sell or dispose of assets, and/or increasing user fees and charges.²

Key demographic information: Tenterfield

According to 2016 Census statistics,³ the medium age of Tenterfield residents is 53 years of age, while 27.6 per cent of the population were 65 years and over in age. Furthermore, the median weekly personal income for people over the age of 15 is \$454.00.

¹ Tenterfield Shire Council, 'Tenterfield Shire Council: Community Strategic Plan 2022 2032 & Financial Sustainability', *Tenterfield Shire Council* (Community Consultation Document, 23 March 2022) <<https://www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/2022/04/TSC-Community-Strategic-Plan-Financial-Sustainability-Presentation-to-Community-Consultation-Sessions-April-2022.pdf>>.

² Ibid.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Tenterfield (A): 2016 Census All persons QuickStats', (Statistics, 2016) <<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2016/LGA17400>>.

Given the number of Tenterfield residents over the age of 65 (around 1,800 people from a total population of 6,628 in 2016), it would be safe to presume that a significant proportion would be in receipt of the aged pension (in addition to other social security payment paid to other demographics). As a result, the inevitable increase to the SRV will have a disproportionate impact on people over 65 and in receipt of the aged pension in Tenterfield. This will mean these residents will be forced to forgo essential expenditure, already difficult on insufficient income, such as life-preserving medications and/or utilities (water and electricity), in order to service increased rates to enable the Council to maintain services that will have little to no impact on these people.

Suggested actions to alleviate financial issues

As should be evident from the above, I am not supportive of this proposed significant increase in rates by way of an SRV. A couple of suggestions could be as follow:

- Assessing the Council's eligibility for a range of regional grants provided by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, and applying.⁴
- Selling Council assets that are non-essential.
- Reducing non-essential (or least-essential) Council services.
- Freezing hiring and promotion decisions within Council.
- Approaching the New South Wales Government to appoint an administrator and/or amalgamate with a neighbouring local council.
- Reducing remuneration for identified positions, noting the salary for three people alone in 2020-21 was \$725,000.00 or around 18 per cent of the \$4 million shortfall.⁵

Thank you again for your consideration of this especially important and serious matter. I would appreciate a direct and prompt response, and, if possible, not a response from your staff members.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

TENTERFIELD NSW 2372

⁴ Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, 'Regional and Community Programs', *Australian Government* (Webpage, April 2022)
<<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/regional-australia/regional-and-community-programs>>.

⁵ Tenterfield Shire Council, 'Annual Report: 2020-21', *Tenterfield Shire Council* (Annual Report, 2021) 50.

A4

Our Shire Our Council Initiative

Tenterfield Shire Council

CEO / COO / all councillors / council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

26. April 2022

OBJECTIONS TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND DOCUMENTS / PLANS

Prepared by and with the input of over 300 TSC ratepayers and submitted on their behalf.

Referenced Documents

1. Community Strategic Plan & Financial Sustainability Presentation to Community Consultation Sessions April 2022
2. Draft Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032
3. Draft Delivery Program 2022-2025 & Operational Plan 2022-2023
4. Draft Asset Management Strategy 2022-2032
5. Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2022-2032
6. Draft Revenue Policy 2022-2023
7. Draft Workforce Management Strategy 2021-2025

Objection / Rejection is hereby lodged to the following:

1. Public Consultation Process (failed)
2. Contents provided for information (as above and missing documents)
3. Draft Community Strategic Plan (as above)
4. Draft Delivery Program & Operation Plan (as above)
5. Draft Asset Management Strategy (as above)
6. Draft Long Term Financial Plan (as above)
7. Draft Revenue Policy (as above)
8. Draft Workforce Management Strategy (as above)

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Our Shire Our Council Initiative

Executive Summary

Considering the recently published financial position, the Tenterfield Shire Council (Council) has put this community in a **near-catastrophic financial situation**. This situation is not acceptable or explainable other than as a **failure of the councillors to fulfil their duties and the CEO and administration team to act in the community's best interest that pays them to do so**.

On the basis that the councillors are responsible for directing and overseeing the Administration / Operation of the Council, **the five remaining councillors participating in creating this situation** are to be held accountable.

These Councillors and the Chief Executive shall face the consequences of their acts and omissions, apologise to the community and step down with immediate effect.

The Councillors have lost control over the Chief Executive and hence the administration. Some examples:

- The sudden realisation that the community is in unreconcilable debt.
- The uncoordinated proposition of a rate rises from 0.7% to 2.5% to 79% to 109% to 200%.
- The public comments by the Chief Executive about people having to move away.
- Adding personnel and managers under managers in the organisation chart.
- Proposing additional spending without a funding source.
- The change from a Farming Community to a tourism community via a Mountain Bike stronghold to an Arts and Crafts Centre – without any consultation.
- A budget that shows \$6M in further losses over the coming years.

Why do we need a \$300k PLUS p.a. CEO to help lose \$6,000,000 over the next 3 years???

The newer councillors shall be reminded of their obligations and held responsible every step of the way. Currently the councillors are **BLAMING** reduced State funding for the situation this council is in, which clearly shows their denial of the fact that there is overspending and lack of governance.

The proposed financial plan is **not acceptable at all**. Significant changes must be made immediately. **Under no circumstances are the councillors to approve** the plans without complete overhaul, input from the public and another round of genuine public consultation.

The community does not understand how this Council can keep spending millions of dollars on office upgrades, salaries, bonuses, vehicles and benefits while driving the deficit further and further. **There is NO value for money proposition and no perception of additional value in return for the increased cost to the ratepayers.**

The different Community Plans talk about "the community vision" – this needs to be corrected. At best, this could be called the **Chief Executive's vision** – as there was no community involvement in developing these plans.

Regarding the recent so-called "community consultation", **no reasonable/honest attempt was made** to engage with the community – the information provided was incomplete. No attempt was made to openly inform the community before the consultation sessions (low attendance) about the proposed 200% Rate Rise and catastrophic financial position/management, ongoing overspending and underfunding, \$50 Million proposed future deficit and impacts on ratepayers.

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The community has no to little trust in their Council and withholding the TRUTH does not help.

Despite the Strategic Plans talking about operations being run transparently, efficiently and sustainably, the opposite is true. We see enormous salaries being paid to some public servants – plus a combined effect from past and present councillors lacking qualifications (no relevant business experience) operating today in combination with a council administration that provides selective and non-factual reports. **The CEO and Administration appears to be working against the councillors, driving this Council and community to the brink of bankruptcy with no viable plans how to resolve the situation.**

Multiple honest attempts by competent and concerned local businesspeople/ratepayers and the wider community to obtain active involvement to assist have been ignored or actively rejected. Not using or integrating this available free resource pool goes against every statement of transparency and inclusiveness and good business practices.

As a whole – the plans talk about values, ethics and integrity – while the past and currently experienced actions of the Councillors and Council Administration are the exact opposite.

Difficult questions asked to the Council and councillors remain unanswered which deepens the perception of incompetence, arrogance and ignorance.

They are actively excluding the community as much as possible and propose a financial and asset management strategy that is not viable.

This behaviour and miss management will drive / keep businesses away from Tenterfield Shire and force older / long term residents who have worked and live here for a long time away – without providing an opportunity for younger people to stay or come to the area.

This must end NOW!

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Failed Community Consultation in Detail

February and March 2022 Tenterfield Shire Council Documents discuss a higher than usual (0.7%) Special Rate Variation of 2.5%. Following closed discussion, this was decided to be non-effective. No higher rate increase proposal or forum is on council records.

In late February, the Mayor posted on Facebook that a 79.4% Rate rise had been proposed. An extraordinary council meeting was called – lengthy explanations for why this was necessary were in the post (now removed).

After that, only invitations with no further details were posted on Facebook, the council website (well hidden), and the local paper.

The times for the consultations were set in a way that most people could NOT attend them.

Had the Council openly communicated the significance of the proposed plans to the community, a much higher engagement would have been achieved – see the event organised by www.OSOCI.org on April 9, where, based on the approx. 80% rate rise announcement over 250 members of the community was present and expressed their objection to the process and proposed rate rise and financial plans.

After the community was made aware of the proposed impacts and how Council was implementing the financial and other plans, much more interest and input were generated, informing this response.

For those who attended the "community consultation sessions," no presentation was given that actively informed about the significant items.

TSC Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032 & Financial Sustainability was handed out. This document has not been made available prior – it has been added to the website since. So, participants could not have come to the meetings prepared for the consultation with the well-prepared specialists.

Large numbers of Councillors and Council Staff tried to talk participants into submission via a "hard sell" – pretending it was in their best interest. There were 21 council staff/councillors in one session and 4 NON-Council related participants.

A question raised in that session was "shot down" by a Councillor in an aggressive and intimidating tone intended to stop the question from being answered. This kind of bullying behaviour is what the community experiences in this so-called "consultation" process.

Older residents who have come to retire in Tenterfield need a more collaborative approach. However, for this target group (approx. 40% of residents), the proposed rate and charge rise have catastrophic consequences as pensioners have no opportunity to increase income.

Questions were not answered clearly, and in a way, the community members could understand the significance of the potential outcome of the answer. Questions asked to Council after the event are still unanswered to date.

The TSC 2022 Community Strategic Plan – Community Engagement report (no date) was not presented on the TSC website but as a handout only available at the consultation events.

It contains responses from the community as well as statistics.

Upon investigation, it was noticed that input provided by the community via the process had been filtered out / left out.

4

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The question was asked WHO decides which content goes into the report. No answer has been received to date.

It shows that only 33 people had responded to the survey.

Out of those, the following feedback was recorded:

Question 6: How supportive re a rate increase.

- 22 answered: not supportive
- 10 answered: willing to consider a reasonable increase
- 1 answered: supportive

Question 7:

- 11 answered: significant reduction in services – minimal increase in rates
- 9 answered: major reduction in services – small to medium increase in rates

So, with 20 out of 33 OPPOSING a rate rise – the Council still proposes a 200% rate increase.

Conclusion:

The community consultation process is flawed and incomplete. To develop community plans and vision, the process must be undertaken again. Eliminating the shortfalls and executing it properly and inviting and including the community to provide their input and identify themselves with the process and outcome.

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Draft Community Strategic Plan

Overview

The plan leaves out some of the most significant aspects of the economy and community such as agriculture, tourism, hospitality and health.

There are many grand statements in the plan that have no foundation, actions, or KPIs / benchmarking. Therefore, they are not measurable, which leads to no actionable/achievable outcomes.

As a whole – the plan sounds nice but falls way short in many sectors and as is would only give an administration an opportunity to “do whatever” they want and justify it by pointing back at the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan shall be completely overhauled with the active involvement of all stakeholders and the community in order to produce an executable plan with clear benefits.

Page 6

Claims are made that Agriculture is the largest employer – no source provided.

This is misleading as most farming businesses are not undertaken as a primary source of income. Most people undertaking farming activities do have a second job. A strong move out of farming is noticeable with people trying to establish other businesses as farming is not viable.

Farming businesses are typically mum and dad businesses with NO employees and potentially only registered to obtain a Primary Producer Tax benefit.

Regardless there is no further mention of agriculture in the plan – why?

Page 6

The Health Sector is claimed to be the second-largest employer – no source provided.

The health system and services in and around Tenterfield are well below acceptable standards, including the Aged Care / Nursing Home businesses in town.

Mentioned as a key deliverable/vision point, no specific action or benchmark has been provided:

Page 17 - 5.2.2 Work with key stakeholders and the community to lobby for adequate health services in our region and greater accessibility to regional services.

This is not a suitable and executable strategy (plan) for one of the Key Requirements for this community going forward. And there is no further mention of HEALTH in the plan.

Page 6

Retail is named as the 3rd largest employer.

Since the beginning of COVID, the retail sector has been one of the hardest-hit areas in the shire.

Despite this, there is no further mention of retail in the plan – WHY?

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Page 12 - Community

1.1 Tenterfield Shire is a vibrant, inclusive, and safe community where diverse backgrounds and cultures are respected and celebrated

The plan fails to mention the demographics of the shire.

The Plus 60 yo group is with over 40% a significant part of the community, and yet there is NO mention of this group and subsequently NO actions/strategies to cater for this group.

The same can be said for Youth as a target group – mentioned once.

This needs to be redone completely.

Page 13 - Economy

2.1 Develop Tenterfield Shire's economic base into a robust and growing economy that supports creating a variety of employment and business opportunities.

2.1.2 Manage Councils Livestock Saleyards in a commercial manner.

The CEO was asked about the sale of the sales yard and swore that it would not be sold. A \$15,000 valuation of the sales yard was ordered the day after.

This section clearly shows that there is NO understanding of business and the economy. Without a healthy economy, there are no jobs, no income, and no quality of life.

Over the past years a significant number of capital projects were undertaken in the region e.g. Bolivia Bypass, Dam Upgrade, WTP, Bypass PFS and FS totalling about \$200M – upcoming the \$100 Tenterfield bypass. None of those projects led to upskilling in the community, job opportunities, training or the like other than incidental spend. None of those projects had a guaranteed LOCAL SPEND – because such benefits were not written into the Stakeholder requirements. Other Town such as Parkes Shire have achieved about %30 local spend in similar situations. Despite numerous attempts by the community to instigate such local spend initiatives, the Council did not only act but actively rejected.

Business is the LIFE BLOOD of the region and the weakest part of the strategic plan.

There are no goals around attracting new industries to town, participation in ongoing opportunities such as the major projects (Water Treatment Plant, Dam, Bypass...) or ongoing training and development of a Centre of Excellence.

- What about supporting existing businesses.
- How do new residents impact the economy?
- What product development?
- Bypass and impact
- Planning for a Town that no one drives through?
- Affordable Housing
- Development

This needs to be redone completely.

Our Shire Our Council Initiative

Page 14 – Environment

3.2 Provide secure, sustainable and environmentally sound infrastructure and services that underpin Council's service delivery.

These are NOT environmental strategies – the water services are in place or in progress (Water Treatment Plant) with financial impacts of mismanagement already implemented (water cost increase).

The following points are not what this community needs to focus on concerning their environment.

They seem to have made it into the plan as an excuse for the dramatic overspending on assets in water, waste and wastewater management and the associated cost increases.

How many people are connected to Town Water and Sewerage – do we need more of that, or do we have too much of it already?

3.2.1 Deliver a total water cycle management approach, including water conservation and reuse, is implemented and ENSURE it complies with the Biosecurity Act 2015 and standards.

3.2.2 Deliver an affordable waste management solution for the community to manage waste volumes best and take advantage of recycling opportunities.

3.2.3 Deliver an affordable and effective wastewater management solution for the community.

The environmental section shall be completely overhauled, removing ASSET justification from it.

The services provided shall be Affordable and Appropriate for the population and predicted growth, which they are NOT.

Page 15 – Leadership

"Council continues to partner with and support community members and associations through involvement in decision making and by applying principles of fairness, equity, transparency, and probity in all its dealings."

This entire section sounds nice and would definitely help if achieved.

The current status is the exact opposite - exclusive, secretive, covering up issues, decision making behind closed doors, unprofessional public conduct of councillors.

Goals must include.

- Competent and accountable – Councillors and Council Leaders
- Affordable
- Not self-focussed
- Councillors to have read and understood the council documents.
- Councillors educate themselves about the subject matters
- Councillors consult with the community before making decisions

Lost time injury rate of <4.24% - is way too high. As an indicator of a healthy workplace (mental and physical), the Council is NOT a healthy workplace where people perform and enjoy participating.

Our Shire Our Council Initiative

Again – a lot of focus on ASSETS

A Lost Time Incident Rate (days lost to injuries/illness) of about 4 also means 4% waste in wages / operational cost, which should and can be reduced.

Target should be below 2%

Page 16 - Transport

Capital Projects

Measure: Delivered on time, Quality and Budget 100%

How about Public Transport Options?

- Reducing Traffic – share rides
- Bypass and impact
- Planning for a Town that no one drives through?

31-March-Draft-Delivery-Program-2022-2025-Operational-Plan-2022-2023

Page 4 – Community's Vision

The mayor talks about the communities Vision. What is that – who wrote that – the community clearly was NOT involved.

Page 6 - Duties of Councillors

We should start reminding them they represent ratepayers and should be automatically including our concerns in each meeting when requested. So far, they all fail.

Page 7 - Our Mission / Vision

Explain who researched and devised the strategy - and what data influenced this.

Page 10

Provide an ORG Chart with contact Phone numbers and email addresses

Pages 31 ff

Must be reworked based on the updated Strategic Plan

Our Shire Our Council Initiative

Draft Workforce Management Strategy

There are many grand statements in the strategy paper that have no foundation, actions, or KPIs / benchmarking. Therefore, they are not measurable, which leads to no actionable/achievable outcomes.

As a whole – the strategy sounds nice but falls way short in many sectors and is not tied in with the current financial situation.

The Strategy shall be completely overhauled once the financial situation has been rectified, funding has been secured and the future of this Council has been defined.

Asset Management Strategy

Executive Summary

The PRIORITY for rural areas = roads.

Do not include footpaths, cycleways, aerodrome, rail tracks, or kerb and guttering in road transport group dollars to avoid diluted dollars on low priorities.

Remove all aspirational projects - these are someone else's job and make the service level unaffordable. Update the content of the staff report on "what everyone wants" to reflect the reality of the outcome of asking ratepayers how much extra rates are they willing to pay?

Remove all activity and financial commitments outside the Council area and primary funding role.

Stop TSC spending rates and financial assistance grants on behalf of other agencies, entities or individuals.

NO to over 200% rates increase (with 110% in 1st 2/3 years) AND

NO to \$50 million deficit over the 10-year long term financial plan

YES to 'service' reductions while councillors get control over TSC spending plans, from now for possibly a year or two.

5,000 TSC ratepayers cannot afford the Chief Executive's recommendations to date.

The Chief Executive says that these documents and recommendations to date DO NOT include any additional expenditure for any reason over the next 10 years, so ratepayers need to identify priorities and \$/activity and administrative units to remove now. It will only continue to escalate.

5,000 ratepayers cannot afford 3 executive positions and 12 manager positions within the "approved" TSC structure. The councillors need to remove delegations for staff replacement, etc., until the \$50 million deficit is resolved and loans covering the deficit are repaid.

Our Shire Our Council Initiative

5,000 ratepayers can't afford the aspirations contained within the Integrated Planning & Reporting documents now out for public consultation, presumably prepared with input from the 3 executive staff and 12 managers.

Staff have yet to propose how any rate increase will be distributed over all ratepayers. I.e., the Rating Structure. If every ratepayer pays \$1,000 extra, that is \$5 million but only covers 1 year's deficit. Every one of the 5,000 ratepayers would have to pay an extra \$1,000 every year of the 10-year long term financial plan.

Reductions for one rate category mean big increases for others. I.e., higher than even the 200% presented from p39/43 in the 23/3/22 meeting long term financial plan (which should be the document online for public consultation).

ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY suggested \$ changes.

Practical & Achievable Suggestions:

TO URGENTLY REDUCE:

- \$50 million + estimated deficit.
- Repay loans raised to cover the deficit and cash flow problems:
- To significantly reduce the over 200% rate increase (increasing 110% in the first 2/3 years) to NO MORE than 8-10% in 23/24 and State approved rate peg.
- To restore capacity to responsibly consider new expenditures over the 10-year long term financial plan/s (LTFP)
- ***Please Don't forget: the over 200% rate increase or \$50 million + deficit (LTFP) does NOT allow for any more expenditure for the 10-year long term financial plan, including unexpected weather or other events or more cost-shifting etc. See documents, Chief Executive feedback & meeting recordings.

The Chief Executive has been very clear about NO more expenditure and can't keep using the credit card. Hopefully, the Chief Executive does as he indicated and says NO to any expenditure proposals from all sources. (Unless other expenditure is reduced at that meeting to cover the new apparently more important, necessary, urgent item).

***Please consider that instructions to spend capital budgets asap before year-end and additional expenditure being OK if it reduces future operational expenses must stop as an automatic Chief Executive instruction to staff.

While cash flow has no doubt improved (receipt of untied Financial Assistant Grant), there is a long way to go to improve financial management and TSC's financial stability.

***5,000 odd ratepayers can't afford the aspirational activity & activity belonging to other entities or individuals, especially considering the very large area and the huge areas of non-rate paying national parks and state forests and crown lands.

***Priorities outside Tenterfield township seem to clearly be usable Roads, not 'luxuries' currently redirecting scarce TSC resources.

Our Shire Our Council Initiative

Submission on public exhibition document: Asset Management Strategy 2022 -2032

A: Asset Management Strategy -

Remove all non-mandatory activity in plans/budgets/10-year LTFP: remove all 'service levels' above a reasonable rate increase IMPACT on ratepayers; Remove all activity which is outside the TSC area, or which is the role of another entity.

AND

B: Asset Management Strategy 2022-2032 -

Inconsistent use of TERMS across pages and tables. Page # issue. The majority of AMP assets are excellent, good, moderate/average CONDITION. How much expenditure for these assets is in a 10-year LTFP? SUGGEST REMOVAL

Section A:

1. Remove all non-mandatory activity in Asset Management and other plans/budgets/10-year LTFP. The approximately 5,000 TSC ratepayers cannot afford to take on financial responsibility for activity and expenditure, which are the responsibility of other entities or agencies.

Staff should not be including asset activity or taking responsibility for new assets because they consider TSC will do a better 'job' or manage 'priorities' better.

For ratepayers, the 'better' solution is to remove them altogether from the Long-Term Financial Plans and proposed excessive rate increases.

2. Remove all 'service levels' that rely on an unreasonable rate increase IMPACT on ratepayers, especially non mandatory, whether they reduce future operating expenditure or not. In contrast, the current unreasonable rate increase is minimised, and operational deficits and cash flow issues are brought back under responsible financial management.

TSC ratepayers cannot afford to pay for 'gold plated' service standards.

The attached pie charts clearly show that most assets are in the top 3 condition categories for ALL asset groups.

Please provide the TSC approved policy statement for 'intergenerational equity'.

Please provide the TSC approved policy statement for equity across the TSC area and interest groups.

Please provide the TSC approved policy statement for required/minimum service levels, especially for Road Network (excluding footpaths and cycleways and heritage items that are 'luxury' items).

3. Remove all asset capital and operational activity outside TSC local government area or is the primary role of another entity, including all 'aspirational' wants and needs.

Record the removed budgets/activity in a separate 'advocacy' list without any \$ inclusions in the 10 Year LTFP.

Our Shire Our Council Initiative

TSC ratepayers cannot afford to pay for an activity that belongs to another council, entity, or agency more properly. The NSW government's focus on 'regional' activity does not mean every Council interferes or reallocates scarce resources to regional activity over council area activity.

Please provide a detailed summary of any financial benefit arising from existing regional activity.

4. Including 'Footpaths & Cycleways' within TRANSPORT risks use of scarce \$ which must be allocated to ROAD expenditure as a Shire wide priority.

Suggest 'Footpaths & Cycleways' be moved to Community assets and/or Open Space, Sporting, Reserves, and Recreation grouping.

Do not move the related \$ from roads, culverts, bridges, and causeways.

Footpaths (particularly upgrades, expensive heritage renewals or those outside the main population centres are 'luxury' items that ratepayers cannot afford.)

5. As there is a category for Strategic/Investment assets under CORPORATE, which currently includes the industrial subdivision and commercial property, **it would be appropriate to move the Aerodrome, Livestock Saleyards and CBD assets (including School of Arts and RSL hall etc.?) to Strategic/Investment Assets.**

6. For councillors and ratepayers to understand TSC's success to date in strategic/investment/entrepreneurial assets priority, please provide reports on success to date and planned revenue, expenditure, cash flow in LTFPs

6.1 **Please provide a report on the TSC Industrial Estate**, showing the total \$ activity to date, including the sale price of every lot, total expenses from reclassification of property, survey, sales activity, property manager expenses etc.

6.2 With the inclusion of identified assets into the strategic/investment category, **it should be possible also to integrate at least 2 manager roles, further reducing TSC expenditure commitments.**

6.3 **Please provide a report on the TSC Industrial Estate, showing the total \$ activity now included in the 10-year long term financial plan**, including relevant Manager expenses, so ratepayers and councillors may identify activity to reduce the budget/s.

6.4 **Please provide similar reports on the Livestock Saleyards, CBD assets, Land 'assets.'**

7 **Quarantine all reductions in net expenditure** (there may be some estimated revenue associated with activity proposed for removal) and use to reduce the estimated operational deficit and the staff recommended, but unaffordable general rates increase over 200% as per the 10 Year long term financial plan (being 110% in the 1st 3 years).

7.1 **Please create a separate group for 'quarantined' expenditure** (which may have been previously approved within 20/21 and future year budgets) to a new group that requires a new council resolution before any further expenditure or commitment.

8 **Please update policies etc, so that any concept of 'sustainability' doesn't just consider TSC position but also clearly considers the 5,000 odd ratepayers.** They are being treated unfairly as the 'balancing item' for the apparent failure of financial risk management to date.

i.e., an estimated \$50 million deficit over the LTFP or an over 200% increase in general rates?!!

Our Shire Our Council Initiative

Section B:

1.1 Asset Management Strategy 2022-2032 - Inconsistent use of general terms across pages and tables.

While reviewing this public exhibition document, the inconsistent use of many terms across pages and tables **makes it very confusing to the reader.**

Also, there seems to be a problem with page numbering, which does not help ease of use for readers.

Q: Can these issues be updated, please (or was something missed)?

1.2 Asset Management Strategy 2022-2032 - **Inconsistent use of ASSET CONDITION** terms across pages and tables

Asset Condition term #3 uses Average = preventative maintenance work required. P16/115

In the individual AMPs, condition #3 shows as 'moderate'. E.g., Transport p22/115

Q: Is the description for #3 consistent = preventative maintenance work required, despite using different terms? E.g., Average and Moderate terms are used on different pages.

Q: Do the individual AMPs (i.e., not the summaries in this document) use consistent terms as per p16.

Q: **Why do components move between different groupings.** E.g., strategic/investment (industrial subdivision, commercial property), culverts & causeways, parking, aerodrome, other road assets, cemeteries, libraries, public amenities, Open Space, Reserves, recreation, streetscaping, VIC, CBD assets(?), corporate or leadership? works depot/workshop, fuel facilities, equipment (depot?) equipment & furniture? Other assets (land, earthworks, etc.??), communications, community buildings,

Q: **Can you please use consistent terms** across the different categorisations used in this & subordinate documents, including how they align with TSC annual report and financial reports and the 10-year long term financial plan/s?

2. Page numbers don't seem to be consistent throughout the document. Very confusing for a complicated document. Please check page numbers and modify where necessary with a new version.

2.1 The Majority of assets in Asset Management Plan summaries show as "excellent, good, moderate/average" condition.

Q: How much expenditure for these assets (with conditions 1-3) is in the 10-year LTFP?

Suggest removal or defer till 24/25 (at least), allowing time to improve TSC financial risk management, reduce the need to consider the staff recommended rates increase of over 200% (110% in the 1st three years) while doing maintenance as per asset condition #4.

2.2 P16/115 asset condition table/s include "Poor Condition" = renewal/replacement due, increasing reactive maintenance:

Our Shire Our Council Initiative

2.3 As the Asset Condition 'pie charts' P17-19/115 also show for all-AMPs the condition predominantly conditions 1-3 (all pie charts showing at least 70% with asset conditions 1-3), this supports #3.1 that any expenditure related to the assets reflected in conditions 1-3 should be removed from expenditure budgets for 21/22, 22/23, 23/24 as a start to reducing the unsatisfactory financial position and the inappropriate staff proposals for over 200% rate increases (with 110% in the first 3 years).

/Ends

A5

TSC

Cc Mayor Petrie, Deputy Mayor Macnish

Feedback on components of the Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) document Workforce Management Strategy 2021 – 2025

1). The Workforce Management Strategy document **should include the Organisation Chart**, with key data;

- *last specific approving resolution #;
- *number of full time equivalent positions (FTEs)
- *\$ budgets by manager unit and in total
- *vacancies
- *for each of the 10 years of the long term financial plan (LTFP)

2). The current Organisational Chart (online version dated 16.3.22 – TSC>your council>about council>council structure) showing **3 executive positions with >\$200,000 remuneration** (TSC annual reports) and **12 manager positions on 'heading line'** with another 1-2 Manager positions reporting to another manager seems excessive for a small rural council with approximately 5,000 ratepayers.

Q: How many manager positions are currently represented? 12, 13, or 14 or ??

Q: Why are there managers reporting to managers or perhaps inconsistent uses of terms in the organisation chart and the staff position declarations (also appropriately online)?

3). There should be **specific motions presented for councillor consideration** which refer to the approved organisational structure, FTEs, \$ remuneration budgets by manager unit and in total, not Generic draft motions/resolutions/minutes which may approve all IP&R documents as one consolidated approval. Explicit resolutions (such as happens for the rates by category) represent improved corporate governance for councillors, ratepayers and residents.

4). Reference should be included for the **Delegations Register and Position Descriptions** as these are key components of any Workforce Management Strategy. This reference should include the specific resolution/minute/approval numbers for each component and version control.

Q: could the Chief Executive please advise when the Delegations Register will be available on line and that ratepayers, residents and councillors can access it at the office in the meantime, including requesting a copy (electronic or paper)?

The Local Government Act **requires review of the Delegations Register within the 1st 12 months of each term.**

Q: Could councillors please ask the chief Executive to **provide the resolution number for the last term/s review**

Q: could councillors please ask the Chief Executive **to provide a report for a review of the Delegations Register** prior to finalisation of the IP&R documents as delegations are a key component of Council (councillors) controls and often directly affect position classifications.

5). While the Chief Executive (CE) is responsible for all staff, information on the **award classifications and the position descriptions (PD) should be available online** (to reduce disturbing the staff with enquiries) as these improve transparency for all.
The PD including the position/contract classification and delegations from the CE are not confidential as it is good corporate governance for all positions and contracts to be advertised on TSC website as well as elsewhere.

6). The Workforce Management Strategy 2021 – 2025 **needs to include:**

- *specific reference to **ratepayers and residents being the ultimate client group** for the whole workforce,

- *being responsible to ratepayers & residents for a **consistently reasonable impact of any rates increase.**

- *a particular focus on **'efficient & effective financial management' with a focus on:**

 - # TSC physical area and primary responsibilities only

 - # staying not only 'within approved budgets' but looking to reduce expenditure

 - # being aware of the current financial position and need to reduce expenditure

- * **'relevant skill, experience & education'** for a more practical focus than current content

- *a focus on **'must do'** not **'want to do'** or **'would like to do'**.

- *Operational Plan documents & monthly reports include specific responsibilities for every position:

 - # eg **"4.3.6.6 Manage the Organisational Leadership Service of Council in a financially responsible manner in line with budget allocations".**

^ The 'catch' or 'out' here is **'in line with budget allocations**.

^With the current financial issues, a **stretch performance focus would be "at reduced budget allocations"**.

In the current financial situation the **2 phrases could be seen as contradictory**.

^ in my experience a documented staff focus on **'spending the approved budget'** never ends well financially.

#eg **"4.3.3.2 Develop, manage & deliver the Workforce Management Strategy.**

The March update shows "all vacancies are now being reviewed by the CE and currently on hold unless extenuating circumstances."

^BUT: 2 positions currently advertised online

^ 2 positions with significant Operational Plan expenditure have apparently been 'recently' appointed

7). All IP&R documents, including the Workforce Management Strategy 2021-2025 should ensure the whole workforce has a **focus on the following IPART requirements**, especially where a special rate variation is proposed:

- *proposed special rate variation has a **REASONABLE IMPACT** on RATEPAYERS

- *RATEPAYER ACCEPTANCE of the **RATING STRUCTURE**

- *CONSULTATION COMMENSURATE with **IMPACT** on RATEPAYERS

NOTE: **"commensurate"** -especially when the staff proposed rate increase is in excess of 200% over 10 years.

NOTE: it is TSC ratepayers, not adjoining councils' ratepayers.

See TSC annual report & Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data for population income, mortgage, ages etc.

While 'Ratepayer' includes staff, councillor & contractor ratepayers, there may be a perceived 'conflicted' status with respect to staff proposed and councillor possible approval of special rate

variations and the focus needs to be on the 'other' ratepayers and how best to communicate & consult with ALL ratepayers.

Eg Possibly via a councillor approved consultation survey direct to the ratepayer nominated contact address (for rates notices).

8). Include the principle of '**no surprises**' '**courtesy**' and '**provision of timely, relevant information**' **not only for senior staff but also for councillors, ratepayers and residents** – with ratepayers being those bearing the currently significant proposed financial consequences of the administration activity to date and who only very recently elected a new council (without being aware of a potential staff recommendation for a staff proposed over 200% special rate variation within 2 months of the finalisation of the election/s).

Eg of the principle above:

Q: exactly which staff members and councillors were aware in 2021 of the potential size of the 2022 staff proposed special rate variations from 48%, 58%, 79.56% at & February 2022 meeting to over 200% increases over the 10 year long term financial plan (LTFP), with 110 % being due in the 1st 2/4 years.

Q: How do the Workforce Management Plan 2021-2025 performance review & career progression activities for individual positions reflect this apparent significant knowledge being kept 'in house' – initially presumably by staff, but possibly also by the previous term Mayor & possibly councillors?

Q: Which of the three recent Chief Executives were aware of the quantum of the special rate variation prior to the recent council election? Reports of 'a SRV may be needed' or "a SRV will be needed" doesn't cover the issue, especially considering the 'effusive' public news comments on how well TSC was performing.

Q: Can the Chief Executive provide a report on why this significant data was apparently kept 'in house'?

Q: Can the Chief Executive or the previous Mayor provide advice on how the lack of this information may have affected the potential councillor candidates and the election results for the recent 2021/22 council election?

Q: Why did the 7 February 2022 agenda report include **specific details for councillors & ratepayers** on the then staff proposals for 48%, 58%, 79.56% rate increases but the 23 March 2022 agenda, which increased the staff proposed special rate variation by 120% (over the 10 years) **only included information relating to the over 200% increase in the heading of p 39-43 of the long term financial plan document?**

Q: Can the Chief Executive please demonstrate how councillors, ratepayers & residents **can have confidence in an 'open & accountable' administration** when between 7 February 2022 & 23 March 2022, the staff proposed special rate variation not only increased by 120% but the agenda report also indicated the alternative was a \$50 million deficit (p9/43 LTFP). Other communications since also making it clear there is NO additional expenditure possible than what is currently included in the IP&R documents?

9). **Remove 'expansive' terms** from within all IP&R documents, including the Workforce Management Strategy 2021- 2025, including the following currently unaffordable 'aspirational' inclusions:

* 'employer of choice' – this is a small rural council with approx. 5,000 ratepayers. Can't afford this.

* 'empower' – likely to encourage focus to expand the PD role, Delegation is only 'empower'.

* 'flexible balance between work & life' – currently unaffordable & priority must be the role for TSC

* 'competitive remuneration' – every organisation can't afford 'competitive' remuneration, & TSC can't.

* 'service levels our communities would like to see delivered' – 'aspirational' & unaffordable

* '& service levels that Councils would like to be in a position to deliver' – why plural? Remove

* a focus on ratepayer privacy – eg NO suggestions on reducing private expenditure to pay big rate increase

* a focus on ratepayer privacy re request for time to pay as a staff solution to huge proposed rate increases

Q: what is the estimated cost of the Actions included for 22/23, 23/24, 24/25.

I would have thought many of these documents (being the likely output of the actions) would already be directly available via the NSW government agencies and some seem to duplicate one another?.

Q: Why does TSC need a Manager role to undertake these actions?

Q: Are these 'aspirational' & unaffordable especially if they create unaffordable expectations when reports are prepared and presented?

Q: Are there any positions over the past 3 years where the role, delegations, titles been amended to achieve a higher award/contract classification or potential for over award payment or higher starting payment point?

Q: If so, what was the increased remuneration budget?

10). REPORTING: All reporting related to the Workforce Management Strategy 2021-2025 **should be reported to Council, via a non confidential agenda report** at least quarterly, but more frequently when the reports are being prepared. Components of any report which fits the 'confidential' categories could be excluded as required.

Reporting to the Audit committee isn't sufficient as little detail comes from this committee reports to council.

11). Administrative Feedback:

- (I) All IP&R documents should include **version control** including the last approving resolution #
- (II) All IP&R documents should include the **total \$ consequences**
- (III) All IP&R documents should include **consistent terminology & position titles**
- (IV) Add another of the 'many known & unknown challenges' being
 - i. An aging population
 - ii. Low mean income
 - iii. Economic impacts on ratepayers & residents which require reasonable rates.
- (V) **Amend** Objective sentence to include "within rate increases with a reasonable RATEPAYER impact"

- (VI) **Amend** 'accountability' value to 'accepting responsibility for providing quality, essential, affordable services & timely information for ratepayers and councillors.
- (VII) Amend the 'excellence' value to include "and reasonable rate increases"
- (VIII) Include somewhere
 - i. that 'the ratepayers will not be considered as the balancing item' and
 - ii. 'records of community consultation will identify #s of staff, councillors & others attending
 - iii. all consultations will include the question of 'how much extra rates will you pay"
 - iv. that sufficient data (which is agreed by non staff, non councillor attendees) is kept to identify which groups or areas have the majority of their ratepayers supporting particular services, as an option to apply any rates increase just to that group/area not all TSC.
 - v. that consultations involving more than 8-10% proposed rate increases for one year will include direct communication with a properly constructed survey (approved by councillors) delivered to every ratepayers nominated mailing address & provision is made in the budget.
- (IX) Documents structure
 - a. Please stop using block colour backgrounds and extensive use of colour in these documents
 - i. *most of the time the document readability is significantly compromised.
 - ii. The cost of printing full page or half page colour or colour photos is more than b/w
 - 1. \$1 per page was mentioned by a staff member recently as if this was OK?
 - 2. Perhaps every document should show the cost of manhours etc to produce & the cost to print (paper, copying, collating, distributing)
 - b. Consider the necessary size of tables & charts to significantly reduce the number of pages
 - c. Include a relevant summary of the attachment content in the covering agenda report, recognising the HUGE numbers of pages the councillors, other staff & ratepayers etc are being asked to read

Fyi as an attempt to potentially reduce the current financial issues to a level where the rates are reasonable and affordable for ratepayers – ie no more than 8-10% for one year while all activity is more closely reviewed.

 (please text if no answer)

A6

Our Shire Our Council Initiative

13 April 2022

Daryl Buckingham

CEO

Tenterfield Shire Council

Hand Delivered and by email

Ref: Collaborative Approach to protect the financial future of the Tenterfield Shire

Mr Buckingham,

As indicated by our public meeting attended by hundreds of concerned residents on 9 April, a rapidly growing group of concerned Tenterfield ratepayers and residents disapprove of the current direction, plans and operational activities of the Tenterfield Shire Council. This includes the output from the Administration team and Councillors representing ratepayers. This group do not believe the Council is focused on protecting the financial and social future of the Tenterfield Shire. We reject the proposed 109% rate rise. The community wants these concerns urgently addressed to potentially avoid economic outcomes that detrimentally impact the Tenterfield Shire ratepayers and residents in the future.

Those ratepayers and residents are now collaborating to represent these concerns to influence the existing Tenterfield Shire Council plans and actions positively. The objective is to avoid the Tenterfield Shire Council's currently projected (budgeted) financial deficit and instead build a plan to remediate the debt. The goal is to work together with the Tenterfield Shire Council to ensure a stronger financial future and beneficial outcome for all involved.

RFI Request

The plans provided by the Tenterfield Shire Council are under review by our subject matter experts, and a consolidated response will follow shortly. Please provide your updates from last weeks round of meetings so our comments are based on all information available.

The potential budget presented is of the biggest concern. We believe it gives grounds for the Request for information outlined below. Further, we think it also requires immediate corrective action by the administration team to accurately reflect the wishes of this community – including individual and commercial ratepayers and residents.

Our Plan for Best Outcomes

Our Management Team has also been made aware by a concerned ratepayer that they HAVE written to the NSW Premier and Minister of Local Government and requested an administrator be appointed immediately.

Our initiative does not see this option as the best outcome. We hope that further consideration of the economic options available to the Tenterfield Shire Council will enable further discussion and respect for the community's wishes.

Therefore, we continue to reach out to you as the Chief Executive hoping that the Tenterfield Shire Council Administration, which serves the community, will see the benefits of and agree to this collaborative process.

Next Steps

This next step ahead for all of us is crucial and potentially our best and last opportunity to avoid administration and subsequent amalgamation.

www.osoci.org - info@osoci.org - 0439640512

Our Shire Our Council Initiative

We have a chance for growth. We have members on this new team who have experienced similar challenges in other shires and worked with respective councils to steer administration through an economic transformation and positive future. We believe we can transition Tenterfield in the same way.

Our Core Team (plus Focus Groups) consists of a highly credentialled number of Subject Matter Experts (SME) in a wide range of areas such as (but not limited to): Finance, Accounting, LG Operation, Health, Engineering, Mining, Legal, Tourism, Capital Projects, Business Process Optimisation... to name a few.

This talent pool is available right here. Treated as a valuable resource and used in the right way, it can help make a difference for the benefit of this community—a top-shelf consulting team FOR FREE.

We trust you see the upside of this proposition and the enormous opportunity.

Urgent Actions

In preparation for a constructive collaboration, we cordially request the following information and response be prepared and submitted by your team as a matter of urgency:

- Confirmation of new financial modelling (including age demographic forecasts) and the corresponding budget outlining an immediate 15% reduction in Tenterfield Shire Council expenditure – particularly in non-core business to achieve profitability.
- Confirmation of hiring freeze and immediate review of non-core roles, including contractors and casual staff.
- Explanation of how the Tenterfield Shire Council will be reviewing and immediately reducing unnecessary expenses that do not benefit ratepayers.
- Planning a shared services approach within Council for more efficient use of available staff and financial resources.
- Guarantee all capital projects underway are solvent (self funded – not cross funded). If not, works to stop, and financial modelling is undertaken to ensure budget forecasts are met.
- Confirmation that NO council assets are being sold off without community consultation.
- Open and transparent dealings without violating commercial in confidence when required.
- Outline a fiscal plan to better manage rates being paid and recovered (rather than written off) and reduce existing rate arrears.

We expect and are looking forward to a timely response.

Respectfully submitted

Our Shire Our Council initiative

CC:

- Premier Dominic Perrottet
- Deputy Prime Minister of Australia Barnaby Joyce Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development Member for New England
- Minister for Local Government, Wendy Tuckerman
- Janelle Saffin MP, Member for Lismore

This letter will be published to the OSOCI database and available on our website and social media in our pledge for open and transparent dealings.

www.osoci.org - info@osoci.org - 0439640512

TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL	
14 APR 2022	
Action	Info
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CCO	
DI	

Daryl Buckingham
TSC CEO
hand delivered
Tenterfield

POSTCODE

2372

A7

Council
Manager Asset Management
Mayor Petrie, Deputy Mayor Macnish

Submission on public exhibition document: Asset Management Strategy 2022 -2032

A: Asset Management Strategy -

Remove all non-mandatory activity in plans/budgets/10 year LTFP: remove all 'service levels' above a reasonable rate increase IMPACT on ratepayers; Remove all activity which is outside TSC area or is the role of another entity. AND

B: Asset Management Strategy 2022-2032 -

Inconsistent use of TERMS across pages and tables. Page # issue. Majority of AMP assets are excellent, good, moderate/average CONDITION, How much expenditure for these assets is in 10 year LTFP? SUGGEST REMOVAL

Section A:

#1 Remove all non-mandatory activity in Asset Management and other plans/budgets/10 year

LTFP. The approximately 5,000 TSC ratepayers cannot afford to take on financial responsibility for activity and expenditure which are the responsibility of other entities or agencies.

Staff should not be including asset activity or taking responsibility for new assets because they consider TSC will do a better 'job' or manage 'priorities' better.

For ratepayers the 'better' solution is to remove them altogether from the Long Term Financial Plans and proposed excessive rate increases.

#2 remove all 'service levels' which rely on an unreasonable rate increase IMPACT on ratepayers, especially those which are non-mandatory, whether they reduce future operating expenditure or not, while the current unreasonable rate increase is minimised and operational deficits and cash flow issues are brought back under responsible financial management.

TSC ratepayers cannot afford to pay for 'gold plated' service standards.

The attached pie charts show clearly that for ALL asset groups the majority of assets are in the top 3 condition categories.

Please provide the TSC approved policy statement for 'intergenerational equity'.

Please provide the TSC approved policy statement for equity across TSC area and interest groups.

Please provide the TSC approved policy statement for required/minimum service levels especially for Road Network (excluding footpaths and cycleways and heritage items which are 'luxury' items).

#3 Remove all asset capital and operational activity which is outside TSC local government area or is the primary role of another entity, including all 'aspirational' wants and needs.

Record the removed budgets/activity in a separate 'advocacy' list without any \$ inclusions in the 10 Year LTFP.

TSC ratepayers cannot afford to pay for activity which more properly belong to another council or entity or agency. The NSW government focus on 'regional' activity does not mean every council interferes or reallocates scarce resources to regional activity over council area activity.

Please provide a detailed summary of any financial benefit arising from any existing regional activity.

#4 Including 'Footpaths & Cycleways' within TRANSPORT risks use of scarce \$ which must be allocated to ROAD expenditure as a Shire wide priority.

Suggest 'Footpaths & Cycleways' be moved to Community assets and/or Open Space, Sporting, Reserves, Recreation grouping.

Do not move the related \$ from Road, culverts, bridges, causeways.

Footpaths (particularly upgrades, expensive heritage renewals or those outside the main population centres are 'luxury' items which ratepayers cannot afford.)

#5 As it appears there is a category for **Strategic/Investment assets** under CORPORATE, which currently includes the industrial subdivision and commercial property, **it would be appropriate to move the Aerodrome, Livestock Saleyards and CBD assets (including School of Arts and RSL hall etc?) to Strategic/Investment Assets.**

#6. In order for councillors and ratepayers to understand TSC success to date in strategic/investment/entrepreneurial assets priority, please provide reports on success to date and planned revenue, expenditure, cash flow in LTTPs

#6.1 please provide a report on the TSC Industrial Estate, showing the total \$ activity to date, including sale price of every lot, total expenses from reclassification of property, survey, sales activity, property manager expenses etc.

#6.2 With the inclusion of identified assets into the strategic/investment category it should be possible to also integrate at least 2 manager roles, further reducing TSC expenditure commitments.

#6.3 Please provide a report on the TSC industrial Estate, showing the total \$ activity now included in the 10 year long term financial plan, including relevant Manager expenses, so ratepayers and councillors may identify activity to reduce the budget/s.

#6.4 Please provide similar reports on the Livestock Saleyards, CBD assets, Land 'assets'

#7 Quarantine all reductions in net expenditure (there may be some estimated revenue associated with activity proposed for removal) and use to reduce the estimated operational deficit and the staff recommended but unaffordable general rates increase over 200% as per the 10 Year long term financial plan (being 110% in the 1st 3 years).

#7.1 Please create a separate group for 'quarantined' expenditure (which may have been previously approved within 20/21 an future year budgets) **to a new group which requires a new council resolution prior to any further expenditure or commitment.**

#8 Please update policies etc so that any concept of 'sustainability' doesn't just consider TSC position but also clearly considers the 5,000 odd ratepayers who are being treated unfairly as the 'balancing item' for the apparent failure of financial risk management to date.
i.e. an estimated \$50 million deficit over the LTTP or an over 200% increase in general rates?!!

B:

#1.1 Asset Management Strategy 2022-2032 - Inconsistent use of general terms across pages and tables.

While reviewing this public exhibition document, the inconsistent use of many terms across pages and tables makes it very confusing to the reader.

Also there seems to be a problem with page numbering, not helping ease of use for readers.

Q: Can these issues be updated please (or have I missed something)?

#1.2 Asset Management Strategy 2022-2032 - Inconsistent use of ASSET CONDITION terms across pages and tables

Asset Condition term #3 uses **Average** = preventative maintenance work required. P16/115
In the individual AMPs condition #3 shows as **'moderate'**. E.g. Transport p22/115

Q: Is the description for #3 consistent = preventative maintenance work required, despite different terms being used? E.g Average and Moderate terms used in different pages.

Q: Do the individual AMPs (ie not the summaries in this document) use consistent terms as per p16.

Q: why do components move between different groupings. Eg strategic/investment (industrial subdivision, commercial property), culverts & causeways, parking, aerodrome, other road assets, cemeteries, libraries, public amenities, Open Space, Reserves, recreation, street scaping, VIC, CBD assets(?), corporate or leadership?, works depot/workshop, fuel facilities, equipment (depot?) equipment & furniture?, Other assets (land, earthworks, etc??), communications, community buildings,

Q: Can you please use consistent terms across the different categorisations used in this & subordinate documents including how they align with TSC annual report and financial reports and the 10 year long term financial plan/s?

#2 – page numbers don't seem to be consistent throughout the document. Very confusing for a complicated document. Please check page numbers and modify where necessary with a new version #.


#3.1 The Majority of assets in Asset Management Plan summaries show as "excellent, good, moderate/average" condition.

Q: How much expenditure for these assets (with conditions 1-3) is in the 10 year LTFP?
Suggest removal or defer till 24/25 (at least) allowing time to improve TSC financial risk management, reduce the need to consider the staff recommended rates increase of over 200% (110% in the 1st three years), while doing maintenance as per asset condition #4.

#3.2 P16/115 asset condition table/s include "Poor Condition" = renewal/replacement due, increasing reactive maintenance:

#3.3 As the Asset Condition 'pie charts' P17-19/115 also show for all AMPs the condition is predominantly conditions 1-3 (all pie charts showing at least 70% with asset conditions 1-3), this supports #3.1 that any expenditure related to the assets reflected in conditions 1-3 should be removed from expenditure budgets for 21/22, 22/23, 23/24 as a start to reducing the unsatisfactory financial position and the inappropriate staff proposals for over 200% rate increases (with 110% in the first 3 years).

FYI, with respect

 Please use text if no answer)

A8

Council
CC Mayor Petrie, Deputy Mayor Macnish,

NOTE: ratepayers are likely to think the huge rate increase won't happen when they receive their 22/23 rate notices.

SUGGEST: an information sheet (agreed by councillors) is included with all rate notices for 22/23 re any special rate increase still included in the IP&R documents, in particular the long term financial plan.

Summary Feedback on Community Strategic Plan Tenterfield 2032:

- 1) Change heading to clarify it is TSC not Tenterfield Town.
Out of Town ratepayers already think there is too much expenditure in the town area at the expense of rural roads. Many in TSC rarely go to Tenterfield Town at all, so don't use many if any of the town facilities.
- 2) **Primary focus of ALL IP&R documents needs to be on RATEPAYERS** who ultimately pay the increased mandatory rates and mandatory charges and **IPART requirements need to be front & centre** whenever there is a proposed special rate variation in the 10 year \$ plan.
- 3) **Remove 'aspirational' & low priority** (to ratepayers) expenditure activity outside TSC area & TSC direct primary role. Remove definite words; will, ensure, has, enhanced, other entity activity.
- 4) Remove *'we would like our community to progress over the next 10 years'*
Unaffordable and unreasonable for Ratepayers, especially for 2022 -2032.
- 5) **Explicit evidence** needed from community meetings & selected participant surveys; numbers asking for what; who, where, ratepayer? Ensure key information is provided prior to consultation.
- 6) Clarity needed for 'motherhood' statements, to separate 'aspirational' & not TSC direct financial role to an appendix, do not include in the main part of any IP&R document. Nil in expenditure. **Don't use terms which create 'expectations' which are beyond TSC financial capability.**
All expenditure inclusions MUST be affordable & reasonable for RATEPAYERS & the 'commensurate' consultation MUST include direct contact with all ratepayers (with key data & a properly constructed survey').
This is Still not happening. Ratepayers have to rely on grapevine.
Most Ratepayers would still be unaware of possible unaffordable rate increase.
- 7) Why is the focus still on *'build on ...original plan'*?
Apparently the 'original plan' results in a \$50 mill deficit or an unaffordable unreasonable rate increase/s of 48%, 58%, 79.56%, over 200% - with NO provision for more/new/extended expenditure over the 10 year \$ plan? Exclude from all expenditure & content. I don't consider anything over 8-10% for ONE year is reasonable.

Prior budget approvals must be reviewed again and remove 'aspirational', unaffordable service levels, 'gold plated taps', etc. eg fishing platform, youth hub, non-profitable business activity etc. Across ALL TSC not just rates.

- 8) **Why did January 2022 online survey results apparently get ignored?**
Result included: NO rate increases & YES to service reductions.
How do ratepayers know about these surveys & possible rate increases?
How many other surveys to selected groups, committees, sport groups etc have been issued and

the feedback included in IP&R documents at RATEPAYERS expense & NO RATEPAYER KNOWLEDGE of survey, questions, evidenced results? URGENT CHANGE NEEDED.

- 9) **Administrative suggestions include:** version control; specific Resolution #s; reduce all IP&R documents size, duplication & colouring in; SIGNIFICANTLY improve the community consultation with a focus on RATEPAYER inclusion; remove all 'aspiration' & use of 'definite' words which create unaffordable expectations, including work for other entities, which usually expands TSC workforce unnecessarily & complicates senior office focus on TSC ratepayer priorities; remove unnecessary expenditure.
- TSC administration MUST not develop I&R documents which are beyond RATEPAYERS capacity to pay.
- See ABS data on TSC council area and townships etc for Capacity to pay & affordability for ratepayers.

More detailed feedback, questions, examples, see continuing email.

- 1). **Suggest heading page (& title) is clearly "Tenterfield Shire Council",** not Tenterfield Township, Region. "Tenterfield" is too vague a term to use.
- Use of 'Tenterfield' alone could be perceived as a continuing focus on the township above the whole shire.
- The correct term is suggested as **"Tenterfield Shire Council"** and the whole emphasis needs to be on primary role of TSC within its area and the impact of any proposed rate increases on Ratepayers arising from all expenditure possibilities contained within the huge multiple IP&R documents.

- 2). **Q: Where is the primary focus on "RATEPAYERS" in all the IP&R documents, especially this primary document?**
- It is essential to include RATEPAYERS as the primary client group, which pays mandatory rates and charges.**

Where there is any staff recommended Special Rate Variation in the IP&R documents, including the 10 year long term financial plan, the IPART focus should be explicitly followed.

The IPART requirements are more extensive than what is required for the IP&R documents apparently.

The approximately 5,000 RATEPAYERS are the only community members who will be affected by the impact, the reasonableness or capacity to pay the special rate variation.

NOT the grey nomads passing through. Not various sporting groups who want to visit.

NOT the Stanthorpe located tourism business or residents who may benefit from TSC tourism activity.

While working with other entities can be a good idea, it shouldn't be their aspirations as the priority.

3. The impact on affected ratepayers must be reasonable, having regard to both the current rate levels, existing ratepayer base and the proposed purpose of the variation. The council's Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan should:

- clearly show the impact of any rate rises upon the community,
- demonstrate the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay rates, and
- establish that the proposed rate increases are affordable having regard to the community's capacity to pay.

In assessing the impact, IPART may also consider:

⁵ <https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Local-Government/For-Councils/Apply-for-a-special-variation-or-minimum-rate-increase>

3). Tenterfield Shire Council (TSC) is a small rural council at the top edge of NSW. I suggest 'quality' is too aspirational, especially when ratepayers are being asked to pay over 48%, 58%, 79.56% and recently 200% increase in rates, with the majority (110% in the first few years) Perhaps just use key terms: Nature; Heritage; Rural Lifestyle or "living naturally with our environment, heritage and community" or ?? TSC and their approx. 5,000 ratepayers can't afford 'quality' anything.

These 'aspirations' and 'quality' and 'ensure' type inclusions need to be removed to an attachment at the end which clearly identifies these themes, goals, priorities will be left to other entities, agencies and individuals. (as anticipated by the State)

Q: Why did the staff recommended rate increase grow by 120% between 7 February and 23 March 2022? (less than TWO MONTHS). Eg Exactly what additional expenditure was included or what additional 'provisions' were made?

Q: what confidence can councillors and Ratepayers (other than staff & councillor ratepayers who may be perceived as 'conflicted') have that the current over 200% unreasonable and unaffordable (to ratepayers) staff proposed rate increase is now correct, especially when content in the IP&R and agenda documents and staff comments clearly indicate that no additional expenditure is possible over the 10 year \$ plan than what is already included?

4). "how we would like our community to progress over the next ten years"
IP&R documents need to focus more on ratepayers and the affordability of staff recommended rates increases.

Ratepayers & residents are TSC primary 'client' groups with Ratepayers being the group which directly provides the rates and mandatory charges income.

Ratepayers who have rental/lease properties may not be able to pass on the rates increases.

5). All consultation meeting reports need to provide explicit attendance numbers (staff; councillors; others) and who supports/proposes what and how much extra they are prepared to pay in rates & charges, to avoid the current unreasonable and unaffordable expectations.

- 6). **SUGGEST:** Further clarity is needed for these included statements:
"Council is not able to deliver the community's vision on its own and needs to work together with many groups to achieve the desired outcomes."
This must include ALL ratepayers. Ratepayers must have visibility of all groups TSC is working with.

"the plan also outlines the valuable & critical partnerships that can assist us in achieving the visions contained in the plan."
All 'visions' must be affordable for RATEPAYERS" Ratepayers must have visibility of these partnerships.

"the goals of this plan will not be possible without working together with the NSW State Government agencies, community groups, non-government organisations, businesses & members of the community."
Full TSC cost of each goal must 1st go to Council prior to activity"
- SUGGEST:** there needs to be a **TSC policy documenting just how this works** as current practice appears to keep the ratepayers 'in the dark' for many consultation & other planning activity, sometimes until far too late to ensure the staff recommended rate increases remain a reasonable and affordable impact on ratepayers.
- Eg: NO easily accessible information to community for 23 March 2022 staff recommended rate increase.**
While the 7 February 2022 agenda **did include reference to the % staff recommended rate increase**, the **23 March 2022 agenda papers were silent about the 120% further increase** – except for a heading line in a financial table on p39/43 onwards (Long Term Financial Plan).
- Eg: recent emailed consultation survey with tourism and business, which was invisible to most ratepayers,** which apparently included individuals and business entities outside TSC area & responsibility, had no media release, no council resolution etc All Business should pay directly not via TSC rates and mandatory charges.
RATEPAYERS are missing from the information once again?
We don't know how many were emailed or the source for this or other staff initiated email surveys?.
- Q:** Why does the administration seem to consider ratepayers primary source of essential information will be the grapevine?
- Eg. Recent community consultation meetings** around the Shire where there was **NO direct contact with the ratepayers**, other than a list of meeting dates/locations on the website and eventually a media release (which still isn't on TSC website, with its distribution list, as has been the norm for media releases).
- Eg** even when an **additional document was provided at the community meetings**, the papers were left in the centre of the table and the 3 year rate increase of 110% **wasn't automatically raised**.
Nor was the 10 year proposed rate increase in excess of 200% raised, although this is a component of the IP&R documents via the 10 year long term financial plan. **WHY?**
- Q:** **Why was an email consultation/survey undertaken for tourism & business (although still NO reference to the key issue of the 2022 over 48% - 200% staff proposed rate increase, with 110% in 1st few years) but NO direct email at a minimum contact for, ratepayers. (using all emails held by TSC – ie given to TSC for various TSC business matters)?**

TSC does have a primary contact for all ratepayers – in order to issue rate notices.
what is an additional \$10,000 when we are considering a \$50 million deficit?

7). Q: WHY is there a continuing staff/document focus on 'build upon the long-term planning that commenced with the original plan' when apparently the previous versions have apparently resulted in a staff estimate of a \$50 million deficit or staff recommended unreasonable and unsustainable (for ratepayers) rate increases of 48%, 58%, 79.56%, over 200% over the 10 year \$ plan, with 110% in the 1st 2/4 years?

NOTE: In my opinion (which includes feedback from many ratepayers), a permanent rate increase over 8-10% for 1 year ONLY is the most which could be considered, while the very new Council gets full information and implements improved corporate governance and financial management controls.

Q: exactly which staff members (including all 3 Chief Executives within the 2020/2022 financial years) and which councillors knew of the possible size of the 2022 recommended rate increases, during 2021?
le prior to the recent election.

Q: exactly which person decided to keep this information 'in house' and what effect did this have on councillor nominations and the election result?

Q: is keeping information of this significance 'in house' an act which is or could be seen to be 'ultra vires' under the electoral legislation and policy?

8). Q: WHY did the January 2022 online survey seemingly get ignored, particularly with the NO to rate increases and YES to service reductions?

NOTE: many ratepayers outside Tenterfield township seem to have difficulty thinking about what services they are happy to reduce – NOT because they want to keep all of the existing 'services' TSC administration have included in the documents, BUT because they can't think of any 'services' they have requested and received, other than wanting to have safe, usable rural roads and their local transfer station.

NOTE: where 'services' have been requested in the rural areas and a 'service' has been delivered, it is apparently often very different and usually much more expensive than what was requested (increased or unnecessary service/standard, having to redo the work).

NOTE: ask any ratepayer and you will have multiple, very different examples of \$ waste.

Q: what is proposed for the significant expenditure for the villages water supply?

Q: exactly what is currently included in these IP&R documents for Village Concept Plans?

Q: Where are the Village Concept plan @ today available on line?

Suggest: the relevant ratepayers need to be directly consulted as to whether the content is a continuing priority.

Q: What % of 21/22 & 22/23 & 23/24 expenditure is WITHIN Tenterfield township?

Q: What size population is the proposed new Tenterfield water treatment expenditure able to cover and what year does the administration think the actual population will reach these numbers?

Q: Has the **size of the Tenterfield Water treatment plan been established to support lower priority recreational activities on the dam?**

If so, I suggest this is aspirational and urgent review of the past decisions needs to be undertaken as recreation must be low down the priority list over essential expenditure

WATER, SEWERAGE, WASTE mandatory charges ARE part of the rate NOTICE consequences!

Note: based on feedback I have personally received and the **ABS statistics on Tenterfield township**, the ratepayers will be severely impacted by the cumulative charges (water, sewerage, waste and massive general rate increases currently being considered).

While the administration may be focussed on reminding attendees that the proposed rate increases don't relate to water, sewerage or waste, these additional mandatory charges directly extend the unreasonable, unsustainable rate NOTICE increases for ratepayers across the shire.

Ultimately it is the total increase in the rate notice which compromises the RATEPAYERS financial viability, even when it is the 2022 staff proposed general rate increase which may be the most significant at this point.

Reduction of 'aspirational', 'other entity primary responsibility', etc needs review for all aspects of TSC expenditure and cash flow.

The full expenditure consequences over the 10 year \$ plan must be considered prior to any new, proposed or continuing project and councillors must be consulted prior to any commencement, in order to avoid a continuation of these unreasonable and unaffordable rate and mandatory charges increases.

SUGGEST: A council report needs to be provided for all project/service expenditure showing the original and the final budgets/actuals with explanations for why this happened and where the CE identified available source of funds came from.

9). Administrative suggestions:

- a. These significant documents need to **always include a version control segment, with the Council's specific resolution reference.**
- b. These **documents should include some mechanism showing what changes have occurred especially since the previous term versions**, particularly where there are changes in the 'unreadable' maps in the Revenue Policy as well as other key content likely to affect the impact and affordability of rates on TSC ratepayers.
For some documents the majority is new, for others 'track changes' would be simplest, for the remainder **at least a summary of changes is required in an appendix.**
- c. The **size of these IP&R documents needs to be significantly reduced.**
I doubt many of the senior staff or councillors have read and understood all the huge documents presented for review and ultimately Council approval.
The huge size, repeated content, pictures, unnecessary content, block background colours and 'prettiness' is a waste of administrative staff time and printing costs for all.
These are not marketing documents – I doubt anyone would be attracted to an over 200% rate increase.
- d. The **community consultation methods need urgent and significant change.**

- i. Multiple tables with all talking does not work in the halls, which have high reverberation designed for 'one' conversation from the stage or parties
- ii. The separation of attendees into separate tables, with apparently a 'single script' and no end of session summary by the scribe/s at each table, for the table and for the hall, does not demonstrate real consultation and listening to the community
NOTE: our previous experience of the summary of what the community wants and what gets delivered has not been good. Eg Request modified by the administration and often the cost significantly escalates?
NOTE: To my knowledge we have never been given the #s per table/hall of staff, contractors, councillors and others apparently requesting services to not only continue but to increase. How many Ratepayers for each item?
- iii. The continuing practice of asking what the attendees want, especially for the 2022 meetings seems to be 'inappropriate', when since at least 7 February 2022 Extraordinary Council Meeting, the staff and councillors were aware of the significant 10 year, \$50 million deficit or staff recommended special rate variations of 48%, 58%, 79%, 56%, 110% (for 1st few years) and ultimately at least 200% unreasonable and unsustainable potential mandatory rates increases.
- iv. Where are the Ratepayers in this 'community consultation'?
(in particular other than the staff & councillor ratepayers who can be perceived to have a 'conflicted' position and would be in the minority for the approx. 5,000 TSC ratepayers).
i.e. If there is no provision for further expenditure than what is already included in the IP&R documents for the 10 year long term financial plan, why isn't the focus on reducing expenditure and services or service levels?
- v. **Q:** WHY are staff leading the table discussions with what do the attendees want, when TSC is giving options of a \$50 mill deficit or over 200% rates increase over 10 years with 110% in the 1st few years?
NOTE: ratepayers are likely to think the huge rate increase won't happen when they receive their 22/23 rate notices.
SUGGEST: an information sheet (agreed by councillors) is included with all rate notices for 22/23 re any special rate increase included in the IP&R documents, in particular the long term financial plan.
- vi. **Q:** WHY aren't staff asking who is a ratepayer and how much extra in rates will they be willing to pay and what are the ratepayer primary priorities to remain in the documents etc.

NOTE: this relates to ratepayers, other than staff and councillors who may be perceived as 'conflicted', and although the councillor/staff/contractor ratepayers may not represent the majority of the 5,000 ratepayers they may often be the majority at a hall or other meeting.
- vii. **Q:** Why is there no table and hall summary by each TSC scribe from each table, so attendees can have some confidence in the summaries of wants etc when finally added?
- viii. The TSC advisory committees, hall and progress associations DO NOT represent all the ratepayers, they are individual nominations who may reflect their wider community or interest groups.

The same issues as above apply to these committees also.

The minutes from advisory committees should not be treated as more important than any other individual or entity suggestion from TSC community members – especially Ratepayers.

FYI, in the hope of reducing unnecessary and unaffordable TSC expenditure and its direct unreasonable and unaffordable impact on TSC ratepayers, including those ratepayers who still have no idea of the potential huge rate increases still proposed by TSC administration for 23/24 and future years.

I suggest, the TSC administration needs to stay within its financial capacity, not treat ratepayers as a balancing item for aspirational or non priority TSC activity.

 (please text if no response)

A9

Good afternoon,

It has come to my attention that Tenterfield Shire Council are considering a rate increase of 28% per year for three years in a row. As you are aware, this is more than ten times the rate increase limit set by IPART, which should indicate to you how unreasonable and untenable such an increase is for residents of your shire, in particular Urbenville village, where I reside.

I've been made aware that Tenterfield Shire Council is in financial difficulty, even approaching insolvency with the increased costs of living that are beginning to impact all of us. I do not think that increasing rates by approximately 100% over three years is a sustainable financial plan for Tenterfield Shire Council. If it went ahead I believe it would be the end of Urbenville. There simply aren't enough services or things happening in the community to keep affluent people here long-term. A large part of its attraction is its affordability. The people who are here in the village are mostly pensioners like myself who won't be able to absorb the increase. It has been suggested to me by council that remote workers could move to town to replace us pensioners if we were squeezed out by the rate rise, however that is a big gamble to take when businesses are beginning to clamp down on remote workers and while Urbenville remains isolated due to being surrounded by National Parks.

There are other ways for Council to generate income other than rate increases and I would implore Council to exhaust those options entirely before initiating a rate rise. Then, when the inevitable rate rise does occur after all other income generating avenues are explored, it should be inline with IPART, commensurate with the services provided and inline with the current community's capacity to pay.

I would also like to make mention of the fact that I've had significant difficulty accessing information about the rate rises as a housebound person with a disability, including cognitive processing disability. For such important matters as rate increases council is required by law to provide information in a format that is readily accessible to disabled people, such as a plain English version of the proposed changes and what they will mean to individuals. I also had no idea of any town meetings about rates increases and wonder where they were advertised and how much effort was given to including your disabled constituents.

In closing, I do not support a rate increase of 28% for three years in a row and implore council to explore other revenue and come back to the community with a revised and greatly reduced rate rise proposal.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission to the Community Strategic Plan.

Kind regards,





Mr Daryl Buckingham
CEO
Tenterfield Shire Council
Tenterfield NSW 2372

Cr Bronwyn Petrie
Mayor
Tenterfield Shire Council
Tenterfield NSW 2372

All Councillors

29 April 2022

Submission to the 10-year strategic plan

Having followed the recent public discussions and somewhat disappointing commentary around council's proposed 10-year strategic plan, I would like to proffer the following suggestions for consideration.

The proposed strategic plan is simply a re-write of the old, and apart from removing a few, less than strategic operations such as the management of the public library service, School of Arts and Visitor Information Centre, provides no significant savings and lacks evidence that any new management principles or solutions have been investigated or where tangible savings are going to be made. This strategic plan, like the last, will continue to drive our council into a spiral of do less with more resources and return council's reliance on Special Rate Variation (SRV) funding at the end of this council's term. This plan continues to stifle any real prospect of future building for our community. The plan does not build resilience and does not instil confidence that council can meet the challenges of the future including the transition to a more environmentally and technology driven sustainable future. To improve this debate, I offer the following suggestions for council consideration so the next plan can offer the community a way forward that is both affordable and sustainable.

- 1) *Investigate and implement a commercialisation process outsourcing the following services*
 - ✓ Road construction and road maintenance
 - ✓ Waste and recycling services
 - ✓ Gardening and Public facilities maintenance (*fiddling around the edge of parks and gardens maintenance in the short term may reduce some costs but will impact greatly on these assets requiring significant funds to reinstate at a later point*)
 - ✓ Review the Tenterfield Sale Yards operations to establish its medium to long term development plans to ensure they adequately support our agriculture industry into the future.



Outcome

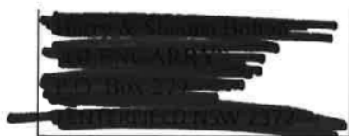
- Removal of considerable fleet liability
 - Creation of new employment opportunities with private contractors
 - Reduction in staff costs and overheads
 - Reduction in administration staff
 - Streamline community maintenance for gardens, parks, and public facilities.
- 2) *Abolish the ward system – The current system does not encourage or provide reasonable opportunity for professional or businesspeople to nominate for council*
- ✓ Reduce the number of councillors from 10 to 7 or even 5 (10 is too many and does not allow for quality of debate or reflect current business practices)
 - ✓ Will allow for greater focus on community and council business
 - ✓ Improve knowledge and understanding of councillors' responsibilities within council

Outcome

- Improved representation
 - Improve quality of council debate
 - Streamline the reporting system to council allowing focus on issues of importance rather than the day-to-day operation of council
 - Proactive and holistic approach to governance
 - Reduce the problem of not having nominations to fill wards
 - Reduced election fees for elections and bi elections etc.
- 3) *Review the need for non-core functions.*
- ✓ *Remove the unrealistic view that council can have a major impact on community issues without suitable or sustainable funding*
 - ✓ *Empower existing community groups – Tenterfield Chamber of Commerce, Local Land Service, Dept of Primary Industries, Tenterfield HUB, Tenterfield Social Development Group, Tenterfield Benevolent Society, Tenterfield Care Committee, Tenterfield Artist Collective, Tenterfield TAFE to coordinate, advocate and lobby on behalf of community*

Outcome

- Reduced staffing levels
- Allows council to directly support community through the provision of funds created through savings
- Empowers community to take control of their own destiny and network directly with Local Government, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), State and Federal Government bodies.



- 4) Review the Visitor Information Centre and Sir Henry Parkes Memorial School of Arts operations.
- ✓ Ascertain from the community the importance of the Visitor Information Centre and how this function should operate into the future.
 - ✓ In conjunction with the Sir Henry Parkes Memorial School of Arts Board of Management – review the School of Arts operation to ensure that its focus is in lockstep with the community and National Trust of Australia (NSW)
 - ✓ That staff understand and can deliver pertinent information relating to the Tenterfield Sir Henry Parkes Memorial School of Arts role in the development of Australia's political and social history.
 - ✓ That staff can engage with tour groups and School excursions and deliver educational material relevant to these groups

Outcome

- Improved delivery of Visitor information
 - Greater emphasis on the importance of the visitor economy to Tenterfield and District
 - Possible expanded use of a community facility (VIC)
 - Improved customer focus and visitor welcoming atmosphere (VIC & SoA)
 - Increased volunteer involvement (VIC & SoA)
 - Improved volunteer focus and training across both facilities (in conjunction with TAFE NSW, Volunteering NSW and Tourism NSW)
- 5) Review the employment and administration of council staff. For many years council has had difficulty attracting and retaining quality staff across its operations. Seven General Manager/CE plus 2 interim managers in 21 years is excessive, numerous engineers, environmental officers and more recently the loss of quality council officers has been alarming and suggests that council does not value or respect their staff. Many community comments suggest confusion over the role of the CE as the role now appears more about having visions, inspirations, and aspirations versus the role of managing operations.
- ✓ Return the title of Chief Executive (CE) to General Manager (GM) – this provides more clarity for the community and council and takes away any expectation that the head of council operations is in some way responsible for community wellbeing rather than the operations of council.
 - ✓ Implement staff exit interview for all staff leaving council employment
 - ✓ Review how staff are managed to ensure their work/life balance is in step with community expectations. Nursing mothers and young staff members starting a family need flexibility to maintain a productive work environment that provides the caring and nurturing environment that parents and carers need for their child's development. Council needs to be leaders in this space if they are to encourage young families to stay and work in Tenterfield.
 - ✓ Demonstrates leadership toward other employer groups within our community.



- ✓ COVID-19 has proved that many functions can be undertaken from home and while having face to face contact is still desirable, flexibility is the key if council wish to retain quality staff members

Outcome

- Provides more clarity for the community as to the role of the CE/GM and other senior members of the council leadership team (Chief Corporate Officer return to Director of.. etc)
- Improved workplace environment for young families
- Improved productivity wellbeing with staff taking less sick leave and other leave to provide care to their children.
- Demonstrates that council is proactive in this space and lives up to the mantra of being an Employer of Choice.

- 6) Investigate and open discussions with Community Hall committees to better manage these assets and reduce council liability.

- ✓ Establish a fund (community grant fund) that will assist with maintaining facilities on an annual basis
- ✓ Reduce or remove any rate charges from those halls that the community takes greater responsibility for
- ✓ Provide administration support to assist with grant applications for funding rounds for community hall maintenance

Outcome

- May provide greater engagement/ownership of the facility by the community allowing greater flexibility when doing upgrades and facility maintenance
- Will engage community members and encourage them to be more involved in their local community and community events.

- 7) Greater representation and advocacy by council, business, and community to the State Government for the removal of the Bruxner Way and Mt Lindsay Rd from council's road infrastructure

- ✓ Increase funds availability for local roads maintenance
- ✓ Reduce maintenance and road construction liability

Outcome

- Reduction to council's road infrastructure liability
- Reduction in construction equipment
- Reduction in road maintenance and construction staff
- Redirection of maintenance and construction budget to local roads



Summary

While these measures may appear harsh, they are strategies that would possibly be in line with community expectations and consideration of council. The current model is ineffective and is designed to bring council back to the table at the end of each 4-year term, asking for more money from the ratepayer to continue providing services at an ever-increasing cost. A review of other councils within our band all point to the same failure and outcome, so it is logical to think that if council continues to do the same thing without addressing the big-ticket items, then the outcome will be the same. Tenterfield Shire Council, in the past, has shown that they can be inspirational, focused and through agility were able to navigate away from amalgamation.

Today, we have members of our community thinking that amalgamation or the implementation of an administrator are our only option! Both measures may be solutions but ultimately will disenfranchise the community, and would be a disaster, as it would very much place Tenterfield at the far end of the funding barrel, making us the very poor relation in any amalgamation process or discussion with all levels of government.

It is imperative that our community begin to build for the future, can effect change in our health and education facilities, to increase our population at a sustainable rate and support our major industries including Agriculture, Retail, Health, Hospitality, Tourism, Manufacturing and Engineering. Encourage young families to live, work and play and ensure our community can grow old with respect while maintaining a good quality of life in their homes or aged care facilities through to their end of life. These are the aspirations of this community.

These changes would not happen quickly, and any agreed implementation would be over the life of a 10-year plan. I would suggest that to achieve serious change, council need to begin discussions that engage Community Leaders, Business Leaders, Youth Leaders, and local Professionals (Business, Finance, Health, Education, Aged Care and Law Enforcement) now and not leave it to the end of a 4-year term before engaging with community to look for strategies to overcome these issues.

The decisions council make now will determine what our community will look like in 30 to 50 years' time. This is the opportunity where council can make a difference and create a sustainable organisation for the future. Otherwise, we will continue to follow like lemmings and become increasingly reliant on grant funding to maintain our operations and be at the mercy of state governments forever.

Finally. A public review of a strategic plan should always begin with celebrating and acknowledging the success and failures of the previous plan. Unfortunately, these things were not discussed at any of the community engagement sessions I attended and I found it disappointing that the outcomes of the previous delivery plan, delivered through drought, bushfire and Covid, were not highlighted at any stage, as there were many. This process would have provided much needed background and clarity for those people who were clearly seeking guidance as to the types of projects, activities, and events that they needed to be discussing. I found the initial community engagement process to be disrespectful of those who attended, and that the facilitator appeared incapable of answering simple questions put by the audience. It was also apparent that no significant preparation had been made to ensure



those attending could be part of a quality facilitated discussion group. This was the first community engagement session that I have attended where people were leaving 15 minutes into the presentation and continued to leave throughout the presentation.

Sincerely yours


Harry J. Bollman

All

Hey Kylie

As discussed this morning I would like to know **WHO** is making the decision of WHAT input from the Strategic Planning Sessions is put into the report?

While Liston, Legume and Torrington are extremely well represented with "minor issues" such as a BBQ or a shade sail (yes important to them but not big picture).

Input that I know has been provided by Tenterfield members is NOT represented? Including my own.

The below was provided via the portal to council direct, then to the chamber of commerce and a number of councillors as I was unable to participate in person due to work related travel.

As reiterated today, I think the Council (and Councillors) are missing nearly every opportunity to engage with a highly disillusioned and frustrated community – and this is another example why. If you keep focussing on little things for micro minorities i.e. 20 people in Torrington and don't talk about the big issues with the 1000nds that your work affects, how do you see a way out of this mess?

I found today's session with you very positive for a number of reasons (apart from the fact that the SRV is actually 109% not 80)

It was the first time anyone has bothered to listen

It made clear where the deficits are and that trying to fix it on the same level you have the problem created is never going to work – see the numbers.

Your business and business model is broken and you expect those you ignore most to pay for it so you can keep digging the whole deeper.

Can I please have the responses from today's session regarding RSL Hall refurbishment and Council Refurbishment as well as the 20/21 and 21/21 numbers in comparison and the budget taking SRV into account. This will give me the opportunity to represent the facts rather than question marks ????? when asked on Saturday.

See you on Saturday.

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

Topics for Town wellness and financial stability / sustainability I would like to put on record include:

1. Upgrade airfield so that RFDS can land 24/7 – which is a key to some half decent medial transportability / support for town. This was put into the TOP 10 during last years workshops run by NSW Government here in town – never got to see any outcomes of those workshops. This is NOT important for private flying – only for medical transport. Mind you – making the airfield more attractive would bring visitors to town as well.

2. Ensure that local businesses and involvement is written into the Scope Documents for the upcoming major infrastructure projects such as

- a. Mole River Dam
- b. Town Water Treatment Plant
- c. Bypass
- d. Pool

Only when there is a contractual requirement to put some money back into the community – that will happen to more than the accidental 2-3%

With this come a lot of training, upskilling, tooling and other Job opportunities.

This was previously explained in some detail to Bronwin Petrie, Kristen Lovel and Peter Hay.

Too much money is being spent outside of Town with people and businesses who have no ties or interest in this community and give NOTHING back.

3. Create a Joint Task Force of local businesses to co-ordinate availability and attractive offerings for TOURISM. Once Town is ready for visitors again (currently it is not) – run advertisements as done in 2020 – they were very successful. A few people have bought businesses in Town and moved here. Now they need to generate turnover in order to stay viable – the more interesting businesses we have, the more people we attract, which gives more to everyone in town.
4. Develop Town and Region further towards a major Mountainbike Destination – lots to do and usually great folk those Mountainbikers from the city.
5. **Make sure that rate paying citizens are not treated as if they were IDIOTS by the council administration – and that the administration team actually takes the time to respond to friendly and well meant requests. Unfortunately I haven't been so lucky to receive responses regarding WHS matters that I raised with Council Admin Team.**
6. Ensure more involvement of the community and transparency in regards to significant matters which affect all citizens. In the past council has far too often held "closed" meetings and avoided transparency to push through an agenda which was not in the best interest of the community. And one can't even obtain documents from those meetings. I have tried.

As always - I **would be happy to be part of some serious and well structured BD activities to support Tenterfield and the Region** and am looking forward to hearing about the steps the newly formed council is going to take to secure sensible growth, job security and sustainability.

Warmest

Kind Regards

Christian Uhrig

True German Food Experiences
<http://www.rosenhof.com.au>
17 Naas Street – Tenterfield – NSW 2372
phone: 02 5776 1614 – mobile: 0439 640 512

A12

The Chief Executive;

As an aged pensioner and Rate Payer.

The proposed 80+% rise in general rates is far beyond our capability to meet.

With the cost of living, fuel and power reaching unheard of increases.

Such a rise will force up the price of rental properties not just for accommodation but also for business. Which is already struggling you only have to look at the number of empty shops.

Yours Faithfully

[REDACTED]

A13

Chief Executive,
Mayor Petrie, Deputy Mayor Macnish

Q: Can you please provide the summaries of the April 22 community consultation meetings, showing the key issues by table /meeting as this will help attendees to review the details listed for their future consideration.? Ie whether IMPACT of the rates increase scenarios (& related long term financial plan etc content) is reasonable for them as ratepayers.

It would also be helpful if each table/meeting summary could show # attendees, (#councillors, # non staff, #staff) again, to help ratepayers to consider which item has greater "priority for them.

Q: based on your knowledge of TSC "must do" activity and the primary role of TSC, can the summaries of the meetings also show which requests are 'aspirational", which are "advocacy"?

Q: How will the results of the "conversations" be provided to ratepayers? Eg the April OG meeting or put into one of the TSC online pages?

Q: If the new "conversation" summaries are to be integrated with the January 2022 summaries, can these earlier summary pages can also show numbers and types of attendees?

Q: Could you advise please whether the January 22 community consultation "results" are already in or out of the 23/3/2022 staff prepared public consultation documents, particularly the 10 year long term financial plan (LTFP) "scenarios" showing either an estimated \$50 million deficit or two versions accumulating to over 200% rates increase, with approx 120% rates increase in the first 2/3 years?

Q: Do you intend to directly contact all TSC ratepayers with a summary of the staff prepared "scenarios", the likely impact on ratepayers and the opportunity to provide comment and complete the online survey?

Your response would be appreciated,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] please text if no answer

A14

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 11 April 2022 12:25 PM
To: Daryl Buckingham <d.buckingham@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>
Cc: Bronwyn Petrie <b.petrie@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; John Macnish <j.macnish@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Peter Petty <p.petty@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Tim Bonner <t.bonner@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Tom Peters <t.peters@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Peter Murphy <p.murphy@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Kim Rhodes <k.rhodes@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Giana Saccon <g.saccon@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Greg Sauer <g.sauer@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Geoffery Nye <g.nye@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Kylie Smith <k.smith@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@gmail.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@gmail.com)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nsw.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@nsw.gov.au)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@facebook.com](mailto:[REDACTED]@facebook.com)>; [REDACTED] <lismore@parliament.nsw.gov.au>; [REDACTED] <goulburn@parliament.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Response to Community Meeting regarding 110% rate rise

Good Morning Daryl,

Firstly, I wish to thank you and your staff for holding the consultation meeting at Legume on Saturday. I also thank you for your candour on this issue. It was very interesting and daunting to hear from you the choices that ratepayers are faced with.

I am writing to outline some points of discussion held within our small discussion group so that I can express these to all councillors and interested ratepayers.

- It was made clear to us that ratepayers are facing a substantial increase in rates with the 110% increase looking like the figure that is going to be put to IPART. This blanket increase will obviously affect individual ratepayers in very different ways. The average ratepayer in the township will have their \$650 rates doubled to around \$1300. Property owners in rural areas will have far larger increases to absorb, with many being forced to finance rate increases in the tens of thousands of dollars. There was much talk in the meeting about us all being in this together. That is not how this is playing out. My feeling is that there is an archaic attitude in place where people think that rural properties are a license to print money and can absorb this inequitable burden with ease. Those days unfortunately ended in the 1950's and any thought that we are unable to sleep at night because of all the money under our beds needs to be firmly put to rest. We are coming out of the biggest drought on record, the worst bushfires on record and some of the worst floods. Cattle are only worth a fortune because none of us have any. We are like Council, we have no reserves and many repairs to contend with. I find it offensive that Council have put a plan to us that feels that it is OK to ask me to contribute 12 schooners a week to its operation (using the patronising examples in the Financial Sustainability document) while a couple of teachers in a house in town pulling in \$200000 are only expected to contribute 2 schooners. Let me be as direct as possible, if anyone tells you that an average farming family has received a net income of anything like \$200000 during the drought, fires and floods 'tell em their dreamin'.
- One idea put by our group is to burden everyone equally with the same rate rise of \$1000.
- Another idea may be to access ATO records and charge everyone according to their asset base. As you know this would be screamed down by everyone, yet it is exactly what you are doing to farmers.
- It was made clear to us that along with this very substantial rate hike there would be an accompanying drop in services. This apparently is largely focussing on road maintenance. You made it clear to a direct question from me that D-class road servicing would reduce

from every two years only last year to every four years. It seems that not only are rural producers expected to absorb the greatest individual increases of rates (by a huge margin), we are also expected to handle the greatest decrease in service provision, as I take it that there are very few if any D-class roads in the township. In this decision, it must be understood that Council is setting in place a road maintenance structure that will grade (or perhaps patch grade) a D-class road every 1460 days. In our case we live along a steep coarse-granite road. On average we receive 4000 millimetres of rain over this timeframe. To say a four-yearly grade under these circumstances will even come close to providing a safe and usable public access road is completely false. It was worrying in the extreme to be told during the meeting that Council only has a legal obligation to maintain roads 'within budget'. It seems that the planned changes to road maintenance shows that Council is willing to use this legal caveat to renege on their social obligation to maintain a safe and usable road system.

- The Community Strategic Plan 2022-32 and Financial Sustainability Document that staff spoke to on Saturday was discussed by our small group. The first issue raised was the comparison table of rates. This document presented a false picture of rural rates within our shire. It compared the average rates paid by rural ratepayers in Tenterfield, as compared to Uralla, Glen Innes and Gwyder. There was no covering explanation of this table, so here it is. Tenterfield has many small landowners along the eastern fall on low-value, low productive land. In comparison Glen Innes and Gwyder have larger more valuable properties, capable of producing far greater incomes. This table actually accentuates the need to shield rural producers in our shire from unsustainable rate rises. Without this explanation this table seemed to indicate that rural producers in Tenterfield were not pulling their weight. Nothing could be further from the truth. The people in our shire who aren't pulling their weight are the National Parks and State Forests that take up a considerable part of our shire and pay nothing. It would be interesting to look at the gross income from rural producers in the various shires and compare that to the land mass taken by these enterprises (more smaller producers as opposed to less bigger producers). As I stated in the meeting we need to be extraordinarily careful of 'lies, bloody lies and statistics'.
- The document trumpeted the goals of the Community Strategic Plan. It talked about inclusivity, equitably distributed facilities, building a robust and growing economy, providing secure and sustainable services, being a high-performance organisation delivering valued services to the community and providing a safe and efficient transport network. Outside the township all of this relies on properly maintained roads. It feels to us as if you are promising all of these goals while you are doubling our rates and casting rural areas adrift.

I am happy to work with Council on a long-term fix. If the core of this issue is an inequitable and broken government system for ensuring our fair share of GST revenue ends up with our local council, then lets all work together on that. A quick perusal of the NSW auditor-general's report into the Stronger Communities Fund gives some indication of the game that is being played. However, this fight will be long and protracted with little chance of success. In the meantime, it must be made clear that we will not sit on our hands and let TSC implement solutions to this crisis that will destroy elements of our community while others move on basically unscathed. If your response is going to be a doubling of our rates combined with a very severe decrease in services, mostly directed inequitably at the rural areas, then that is the first fight that our community faces.

Stuart Bell

A15

Tenterfield Shire Council covers a large area. So we can understand the requests for the different areas of our region please let us know which part of the Shire you live in

Urbenville

(Max Character Limit : 500)

Q.2

What do you see as most important to be maintained in the Tenterfield Shire? *
Council has a difficult task in maintaining its asset base with limited financial resources. This question is asking you to nominate the Council assets and services that you believe are most important to be maintained.

Storm water drainage in Urbenville and the subsequent building damage.

Q.3

What are three things you would like to see change in the Tenterfield region? *

Curb, guttering and drainage in Urbenville; 2) Council notifications by post (including being actually notified of important consultations and events); 3) No rate increases for Urbenville where there are no services and a population of pensioners.

Q.4

What facility or service would you most like to see improved or added to the Tenterfield region? *

Adequate town planning, flood management and drainage for Urbenville village to prevent further damage to existing residences.

Q.5

On average, are you satisfied with the services currently delivered by Council? *

Generally Not Satisfied

Because of the damage to my home caused by the storm water run off. It's been like that for 35 years and I'm exhorbetant rates without the seeing the benefit of basic services.

Q.6

Council has to deliver the community's vision in a financially responsible manner to ensure Council is sustainable into the future. Tenterfield Shire Council's rates are, on average, cheaper than other similar Councils (e.g. Uralla, Glen Innes, Gwydir and Kyogle).

How supportive would you be to an increase in rates to allow Council to deliver the community's vision? *

Supportive data for this question can be seen at <https://www.yourcouncil.nsw.gov.au/council-data/tenterfield/2019/finances/>

Not supportive

Q.7

Council has to operate in a financially responsible manner to ensure it is sustainable into the future. Council manages a large asset base (e.g. roads, bridges, community buildings, parks etc.) and delivers a large number of services (e.g. Planning, Library, Community services etc.) without the funds to maintain these at current service levels. Noting this, Council is constantly balancing between increasing revenue and reducing service levels (e.g. fixing roads slower),

Tenterfield Shire Council's rates are, on average, cheaper than other similar Councils (e.g. Uralla, Glen Innes, Gwydir and Kyogle). To help us manage this balancing act better, using the sliding scale below, please let us know if you would prefer to see reduced service levels, are supportive of an increase to rates or a compromise of the two options.

*

Please note a rates increase applies to the general rate only and does not apply to fees and charges such as water and sewer charges. Any increases to fees and charges are managed separately.

This field is required.

NO reduction in the already sparse service levels for Urbenville and NO rate increase in a village populated by pensioners who simply can not afford an increase and will be pushed out of Urbenville.

(Max Character Limit : 500)

A16

COUNCIL FUNDING 2022 – Issues / Proposed Rate Rises and funding cuts

The vast majority of **Tenterfield Shire** relies entirely on **GOOD ROAD ACCESS**, whether bitumen or gravel.

Therefore, **NUMBER ONE PRIORITY** for Council focus and funding should be on ensuring we have the best **ROADS, BRIDGES**, etc (including road verges – eg: mowing and weed reduction) possible. **EVERYTHING ELSE IS SECONDARY TO THIS.**

This is necessary for:-

ACCESS for RESIDENTS and VISITORS

- For emergency services = ambulance, RFS, SES, police
- To medical and other services
- To supplies to/from residences and properties, towns and villages
- For mail and school buses, electricity, gas and telecommunications, etc
- For livelihoods of residents and tradespeople and contractors
- For rubbish removal, and access to transfer stations and tips
- To tourist attractions and recreation
- To Education

SAFETY for RESIDENTS and VISITORS

- Human and animal (domestic and native)
- For vehicles
- For properties

PRODUCTIVENESS and **SUSTAINABILITY** for RESIDENTS and VISITORS and COUNCIL

- For business
- For tourism
- For primary industry
- For communication
- For employment opportunities
- For shire growth
- For health and well-being

Roads, bridges etc should **NOT** be part of any cost-cutting! In fact, there should be increased funding for this. They are essential to ensure a vibrant future for the Shire.

EVERYTHING ELSE IS SECONDARY.

Cost cutting needs to be found in other areas.

We need a high-functioning shire. One that provides **good infrastructure** to support residents and businesses. We need **good administration** to achieve this. Given the current situation, it would appear that an administration review could be the first place, other than an exorbitant rate rise, to provide cost-cutting material. How has Council found itself in this situation? It certainly wasn't caused by rate-payers.

I'm sure rate-payers could tolerate a **fair and reasonable** rate rise if they could see that the council had their best interests at heart, were **operating efficiently and effectively**, and were **providing essential, necessary, good quality** infrastructure and services.

Council really needs to reassess why they exist and what their priorities should be **FOR THE COMMUNITY.**

Christina Fletcher
1/11/2022

A17

Hullo Hayley,

Lovely to meet you at the Community consultation afternoon meeting held at the RSL Pavilion.
As you indicated you are seeing all submissions I am taking up your invitation to send my comments (see below) that I sent last week to the Ratepayers Association.

Demographics is the key, the ABS will release data from the most recent census in June. The population in 2020 was approximately 6,470. In the meantime local real estate agents may be able to provide general characteristics of new comers to the shire – number and age. Census information will reveal the age groups that require support and funding now and in the future. It would appear Tenterfield Shire still has a high proportion of people aged over 65, median age is 55, and the majority of residents are from a lower socio economic background. As ratepayers their needs must take precedence in planning and funding.

This area has experienced significant environmental damage in recent years (drought, fire and flood) and the ramifications are ongoing, yet to be fully revealed and understood. The State of the Environment report is an important resource. Covid 19 continues and is costly – agriculture, tourism, building industry, infrastructure etc.

TSC must consider very carefully the implications of the past Council's decisions, some of which appear to be unrealistic in the current economic situation – locally and globally.

TSC should seek information from other councils serving similar populations and areas re: staff numbers and positions, in order to gauge the viability of this organisation.

A Grants Officer position appears necessary considering the reliance upon funding from the other levels of government, and the skills necessary to undertake such work.

Communications between residents/ratepayers and Council requires well publicised specific procedures that are easily understood with quick acknowledgment and action.

If emails to councillors are the main channel there needs to be a formal receipt and response/follow up process to confirm action.

If a resident requires an issue to go on the Council meeting agenda what is the procedure?

Clean air, open spaces, four seasons, heritage and history, small population, minimal development are the main attractions of this area. Maintaining these is the challenge in a socially and financially responsible manner for the future generations.

In addition to the above I would like the following concerns noted please:

The proposed relocation of the Old Band Hall does not make sense (see my submission of objection sent last year).

The Youth Precinct and any pool funding allocations must be reassessed considering the current financial situation plus census statistics.

Tenterfield Park is a unique setting for bird watching and bush walking and requires ongoing maintenance (removal of weeds and dead trees, fire hazard reduction). Allocation of funding for this park would be worthy considering its quiet tourist attraction and proximity to residences.

The proposal (if it is still on the agenda) for a roundabout at the intersection of Old Ballandean, Mt Lindsay and Old Racecourse Roads is not appropriate financially. STOP signs, reduced speed signs, rumble strips etc would be adequate.

Energy and water conservation measures – research other LGAs achievements and NSW State Government goals. Promotion of harvesting rain water (tanks), light coloured roofs, storm water drainage to potential wetland areas are worthy of investigation amongst many others.

Careful supervision and assessment of development proposals, including the work of staff involved, the true financial costs and the proper information supplied to councillors and the community.

[REDACTED]

A18

I am a resident of Tenterfield living in D ward and a rate payer and am writing this to say that any rate rise other than the rate peg is unacceptable

The mismanagement of rate payer money has to stop. It appears to me that the answer to the council living beyond its means is to ask the rate payers for more. Where does the Council think we are going to get the extra money from -- obviously it does not care.

We had a SRV a few years ago which was supposed to be the be all and end all of rate rises. But NO the council has kept on spending beyond its means and now it expects us to pay.

Then to threaten us with "we will have to cut back on services" we would have to ask what services ?? The roads are in a terrible state, the drainage system is non existing, the creek looks like something from a 3rd world country just to name a few. This used to be a well kept well maintained town but it has gone downhill in the last 10 years.

Once again I reiterate NO RATE RISE

A19

We totally appose any rate rise above the level of the CPI increase until the council improves their efficiency. To throw money at an inefficient organisation only feeds the inefficiency and does not result in any productivity gains. It is obvious to most rate payers that the Tenterfield council is very inefficient.

Tenterfield is a very low socio economic area and can't afford a substantial rate rise. Although Tenterfield has low rates, the rates + charges combined are extremely high. Tenterfield's average ordinary rate + typical water, sewerage & domestic waste charges, (\$2903), is 2nd highest. \$17 lower than Kyogle (\$2920) and \$491 more than Gwydir (\$2412), \$533 more than Uralla (\$2370), \$571 more than Glen Innes (\$2332). That is \$480 above the average or 19%. (public consultation hand out "Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032 & Financial Sustainability") Tenterfield is a very expensive place to live!!!

We have never before seen the rate payers of the shire so angry over this totally unaffordable, ridiculous proposal. The anger arises in some part from the deceitful, unethical and arrogant way the so called public consultation process was carried out. Their feelings are so strong that if their concerns are not addressed, it is possible there will be a move to have the council dismissed.

[REDACTED]

A20

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, April 18, 2022 6:33:58 PM
Cc: Kim Rhodes <k.rhodes@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Rate rises appeal

Kim- I appealing to you as a ratepayer and a pensioner in your wardD - regarding the 100.9% rate rise - I've been here in Tenterfield for over 21 years and never have I've seen a mess the council ratepayers funds are been swallowed up in a disgusting manner. I feel that all past councillors should be held accountable for the loss & overspending mostly ratepayers money. I left the Gold Coast as councillors in my elect never seemed to care too much on how funds were spent- but if the rates rise here they will meet the standards of Gold Coast rates annually. To me is not only pathetic but appalling to say the least . How will pensioners be able to meet this damaged increase

Yours faithfully, [REDACTED]

1 MAY, 2022

A 21

TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL		
16 MAY 2022		
	Action	Info
CE		
CCO		
DI		

[REDACTED]

PROPERTY NAME [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

RE: ATTACHED QUESTIONNAIRE.

AFTER EXPERIENCING SOME SEVERE HEALTH ISSUES IN 2010, I DECIDED TO MOVE TO LISTON BECAUSE IT IS A SMALL, QUIET COMMUNITY, PRIVATE, NOT GIVEN OVER TO LARGE COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AND DEVELOPER DRIVEN DESTRUCTION SO PREVALENT IN AUSTRALIA'S LARGE CITY AREAS, AND TO ESCAPE THE EVER INCREASING COSTS.

I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES SHOULD PROVIDE CORE SERVICES ONLY, IE ROADS, REFUSE MANAGEMENT AND, IN TOWN SITUATIONS, WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES. SERVICES, HOWEVER, PROVIDED WITHIN THE BUDGET OF REASONABLE RATES.

ALL OTHER SERVICES, SUCH AS ARTS, MUSIC FESTIVALS, TOURISM-RELATED EVENTS SHOULD BE LEFT TO COMMUNITY GROUPS OR BUSINESSES THAT PROFIT FROM SUCH THINGS, AND INCLUDE PROMOTIONS OF SUCH.

RATE INCREASES SHOULD BE KEPT AT MINIMAL LEVELS AND IF THAT MEANS REDUCING INTERNAL COUNCIL STAFF LEVELS OR REMUNERATION, THEN SO BE IT.

[REDACTED]

To help us manage this balancing act better, using the sliding scale below, please let us know if you would prefer to see reduced service levels, are supportive of any of the following increases to rates or to a compromise of the 2 options to remove the estimated operating deficit of \$50 million over 10 years? CJJ has Defined: in options below based on 2022 TSC staff proposed rate increases (to date).

- (i) Increase service levels (Very significant increase in rates) eg 300% over 10 years
- (ii) No service levels reduction (Significant increase in rates) eg 200% over 10 years
- (iii) Minor reduction in service levels (Large increase in rates) eg 48, 58, 80% over 10 years
- (iv) Major service levels reduction (small to medium increase in rates) eg 20%
- (v) Significant service levels reduction (minimal increase in rates) eg 5-10%
- (vi) Other - please specify REFER TO Q3! MINIMAL RATES INCREASE, AND
PARE DOWN ALL SERVICES/WISH LIST ITEMS TO ESSENTIALS

Questions need to relate to Tenterfield Shire COUNCIL area services.
Not Tenterfield REGION. NOT Tenterfield Shire

Questions need to be focused on RATEPAYER IMPACT, RATEPAYER AFFORDABILITY & RATEPAYER acceptance of Rate Structure as required for an IPART NSW submission for approval of any special rate variation (eg over 200% in draft LTFR).

The Rate Structure is how the staff propose to allocate the proposed rate increase over rate categories. If one category pays less than an equal share of the increase, then others will have to pay the 'shortfall'.

Staff have made it clear the over 200% proposed rate increase only covers expenditure which is already included in the budget/plan documents being considered at the moment.
No new, extended expenditure for cost shifting, weather events, new initiatives, grant support etc.

I suggest you either complete this, send other written feedback, complete the online survey or text your councillors, so there is a written record of your feedback. If you don't want mandatory staff recommended rate increases of 48%, 58%, 79.56%, 110%, over 200% or even possibly over 300% (depending on the eventual staff proposed rate structure).

Please provide your rate #, address, name so staff don't think one person has completed multiple surveys.

Based on the consultation meetings, no one has to identify if they are a ratepayer, resident, community member or passer-by.

ASAP
Please return to TSC by 31 March 2022 to:

council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

TSC po Box 214, Tenterfield NSW 2372

Tenterfield Council office counter.

there are other options on TSC website, including contact #s for council and all the councillors.

If you need a hand, please phone council, the councillors or if you prefer it's OK to phone me

Cheryl Jaques, Liston 0409153939 (please text if no answer).

Which staff members or councillors knew of this potential size of rate increase before the last election?

Updated version of TSC Jan20 22 online survey. Updated by CU.

VERY clear Jan 2022 results = NO rates increase, YES reduce services. Important feedback is:

- (i) 'how much extra are you prepared to pay for same or more services
- (ii) what services do you suggest be reduced to avoid a \$50 Million 10 year deficit or over 200% rates increase?

Question 1: Which part of the Tenterfield Shire Council (TSC) area are you from?

WISTON

Question 2: what do you see as the most important TSC activity to be maintained?

ROADS

Question 3: what are 3 activities you would like to see changed, removed or reduced by TSC?

ANY THAT ADD TO COUNCIL'S COSTS UNNECESSARILY. STICK TO
CORE ACTIVITIES ONLY, NO FRILLS, UNTIL BUDGET IS BACK IN BLACK

Question 4: what 3 facilities or services would you most like to see improved or added to TSC budget?

ROADS

- (i) How much extra in rates (or separate) charges will you pay to cover this extra expenditure year by year over the 10 year \$ plan? 0

Question 5: on average, are you satisfied with the 'services' or activities currently delivered by TSC?

- (i) Not satisfied
- ☒ (ii) General not satisfied
- (iii) Satisfied
- (iv) Satisfied most of the time
- (v) Very satisfied

Question 6: council has to deliver community's 'vision' in a financially responsible manner to ensure council is sustainable into the future. TSC rates are on average cheaper than the following councils (Uralla, Glen Innes, Gwydir and Kyogle.) (NOTE: vision often includes 'aspirations' or is provided by passers by not ratepayers)
How supportive would you be to an increase in rates to allow council to deliver the community's vision?

How supportive would you be to an REASONABLE increase in rates to allow council to deliver RATEPAYERS required services. Defined: A reasonable rate increase being <10%

- (i) Supportive (of a reasonable rates increase)
- (ii) Willing to consider a reasonable (rates) increase
- (iii) Not supportive (of reasonable rates increase)
- ☒ (iv) What rate increase do you think is reasonable? <10%

Question 7: council has to operate in a financially responsible manner to ensure it is sustainable into the future. Council manages a large asset base (eg roads, bridges, community buildings, parks etc) and delivers a large number of services (eg planning, library, community services etc) without the funds to maintain these at current service levels. Noting this, council is constantly balancing between increasing revenue and reducing service levels (eg fixing roads slower). TSC rates are on average cheaper than the following councils (Uralla, Glen Innes, Gwydir and Kyogle.)

A22



Project Name : Have your say on our Community Strategic Plan

Powered By : **Engagement Hub**

Reporting Period: 01 March 2022 - 23 May 2022

Content

- Project Overview
- Project Snapshot
- Project Performance
 - Project Level of Engagement
 - Project Activity
- Informative Activities
 - Number of Informative Items Posted
- Engagement Activities

Report generated on 23 May 2022 by Hayley Ritchie On Engagement Hub

- Number of Engagement Items Posted
- Event Tool Activity
- Community Chat Tool Activity
- Survey Tool Activity
- Quick Poll Tool Activity
- Submissions Form Tool Activity
- Mapping Tool Activity
- Ideas Wall Tool Activity
- Extended Ideas Wall Tool Activity
- Interactive Image/Pdf Tool Activity
- Interactive Gis Mapping
- Budget Stimulator
- Interactive Media
- Key Topics
- Newsletters Sent
- Registered User Demographic and Activity
 - Registered Users Demographics
 - Gender and Household Composition
 - Registered Users by Suburb

Report generated on 23 May 2022 by Hayley Ritchie On Engagement Hub

- Users – Additional Information
- Notes
- Top Active Users
- Top Influences

Project Overview

WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR OUR FUTURE?

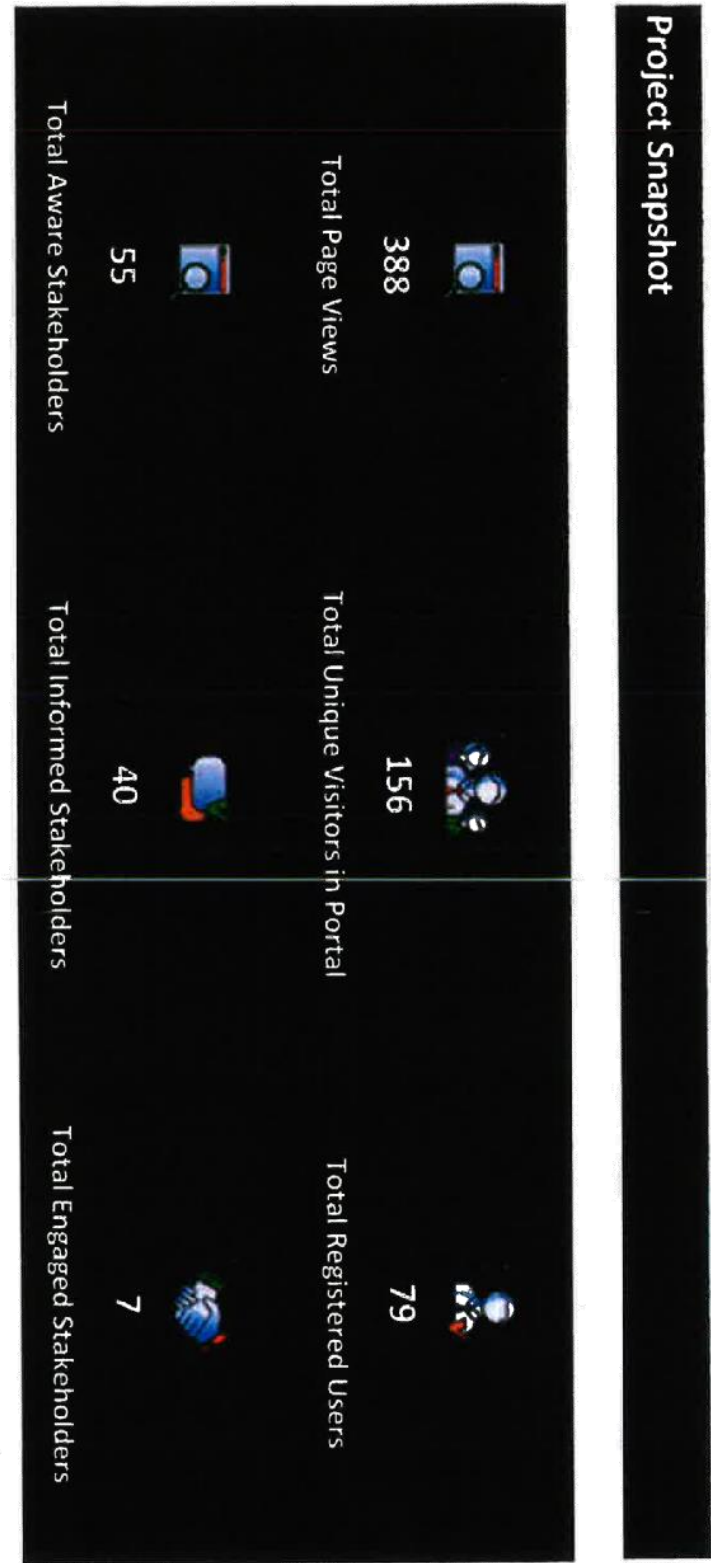
Many things have changed over the last five years and it's time to once again take stock of our community priorities. Council is reviewing its 10-year Community Strategic Plan for our future and would like to invite you to share your vision.

The Community Strategic Plan sets the overarching direction for all of Council's services and programs and will be used to drive the delivery program for this term of Council. The plan also allows Council to work towards achieving the long term vision of the Community.

We're listening and together we can ensure we continue working towards a shared long-term vision for Tenterfield Shire Council.

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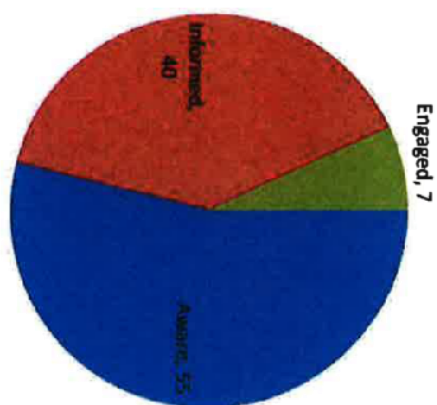
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Project Performance

Project Level of Engagement



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Terminology

- **Aware:** Number of unique visitors who have viewed the project page, minus any visitors who have undertaken any activity eg: downloaded a document, viewed a video, completed a survey etc.
- **Informed:** Any unique visitor who has viewed a latest news item, viewed a document, viewed a video, viewed a FAQ minus any user that has engaged eg: done a poll, survey, ideas wall, interactive mapping, interactive document, forum.
- **Engaged:** Any unique visitor who has done a poll, survey, ideas wall, interactive mapping, interactive document, forum

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Project Activity

Total Page Views	Total Video Views	Number Of Event Attendees	Total Document Download	Total Survey Taken	Total Poll Taken
388	0	0	25	Total : 8 Submitted : 8 Saved to draft : 0	Total Poll Vote: 0
Total Ideas Posted	Total Extended Ideas Posted	Total Map Comment	Total Forum Comment	Total Interactive Document Comment	Total Comment On Budget Stimulator
0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Activity On Interactive Media					
0					

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Informative Activities

Number of Informative Items Posted

Latest News	Key Document	Photo Gallery	Video Gallery	Who's Listening	FAQS
0	8	0	0	0	0

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Informative Widget Tools		Unique Visitors	View / Downloads
Latest News Tool (when clicking 'Read More')		28	75
Help us set the future for Tenterfield		155	264
Registered		5	9
Anonymous		150	255
Video Tool		0	0
Photo / Image Gallery Tool		0	0
FAQ Tool		18	37
What is the Community Strategic Plan?		30	37
Registered		4	6
Anonymous		26	31
Why are we reviewing the Community Strategic Plan?		18	19

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Registered	3	4
Anonymous	15	15
How much input will the community have in the final document?	28	28
Registered	4	4
Anonymous	24	24
Does the Community Strategic Plan outline Councils program of works?	19	20
Registered	2	2
Anonymous	17	18
How do I have my say	39	49
Registered	6	7
Anonymous	33	42
Key Documents Tool	10	25
DRAFT Workforce Management Strategy 2021-2025	1	1

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Registered	1	1
Anonymous	0	0
Delivery Program 2017-2021 & Operational Plan 2021-2022	141	235
Registered	0	0
Anonymous	141	235
End of Term Report 2016-2021	7	12
Registered	0	0
Anonymous	7	12

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Engagement Activities

Number of Engagement Items Activity

	Events		Community Chat		Surveys		Quick Polls		Submissions
0		0		Total : 8 Submitted : 8 Saved to draft : 0		Total Poll Vote: 0		1	
	Mapping		Ideas Wall		Extended Ideas Wall		Interactive Image / PDF		Budget Stimulator
0		0		0		0		0	

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Engagement Widget Tool		Participants
Event Registration Tool		0
Community Chat Tool		0
Survey Tool		8
Tenterfield Community Strategic Plan - Have Your Say		8
Submitted		8
Main Widget Quick Polls Tool		0
Whilst Council delivers many services, which is the most important theme of interest to your Community?		0
The Mt Lindsay Road upgrade is high on the Council priority list. Will this upgrade improve your		0

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transport experience?	
Whilst Council delivers many services, which theme is of the most interest to you as an individual?	0
Recently the township of Tenterfield has undergone a redevelopment of the main street. Do you think this has improved the amenity for locals and visitors to the town?	0
Cycle ways have been introduced around Tenterfield Township. Do you or your family use the paths?	0
Over the past 4 years Council has been working with the State Government to secure funding for a Heavy Vehicle Bypass. This issue was a key project identified in the last Community Plan. Is this still a priority for our community?	0
Would you recommend the Tenterfield Shire as a tourism destination to your family and friends?	0
Would you recommend the Tenterfield Shire as a tourism destination to your family and friends? If yes Why?	0
Sidebar Quick Polls Tool	0
Mapping Tool	0

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Ideas Wall Tool	0
Extended Ideas Wall Tool	0
Interactive Image Tool	0
Advanced Mapping	0

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Survey Tool Activity

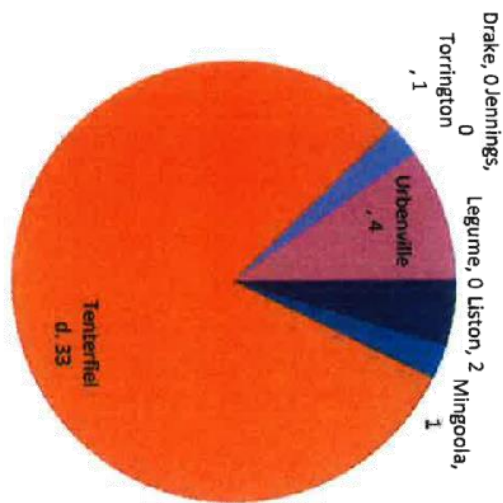
Survey Title : Tenterfield Community Strategic Plan - Have Your Say

Question : Tenterfield Shire Council covers a large area. So we can understand the requests for the different areas of our region please let us know which part of the Shire you live in

Answered : 41

Skipped : 0

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Question : What do you see as most important to be maintained in the Tenterfield Shire?

Answered : 41

Skipped : 0

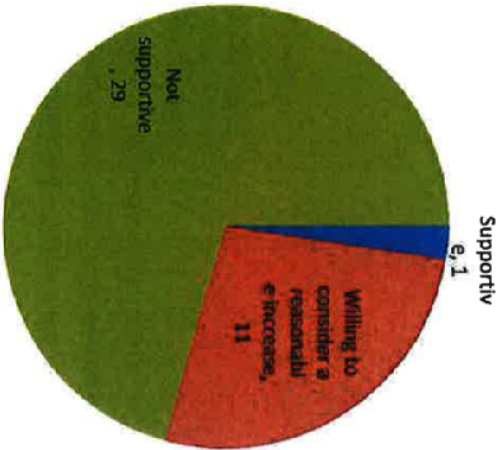
Name	Screen Name	User Type	Email	Submitted On
------	-------------	-----------	-------	--------------

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Question : Council has to deliver the community's vision in a financially responsible manner to ensure Council is sustainable into the future. Tenterfield Shire Council's rates are, on average, cheaper than other similar Councils (e.g. Uralla, Glen Innes, Gwydir and Kyogle). How supportive would you be to an increase in rates to allow Council to deliver the community's vision?

Answered : 41

Skipped : 0



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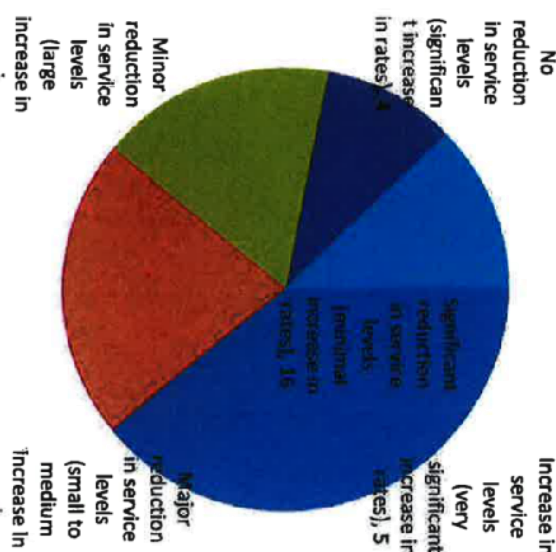
Question : Council has to operate in a financially responsible manner to ensure it is sustainable into the future. Council manages a large asset base (e.g. roads, bridges, community buildings, parks etc.) and delivers a large number of services (e.g. Planning, Library, Community services etc.) without the funds to maintain these at current service levels. Noting this, Council is constantly balancing between increasing revenue and reducing service levels (e.g. fixing roads slower), Tenterfield Shire Council's rates are, on average, cheaper than other similar Councils (e.g. Uralla, Glen Innes, Gwydir and Kyogle). To help us manage this balancing act better, using the sliding scale below, please let us know if you would prefer to see reduced service levels, are supportive of an increase to rates or a compromise of the two options.

Answered : 41

Skipped : 0

Report generated on 23 May 2022 by Hayley Ritchie On Engagement Hub

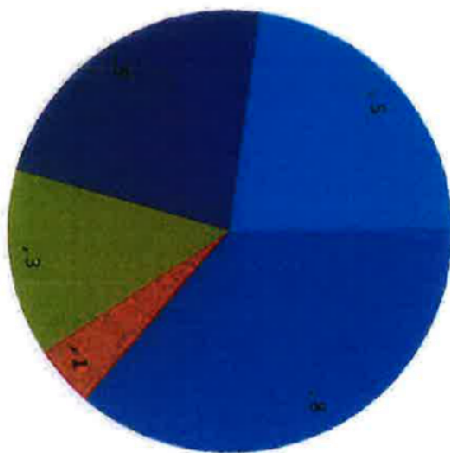
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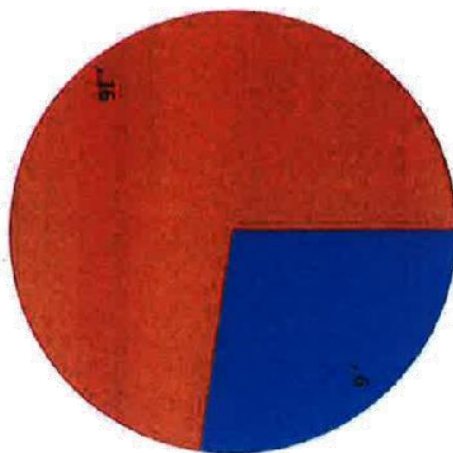
Quick Poll Activity : Main Widget Quick Poll

Question : Whilst Council delivers many services, which is the most important theme of interest to your Community?



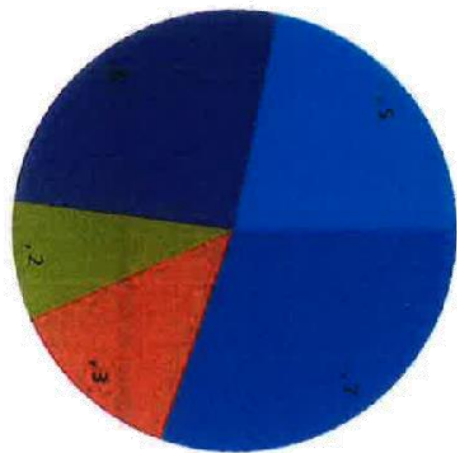
Question : The Mt Lindesay Road upgrade is high on the Council priority list. Will this upgrade improve your transport experience?

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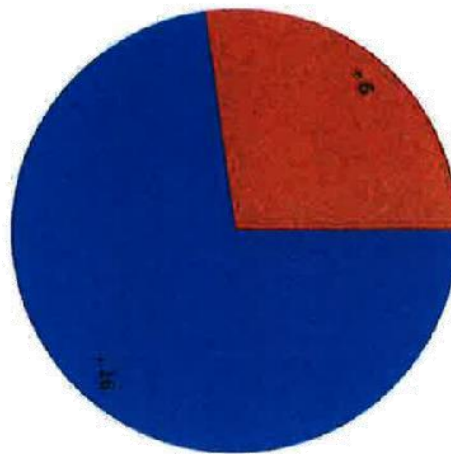
Question : Whilst Council delivers many services, which theme is of the most interest to you as an individual?

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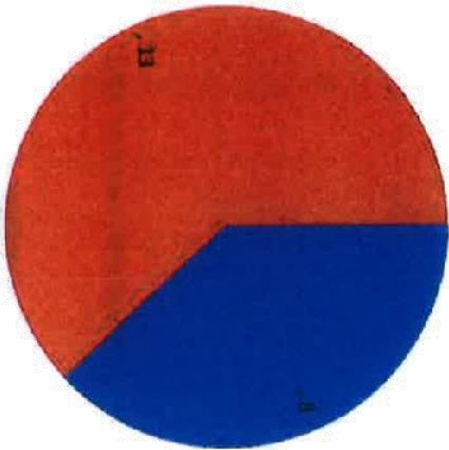
Question : Recently the township of Tenterfield has undergone a redevelopment of the main street. Do you think this has improved the amenity for locals and visitors to the town?

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Question : Cycle ways have been introduced around Tenterfield Township. Do you or your family use the paths?

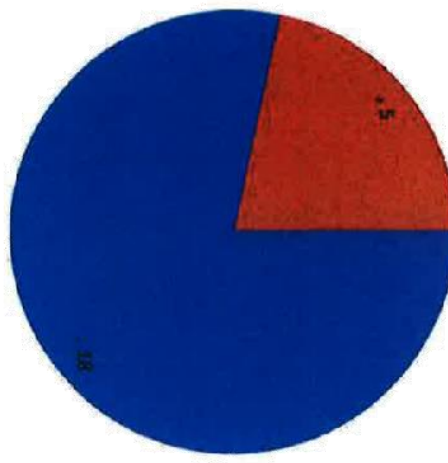
Report generated on 23 May 2022 by Hayley Ritchie On Engagement Hub



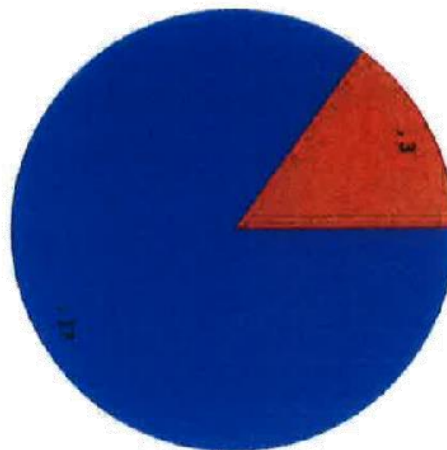
Question : Over the past 4 years Council has been working with the State Government to secure funding for a Heavy Vehicle Bypass. This issue was a key project identified in the last Community Plan. Is this still a priority for our community?

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Question : Would you recommend the Tenterfield Shire as a tourism destination to your family and friends?

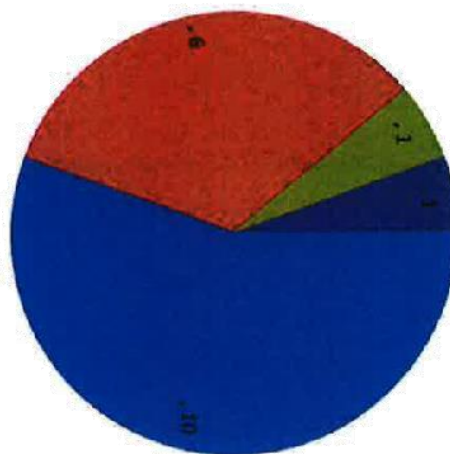


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Question : Would you recommend the Tenterfield Shire as a tourism destination to you, family and friends? if yes Why?

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Ideas Wall Tool Activity

Ideas Wall Title :

Do you have a great idea? Upload your image to the Ideas Wall!

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Feedback :

No Images

Short Answer : Help the forgotten community

Estimated Costs :

Perceived Outcomes : Some care and attention to basic infrastructure like roads within this community will go a long way to changing attitudes to their fellow citizens.

Delivery Project :

1 

0 

No Images

Short Answer : Move into the 21st Century

Estimated Costs :

Perceived Outcomes : Using electronic communications will reach more people more often at less cost.

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Delivery Project : Council staff

2  0 



Short Answer : Jennings Park Idea

Estimated Costs :

Perceived Outcomes :

Delivery Project :

0  0 



Short Answer : Jennings Park Idea

Estimated Costs :

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Perceived Outcomes :

Delivery Project :



No Images

Short Answer : Water Storage Dam at the Mole River

Estimated Costs :

Perceived Outcomes :

Delivery Project : Tenterfield Shire Council



No Images

Short Answer : National War Graves Cemetery

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Estimated Costs :
Perceived Outcomes :
Delivery Project : Tenterfield Shire Council
0 thumbs up 1 thumbs up



Short Answer : Jennings Park Ideas
Estimated Costs :
Perceived Outcomes :
Delivery Project : Tenterfield Shire Council
0 thumbs up 0 thumbs up



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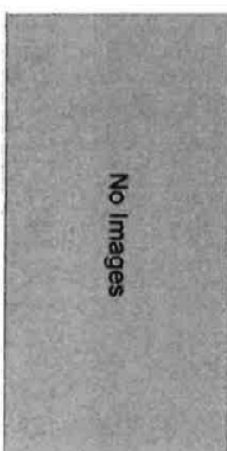
Short Answer : Consult with appropriate consultants to identify which industries/businesses could relocate profitably from Sydney and attract suitable workers.

Estimated Costs : 50,000

Perceived Outcomes : Employment for young people, less reliance on senior citizen facilities, diverse outlets for social and sporting activity, a more reliable revenue stream for Council, a more far-sighted and demanding planning challenge for Council, great achievement.

Delivery Project : Council with shared cost.

3  0 



Short Answer : Household rubbish collection on Billrimba rd, Steinbrook Are once a fortnight

Estimated Costs :

Perceived Outcomes : Helps to enable those who are elderly, have health issues or are too busy working/ running businesses to have time to go to local refuse station. Some pay extra at tip as have more rubbish than vouchers cover so this money we could redirect to rates.

Delivery Project : Tenterfield Shire Council

0  0 

Report generated on 23 May 2022 by Hayley Ritchie On Engagement Hub

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No Images

Short Answer : Not to downgrade roads once DAs have been approved and buildings built along them

Estimated Costs :

Perceived Outcomes : Downgrading road status does not fit well with town progressing, indicates opposite. In our case people from our area go to use the road but say it is too bad to use. It bypasses going town via Logan street and runs from well used road to highway.

Delivery Project : Tenterfield Shire Council

1  0 

No Images

Short Answer : Reduce Council fees for Subdivisions

Estimated Costs :

Perceived Outcomes : More residents subdividing blocks in town. Rather than satellite suburbs being built. Increased building and builders and related employers employing more staff that live locally.

Report generated on 23 May 2022 by Hayley Ritchie On Engagement Hub

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Delivery Project : Tenterfield Shire Council

0  1 

No Images

Short Answer : Community garden

Estimated Costs : 100

Perceived Outcomes : Food security for low income families, community engagement, fresh seasonal produce for good health and wellbeing.
Community level education. Young people will have something fulfilling and worthwhile to do that doesn't involve drugs or crime.
Delivery Project : I am putting my hand up for this.

0  0 

No Images

Short Answer : Upgrade to skatepark

Report generated on 23 May 2022 by Hayley Ritchie On Engagement Hub

Estimated Costs : 500

Perceived Outcomes : Lower crime rates among young people, less teenage binge drinking, help build respect for the community among young people, lower crime rates encourage business and tourism which is also great for the community.

Delivery Project : Council



Short Answer : Facilitate tourism to Mt Mackenzie

Estimated Costs :

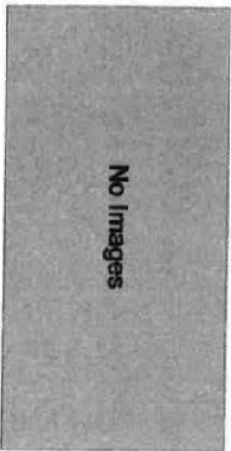
Perceived Outcomes : Easier access for tourists to one of our promoted destinations. Positive word of mouth promotion.

Delivery Project : Council/State Gov't



Report generated on 23 May 2022 by Hayley Ritchie On Engagement Hub

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Short Answer : Tourism Promotion Signage on roads

Estimated Costs :

Perceived Outcomes : Potential to encourage more travelers to stop and hopefully spend money in town.

Delivery Project : Council

0 0

Budget Stimulator

User Response Count

Interactive Media Activity

Gender and Household Composition

Report generated on 23 May 2022 by Hayley Ritchie On Engagement Hub



Proposed Special Rate Variation Community Information Sessions

1 August – 30 September 2022

Attachments 1 – 22

Community Information Sessions hosted by Council:

Council asked the community to submit their questions for Council, submitted questions were answered first then the forum was opened for supplementary questions and two-way information. Promoted through Facebook, Website, TSC App, Media Releases, Community Noticeboards, Digital Display, Newspaper advertising and Radio.

Saturday 3 September	Tenterfield RSL Memorial Hall	102 people signed in
Saturday 24 September	Urbenville Community Hall	13 people signed in
Saturday 24 September	Legume Community Hall	3 people signed in
Monday 26 September	Mingoola Community Hall	19 people signed in
Saturday 1 October	Urbenville Community Hall	26 people signed in

Sign In Sheets ALTUS INT22/529C97E0

During this period (1 August - 30 September), the public were also encouraged to make submissions/comments.

Biannual Community Satisfaction Survey including questions related to the SRV undertaken. 300 people surveyed by Taverner Research Group.

Description	
Media Releases & Media IN22/3E54D9B1	Attachment 1
FAQ's Website	Attachment 2
Your Local News – Special Edition OUT22/529DA89A	Attachment 3
Printed Materials Community Forums OUT22/5AA57F7A OUT22/D4EE809	Attachment 4 Tenterfield 3 Sept Urbenville 24 Sept Legume 24 Sept
Community Satisfaction Survey IN22/22F2B42E	Attachment 5 Graphs attached
Community Appointments	
23 August	[REDACTED]
25 August	[REDACTED]
25 August	[REDACTED]
29 August	[REDACTED]
31 August	[REDACTED]
2 September	[REDACTED]
2 September	[REDACTED]
5 September	[REDACTED]
5 September	[REDACTED]
5 September	[REDACTED]
6 September	[REDACTED]

8 September	Beth Moore
Community Forums	
Power Point Presentation	Attachment 6
Questions Submitted	For Community Forums
[REDACTED]	IN22/IE77526
[REDACTED]	IN22/CB8B8EA
[REDACTED]	IN22/151E53B9
[REDACTED]	IN22/11435D46 & IN22/57F6F7C4
[REDACTED]	IN22/18DAF4F
[REDACTED]	IN22/6EF22542
[REDACTED]	IN22/6E3A4398
[REDACTED]	IN22/745C23D8
[REDACTED]	IN22/745C23D8
[REDACTED]	IN22/5147CEC9
[REDACTED]	IN22/649AC8CB
Tenterfield Ratepayers Association	IN22/57B88D07
[REDACTED]	IN22/57EEA1CB
[REDACTED]	IN22/51DCC7BE
OSOCI	IN22/51FBB409
Clive Powell	
[REDACTED]	IN22/5DEC3189
[REDACTED]	IN22/5DEC3189
[REDACTED]	IN22/5DEC3189
[REDACTED]	IN22/5DEC3189
Submissions	
Peter Robinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 7
IN22/6045BBBF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • False claims made by OSOCI on Social Media
Clive Powell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 8
IN22/1B99073	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media Briefing sent to Council from OSOCI
[REDACTED]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 9
[REDACTED]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns over the Special Rate Variation
IN22/38BED2CF	
OSOCI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 10
IN22/2C7577CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OSOCI Pamphlet handed out at TSC hosted Community Forum
[REDACTED]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 11
IN22/CB8B8EA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate Rise and Pensioner Rebate – sent to all levels of government
[REDACTED]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 12
IN22/11435D46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objection to proposed rates rise
[REDACTED]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 13
IN22/182DAF4F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objection to proposed rates rise
[REDACTED]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 14
IN22/6EF22542	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objection to proposed rates rise
[REDACTED]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attachment 15
IN22/745C23D8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objection to proposed rates rise

Total Care IN22/405F4996	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attachment 16• Statement of services provided
[REDACTED] IN22/4BFE34B6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attachment 17• Questions included in forum, Statement provided.
[REDACTED] IN22/4B0166E3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attachment 18• Objection to proposed rates rise
[REDACTED] IN22/43B605C9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attachment 19• Compliment to the Mayor
[REDACTED] IN22/6A9AC8CB	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attachment 20• Objection to rate rise
[REDACTED] IN22/24533297	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attachment 21• Letter to Premier of NSW re TSC
[REDACTED] IN22/6FE4228	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attachment 22• Objection to rate rise

AI

From: Bruce Mills
Sent: Friday, 29 July 2022 2:35 PM
Subject: MEDIA RELEASE FROM TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL - YOUR SAY ON TENTERFIELD'S FUTURE 29072022

Your say on Tenterfield's future

29 July 2022

This week's Council meeting voted to proceed with further community consultation on a proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV) for a 43 per cent rise in rates in 2023/24 and a further 43 per cent in 2024/25.

Chief executive Daryl Buckingham said it was important residents made their voices heard to help Council decide how the Shire moved forward.

Mr Buckingham said while Council voted to commence community consultation for an SRV representing a cumulative rise of 104.49 per cent on ordinary rates, it was vital Shire residents understood why the increases were needed and what services would suffer without them.

"Tenterfield has been one of the lowest-rated Shires in the State. However, the prolonged drought, bushfires, COVID and floods have all impacted Council's financial sustainability in addition to cost-shifting from the State government and a more than halving of the Federal Assistant Grants. Rate rises are needed as we work to strike a balance between the needs of the community and Council's financial sustainability," he said.

"The SRV, if approved, would apply only to the General Fund which includes roads, buildings, parks and gardens, including cemeteries. Tenterfield Shire has to maintain a vast network of roads, and more than 75 per cent of the proposed rate rise will be needed to cover road maintenance and renewal."

Mayor Cr Bronwyn Petrie said core services of sewerage, rubbish collection and water were delivered under separate funds and were unaffected. However, service reduction across libraries, parks and gardens, pool, tourism and marketing and the big one, roads were all on the table.

"Reducing services does not mean we stop delivering services – our role is to look after Tenterfield and deliver on the community's vision for the Shire, where affordable," Cr Petrie said.

"What residents may see though, is a reduction in service levels – this might mean less mowing of our parks. It could mean postponing the resurfacing of a road, pushing back the renovation of a sports facility or not replacing older playground equipment. Other services which could be impacted include opening times of our community libraries, our Visitor Information Centre or other facilities.

"Council has already cut spending, gained efficiencies, reduced services, delayed projects and identified asset sales. Further long -term cuts to resourcing and / or service delivery will likely have a clear impact on the community," Cr Petrie said.

"Council will be undertaking further engagement with the community to ensure Council, where possible, can continue to meet expectations while reducing services. In Tenterfield's case, reduction in services mainly means maintenance of roads."

Cr Petrie said Council would be seeking community feedback through its on-line portal and through personal and group meetings at times and locations to be organised in coming weeks.

ENDS

Contact: Mayor Cr Bronwyn Petrie 0411 475 301



Media Release

01 August 2022

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 Ten FM	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Glen Innes Examiner	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ten TV Network
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2LM Lismore	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gem FM - Inverell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tenterfield SES
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2NZ Inverell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LG Focus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tenterfield Star
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4WK/4AK Toowoomba	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lismore Echo News	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Chronicle
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ABC Lismore	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NBN TV - Lismore	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hon Barnaby Joyce MP
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ABC Radio Tamworth	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Northern Rivers Heartland	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janelle Saffin MP
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ABC Radio Toowoomba	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prime 7 News – Nth Coast	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Land – Tamworth
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ABC N/E North West	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebel FM Radio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Win News
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Armidale Express	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Southern Free Times	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mobile App
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drake Village Voice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richmond River Independ	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council's Website
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Facebook Page	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Councillors

Book now to discuss rates and rises

Tenterfield Shire Council has opened bookings for Shire residents and landowners to meet Councillors and senior staff to discuss the proposed rates rises for 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Mayor Cr Bronwyn Petrie said Council was giving all ratepayers every opportunity to understand fully why Council needed to increase rates, including face-to-face meetings running from Monday, August 15 to Friday, September 30.

Appointments for 15-minutes can be booked for 1 -2 persons and 30-minutes for 3-4 persons, additional time can be negotiated.

Cr Petrie said if a progress association or other group wished to have a Council representative attend its next meeting, this could also be arranged, with the proviso questions be provided at least two days prior to the meeting to allow for any detailed information needed to respond.

Appointments can be made by contacting Ms Elizabeth Melling, Executive Assistant by email e.melling@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au or by phoning Council 02 6736 6000. Details regarding additional public information sessions are yet to be confirmed and will be communicated shortly.

"Council is determined to answer all reasonable and genuine questions as we continue the process of making an application to the State Government's Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal," Cr Petrie said.

Residents are encouraged to visit Council's website for general information on the proposed rates rises:

Go to: <https://www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/tenterfield-shire-council-proposed-rate-rise-information>

And to use the **Rates Calculator** to accurately calculate the proposed rates rises for 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Go to: [Rates Calculator | Tenterfield Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

Key in the rating category and land value from your latest rates notice to compare your current rates with the increases for the proposed rises.

**Media Contact: Ms Elizabeth Melling
Phone: 0411 231 513**

Council will be consulting with the Shire community during August and September on the proposed rates rises and will make a decision later this year on an application to IPART, the State Government's Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal.
Any rates rise will be subject to approval by IPART.

ENDS

Media Contact: Ms Elizabeth Melling
Phone: 0411 231 513

Tenterfield Shire Council proposes 43 per cent rate rise for the next two years

By Cady Biddle

Updated August 2 2022 at 8:23pm, first published 2:00pm

Tenterfield Shire Council could go into administration within 18 to 24 months if it does not see an increase of rates in the next financial year. A proposal to double rates over the next two financial years would "assist council to help keep its head above water".

It was decided at the last council meeting, that before a decision is made, the public will be consulted about the proposed application for a rate increase of 43 per cent in 2023/24 and another 43 per cent increase in 2024/25 - a cumulative increase of 104.49 per cent.

Under the current structure, if this proposal were accepted, residential ratepayers would pay on average an additional \$5.41 per week the first year and \$7.84 the following year.

That's an increase of about \$280 in the first year and an additional \$400 in the second year.

Businesses would have to fork out an average \$12.71 in the 23/24 financial year and \$18.38 in 24/25.

For farmland, which equates to 48 per cent of the shire, ratepayers would see an average \$13.33 per week rise first which would grow to \$19.04 in the second year.

Finance and technology manager, Roy Jones, said looking at the financial sustainability of the council his recommendation was that there was a definite need for a rate variation in order to be financially sustainable into the future.

"The 43 per cent had been shortlisted by me to address the deficit into the future. It is a percentage that I believe will assist council; it will not fix all our problems," Mr Jones said.

Community engagement is expected to start in September with the council to receive a further report in November which will include a draft application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for an increase to the ordinary rate income.

"We want to make it clear this is just a proposal at this stage," Mr Jones said.

"We will gain the community feedback, then let councillors decide what the final percentage will be, and make an application. Then a decision would be made by IPART. They might dismiss it, or make it a lesser number," he said.

Chief executive, Daryl Buckingham, said he had been told between 30 to 40 councils would put in an application for rate variations next year.
"So it's not just us," Mr Buckingham said.

"All we can do is put up what the data tells us is the best way forward for the community and then IPART will have to make a call," he said.
"We believe the 43 per cent will give us long-term sustainability probably up to the 10-year mark, maybe a little bit longer ... failing to get the 43 per cent, at some point we do become unsustainable."
Cr Giana Saccon voted against the decision, and said the community could not afford this rate rise.

"If residents are going to have to pay extra money they would expect services for that, otherwise, why stay in this town?" Cr Saccon said.
"If we're not respecting them as a community, and their views, what are we giving our community?"

Cr Greg Sauer assured ratepayers the figures and decision had been seriously considered.
"In this six-month council term we have spent more time on workshops than I've spent on my previous five years on council," Cr Sauer said.

"We haven't turned up here today with a dart throw at the wall figure. We are not going into this blindly, but armed with all the information ... It's a hit but it still gives us a council moving forward," he said.
Cr Tom Peters warned this was the better alternative of two difficult scenarios.

"If we go into administration, the administrator will take over, the rates will still go up, and they'll sell everything we've got," he said.
"We're at the end of the state so we'll get no services whatsoever and ... if we get amalgamated with somebody we'll get absolutely nothing so I think the ratepayers have got to look at that.
"I've looked at it fairly in depth and I can't see any way out of it," Cr Peters said.

August 4.

Council warning

COUNCIL
BY CADY BIDDLE

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council meeting, that before a decision is made, the public will be consulted about the proposed application for a rate increase of 43 per cent in 2023/24 and another 43 per cent increase in 2024/25 - a cumulative increase of 104.49 per cent.

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Council warning of administration as it considers rate hike

■ From P1

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Chief executive, Dar-yl Buckingham (pictured right), said he had been told between 30 to 40 councils would put in an application for rate variations next year.

Druck wall neighbouring the Imperial Hotel, in an alley off Faulkner Street, on the

Police commenced the new England police district has "commenced an investiga-

ing, joyce being dressed by min- ing, magnate Gina Rinehart. "I think hopefully it starts a

protested money in politics. Photo: Laurie Bullock

Stunning, Mr Warwick as a "so-called artist", Mr Joyce criticised the work and oth-

he has been a finalist both the Moran Portrait Prize and Archibald Prize.

"So it's not just us," Mr Buckingham said. "All we can do is put up what the data tells us is the best way forward for the community and then IPART will have to make a call," he said.

"We believe the 43 per cent will give us long-term sustainability probably up to the 10-year mark, maybe a little bit longer ... failing to get the 43 per cent, at some point we do become unsustainable."

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"We're at the end of the state so we'll get no services whatsoever and ... if we get amalgamated with somebody we'll get absolutely nothing so I think the ratepayers have got to look at that."

"I've looked at it fairly in depth and I can't see any way out of it," Cr Peters said.



2 TENTERFIELD STAR Thursday August 11, 2022
NEWS

tenterfieldstar.com.au

Rates consultation begins

COUNCIL

TENTERFIELD Shire Council has opened bookings for residents and landowners to meet councillors and senior staff to discuss the proposed rates rises for 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Mayor Cr Bronwyn Pettie said the council was giving all ratepayers every opportunity to understand fully why the council needed to in-

crease rates, including face-to-face meetings running from Monday, August 15 to Friday, September 30.

Appointments for 15 minutes can be booked for one or two people and 30 minutes for three or four people, while additional time can be negotiated.

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representative attend its next meeting, this could also be arranged, with the proviso questions be provided at least two days prior to the meeting to allow for any detailed information needed to respond.

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It was decided at the last council meeting, that before a decision is made, the public will be consulted about the proposed application for a rate increase of 43 per cent in 2023/24 and another 43 per cent increase in 2024/25 - a cumulative increase of 104.49 per cent.

Details regarding addi-

tional public information sessions are yet to be confirmed and will be communicated shortly.

"Council is determined to answer all reasonable and genuine questions as we continue the process of making an application to the State Government's Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal," Cr Pettie said. Council will be consulting

with the Shire community during August and September on the proposed rates rises and will make a decision later this year on an application to IPART, the State Government's Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal.

Any rates rise will be subject to approval by IPART. The council is expected to receive a report in November

Residents "terrified" of Tenterfield Shire Council proposal to raise rates more than 100 per cent

By Cady Biddle

August 18 2022 - 5:00am

CB

Some Tenterfield residents are concerned they won't be able to afford to put food on the table if their council rates increase by the planned amounts.

The *Tenterfield Star* has been told people are "terrified" since Tenterfield Shire Council announced a proposal at the end of July to lift rates by 104.49 per cent over the next two financial years.

While a group of concerned residents said they were "fighting back", the council is concerned they have been spreading misinformation.

The members of 'Our Shire Our Council Initiative' (OSOCI) said they were giving the community a voice.

They hosted a community meeting recently, which about 100 residents attended, some shared personal stories, and organisers said there were some "very desperate people out there".

A voice for the people

President Clive Powell said one man who had recently bought a business in town would see his rates double from \$8000 to \$16,000.

"He had done studies before moving here to see if the business was viable, but if the rates go up he will go from having a viable business to only breaking even or suffering a loss," Mr Powell said.

"The residents are happy somebody is stepping up and helping them voice their concerns on something that could make them leave town," he said. "Many have lived here all their lives and might have to move because they can't afford it."

"There are a lot of elderly widows, a lot of single pensioners who are really struggling."

"There are a lot of people who don't know how they're going to keep living in this town," he said.

OSOCI member Pamela Lee went on to explain how a lady approached her in the street who she said was "devastated".

"She said to me, 'I don't know how I'm going to put food on the table, because I'm not even sure I'm going to have a table'. She doesn't know how she's going to cope. She's terrified of what's coming," Ms Lee said.

"That's who we are standing for: the individuals, ourselves and everybody else," she said.

What is OSOCI?

The association's stated mission is to see the council achieve a balanced budget by controlling spending, reducing debt and capping rates, fees and charges to the CPI.

They plan to hold regular meetings - either monthly or six-weekly - and are in the process of creating a petition.

But council's CEO, Daryl Buckingham, said he had concerns the association was fear mongering to some of the community's most vulnerable members based on flawed intel, biased information and incorrect analysis of what is a complex and heavily legislated subject matter.

Ratepayers say they are fighting back, council says they're fear mongering

Cause for concern

The group wants to know how the council got into a position of such a deficit.

"Reasons they have continuously given is because of what is happening in the Ukraine or cost shifting from state to local government," Ms Lee said.

"There is no specifics and that's the issue," she said. "We've been told there is a cost blow-out, this is what has to be paid and everybody has to pay it."

Ms Lee said the council had presented four options to the community - 1: reduce service levels; 2: sell and/or dispose assets that will reduce associated ongoing expenses; 3: increase income raised through rates, uses, fees and charges; 4: a combination of all.

"Are you kidding me, that's it?"

"I went through their 10-year plan, their supposed plan for the future, and I could not find one thing that gives us an avenue other than the four options given here, nothing," Ms Lee said. "There was nothing about seeking income other than from ratepayers.

Everything came back to ratepayers having a special rate variation," she said.

"Winston Churchill says, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. I think we can take a leaf out of his book. This is what's happened; they have failed to plan."

Tenterfield Shire Council's CEO Daryl Buckingham says the council has been hit with the increasing cost of doing business. Picture:
File

'FIGHTING BACK'

COUNCIL

BY CADY BIDDLE

SOME Tenterfield residents are concerned they won't be able to afford to put food on the table if their rates rise.

The *Star* has been told people are "terrified" since Tenterfield Shire Council announced a proposal at the end of July to double rates over the next two financial years.

A group of concerned res-

idents say they are "fighting back". Although the council is concerned all the group is doing is fear mongering.

But the members of 'Our Shire Our Council Initiative' (OSOCI) say they are giving the community a voice.

They hosted a community meeting, which about 100 residents attended. Some shared the situation they are in, and organisers say there are some "very desperate people out there".

OSOCI president Clive Powell said residents were happy somebody was helping them voice their concerns on something that could force them to leave town.

"Many have lived here all their lives and might have to move because they can't afford it," he said.

OSOCI's mission is to achieve a balanced budget by controlling council's spending, reduce the mas-

sive council debt position and cap council's rates, fees and charges to the CPL. They plan to host regular meetings and are creating a petition.

Council CEO Daryl Buckingham said he had concerns the association was basing its conclusions and fear mongering on some of the community's most vulnerable members based on flawed intel, biased information and incorrect analysis of what is a

complex and heavily legislated subject matter. He said council recognised the financial challenges it faced, and was taking evasive action to avoid a dire financial situation in the near future.

"It is attempting to implement a program that will provide financial security for the foreseeable future; it doesn't wish to implement a rate rise; it simply has to," Mr Buckingham said.



Last week's meeting.

Tenterfield Star 18 August

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 08, 2022 tenterfieldstar.com.au

Tenterfield Star

\$2.26 inc GST



Tenterfield Shire residents attended a public meeting to discuss a proposed rate rise at the weekend. Photo by Melinda Campbell.

Rates review

BY CADY BIDDLE

A PUBLIC meeting to discuss the possible future rate rise for Tenterfield Shire residents has received mixed reviews.

Tenterfield Shire Council announced a proposal at the end of July to lift rates by 104.49 per cent over the next two financial years. TSC is considering making an application to IPART for

a special rate variation of 43 per cent in 2023/24 and another 43 per cent increase in 2024/25.

About 150 residents attended the first public meeting hosted by council, which went for more than three hours.

Questions from the public were varied and included everything from debt and expenses to staff and wages, and what the future

will look like if the SRV is not approved.

Former Army Major Alex Rubin moderated the meeting and had to remind some attendees to be respectful, Mayor Bronwyn Petrie told the Star.

Cr Petrie said some residents were genuinely interested in learning more and continued discussions after the meeting or followed-up with calls and emails. But

she said some who attended clearly weren't interested in the answers, only in their own objections.

President of the *Our Shire Our Council Initiative*, Clive Powell, said everyone he spoke with after the event were dissatisfied with the information and answers given by council.

"People were not happy with what they heard," Mr Powell said.

"They just kept saying there's nothing they can do, it's not their fault and if they don't double the rates they won't fix the roads. That basically summarises what was said over and over again in different ways."

Mr Powell said the council tried to avoid answering difficult questions and that the question of cutting costs of administration was never addressed.



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\$10,000**



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WORD**

INSIDE TODAY



JENNY AITCHISON MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR REGIONAL TRANSPORT AND ROADS

JANELLE SAFFIN MP
MEMBER FOR LISMORE

GOVERNMENT FAILS TO DELIVER ON REGIONAL ROADS PROMISE TO
NORTHERN RIVERS & NORTHERN TABLELANDS COMMUNITIES

MINISTER for Regional Transport and Roads Sam Faraway has been forced to admit that not one single kilometre of a promised 15,000 kilometres of regional roads has been transferred from local councils to State ownership.

Under questioning by John Graham MLC during a recent Budget Estimates hearing, Minister Faraway could not bring himself to say the words "it is zero", despite it being clear that zero roads have been transferred under the program.

The Minister dashed the hopes of regional motorists and cash-strapped regional councils that the glacial roll-out of the program would be sped up, saying the Government's key 2019 election commitment is "not a burning topic" amongst regional councils.

The Minister also cast doubt on whether the full complement of 15,000 kilometres promised would be transferred, repeatedly stating that the policy was "up to" 15,000 kilometres.

Shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Jenny Aitchison said the Minister's evidence confirmed that the promise was a cynical attempt to pork barrel regional communities.

"This was a "magic pudding" election promise; every Nationals and Liberal candidate could point to a potential road in their electorate which could be eligible for reclassification or transfer, and the Government still, nearly four years later, hasn't transferred a single one of them," Ms Aitchison said.

State Member for Lismore Janelle Saffin said the promise clearly is a burning topic amongst locals whose tyres and cars are being wrecked by our potholes that are voluminous and crater deep ... it is burning holes in their pockets.

"We've got priority regional roads in Lismore City, Kyogle, Tenterfield Shire and Tweed Shire that have been put on the back burner by this city-centric Government," Ms Saffin said.

"When this policy was announced it was 15,000 kilometres of regional roads and then the disassembling started with 'up to'.

"That is the whole problem with this particular election commitment; it has been short on action, vague on detail and has left local councils and locals in limbo land.

"Lismore City Council is seeking to have regional roads – Wyrallah Road, Nimbin Road, Coraki Road and Kyogle Road (submission by Kyogle Council) – transferred to State ownership and management, but importantly, with councils keeping maintenance contracts to protect local outdoor jobs.

"Council is also seeking to have the following local roads reclassified to regional roads and transferred to the State: Rotary Drive/Uralba Street, Rous Road, Eltham Road, Caniaba Road, Wyrallah Ferry Road, Alphadale Road, Tregeagle Road, Broadwater Road and Richmond Hill Road."

Ms Saffin confirmed Kyogle Council wants to hand back all 127 kilometres of regional roads under its control to the State Road network, also keeping maintenance contracts, and their applications were done in collaboration with neighbouring councils.

"This includes the full length of the Clarence Way, Mount Lindesay Road and Bentley Road, as well as Kyogle Road between Kyogle township and Nimbin Road," Ms Saffin said.

"Tenterfield Shire Council's main priorities are for a transfer of the Bruxner Way, supported by Gwydir, Inverell and Moree Plains shire councils, and Mount Lindesay Road.

"Tweed Shire applied to transfer part of the Tweed Coast Road between the Pacific Highway to Casuarina, which needs to be upgraded from two to four lanes to cope with future growth from major land releases and the new Tweed Valley Hospital.

"However, Tweed Shire is reserving its position on the transfer until Transport for NSW reveals further details of proposed changes to road classifications, maintenance funding, State prioritisation frameworks, and commitments to road upgrades."

DATE: 8 SEPTEMBER 2022

MEDIA CONTACTS: JANELLE SAFFIN MP – 0418 664 001
JENNY AITCHISON MP – 0418 456 405

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Questions about proposed increase to rates

I AM asking the residents of Tenterfield Shire not to be complacent in accepting the 104 per cent rate rise over the next three years. Council will vote on this proposal at its October meeting, this is not a forgone conclusion. Before the meeting we must hear more details, because as it stands nothing adds up.

I attended the public forum recently where I was given the opportunity to ask questions to the councillors and senior staff - answers were subsequently deferred. I have attended meetings with the *Our Shire Our Council Initiative* group opposing the rate rise, and I have attended an interview with the CEO and a senior finance officer. I have forwarded a version of this letter to all our councillors and CEO, and I am now putting forward my concerns publicly.

I understand over the 2022-2032 Long-Term Financial Plan, council will raise an extra \$50 million from its ratepayers through this proposed 104 per cent SRV, a figure confirmed by the CEO. I asked whether council was aware of this figure, and was there any discussion on the impact on how taking an extra \$50 million from ratepayers over the next 10 years would affect the shire's businesses, pensioners, organisations, and communities? I personally fear that taking this extra money from our already struggling pockets will adversely affect the economics and "vibrancy" of our people and communities.

Tenterfield Shire's weekly median income is \$490 per person, in NSW the median

weekly income is \$813, and in Australia the figure is \$805 per week. These figures indicate that Tenterfield Shire sits well below the average, and considering all the other rising costs, the rate rise is not affordable, and our businesses and communities would struggle. The average age within our Shire is 55 years, we are a retiring community with more and more pensioners.

In Tenterfield Shire's 2017-2027 Long-Term Financial Plan, it states "The projected surplus (before capital grants) accumulated across the 10-year period for General Fund is a \$5.27 million surplus". Now five years later in the 2022-2032 Long-Term Financial Plan a \$50 million deficit is projected. A turnaround of \$55.27 million in 5 years. Ratepayers are not being told and have not been given details on why such a huge change in circumstances now exists.

Our council is telling us that the federal government's Financial Assistant Grants (FAGs) which councils rely on, are expected to decrease for our Shire. FAGs to wealthier councils such as city councils and coastal councils, and who have other avenues for revenue raising can expect their FAGs to decrease. However, it is highly "unlikely" that FAGs will decrease to rural, regional, and/or "struggling" councils.

Maintenance of roads and bridges has been the focus given to the ratepayers for the 104% rate rise over three years. The "Asset Condition" document provided in the 2022-2032 Long-Term Financial Plan does not show a dire situation. I agree if

council better managed how and when they provide maintenance and upgrading to our roads and bridges, less money would be wasted, such as with the current repaving to the newly bitumen Bryan's Gap Road. It is also worth noting that in adverse weather events government subsidises councils on repairs to infrastructure. In the 2020-2021 annual report, it was reported that a large portion from a 53 per cent special rate rise (SRV) from 2014, had been spent upgrading roads and bridges. So, I am asking why is the situation still so desperate?

Mayor Pettie suggested at the recent public forum that it may be necessary for council to further reduce its maintenance program without this new proposed 104 per cent rate increase. Road and bridge maintenance is the core function of council, and this should be council's priority before elaborate refurbishments to administration buildings - for example.

Another reason for the necessity of this SRV we are told, is that council has loans that need repaying. Of course, council has loans, all councils have loans. Interest rates have been very low over the past years, and this should have assisted Tenterfield Shire's budget. It is the responsibility of council's finance staff to ensure council's loans are managed efficiently.

Lastly, TSC's income statement for the year ended 30 June 2021 shows council to have a surplus. This shows council to be in a better position than what has been outlined to ratepayers, and as the CEO recently

stated, "we are not broke".
Kim McCarrey, Tenterfield

At the recent council meeting the mayor, Bronwyn Pettie, asked the community to come up with some ways to save money. Here are some suggestions:

Reduce the massive cost of running the council administration, between 2017 and 2020 the cost increased by 148 per cent.

Reverse the recent pay rise for staff and councillors. Instigate a voluntary pay cut of 20 per cent. This is normal for any responsible organization in financial distress.

The council is way over-staffed. Bring staff numbers down to a level appropriate for a community of 7000 population.

Stop unnecessary trips and "junkies" by staff and councillors to conferences around the country. This can be handled via Zoom these days. Include community members in all future planning and workshops. After all, it is OUR money you are spending.

Stop the sell-off of assets - they can only be sold once. These are important to the ratepayers who own them and whose money sustains them. The Angry Bulls mountain trail bicycle riding. This is part of what would be a push into eco-tourism that celebrates and enhances the natural environment without destroying it.

Rubbish recycling is sent to Lismore and costs the Tenterfield community dearly. Could this not be done right here, creating employment and profit in this town?
Clive Powell, OSOCI President

A2

Why is Council concerned about its financial position?

Over the past decade, Tenterfield Shire Council has maintained high levels of service; maintaining roads, re-building bridges, running libraries, parks and gardens. However, in the past four years, prolonged drought, bushfires, COVID-19 and floods have all impacted Council's finances. At the same time, cost-shifting from the State government and significant reduction of the Financial Assistant Grants (FAGs) by the Federal government have had a significant impact on our bottom line.

While service levels have been maintained, Council's income has remained fairly static while input costs have soared with significant cost increases attributed to renewal and maintenance of assets. Council has also seen a significant cost increase in legislative compliance, (e.g. audit and risk, grant applications, reporting and acquittal) insurance and workers compensation. As Council operating expenses are exceeding our operating revenue a deficit shortfall is generated which accumulates each year impacting Council service delivery to the community.

Council acknowledges that its cash reserve's within the General Fund is of high concern and despite implementing effective short-term strategies to cut costs, including a freeze on staff hiring, Council's financial position is unsustainable without rate rises. The proposed rate rise is critical because the gap between what we receive in rates into the General Fund and what we need to spend maintaining and upgrading Council owned assets (Shire buildings, 695km of sealed and 1043km of unsealed roads and bridges etc.) is currently \$4.5m per year.

Like most businesses, the impacts of the past three years have forced Council to stop and reset. With a new Council in place, we need to look at how we do business, where we can improve our revenues, create efficiencies, find savings and how we can ensure financial sustainability for the residents of Tenterfield Shire well into the future.

It should be noted that Council has separate funds for waste, water and sewerage. These funds are self sustaining and include asset management, maintenance and renewal costs. These funds cannot be used for any other purpose.

What has Council done so far to save money?

We are focused on improving our productivity, streamlining services, containing our costs, and increasing own source revenue.

Even prior to being hit by the drought, bushfires, COVID-19 and the floods, it was recognised that Council had some budgetary challenges despite continuing to deliver a broad range of services, invest in local infrastructure, grow our economy and make Tenterfield Shire a great place to live work and visit.

Council's Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) is the tool used to effectively plan for and deliver long-term sustainability. For some time, the LTFP has identified this year and next as being tough with operational costs associated across all operational areas negatively affecting the budget.

Like many other businesses around the world, the past two years have also impacted Council's budget. Costs associated with construction and transport have significantly increased. Major storms and flooding have increased our maintenance costs, insurance and diverted funds away from planned projects.

Despite these efforts, our financial forecast has shown that if we keep going this way, we'll spend more on our services than we can afford. We need to make real changes.

We know COVID-19 isn't over and other economic factors such as inflation and indicators of a global recession are biting, so it's important we take steps now to ensure Council is financially sustainable in the long-term.

In addition to the above, Council has already commenced efficiency measures and reductions in operational expenses. Council currently has 24 vacancies within its current organisational structure and is disposing of non-essential Council assets.

The shortfall of staff will result in reducing service delivery, increasing fees and charges, despite looking at new revenue streams.

What does it mean to reduce services?

Reducing services does not mean we stop delivering services, our role is to look after Tenterfield Shire and deliver on the community's vision for our place.

What you may see though is a reduction in the service level delivery, this might mean we mow our parks less. It could mean we postpone the resurfacing of a road, we push back maintenance of a sports building or not replace older failing assets. Other services that could be impacted include opening times of our community libraries, our Visitor Information Centre or other facilities.

In order to weather the financial storm of the past couple of years Council has already curtailed many areas of spending, reduced services and delayed projects. This was a necessary measure to ensure we stayed within our means. Further long-term cuts to resourcing and service delivery will have a visible impact on the community.

As the elected Council look for savings further engagement will be undertaken with the community to ensure Council, where possible, can continue to meet expectations while reducing services.

What is a rate cap?

Each year, the NSW Government sets the percentage councils can increase their total rate income by for the following year. This income amount is known as the rate cap. The rate peg is the annual percentage the cap can increase by.

The rate cap is based on the Local Government Cost Index (LGCI) which looks at last year's cost increases for items typically purchased by councils. Sometimes, the rate peg is lower than LGCI to ensure councils focus on finding savings and operating productively. When forecasting their budgets councils are advised by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to assume a 2.5% rate peg. However, historically, the rate peg does not meet all increasing costs and is not enough to meet new infrastructure and additional service needs. The rate cap only applies to rates, being the top two lines on your rate notice.

This year the rate peg for Tenterfield Shire was set at 0.7% - significantly lower (1.8%) than the budgeted 2.5%. The NSW Government recognised the lower-than-expected rate cap was a problem for councils across NSW and introduced the Additional Special Variation (ASV) process to bring the rate peg for 2022-2023 financial year back up to 2.5%. However, Council through resolution decided not to proceed with the extra increase of 1.8% after undertaking a cost benefit exercise and assessing the impact on community considering special rate variation discussion was already underway.

What is a special rate variation?

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) sets the rate cap each year. It also assesses council requests for a rate rise more than the rate peg which is called a special variation. Special Rate Variations can be either for a single year or for multiple years and can be temporary or permanently retained in the rate base. Council needs to follow IPART's guidelines and make a formal application showing how they have demonstrated each criteria in the guidelines.

How do our rates compare with other Councils?

Tenterfield Shire has the lowest average residential and farmland rates compared with other shires in our region.

Contrary to claims made by some people during our community meetings, figures from the Office of Local Government (table below in Downloads section) show Tenterfield Shire's ordinary residential rates are the lowest in the region and our average ordinary farmland rate is well below the average for other shires.

You can view the Rates Comparison Table in the Downloads section below.

Have other Councils applied for a rate variation?

Yes. It is unfortunate that all councils at some point will face periods of challenging financial sustainability caused by the constraints and influences on local government. A Special Rate Variation is becoming a more common tool that Councils use to adjust their fixed income when reducing operating expenses alone does not balance the budget.

This year, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) has approved all applications made by New England councils and eighty-one other NSW Councils to increase their rates above the level of the annual rate peg.

While Tenterfield Shire Council did not apply for a special rate variation for the 2022-2023 financial year, it has resolved to submit an application by November for the next budget year.

Like Councils across NSW, Tenterfield is grappling with soaring costs for materials, fuel, electricity, insurance and inflation (annualised at 7%, well above the 2.5% rate cap). Cost-savings have been implemented. Nevertheless, Council needs higher rates revenue to ensure sustainability.

Council is aware that many other councils in NSW are also in discussions with their communities about significant rate rises.

Please see the Download section below for a graph.

How are my rates calculated?

Rates are calculated according to the property land value, determined by the NSW Valuer General.

Rates are charged to property owners and will vary according to:

- Your land category and sub-category (e.g. residential, farmland, business)
- Your land value (not including the value of your home or other structures)
- Council's rating policy (e.g. business rates are higher than residential rates)

There are other charges that may appear on your rate notice that ARE NOT subject to the rate cap such as waste management charges, waste service charges and sewage management fees.

To see how this may impact you, please use our Rates Calculator below this section.

How did Council work out what the proposed rate increase should be?

When determining rate increases, Council considers its Long-Term Asset Management Strategy (over 10 years) and calculates the costs associated with renewal, maintenance, upgrade and acquisition of new assets within the asset classes Council controls.

Based on current service levels, asset data and Council's forecast operating result, the gap in the General Fund and what Council should be spending on assets is currently \$4.5m per annum (conservative estimate).

The proposed 43% rise will result in additional income of approximately \$2.081M in the 2023/24 financial year and a further \$2.976M in 2024/25, resulting in \$5.057M additional rates income over two years bringing total annual rates income of \$9.897M.

Why are our costs so high?

Council services and infrastructure costs to landowners are driven by different factors. Tenterfield Shire has a small rate base of 5,078 assessments compared with its large infrastructure and assets base. One of the largest costs for Council is roads.

More than 70% of Council's budget is spent maintaining and upgrading the Shire's 645km of sealed roads and 1043km of unsealed roads and associated infrastructure, including bridges and causeways.

These assets are expensive to maintain, and more so in recent years with the big increases in the cost of fuel, bitumen, concrete and steel.

What will happen to our rates?

Rates increases applied by councils are determined by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). Each year, IPART determines a percentage we can increase rates to meet increasing costs – this year it is 0.07%.

Currently, Tenterfield Shire has the lowest average rates across our region, charging less than Uralla, Glen Innes, Gwydir and Kyogle (apart from the average ordinary business rate for which Uralla is lowest). For average ordinary residential rates, we are 25% lower, for business rates 23% lower and for farmland 90% lower.

We have managed this low rate base for some time. Nevertheless, forecasting tells us this will no longer be sustainable and if we maintain rates at current levels our service levels will need to reduce.

After providing this information to the community, if Council elects to move forward with a variation to the current rates, a formal application to IPART will be required.

What will the increased rate income be used for?

Council is facing a forecasted financial shortfall of more than \$47 million over 10 years. That means our costs are rising faster than our income, and the gap between our income and the funds needed to upkeep infrastructure assets and services to a level expected by the community and required by legislation is growing.

The key purpose for Council applying for a special rate variation (SRV) is to maintain financial sustainability by eliminating the budget shortfall.

It is unsustainable for us to continue to operate as we are. The additional income raised by the Special Rate Variation would be used to cover rising costs associated with delivery services via our assets to the level of community expectation identified in our Asset Management Strategy.

How can I trust my rates are going to where you said they would?

As part of the IPART determination, Council will be required to report in its Annual Financial Statement to the Office of Local Government each year on the Special Rate Variation. Council will be required to report the increased rate revenue advised in its application and where it has been spent. The community will also be able to access the Council's Quarterly Budget Review Reports and Long-Term Financial Plan which reflects Council's Financial Position and the funding allocations in accordance with the Special Rate Variation.

I do not pay rates but live in Tenterfield Shire – will this affect me?

Council rates are paid by property owners. However, higher rates form part of costs that non-ratepayers may bear, including tenants currently paying rent in Tenterfield Shire, and the cost of goods and services through businesses. Infrastructure, facilities and services are provided by Council for all residents and visitors to the Shire. Having a financially sustainable Council benefits everyone.

I own a property and pay rates in Tenterfield but I live elsewhere – how will this affect me?

Having a financially sustainable Council benefits both tenants and non-residents as well as those living in Tenterfield Shire. Council rates are paid by property owners, regardless of where the owner currently resides.

Council is undertaking an extensive communication program to reach and inform landlord ratepayers.

If an Special Rate Variation application is successful, the rate increase would apply to all ratepayers, including residents and non-residents.

What happens when the rate variation finishes?

After the special variation period finishes, rates will increase only by the rate peg amount set by IPART in addition to the income from the Special Rate Variation, which will become a permanent increase. This is known as a s508A special variation.

Why can't we just get more grant funding?

Most grants require funds to be spent on capital expenditure (e.g. a sporting field or community facility) and therefore grant funds are not normally used to fund the day to day operations of Council.

Council regularly applies for and receives government grants and will continue to do this in the future. However, there are key reasons why Council cannot solely rely on this source of income:

- In most instances, the grant requires Council to provide a financial co-contribution, up to half of the grant amount.
- Receiving grants is a competitive process and there are not enough grants available to fund all of Council's infrastructure needs.
- Grants programs usually have requirements attached to them that may not fit with Council's current strategies and plans.

- Budget allocations are required to maintain and renew projects and this has to be allocated in Council's existing budget (funded depreciation).

Council continues to lobby the Federal Government for the return of Financial Assistance Grants (FAG's) through the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) and Local Government NSW (LGNSW), in excess of 1% of Commonwealth Taxation Revenue provided by the Federal Government, which will support our ongoing sustainability.

Why are we hearing about this now?

Financial sustainability has been a long-term focus at Tenterfield Shire Council. There has been a need for a rate increase for a long time because Council's General Fund has not been keeping pace with the expectations of the Community concerning asset maintenance and service delivery. Council's financial difficulties have been reported to Council as part of its suite of financial reporting most notably the Quarterly Budget Review.

The prolonged drought, bushfires, COVID-19 and flooding, meant Councillors were reluctant to increase rates when large sections of the community were suffering, unfortunately this is not sustainable.

Due to ongoing external factors influencing the cost of providing Council services, the financial situation will continue to deteriorate and needs to be addressed.

Council consulted with the community in January 2022 regarding our Community Strategic Plans, including our Long Term Financial Plan. At the February 2022 Council meeting, Councillors voted to defer a decision on applying for a Special Rate Variation for the 2022/23 Financial Year to enable further community consultation and additional time for the community to recover from drought, bushfires and COVID-19. Additionally, this allowed Council to explore avenues to further cut costs, rationalise services, and raise income from the sale of surplus or under-utilised assets. Council also implemented more efficiencies, and reduced services for the 2022/23 financial year to reduce the impact on ratepayers. In order to apply for a Special Rate Variation commencing in the 2023/24 Financial Year to reduce the impact on ratepayers. In order to apply for a Special Rate Variation commencing in the 2023/24 Financial Year we are now embarking on further community engagement.

Councillors are committed to finding a solution to this problem and as such we are providing as much information as possible about what's happening, so our community has a complete understanding of our financial position, and to participate in the discussion around our funded future.

When is all this happening?

August/September 2022: Community information sessions will be conducted.

Late October 2022: Council will consider all submissions, resolving their intent to apply to IPART.

November 2022: Council will submit an application to IPART

February 2023: IPART Requests public submissions

March 2023: IPART public submissions close

May 2023: IPART Final Report and Media Release

YOUR LOCAL **news**

29 AUGUST 2022



13

SPECIAL EDITION PROPOSED RATE RISE

MAYORAL MESSAGE

Mayor Bronwyn Petrie



This special newsletter is being sent to all Shire Residents to provide key information on the proposal for a substantial increase in rates (top two lines of the Rates and Charges notice only).

An increase has been needed for some years but has been put off because of record drought, extensive bushfires, COVID and flooding events.

Increasing rates is part of the solution to ensure long-term financial sustainability of Council and provision of important community services.

I urge all residents to read this edition and get the facts. Should you have further questions, please make an appointment to meet with us or attend a public information session. You can contact Council on 02 6736 6000 or by email on council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Tenterfield Shire Council Website
www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/tenterfield-shire-council-proposed-rate-rise-information

Tenterfield Shire Council Facebook Page
www.facebook.com/TenterfieldShireCouncil

Book an appointment with Senior Staff and Councillors to discuss your questions
 Call (02) 6736 6000 or email e.melling@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au to book

Attend a Public Information Session
 Check for upcoming Public Information Sessions throughout the Tenterfield Shire on our website
www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

Try the Rates Calculator
 Calculate your proposed rate rise amount using our Rates Calculator at www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/srv-rates-calculator

TENTERFIELD PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION

Saturday, 3rd September 2022
 2pm - 4pm

Memorial Hall, Molesworth Street
 Join Councillors and Senior Staff and ask your questions regarding the potential rate rise.
 Submit your questions to council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au by the 1st September - submitted questions will be answered first, before taking questions from the floor (time permitting).

Details of Rates, Charges & Rebates			
Ordinary Rates		Payment by Instalments	
14 Residential Tenterfield	202001 @ 0.59957	First Due	\$762.72
3000 Amount		31/08/2022	
Rates Category		Second Due	\$762.79
Service Charges		30/11/2022	
301 Residential Water Service Availability		Third Due	\$762.79
314 Water Infrastructure Charge		28/02/2023	
315 Residential Sewerage Availability		Fourth Due	\$762.79
326 Waste Collection - Domestic 240L Bin		31/05/2023	
327 Waste Management Facility Charge			
340 Stormwater Management Charge - Res			
350 Waste Recycling Collection - Res			
Extension Rebate			
NET AMOUNT DUE		TOTAL DUE	\$3,051.09

image: The proposed rate rise will only apply to the first two lines of your Rates notice

WWW.TENTERFIELD.NSW.GOV.AU/TENTERFIELD-SHIRE-COUNCIL-PROPOSED-RATE-RISE-INFORMATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

regarding the potential rate rise.

WHY IS COUNCIL CONCERNED ABOUT ITS FINANCIAL POSITION?

Over the past decade, Tenterfield Shire Council has maintained high levels of service; maintaining roads, re-building bridges, running libraries, parks and gardens. However, in the past four years, prolonged drought, bushfires, COVID-19 and floods have all impacted Council's finances. At the same time, cost-shifting from the State Government and significant reduction of the Financial Assistant Grants (FAGs) by the Federal Government have had a significant impact on our bottom line.

While service levels have been maintained, Council's income has remained fairly static while input costs have soared with significant cost increases attributed to renewal and maintenance of assets. Council has also seen a significant cost increase in legislative compliance, (e.g. audit and risk, grant applications, reporting and acquittal) insurance and workers compensation. As Council's operating expenses are exceeding our operating revenue a deficit shortfall is generated which accumulates each year impacting Council service delivery to the community.

Council acknowledges that its cash reserves within the General Fund is of high concern and despite implementing effective short-term strategies to cut costs, including a freeze on staff hiring, Council's financial position is unsustainable without rate rises.

The proposed rate rise is critical because the gap between what we receive in rates into the General Fund and what we need to spend maintaining and upgrading Council owned assets (Shire buildings, 645km of sealed and 1043km of unsealed roads and bridges etc.) is currently \$4.5m per year.

Like most businesses, the impacts of the past three years have forced Council to stop and reset. With a new Council in place, we need to look at how we do business, where we can improve our revenues, create efficiencies, find savings and how we can ensure financial sustainability for the residents of Tenterfield Shire well into the future.

It should be noted that Council has separate funds for waste, water and sewerage. These funds are self sustaining and include asset management, maintenance and renewal costs. These funds cannot be used for any other purpose.

The remainder of services are financed through the General Fund.

Loans as at 30/06/22 are \$18,848,630.12 across the following Funds.
 Water Fund \$5,969,574.77
 Waste Fund \$3,379,854.08
 Sewer Fund \$1,669,783.32
 General Fund \$7,829,417.95 (plus approval for \$3.1 million if required and \$5 million as a draw down facility particularly for progress payments for grant works - neither of these have been accessed).

WHAT HAS COUNCIL DONE SO FAR TO SAVE MONEY?

We are focused on improving our productivity, streamlining services, containing our costs, and increasing own source revenue.

Even prior to being hit by the drought, bushfires, COVID-19 and the floods, it was recognised that Council had some budgetary challenges despite continuing to deliver a broad range of services, invest in local infrastructure, grow our economy and make Tenterfield Shire a great place to live, work and visit.

Council's Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) is the tool used to effectively plan for and deliver long-term sustainability. For some time, the LTFP has identified this year and next as being tough with operational costs associated across all operational areas negatively affecting the budget.

Like many other businesses around the world, the past two years have also impacted Council's budget. Costs associated with construction and transport have significantly increased. Major storms and flooding have increased our maintenance costs, insurance and diverted funds away from planned projects.

Despite our efforts, our financial forecast has shown that if we keep going this way, we'll spend more on our services than we can afford. We need to make real changes. We know COVID-19 isn't over and other economic factors such as inflation and indicators of a global recession are biting, so it's important we take steps now to ensure Council is financially sustainable in the long-term.

In addition to the above, Council has continued to implement efficiency measures and reductions in operational expenses. Council currently has 24 vacancies within its current organisational structure and is disposing of non-essential Council assets.

Without a rate rise, Council services will be greatly reduced.

WHAT WOULD IT MEAN TO REDUCE SERVICES?

Reducing services does not mean we stop delivering services, our role is to look at Tenterfield Shire and deliver on the community's vision for our place.

What you will see is a further reduction in service level delivery, this means reduced road maintenance, reduced maintenance of parks and buildings or not replacing old failing assets. Other services that could be impacted include opening times of community libraries, our Visitor Information Centre or other facilities.

In order to weather the financial storm of the past couple of years Council has already curtailed many areas of spending, reduced services and delayed projects. This was a necessary measure to ensure we stay within our means. Further long-term cuts to resourcing and service delivery will have a visible impact on the community.

As the elected Council look for savings, further engagement will be undertaken with the community to ensure Council, where possible, can continue to meet expectations while reducing services.

WHAT IS A RATE CAP AND RATE PEG?

Each year, the NSW Government sets a percentage Councils can increase their rate income by for the following year. This income amount is known as the rate cap. The rate peg is the annual percentage the rate can increase by.

The rate peg is based on the Long-Term Government Cost Index (LGCI) which looks at last year's cost increases for items typically purchased by Councils. Sometimes the rate peg is lower than LGCI to ensure Councils focus on finding savings and operating productively. When forecasting their budgets Councils are advised by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to assume a 2.5% rate peg. However, historically, the rate peg does not meet all increasing costs and is not enough to meet new infrastructure and additional service needs. The rate peg only applies to rates, being the top two lines on your rates notice.

This year the rate peg for Tenterfield Shire was set at 0.7% - significantly lower (1.8% than the budgeted 2.5%. The NSW Government recognised the lower-than-expected rate peg was a problem and Councils across NSW and introduced the Additional Special Variation (ASV) process to bring the rate peg for 2022-2023 financial year back up to 2.5%. However, Council

WWW.TENTERFIELD.NSW.GOV.AU/TENTERFIELD-SHIRE-COUNCIL-PROPOSED-RATE-RISE-INFORMATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

regarding the potential rate rise.

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www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/tenterfield-shire-council-proposed-rate-rise-information

HAVE OTHER COUNCILS APPLIED FOR A RATE VARIATION?

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 to 40% rate rise.

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- Your land category and sub-category (e.g. residential, farmland, business)
- Your unimproved land value (not including the value of your home or other structures)
- Councils rating policy (e.g. business rates are higher than residential rates)

There are other charges that may appear on
 your rate notice that are not subject to the
 rate cap, such as waste management
 charges, waste service charges and sewage
 management fees.

To see how this proposed rate rise may
 impact you, please use our Rates Calculator
 at www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/srv-rates-calculator

HOW DID COUNCIL WORK OUT WHAT THE PROPOSED RATE INCREASE SHOULD BE?

When determining rate increases, Council
 considers its Long-Term Asset Management
 Strategy (over 10 years) and calculates the
 costs associated with renewal, maintenance,
 upgrade and acquisition of new assets within
 the asset classes Council controls.

Based on current service levels, asset data
 and Council's forecast operating result, the
 gap in the General Fund and what Council
 should be spending on assets is currently
 \$4.5m per annum (conservative estimate).

The proposed 86% rise will result in additional
 income of approximately \$2.081M in the
 2023/24 financial year and a further \$2.976M
 in 2024/25, resulting in \$5.057M additional
 rates income over two years bringing total
 annual rates income of \$9.897M.

WHY ARE OUR COSTS SO HIGH?

Council services and infrastructure costs to
 landowners are driven by different factors.
 Tenterfield Shire has a small rate base of
 5,078 assessments compared with its large
 infrastructure and assets base. One of the
 largest costs for Council is roads.

More than 70% of Council's budget is spent
 maintaining and upgrading the Shire's 645km
 of sealed roads, 1,043km of unsealed roads,
 152 bridges (52 timber bridges), 32.47km of
 kerb and gutter, and 4,871 culverts.

These assets are expensive to maintain, and
 more so in recent years with the big increases
 in the cost of fuel, bitumen, concrete and
 steel.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO OUR RATES?

Rates increases applied by Councils are
 determined by the Independent Pricing and
 Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). Each year
 IPART determines a percentage we can
 increase rates to meet increasing costs – this
 year it is 0.07%.

Currently, Tenterfield Shire has the lowest
 average rates across our region, charging
 less than Uralla, Glen Innes, Gwydir and
 Kyogle (apart from the average ordinary
 business rate for which Uralla is lowest).

We have managed this low rate base for
 some time. Nevertheless, forecasting tells us
 this will no longer be sustainable and if we
 maintain rates at current levels our service
 levels will need to reduce.

After providing this information to the
 community, if Council elects to move forward
 with a variation to the current rates, a formal
 application to IPART will be required.

WHAT WILL THE INCREASED RATE INCOME BE USED FOR?

Council is facing a forecasted financial
 shortfall of more than \$47 million over the
 next 5 years. That means our costs are rising faster
 than our income, and the gap between our
 income and the funds needed to upkeep
 infrastructure assets and services to a level
 expected by the community and required
 legislation is growing.

The key purpose for Council applying for
 special rate variation (SRV) is to maintain
 financial sustainability by eliminating the
 budget shortfall.

HOW CAN I TRUST MY RATE ARE GOING TO WHERE COUNCIL SAID THEY WOULD?

Special Rate Variation funds are restricted.

As part of the IPART determination, Council
 will be required to report in its Annual
 Financial Statement to the Office of Local
 Government each year on the Special Rate
 Variation expenditure.

Council will be required to report if
 increased rate revenue advised in the
 application and where it has been spent. The
 community will also be able to access the
 Council's Quarterly Budget Review Report
 and Long-Term Financial Plan which reflects
 Council's Financial Position and the funding
 allocations in accordance with the Special
 Rate Variation.

WWW.TENTERFIELD.NSW.GOV.AU/TENTERFIELD-SHIRE-COUNCIL-PROPOSED-RATE-RISE-INFORMATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

regarding the potential rate rise.

DO NOT PAY RATES BUT LIVE IN TENTERFIELD SHIRE – WILL THIS AFFECT ME?

Council rates are paid by property owners. However, higher rates form part of costs that non-ratepayers may bear, including tenants currently paying rent in Tenterfield Shire, and the cost of goods and services through businesses.

Infrastructure, facilities and services are provided by Council for all residents and visitors in the Shire. Having a financially sustainable council benefits everyone.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE RATE VARIATION FINISHES?

After the special variation period finishes, rates will increase only by the rate peg amount set by ART in addition to the income from the Special Rate Variation, which will become a permanent increase. This is known as a s508A special variation.

WHY CAN'T WE JUST GET MORE GRANT FUNDING?

Most grants require funds to be spent on capital expenditure (e.g. a sporting field or community facility) and therefore grant funds are not normally used to fund the day to day operations of Council.

Only the Federal Government Financial Assistance Grants (FAG's) can be used for maintenance, which have been reduced to 0.5% of GDP.

Council continues to lobby the Federal Government to increase the Financial Assistance Grants (FAG's) through the Australian Local Government Association (LGA) and Local Government NSW (LGNSW), in excess of 1% of Commonwealth Taxation

Revenue provided by the Federal Government, which will support our ongoing sustainability.

Council regularly applies for and receives Government grants and will continue to do this in the future. However, there are key reasons why Council cannot solely rely on this source of income:

In most instances, the grant requires Council to provide a financial co-contribution, up to half of the grant amount. Receiving grants is a competitive process and there are not enough grants available to fund all of Council's infrastructure needs. Grants programs usually have requirements attached to them that may not fit with Council's current strategies and plans. Budget allocations are required to maintain and renew projects and this has to be allocated in Council's existing budget (funded depreciation).

WHY ARE WE HEARING ABOUT THIS NOW?

Financial sustainability has been a long-term focus at Tenterfield Shire Council.

There has been a need for a rate increase for some time because Council's General Fund has not been keeping pace with the expectations of the Community concerning asset maintenance and service delivery. Council's financial difficulties have been reported to Council as part of its suite of financial reporting most notably the Quarterly Budget Review.

The prolonged drought, bushfires, COVID-19 and flooding, meant Councillors were reluctant to increase rates when large sections of the community were suffering, unfortunately this is not sustainable.

Due to ongoing external factors influencing the cost of providing Council services, the financial situation will continue to deteriorate and needs to be addressed.

Council consulted with the community in January 2022 regarding our Community Strategic Plans, including our Long Term Financial Plan. At the February 2022 Council meeting, Councillors voted to defer a decision on applying for a Special Rate Variation in the 2022/23 Financial Year to enable further community consultation and additional time for the community to recover from drought, bushfires, floods and COVID-19. Additionally, this allowed Council to explore avenues to further cut costs, rationalise services, and raise income from the sale of surplus under-utilised assets.

Council also implemented more efficiencies and reduced services for the 2022/23 financial year to reduce the impact on ratepayers. In order to apply for a Special Rate Variation commencing in the 2023/24 Financial Year to reduce the impact on ratepayers. In order to apply for a Special Rate Variation commencing in the 2023/24 Financial Year, we are now embarking on further community engagement.

Councillors are committed to finding a solution to this problem and as such we are providing as much information as possible about what is happening, so our community has a complete understanding of our financial position, in order to participate in the discussion around our funded future.

For all information relating to the proposed rate rise, please visit www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/tenterfield-shire-council-proposed-rate-rise-information

Proposed Rating Structure SRV 43% x 2 years with weekly increase data

Rate Category	% Yield per Category 2022/2023	Average Rates per Assessment 2022/2023	Average increase weekly from 2022/2023 to 2023/2024	Average increase weekly from 2023/2024 to 2024/2025	Total average increase of Rates over the 2 years	Cumulative increase weekly 2023/2024 & 2024/2025
Residential Tenterfield	21.91%	\$ 664.75	\$ 5.41	\$ 7.84	\$ 689.38	\$ 13.26
Residential Tenterfield (Urban)	0.23%	\$ 1,388.48	\$ 11.38	\$ 16.39	\$ 1,444.05	\$ 27.77
Residential Other	17.98%	\$ 599.52	\$ 4.88	\$ 7.08	\$ 622.36	\$ 11.97
Residential Urbenville	1.62%	\$ 603.57	\$ 4.93	\$ 7.10	\$ 625.47	\$ 12.03
Residential Jennings	1.31%	\$ 597.51	\$ 4.93	\$ 7.05	\$ 623.10	\$ 11.98
Residential Drake	0.99%	\$ 598.28	\$ 4.82	\$ 7.02	\$ 615.70	\$ 11.84
Farmland General	48.89%	\$ 1,616.40	\$ 13.33	\$ 19.04	\$ 1,683.68	\$ 32.38
Business Tenterfield	6.21%	\$ 1,556.65	\$ 12.71	\$ 18.38	\$ 1,616.90	\$ 31.09
Business Other	0.37%	\$ 1,131.02	\$ 9.30	\$ 13.37	\$ 1,178.87	\$ 22.67
Business Urbenville	0.16%	\$ 564.58	\$ 4.59	\$ 6.68	\$ 585.80	\$ 11.27
Business Jennings	0.02%	\$ 580.38	\$ 4.72	\$ 6.86	\$ 602.32	\$ 11.58
Business Drake	0.09%	\$ 555.40	\$ 4.51	\$ 6.57	\$ 576.21	\$ 11.08
Mining	0.21%	\$ 1,018.20	\$ 8.34	\$ 12.02	\$ 1,058.30	\$ 20.35

WWW.TENTERFIELD.NSW.GOV.AU/TENTERFIELD-SHIRE-COUNCIL-PROPOSED-RATE-RISE-INFO

A4



COMMUNITY FORUM PROPOSED RATE RISE

SATURDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2022

2-4pm

MEMORIAL HALL, MOLESWORTH ST, TENTERFIELD

Tenterfield Shire residents and ratepayers are invited to attend a Community Forum to have your questions answered about the proposed rate rise.

This will be a mediated session, with pre-submitted questions answered first.

Please submit your questions relating to the proposed rate rise by 5pm Thursday 1 September by emailing: council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au or by phone on (02) 6736 6000.



(02) 6736 6000



www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au



www.facebook.com/TenterfieldShireCouncil





COMMUNITY FORUM PROPOSED RATE RISE

MONDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER 2022

4.00 pm

MINGOOLA COMMUNITY HALL

Tenterfield Shire Council invites Mungoola district residents and ratepayers to attend a Community Forum to have your questions answered about the proposed rate rise (Special Rate Variation SRV).

Contact:



(02) 6736 6000




www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au



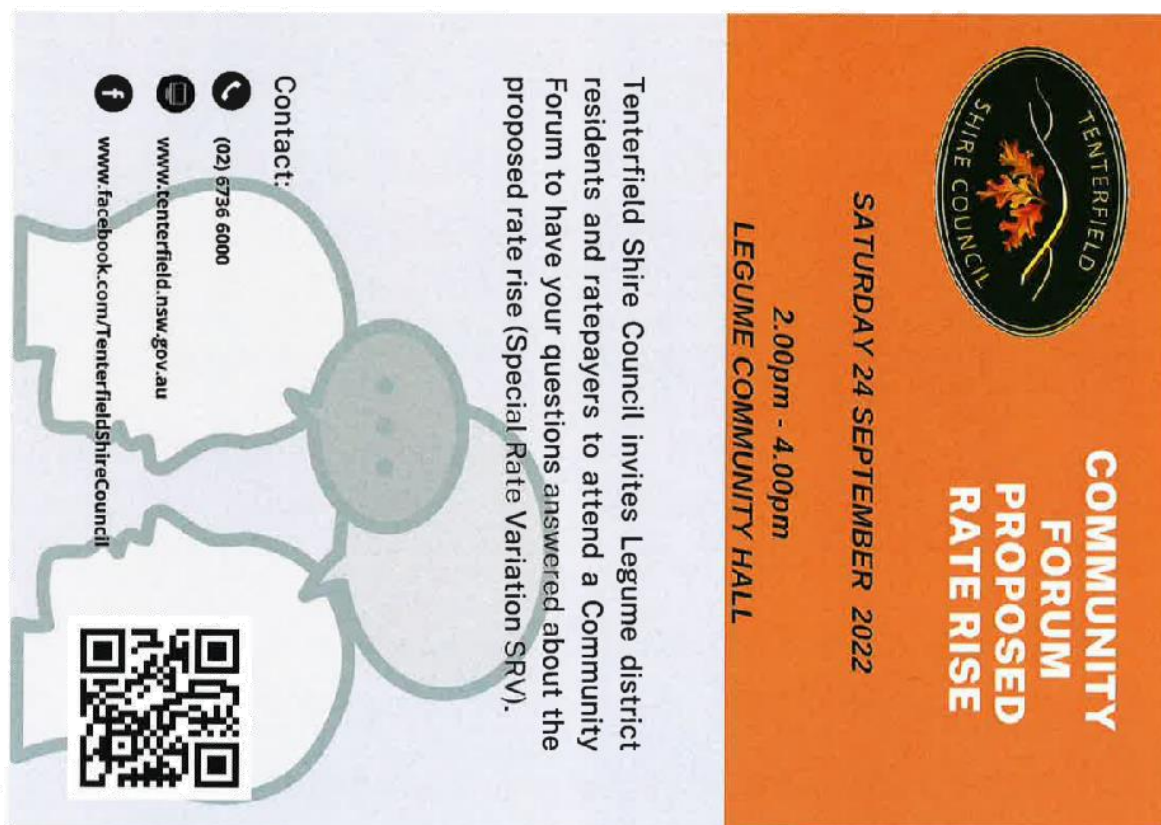
www.facebook.com/TenterfieldShireCouncil





The poster is divided into two main sections. The top section has an orange background and features the Tenterfield Shire Council logo in the top left corner. The logo is an oval with a stylized tree and the words 'TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL'. To the right of the logo, the text 'COMMUNITY FORUM PROPOSED RATE RISE' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Below this, the date and time 'SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2022 10.30am - 12.30pm' are listed in white, followed by the location 'URBENVILLE COMMUNITY HALL' in white capital letters.

The bottom section has a light blue background and features a graphic of two stylized people in profile, facing each other with a speech bubble between them. To the right of this graphic, the text 'Tenterfield Shire Council invites Urbenville district residents and ratepayers to attend a Community Forum to have your questions answered about the proposed rate rise (Special Rate Variation SRV).' is written in black. Below this text, the word 'Contact:' is followed by a telephone icon, the number '(02) 6736 6000', a laptop icon, the website 'www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au', and a Facebook icon, the Facebook page 'www.facebook.com/TenterfieldShireCouncil'. A QR code is located at the bottom right of the poster.



The poster is divided into two main sections. The top section has an orange background and features the Tenterfield Shire Council logo (a circular emblem with a tree and the text 'TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL') in the top right corner. Below the logo, the text 'COMMUNITY FORUM PROPOSED RATE RISE' is written in large, bold, white capital letters. Underneath this, the date and time 'SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2022 2.00pm - 4.00pm' are listed in white, followed by the venue 'LEGUME COMMUNITY HALL' in white capital letters. The bottom section has a light blue background and features a graphic of two stylized people in profile facing each other with a speech bubble between them. To the right of this graphic, the text 'Tenterfield Shire Council invites Legume district residents and ratepayers to attend a Community Forum to have your questions answered about the proposed rate rise (Special Rate Variation SRV).' is written in black. To the left of the graphic, the contact information is listed: 'Contact: (02) 6736 6000', 'www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au', and 'www.facebook.com/TenterfieldShireCouncil'. A QR code is located at the bottom left of the poster.

COMMUNITY FORUM PROPOSED RATE RISE

SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2022
2.00pm - 4.00pm
LEGUME COMMUNITY HALL

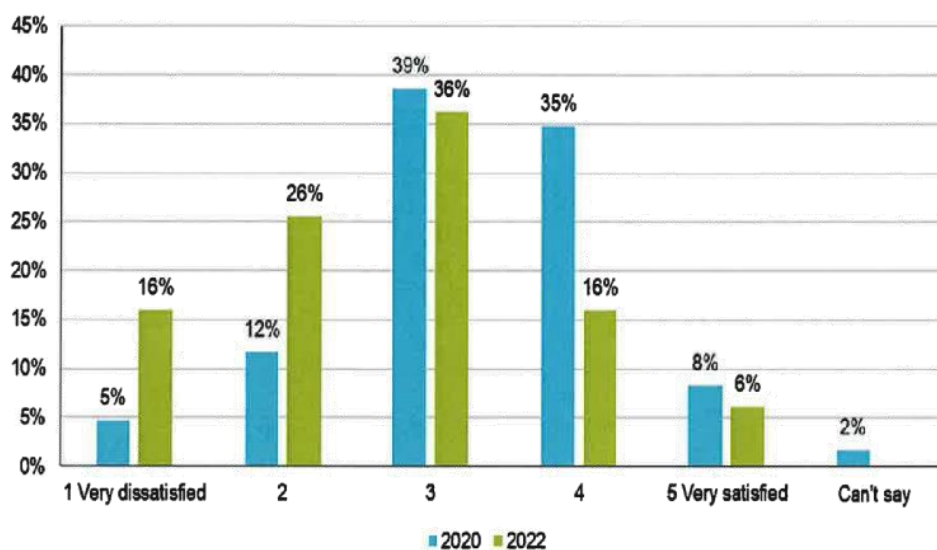
Tenterfield Shire Council invites Legume district residents and ratepayers to attend a Community Forum to have your questions answered about the proposed rate rise (Special Rate Variation SRV).

Contact:
(02) 6736 6000
www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au
www.facebook.com/TenterfieldShireCouncil

A5

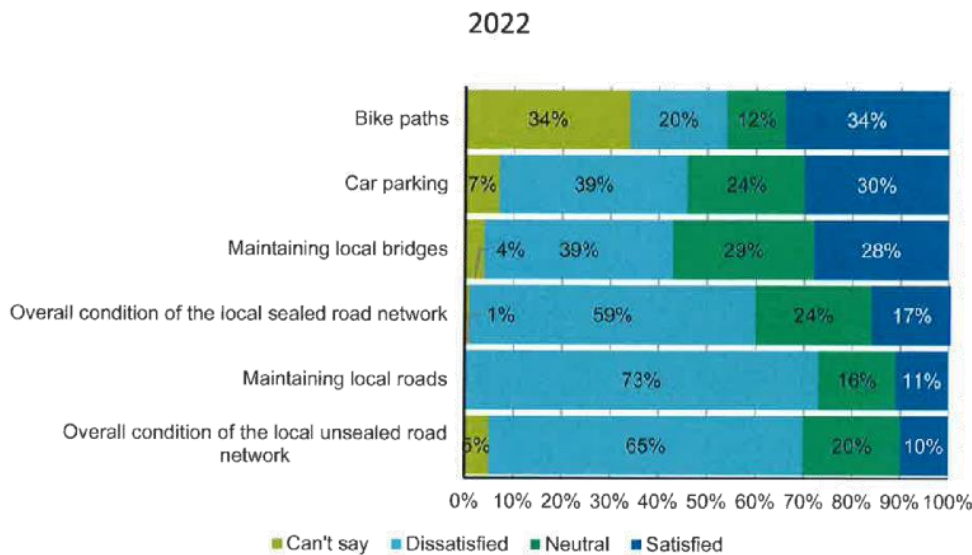
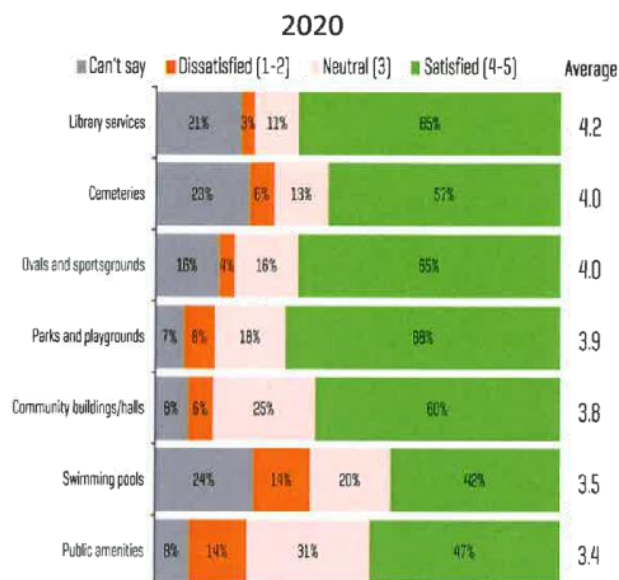
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Overall Satisfaction



Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

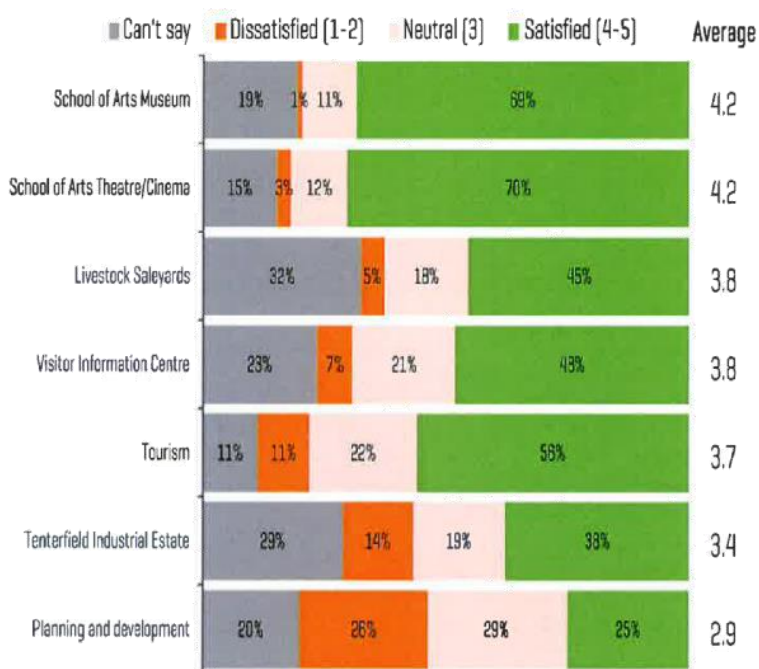
Community Services



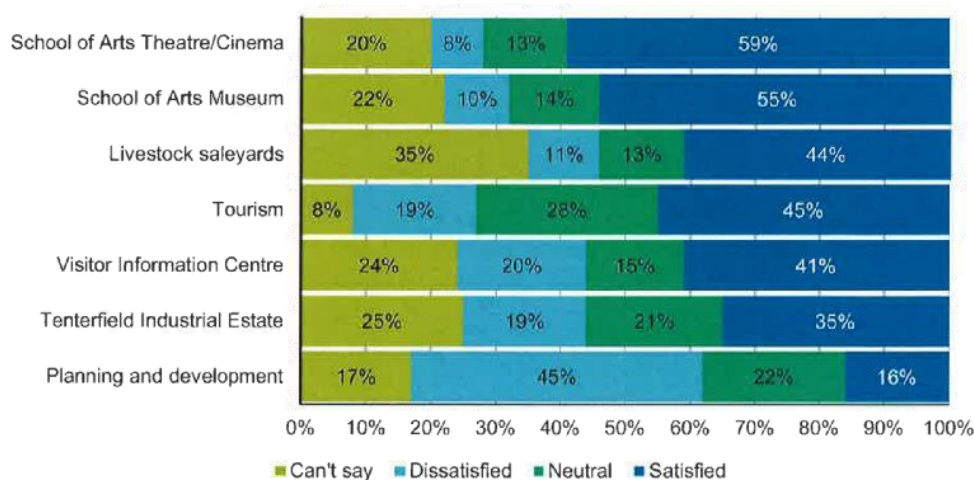
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Economy Services

2020



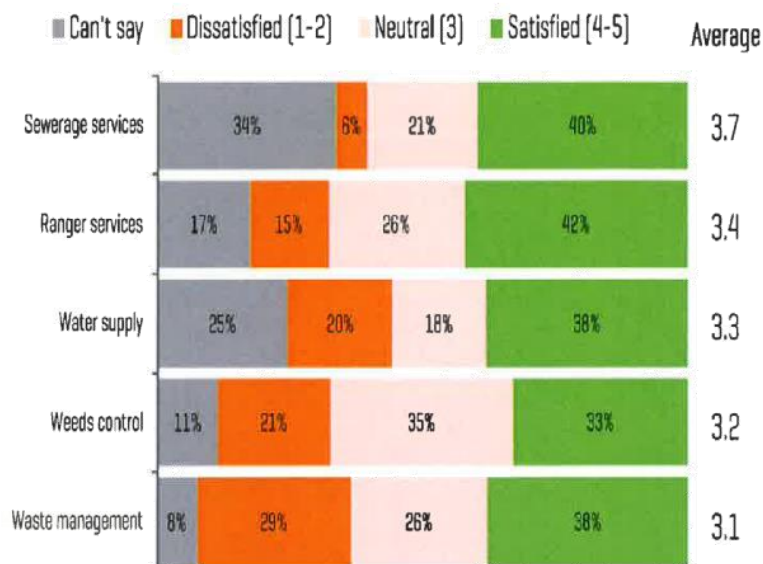
2022



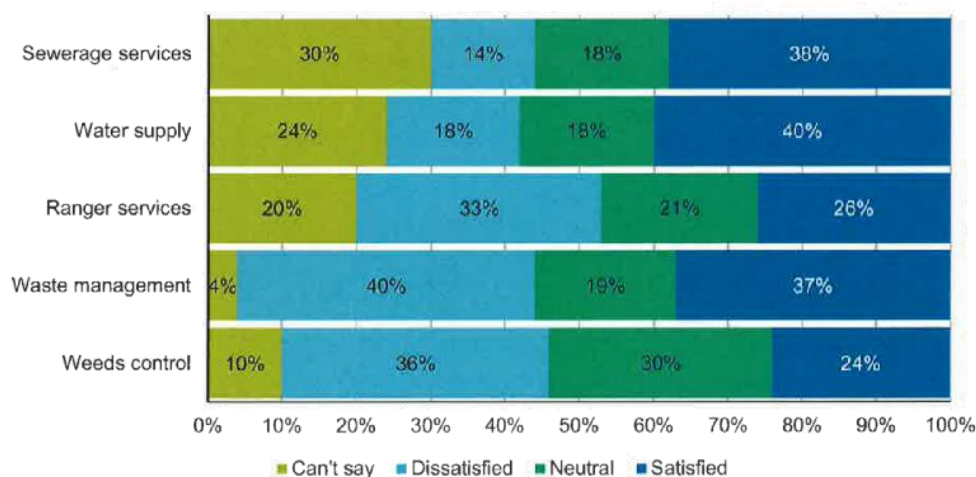
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Environmental Services

2020



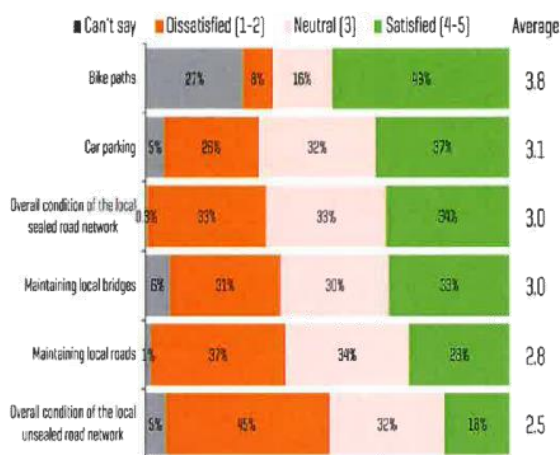
2022



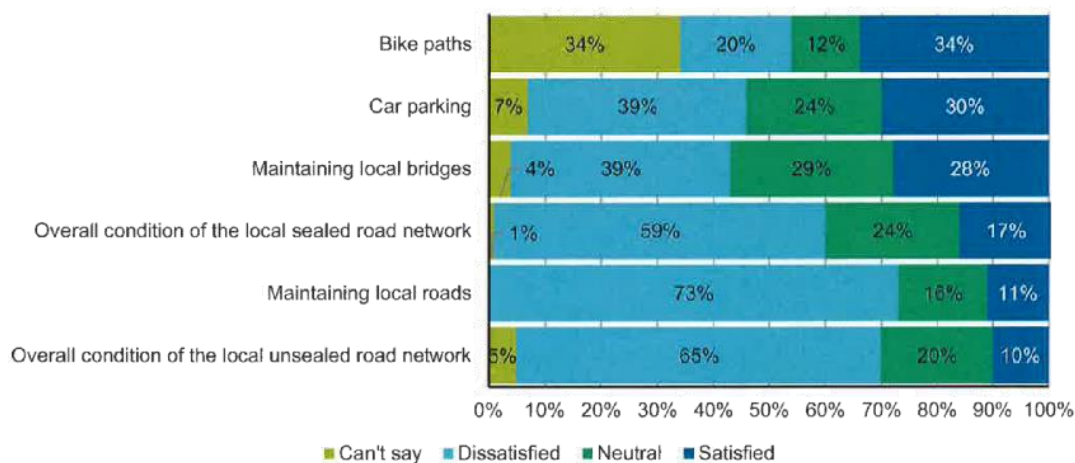
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Transport Services

2020



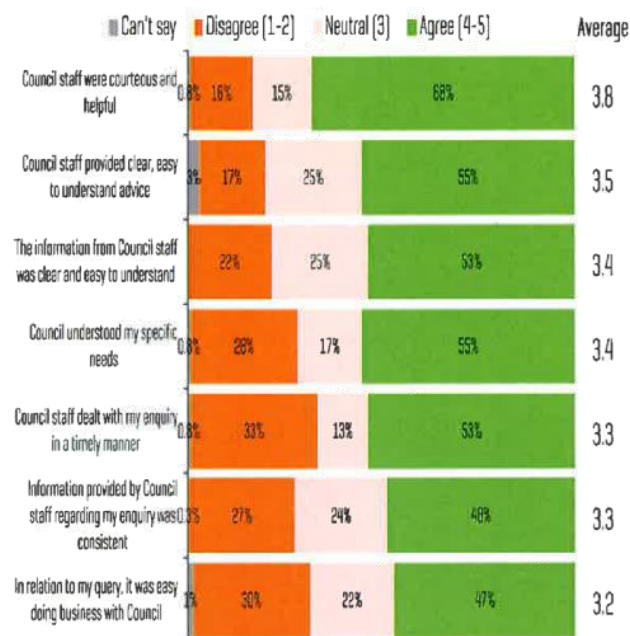
2022



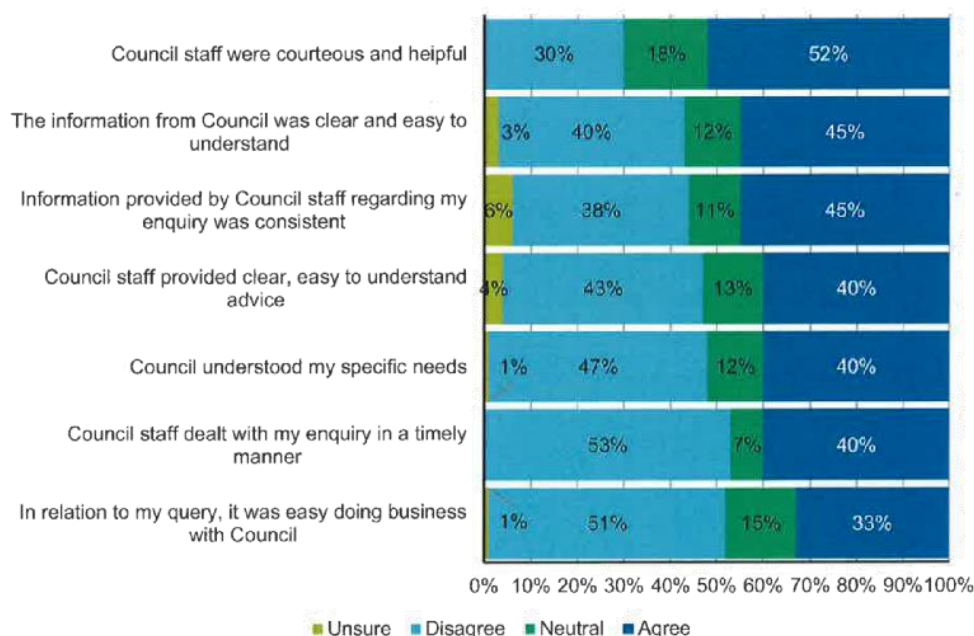
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Customer Perceptions of Customer Service

2020



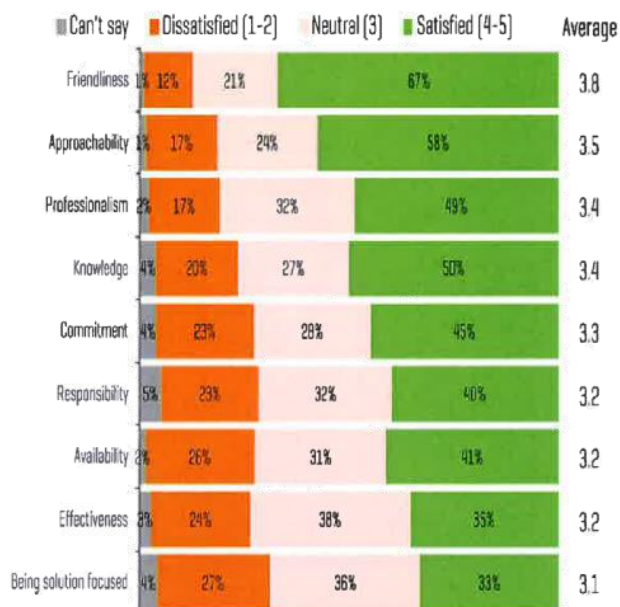
2022



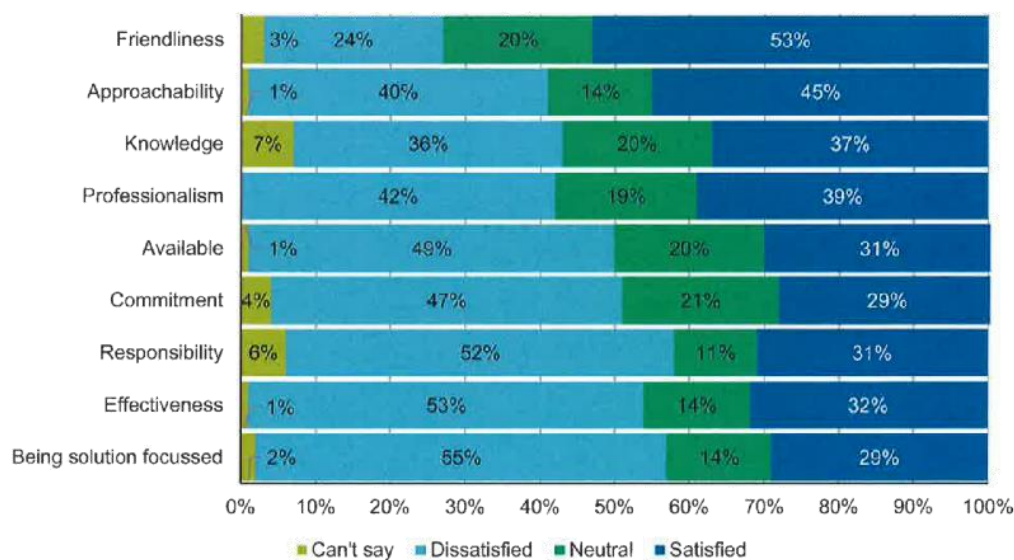
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Customer Perceptions of Council Staff

2020



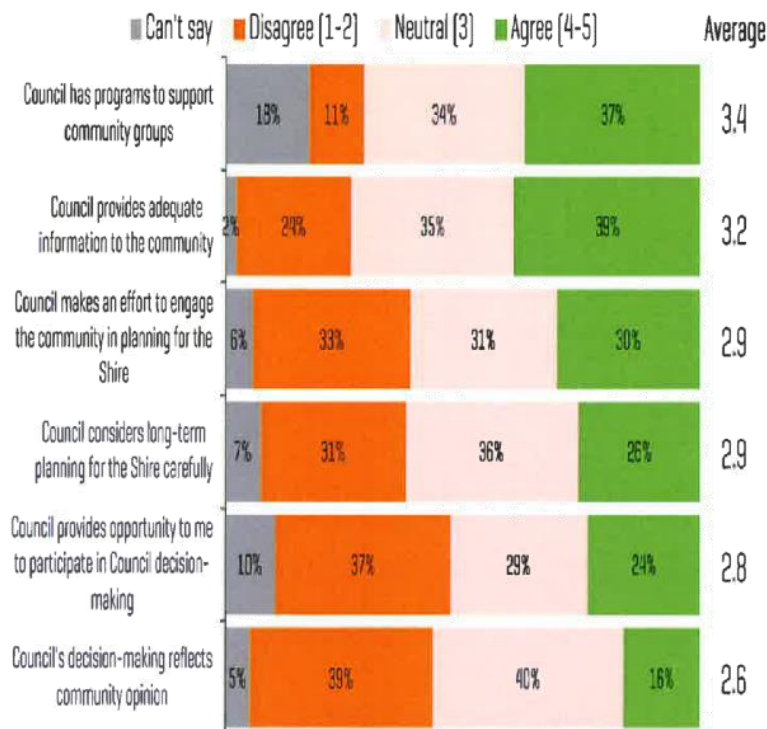
2022



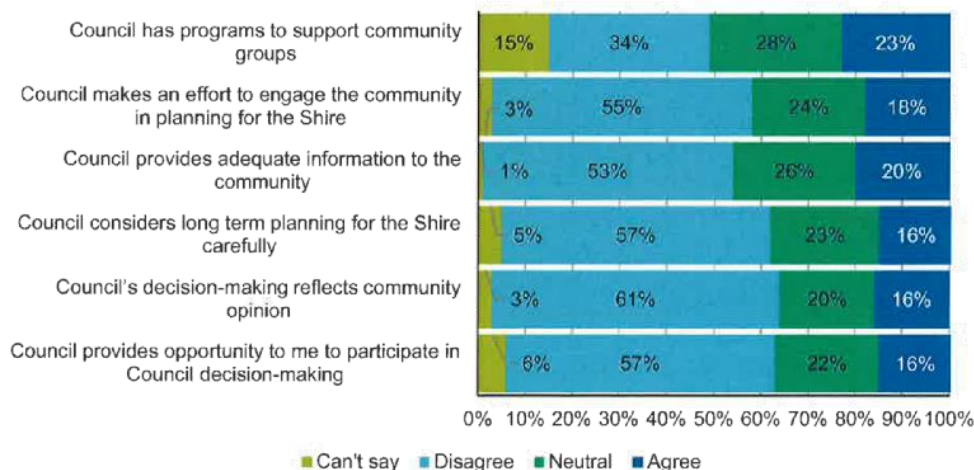
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Perceptions of Community Engagement

2020

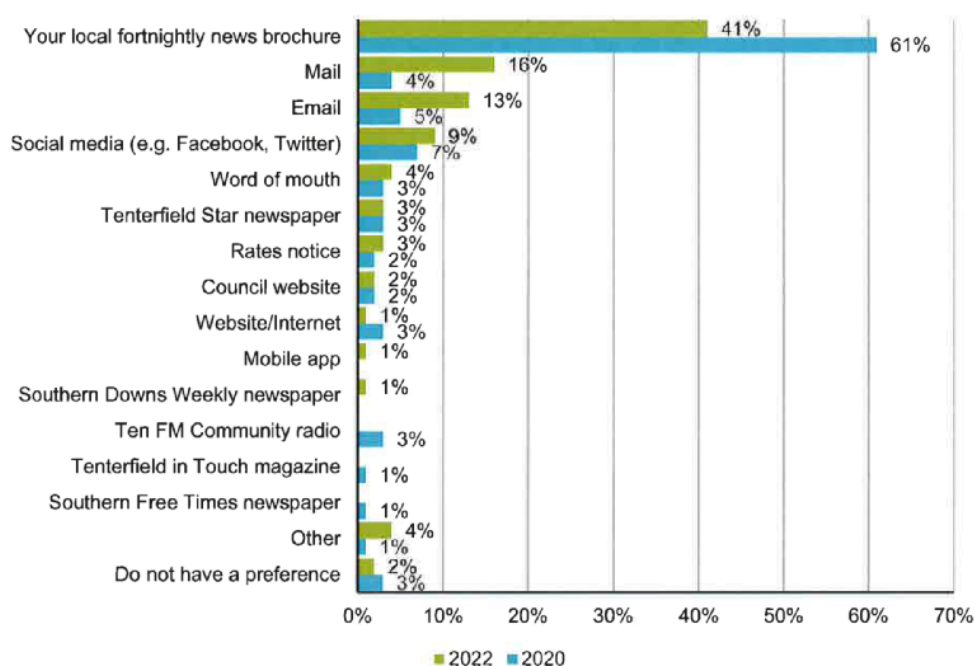


2022



Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

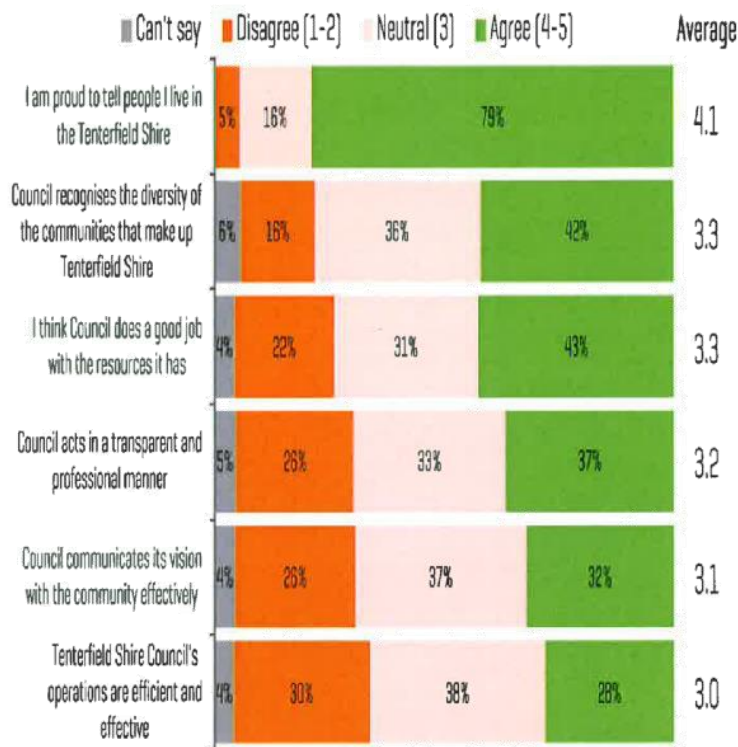
Preferred Source for Receiving Council Information



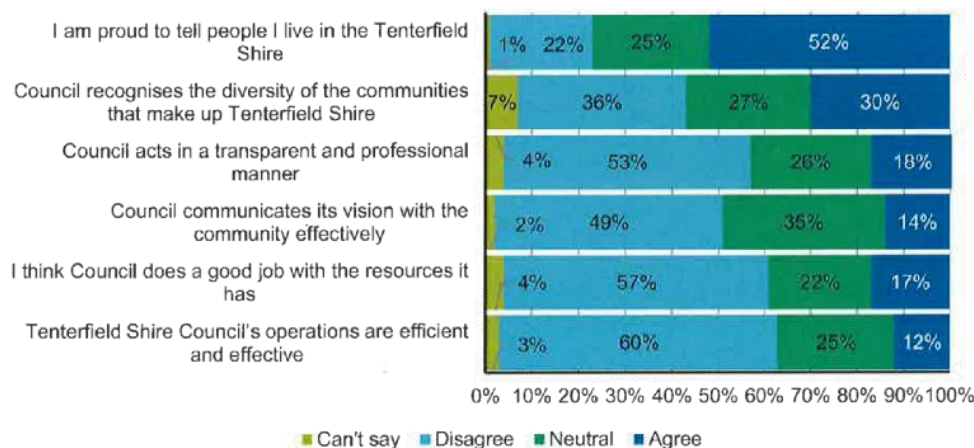
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Perceptions of Council Leadership

2020

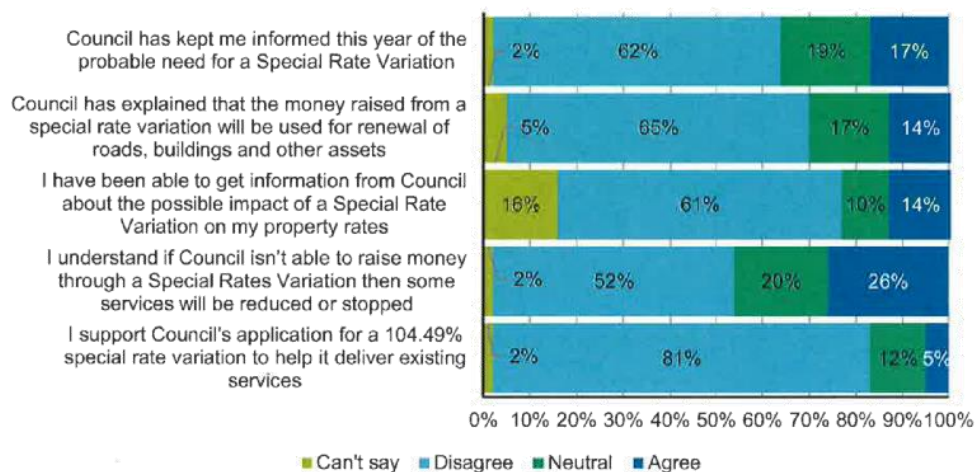


2022



Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Special Rates Variation



A6



Proposed Special Rate Rise Information Session
3 September 2022

Proposed Rating Structure SRV 43% x 2 years with weekly increase data											
Rate Code	Rate Category	% Yield per Category	Average Rates per Assessment 2022/2023	Average Rates per Assessment 2023/2024	Average increase from 2022/2023 to 2023/2024	Average increase weekly from 2022/2023 to 2023/2024	Average Rates per Assessment 2024/2025	Average increase from 2023/2024 to 2024/2025	Average increase weekly from 2023/2024 to 2024/2025	Total average increase of Rates over the 2 years	Cumulative increase weekly 2023/2024 & 2024/2025
1	Residential Tenterfield	21.91%	\$ 664.75	\$ 946.21	\$ 281.46	\$ 5.41	\$ 1,354.13	\$ 407.92	\$ 7.84	\$ 689.38	\$ 13.26
4	Residential Tenterfield (Urban)	0.23%	\$ 1,388.48	\$ 1,980.06	\$ 591.58	\$ 11.38	\$ 2,832.53	\$ 852.48	\$ 16.39	\$ 1,444.05	\$ 27.77
5	Residential Other	17.98%	\$ 599.52	\$ 853.48	\$ 253.96	\$ 4.88	\$ 1,221.88	\$ 368.40	\$ 7.08	\$ 622.36	\$ 11.97
6	Residential Urbenville	1.62%	\$ 603.57	\$ 859.69	\$ 256.12	\$ 4.93	\$ 1,229.04	\$ 369.36	\$ 7.10	\$ 625.47	\$ 12.03
7	Residential Jennings	1.31%	\$ 597.51	\$ 853.79	\$ 256.28	\$ 4.93	\$ 1,220.60	\$ 366.82	\$ 7.05	\$ 623.10	\$ 11.98
8	Residential Drake	0.99%	\$ 598.28	\$ 849.16	\$ 250.88	\$ 4.82	\$ 1,213.98	\$ 364.83	\$ 7.02	\$ 615.70	\$ 11.84
9	Farmland General Business	48.89%	\$ 1,616.40	\$ 2,309.75	\$ 693.34	\$ 13.33	\$ 3,300.08	\$ 990.33	\$ 19.04	\$ 1,683.68	\$ 32.38
10	Tenterfield	6.21%	\$ 1,556.65	\$ 2,217.57	\$ 660.92	\$ 12.71	\$ 3,173.55	\$ 955.98	\$ 18.38	\$ 1,616.90	\$ 31.09
11	Business Other Business	0.37%	\$ 1,131.02	\$ 1,614.52	\$ 483.50	\$ 9.30	\$ 2,309.90	\$ 695.37	\$ 13.37	\$ 1,178.87	\$ 22.67
12	Urbenville Business	0.16%	\$ 564.58	\$ 803.25	\$ 238.67	\$ 4.59	\$ 1,150.38	\$ 347.14	\$ 6.68	\$ 585.80	\$ 11.27
13	Jennings Business	0.07%	\$ 580.38	\$ 825.85	\$ 245.47	\$ 4.72	\$ 1,182.70	\$ 356.86	\$ 6.86	\$ 602.32	\$ 11.58
14	Business Drake	0.09%	\$ 555.40	\$ 790.12	\$ 234.72	\$ 4.51	\$ 1,131.61	\$ 341.49	\$ 6.57	\$ 576.21	\$ 11.08
15	Mining	0.21%	\$ 1,018.20	\$ 1,451.65	\$ 433.45	\$ 8.34	\$ 2,076.50	\$ 624.85	\$ 12.02	\$ 1,058.30	\$ 20.35

Q1: Peter Robinson

What is the current total
debt owed by Council and
how has it arisen?

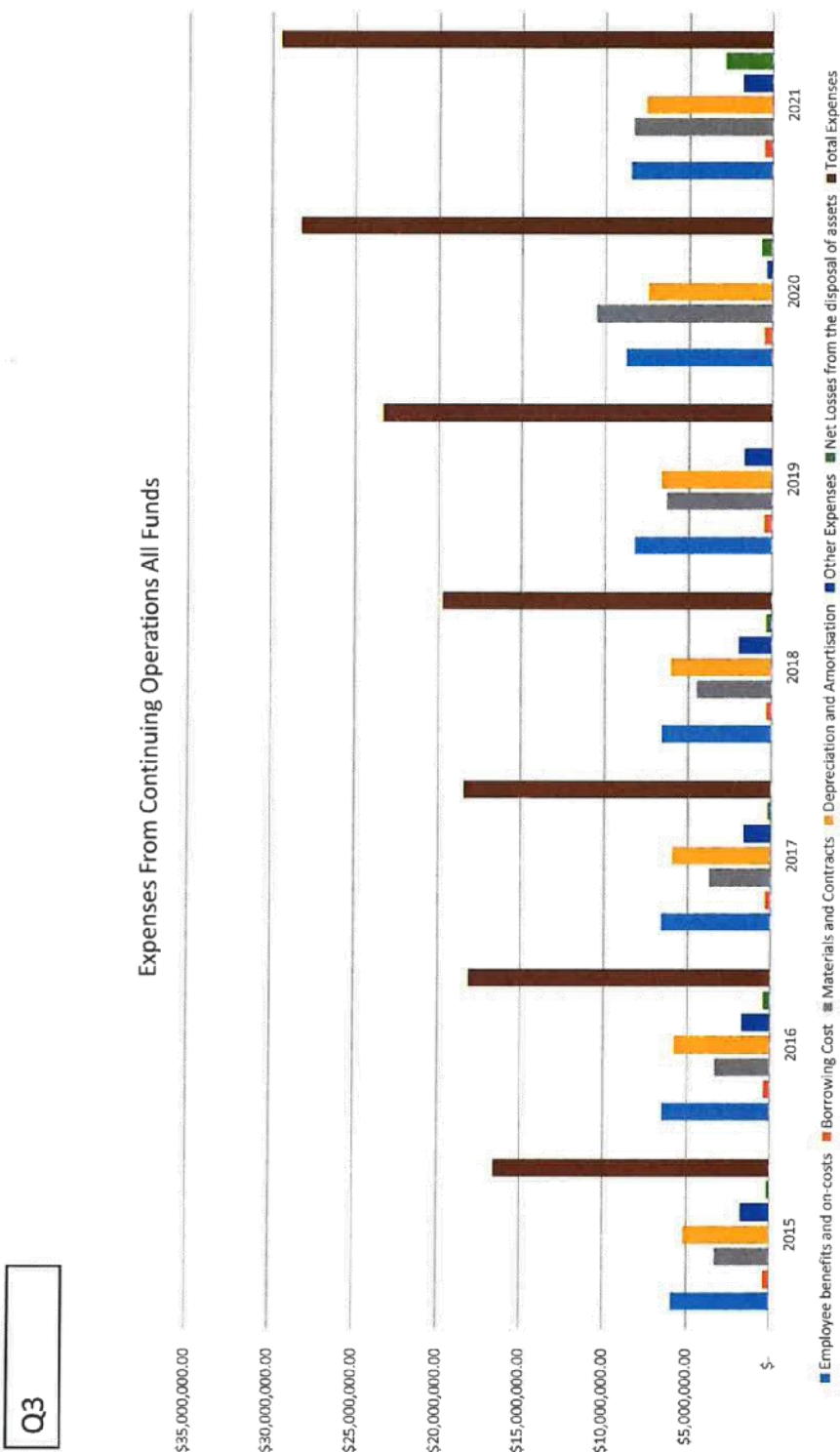
Q2: Peter Robinson

How much have council
rates increased over the last
5 years?

Q2

Year	Rate Peg	SRV	Total
2022/2023	0.7%		0.7%
2021/2022	2.0%		2.0%
2020/2021	2.6%		2.6%
2019/2020	2.7%		2.7%
2018/2019	2.3%		2.3%

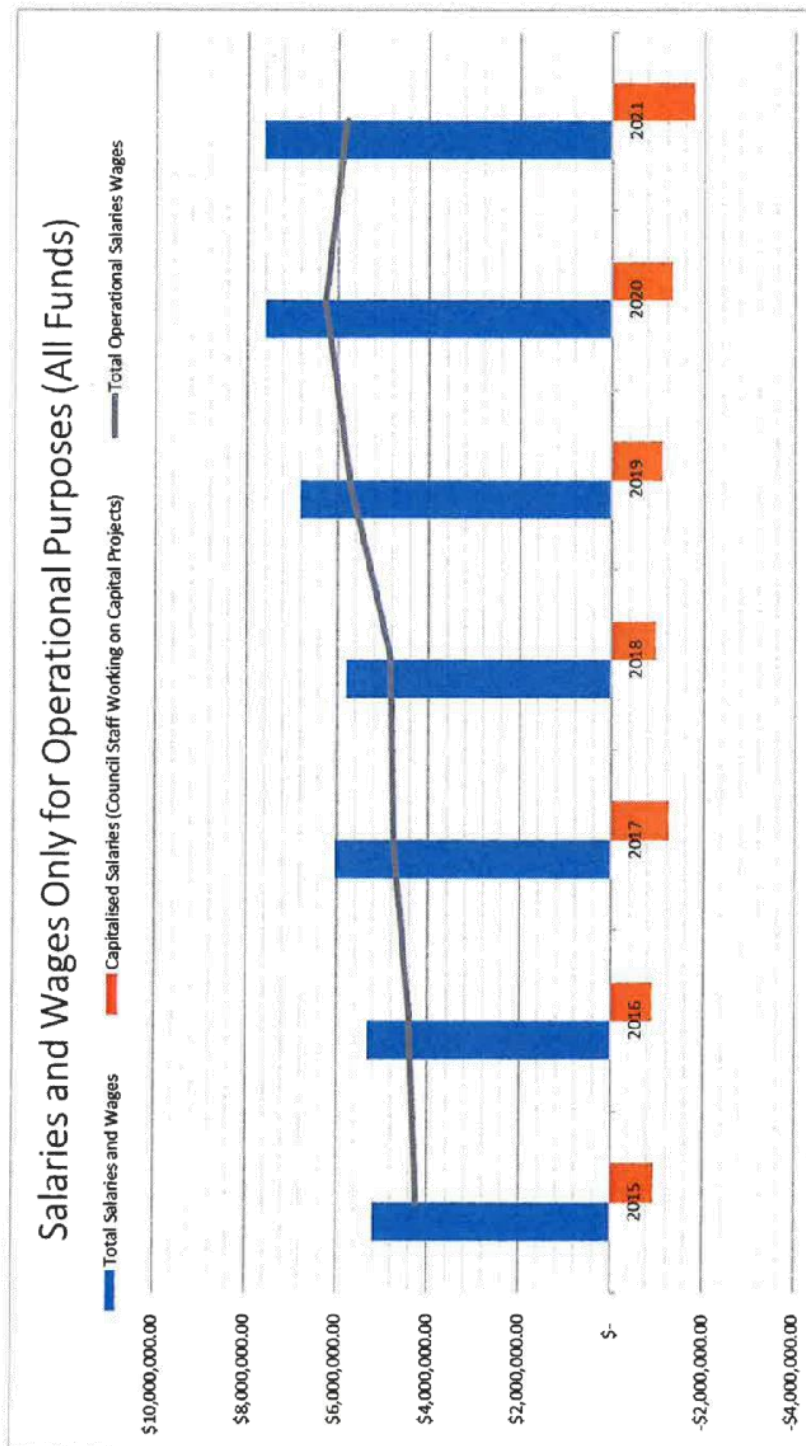
Q3: Peter Robinson
How much have Council's
operational expenses
increased over the past 5
years?



Q4: Peter Robinson

What has been Council's
total wages bill over the
past 5 years?

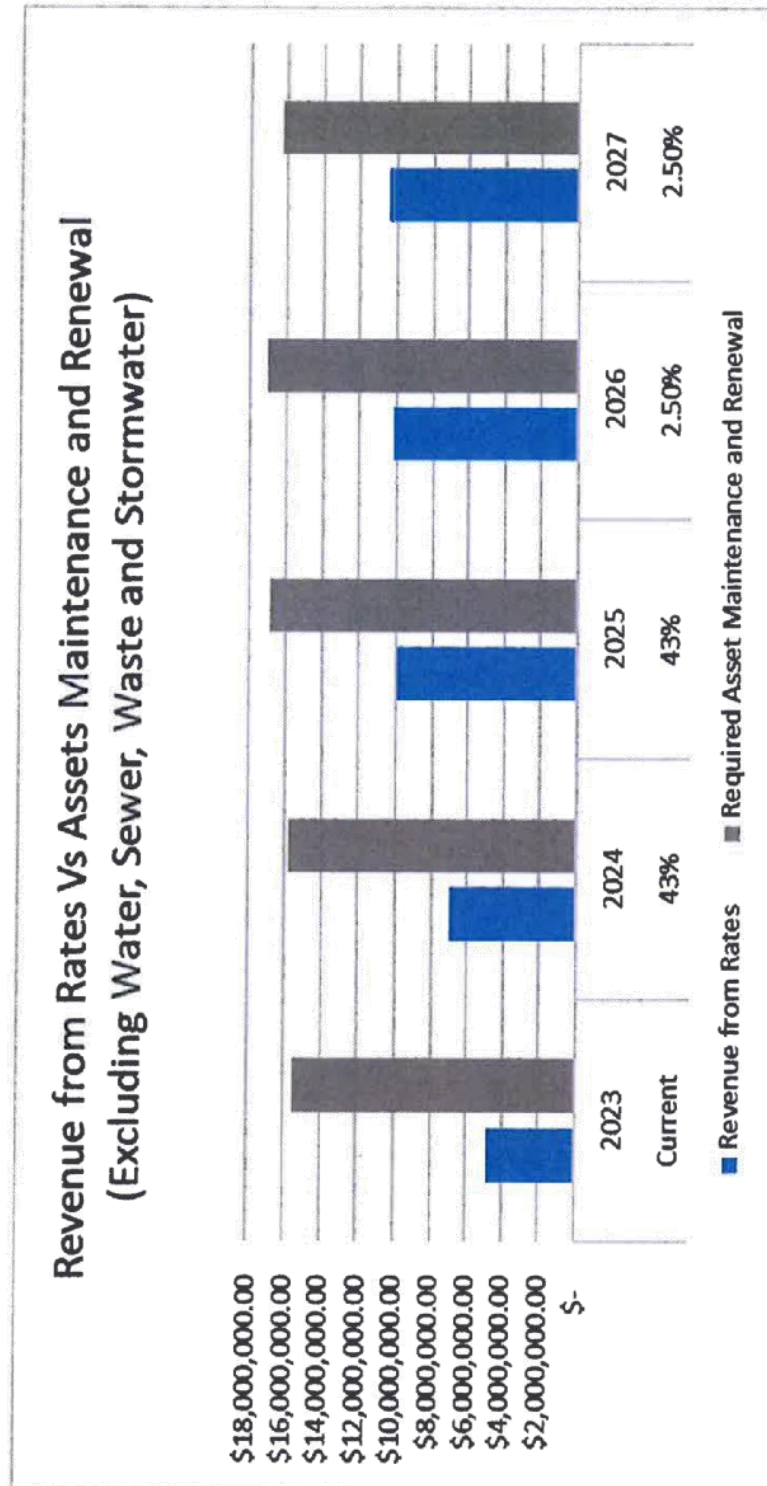
Q4



Q5: Peter Robinson

What unforeseen major
increases in expenses have
occurred recently?

Q5

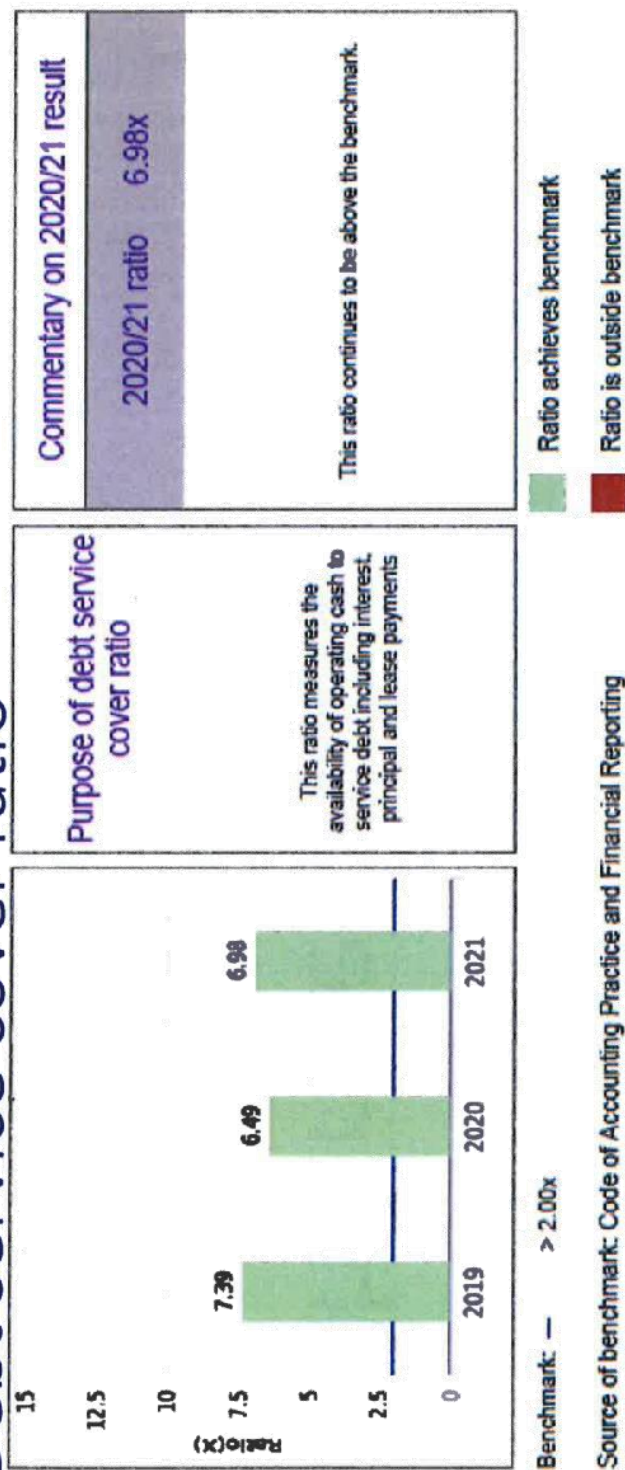


Q6: Peter Robinson

What are any realistic
proposals to repay this debt
and return to credit?

Q6

Debt service cover ratio



Q7: Anonymous

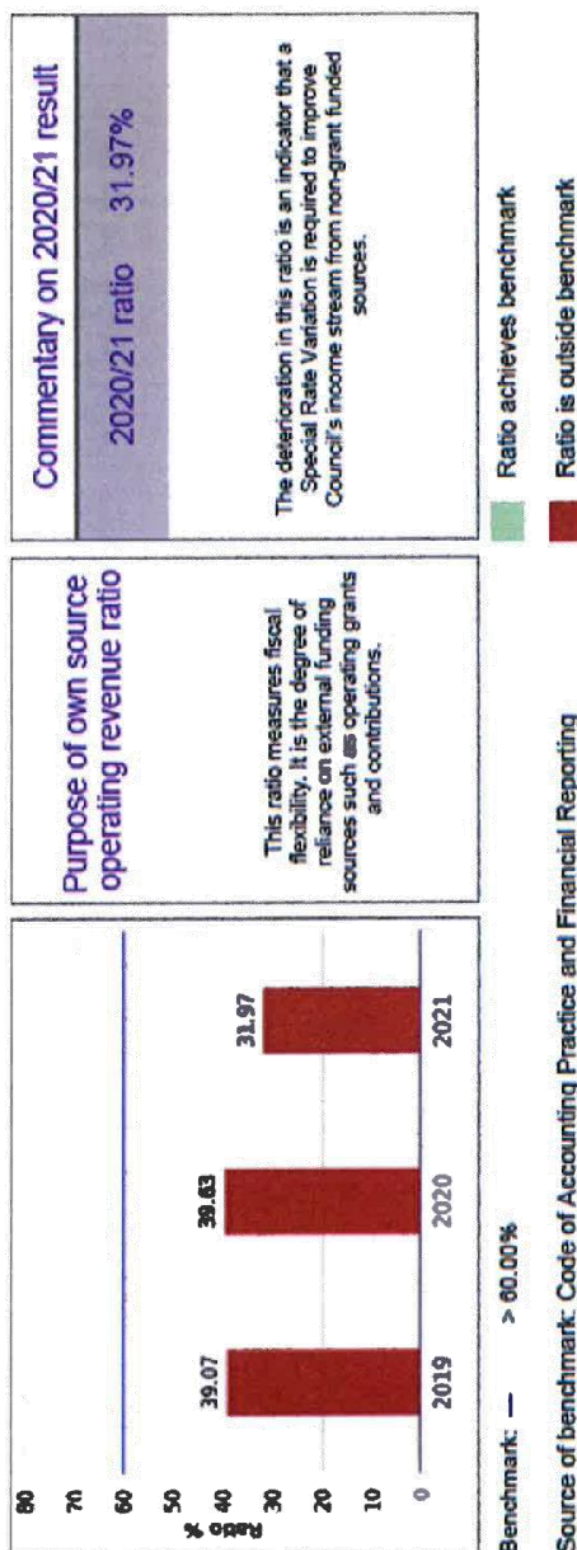
Is the rate rise being
applied for only temporary
rise?

Q8: Anonymous

Is the statement on the OSOCI
pamphlet 104.49% rate rise is
permanent or false?

Q9: Anonymous
Is Council investigating ways of
minimising general rate rises
within the shire by assessing
all avenues legally allowed on
behalf of shire residents and
ratepayers?

Q9 Own source operating revenue ratio



Q10: Anonymous
Is the 10 year plan referred to in
the OSOCI pamphlet flawed and
does not reflect community
needs and aspirations or does it
simply not meet what a recently
formed group want?

Q11: Anonymous

Is it true that the council are looking at selling the information centre, the airfield, community childcare building, community radio station, band hall, terminating the lease of the school of arts?

Q12: Anonymous

Is Council starting businesses to compete with existing businesses in the shire and if they make a loss then are the rate payers responsible for the losses?

Q13: Robyn Bell & Jan Evans

It was recently stated in a letter from the CEO that if the proposed SRV doesn't go ahead then services may be cut resulting in a loss of 30 employees which would have a roll on effect of 100 persons.

Out of those 30 employees
how many will simply move on
and obtain work elsewhere?

Q14: Robyn Bell & Jan Evans

Please refer to Shire overview provided by NSW Office of Local Government (OLG). Tenterfield Shire already pay more per capita (compared to the group average) for: Governance and administration, Public Order, Safety and Health, Water Services, Sewer Services, Environmental (ex footpaths) and Library Services. Less than average on: Recreation and culture and Community Services. To anyone who has ever run any business, large or small, indications are that this council is top heavy.

Why is this so? What is being
done to rectify the situation?
What are the long term goals?

Include

- Office of the Mayor, chairperson and elected members of council.
- Physical amenities provided to the head of council, the elected members and their aides.
- Permanent or ad-hoc commissions and committees created by or acting on behalf of the council including Audit committee, Risk management committee etc.
- Management of public funds and public debt.
- Operation of financial management function, budgeting, accounting services and internal auditing.
- Dissemination of general information, technical documentation and statistics on financial and fiscal services.
- Council tasks such as registration of voters, holding of elections.
- Conduct of basic research and development activity and applied research related to general public services.
- Grants, loans and subsidies to support basic research and development undertaken by private bodies, community groups.
- Administration and implementation of Human Resource practices and policies.
- Operation of other general services such as centralised purchase and supply services, maintenance and storage of government records and archives, operation of government owned or occupied buildings, central motor vehicle pools.

Q15: Robyn Bell
Increase the rates and charges
and more and more people
will default or go without
necessities. As our elected
representatives do you
consider this acceptable?

Q16: Jan Evans

Rates for our house in Brisbane, Karana Downs with water views and access to Brisbane River, are half what we pay for xxx Phelham St Tenterfield. If they are increased 104% we will be paying 4 times and so will deter people coming to live in Tenterfield?

Q17: Jan Evans

How did TSC get into this debt?
What documented plan does TSC
have to get the finances back in
balance? Where are the extra
monies raised by the SRV going
to be spent on?

Q18: Tony Carr

Why hasn't council gone
and asked state
government to bail them
out of the financial
situation?

Q19: Ian Garnham
Council did not pass the fit for
the future test in 2014/2015,
and still has not. When is
council planning on meeting
this obligation?

Q20: Ian Garnham

What changes to job
procedures, and work
practices has council
implemented to become
more efficient?

Q22: Ian Garnham

What action will council
take if the rate rise is not
approved by IPART?

Q23: Ian Garnham

In 2013, NSW Treasury Corporation (TCorp) observed that the council's financial position was 'weak', and considered its outlook to be 'negative'. TCorp noted that the council's LTFP forecast continuing operating deficits for the next 10 years. TCorp also highlighted the council's reliance on external funding from grants and contributions. What has council done to address this?

Questions from OSOCI

1. In light of Councils need to apply for an SRV is the current budget based on the 104.49% SRV being approved? If yes, what will Council do if the special rate variation of 104.49% is not approved?
2. In light of Councils need to apply for an SRV, it seems Council has spent the shire into an untenable financial position. There is no painless way out of this mess. Yet Council has decided to put all the pain onto the ratepayers with a 104.49% rate rise. Did Council consider alternative options? If so, what were they?

3. TSC proclaim that it has to go into administration if the Rates are NOT raised. What immediate actions will TSC take if the SRV of 104.49% is not approved by IPART?

4. In light of Councils need to apply for an SRV, why does TSC not reduce their internal spending to manage the budget they do have?

5. In light of Councils the need to apply for an SRV, what will happen to the community members who are unable to afford the 104.49% Rate Rise?

6. How does TSC justify the SRV raising the cost of living beyond the communities means, the CEO publicly announces that “if people can not afford to live in Tenterfield any longer and have to move away – that’s not a bad thing” .

7. In light of Councils need to apply for an SRV, it is understood that TSC was still spending millions of dollars they didn't have in 2021. There is little to no trust that better financial management will take place if the 104.49% SRV is approved. What personal consequences are Councillors and TSC Management Staff going to take in case they continue to operate a viable Council Corporation?

8. In light of Councils need to apply for an SRV, what was the impact of the total spend on the dam wall upgrade on the council's financial situation that leads to the SRV – what was in the budget for this project and what was the overrun?

9. Council claims to spend 75% of its budget on roads as a main driver for the SRV?
- a) How much of that cost is repairs of roads?
 - b) What is the average time after building a road for council to come back to patch it?
 - c) What is the cost to patch one pothole of average 500mm diameter?
 - d) What is the time between council coming to patch the same pothole over and over and over?

10. Council claims that the SRV is needed to fund the increased cost to operate, what is the total annual Budget of council in say 2021 and what is the total non administrative component of that budget (capital works, maintenance, repairs, parks and gardens....) and how much of the budget is for 'administration' in % of capital spent.

We would like to thank all who put forward these questions Peter Robertson, Warwick Chapman, Robyn Bell, Jan Evans, Tony Carr, and OSOCl and late questions from Evelyn Dudgeon, Bob & Diane South, Jan Evans, Ian Garnham and Vic Wilson whose questions have been covered in the presentation. Thank you to these people for your feedback.

A7

On 26 Jul 2022, at 1:00 pm, [REDACTED]

?

To all Councillors and Council senior staff:

Following the meeting on Sunday evening (24th) of the Ratepayers Association of Tenterfield Shire, the post below has appeared on the 'Our Shire Our Council Initiative' (OSOCI) Facebook site:

ADMINISTRATOR APPOINTED TO TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL

CEO FIRED

This could be the headlines if Tenterfield Ratepayers Association has their way. We understand they have placed a motion recommending that Tenterfield Shire Council be placed in administration. OSOCI is not at all surprised. This is the inevitable consequence of years of poor decision making by Council and Administration.

It is most unfortunate that TSC has refused to listen and collaborate with ratepayers to help them control overspending and balance the books. And at this Wednesday's council meeting they are voting to go out and out to tell us to cop another 104.49% increase in our rates.

Join OSOCI and help stop the rot

The claims in this post are completely untrue, and indicate that OSOCI continues to mislead the public by spreading false rumours and blatant misinformation. The post has now been removed. The Ratepayers meeting on Sunday was attended by 12 people, some of whom are also members of OSOCI. Of these, Robert Evans applied to join on that evening and was accepted as a member. It now appears that he is the operator of the OSOCI Facebook page.

Ratepayers Association committee members present did not support the motion to call for the suspension of Council's activities, and they oppose the appointment of an administrator or of amalgamation with another council, but OSOCI members present discounted the proposal for a more moderate approach to finding a way out of the Council's current financial debt problems. OSOCI's letter to Council dated 14th July stated at the bottom of page 5 'Council's activities must be suspended', and signatory of this letter Robyn Bell stated clearly at our meeting on Sunday that OSOCI supports the appointment of an administrator to manage Tenterfield shire. However this proposal was not presented as a motion to the meeting.

Myself as president and Jan Evans as secretary of the Ratepayers Association are extremely resentful of the fact that OSOCI have now tried to attribute their destructive political manoeuvres onto our Association, which has always tried to maintain a constructive dialogue with other bodies.

It is possible that if our Association is inundated with OSOCI supporters, the democratic power of the 'majority vote' may mean that those who wish to achieve positive progress via open communication are outvoted by those adopting a confrontational approach based on rumours rather than facts.

In the meantime, please disregard OSOCI's false information on their Facebook page as exemplified by the above entry which is typical of their ongoing misinformation campaign.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Robinson President, Ratepayers Association of Tenterfield Shire



AG

Media Briefing 1 August 2022

TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL AIMS TO HIKE RATES BY MORE THAN 104%

Background

The Tenterfield Shire has natural beauty and a friendly community; however, the population is ageing and economically weak. Latest office of local government data available shows that, in 2020:

- Its population continued to decline (5.6% loss over 5 years)
- 40% of the population was over 60 years old (average age of 55)
- Unemployment was above 7%

ABS census data for 2021 shows the median personal income was \$25,480; i.e. many, if not most, residents are below the poverty line and rate increases will cause considerable hardship.

The Problem

The Tenterfield Shire Council (TSC) proposes:

1. **Massive rate rises (104.49% over two years; >140% over 10 years)**
2. Immediate and unnecessary increase of already high fees and charges
3. Potential sale of vital Community assets
4. To follow a fatally-flawed 10-year Community Strategic Plan, at odds with community needs and aspirations.

Meanwhile, it is:

1. Over \$18M in debt with \$21M million in established loans
2. Relying on bank finance
3. Ready to use a further \$5M bridging loan as needed.
4. Following a long-term financial plan projecting losses of \$3.5M to \$5.7M per year; i.e. +\$50M debt by 2032.

With breaches in previous financial management practices (identified in government audits) and no unrestricted funds available, TSC has also had to return grant funding – which is the main source of TSC income.

Many residents in ALL age groups on fixed incomes and welfare say that they will no longer be able to afford to live here if the proposed rates, fees and charges increases are implemented. For homeowners who have their retirement based on rental property – this has catastrophic consequences, as they are now facing cost increases many times higher than the rent increase, they can pass on.

Our Shire Our Council Initiative (OSOCI) has asked for the intervention of the NSW state government and the establishment of an official enquiry into the Tenterfield Shire Council.

Causes

There are multiple reasons for these problems; however, we believe that the root cause is the lack of detailed information, and/or misleading information, provided by Council Administration to our Councillors. This leads to inadequate discharge of Councillors' roles and responsibilities as the 'residents' representatives' and manifests as:

1. Inadequate planning, scheduling and budgeting at all levels
2. Inability to hold Council Administration to account
3. Lack of accountability for Council Administration, Staff and Councillors
4. Lack of control on spending
5. Gross waste and inefficiencies in Council Operations
6. Failing capital projects – Dam, Council Building, Memorial Hall upgrade (privately owned)
7. Having to return grant funds to State/Federal Government
8. Failing the NSW Office of Local Government audit.

Comments

Proposed rate rises, fees and charges

TSC propose permanently raising rates by 43% each year over the next two years, which is a compound 104.49%. Although this is the real amount of the rate rise, Council has consistently tried to present various proposed rises as modest, without transparently disclosing that the annual rises are cumulative and permanent. Over 10 years, further rises proposed could bring the total increase to over 143%.

For a Tenterfield resident, average residential rates alone would increase from approx. \$664 in 2023 to \$1354 in 2025 and \$1609 in 2032.

On top of this, fees and charges for water, sewage, waste etc. have increased immediately, although we understand there were assurances in the past that this would not happen. In fact, these specific cost centres have run at a profit for some years and more profit from them is not allowed to be used for general Council expenses. Charges for other services, such as planning, connections, building inspections, permits etc. are extra – i.e. user pays.

Benchmarking to other Shires

2020 data from the NSW Office of Local Government (<https://www.yourcouncil.nsw.gov.au/>) shows that Tenterfield compares poorly with the state average of 23 large rural Councils (OLG Group 10) on the following key indicators:

Comparison	KPI	Tenterfield	Group 10 Council average	Tenterfield Difference %
HIGH	Typical Residential Water and Sewer Bill	\$1985.90	\$1299.90	52.8% higher
HIGH	Governance & Administration expenditure per capita	\$834.24	\$642.70	29.8% higher
HIGH	Roads, Bridges and Footpaths expenditure per capita (note that Tenterfield has less road length and less public open space per capita than avg.)	\$1276.60	\$983.50	29.8% higher
LOW	Community Services & Education, Housing & Community Amenities expenditure per capita	\$201.09	\$403.80	50% less
LOW	Recreational and Cultural expenditure per capita	\$369.43	\$426.50	13.4% less

It appears that Council administration has multiplied its own costs to administer this well-established community and conversely failed to spend on its own community's needs and services.

A key indicator that points to the major source of the current operating deficit is that:

- In 2019, TSC spent \$2.47M on Governance & Administration.
- **In 2020, this more than doubled to \$5.5M – a rise of over \$3.0M or 122% in 1 year.** This is more than the spending on community services and almost 20% of the Council's entire operational expenditure.

In contrast:

- In 2019, TSC spent \$5.74M on Community Services & Education, Housing & Community Amenities, Recreational & Cultural, and Other Services.
- **In 2020, spending on these services had decreased to \$5.09M – a fall of 11%.**

Council's proposed solution

TSC has publicly stated that it has only four options available to resolve the operating deficits. These are:

1. "Reducing service levels,
2. Sell and/or dispose of assets that will reduce the associated on-going expenses,
3. Increase income raised through rates, user fees and charges,
4. A combination of the above options."

There is NO option to increase income by other means or to cut expenses by reducing waste, becoming more efficient (achieving more with less), reducing activities to Council core functions, or reducing headcount and managerial layers in Council Administration.

Potential Sale of Community Assets

Community assets, such as the Information Centre, Airfield, Community Childcare building, Community Radio Station and Band Hall, are being considered for sale to raise funds, as well as terminating the lease of the School of Arts. These assets are vital and/or important to the community now and for future generations. Their sale will not increase revenue and are a one-off, short-term 'fix'. They cannot be sold again and, once gone, we will never get them back.

At the same time Council is spending millions on renovating their own offices – and properties which are owned by private parties.

Failed Community Strategic Plan (CSP)

On 25th May 2022, the Councillors signed off the 10-year CSP, even though it failed to meet the requirements of the NSW Local Government Act and Regulations.

Despite the requirement for significant community consultation to create a "plan that will truly represent the aspirations and needs of the local community", the process was inadequate. The plan was also built on a false premise, as Council did not provide the community with foundational information about "Where are we now". Public submissions made about the draft CSP were ignored, despite assurances otherwise.

The TSC CEO, Mr Daryl Buckingham, publicly described the CSP as "not of importance or significance, is fluff only and does not need the attention of the community". However, the CSP legally sets the goals for all subsequent, shorter-term, subsidiary plans, forecasts and budgets – so when the CSP is flawed it allows all these subsidiary plans to be developed without proper control and reference to an agreed community vision and goals.

About Us

Our Shire Our Council Initiative (OSOCI) is a Tenterfield Shire citizens' initiative formed because of community concern about the impact of the Council's past, present and proposed actions. OSOCI has members with commercial, local government, project and business management experience. We believe that the Tenterfield Shire – under better management – has great potential and can be turned around both socially and economically. OSOCI has for some time now attempted to collaborate with the TSC Administration and Councillors; however, this has been unsuccessful, despite an overwhelming amount of evidence regarding the negative financial and social impacts on the community, if Council continue unchecked on the current course.

Contact

For further information, please contact
Mr Clive Powell
President, OSOCI
Ph: 0429 161 445
Email: president@osoci.org



The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP
Federal Member for New England

A9

Our ref: NE44124

1 July 2022

Mr Daryl Buckingham
Chief Executive Officer
Tenterfield Shire Council
PO Box 214
TENTERFIELD NSW 2372

Via e-mail: council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Buckingham

I enclose a letter received on 22 April, 2022 from [REDACTED], PO Box [REDACTED], Tenterfield, NSW, 2372, regarding concerns about the Tenterfield Shire Council's 'Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032 - Special Rates Variation Increase'.

I would be grateful if urgent consideration could be given to the concerns and points raised by [REDACTED] in relation to this matter and for your advice as soon as possible.

Any assistance you may be able to provide would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP
Federal Member for New England
Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs

bj.km.ten

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17 April 2022

The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development
Member for New England
PO Box 963
TAMWORTH NSW 2340

22 APR 2022

Dear Deputy Prime Minister

Re: Tenterfield Shire Council's *Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032* – Special Rates Variation Increase

I am writing to bring to your attention my concerns related to Tenterfield Shire Council's (the Council) proposal to introduce a Special Rates Variation (SRV) to local ratepayers, under its *Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032*, of either a 43 per cent increase *per year* over two years (i.e., from 2023/24 to 2024/25), or alternatively, a 28 per cent increase *per year* over three years (from 2023/24 to 2025/26). I note under either proposal, there will be a compound effect on rates, raising them permanently by 109 per cent.¹

Background to the proposed SRV increase

The Council has indicated that its general fund is currently in a weak financial position and that it is heavily reliant on New South Wales and Commonwealth Government grants. In particular:

- The Council estimates a \$4 million to \$5 million deficit between income and expenditure to maintain current service levels in the forward years.
- As at 30 June 2021, the Council had a negative cash result.
- The Council does not have sufficient cash reserves to meet asset renewal and maintenance requirements.
- To reduce the funding gap, the Council is proposing (in addition to the proposed increase to the SRV) to potentially reduce service levels, sell or dispose of assets, and/or increasing user fees and charges.²

Key demographic information: Tenterfield

According to 2016 Census statistics,³ the median age of Tenterfield residents is 53 years of age, while 27.6 per cent of the population were 65 years and over in age. Furthermore, the median weekly personal income for people over the age of 15 is \$454.00.

¹ Tenterfield Shire Council, 'Tenterfield Shire Council: Community Strategic Plan 2022 2032 & Financial Sustainability', *Tenterfield Shire Council* (Community Consultation Document, 23 March 2022) <<https://www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au/content/uploads/2022/04/TSC-Community-Strategic-Plan-Financial-Sustainability-Presentation-to-Community-Consultation-Sessions-April-2022.pdf>>.

² Ibid.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Tenterfield (A): 2016 Census All persons QuickStats', (Statistics, 2016) <<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2016/LGA17400>>.

2

Given the number of Tenterfield residents over the age of 65 (around 1,800 people from a total population of 6,628 in 2016), it would be safe to presume that a significant proportion would be in receipt of the aged pension (in addition to other social security payment paid to other demographics). As a result, the inevitable increase to the SRV will have a disproportionate impact on people over 65 and in receipt of the aged pension in Tenterfield. This will mean these residents will be forced to forgo essential expenditure, already difficult on insufficient income, such as life-preserving medications and/or utilities (water and electricity), in order to service increased rates to enable the Council to maintain services that will have little to no impact on these people.

Request for your assistance with this matter

As should be evident from the above, I am not supportive of this proposed significant increase in rates by way of an SRV. Subsequently, I request your assistance to look into this matter further, and to consider providing further funding to the Council under the next round of Financial Assistance Grants (FAG) or similar regional funding program, and/or allowing the Council to access FAG funding in advance.

While the further provision of funding will provide reprieve in the short term, it will not fix the systematic issues that are clearly ongoing issues within the Council. It is likely that the Council will be in the same or in an even more dire position once any funding has been spent. Therefore, I would suggest tying funding to the Council meeting minimum KPIs, as determined by your Department.

Thank you again for your consideration of this especially important and serious matter. I would appreciate a direct and prompt response, and, if possible, not a response from your Department or staff members.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
PO Box [REDACTED]
TENTERFIELD NSW 2372

A10

TSC WANTS TO MORE THAN DOUBLE YOUR RATES – STOP THE 104% RISE!

Tenterfield Shire Council:

- Wants massive, permanent rate rises totalling 104.49%.
- Already increased fees and charges for Water, Sewage and Waste.
- Is looking at selling off vital Community assets such as the Information Centre, Airfield, Community Childcare building, Community Radio Station and Band Hall as well as terminating the lease of the School of Arts.
- Is spending millions on renovating their own offices and properties that are owned by private parties.
- Is following a flawed 10-year Plan that does not reflect community needs and aspirations.
- Has run up over \$18M in debt, with a further \$3.1M loan and a \$5M bridging loan ready to use.
- Is relying on bank finance – with interest rates skyrocketing.
- Expects to lose another \$3.5M to \$5.7M every year, so will owe over \$50M by 2032. **\$10,000 debt for each of us!**
- Has had to return grant funds to state/federal government.

In 2019, TSC spent \$2.47M on Governance & Administration.

By 2020, this was \$5.5M – a rise of over \$3.0M or 122% in 1 year!

This is more that they spent on community services.

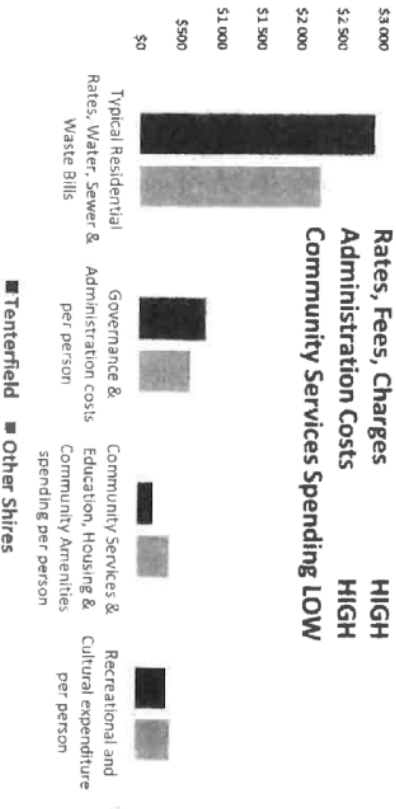
Meanwhile, median personal income in Tenterfield was \$25,480 in 2021 – many people live below the poverty line.

Can you afford these average rate increases over the next two years?

- **Tenterfield Resident** – up from \$664 to \$1,354
- **Tenterfield Business** – up from \$1,556 to \$3,173
- **Farmland** – up from \$1,616 to \$3,300
- **Urbenville/Jennings/Drake Resident** \$600 to \$1,220

Note the extra \$\$\$\$ TSC aim to get from you won't be used to increase services.

How we compare to other NSW large rural Shires (2020 NSW Government Data)



Our Shire Our Council Initiative (OSOCI) is a Tenterfield Shire citizen initiative formed because of community concern about the impact of the council's past, present and proposed actions. We believe that the Tenterfield Shire – under better management – has great potential and can be turned around socially and economically.



HELP US TO HELP US ALL
For just \$10, you can join OSOCI.
That helps us to lobby Councillors and Members of Parliament on your behalf and **STOP THE ROT**
More information and membership forms at www.osoci.org

Att

URBENVILLE, NSW, 2475
E: [REDACTED]

To:

NSW Minister for Local Government, Wendy Tuckerman, by email on contacts page
NSW Minister for Veterans Affairs, David Elliott, by email on contacts page
NSW Minister for Seniors, Mark Coure, by email on contact page
NSW Member for Lismore, Janelle Saffin, by email
Mayor of Tenterfield Shire Council, Bronwyn Petrie and CEO Daryl Buckingham, by email
NSW Shadow Minister for Local Government, Greg Warren, by email
NSW Shadow Minister for Seniors, Jodie Harrison, by email

Copy in:

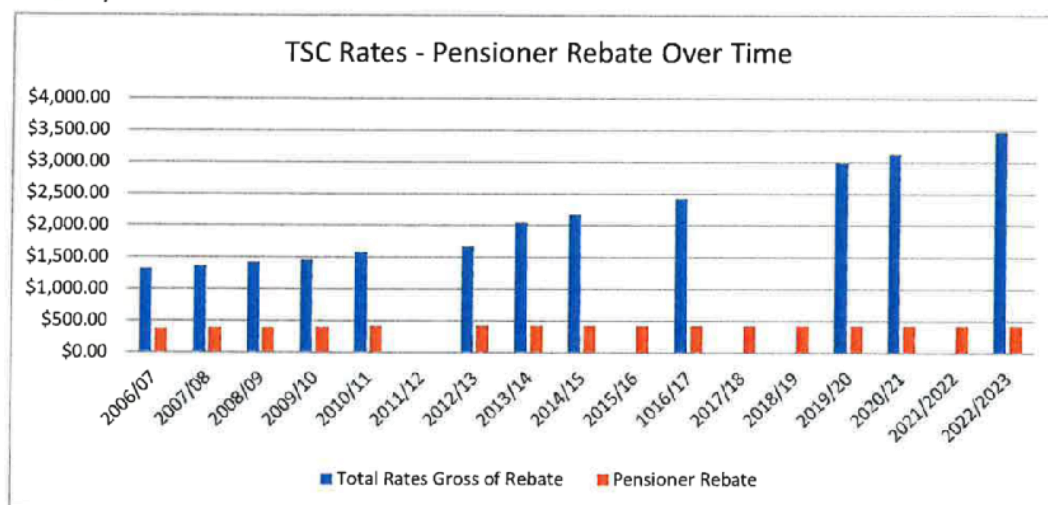
NSW Premier, Dominic Perrotet
NSW Leader of the Opposition, Chris Minns

Subject: Council Rates and the Pensioner Rebate

Dear Ministers, Shadow Ministers, NSW Member for Lismore and Mayor and CEO of Tenterfield Shire Council (TSC)

This letter concerns the pensioner rebate/concession and council rates notices increases. For context, "Council rates notices" refers to the entirety of the TSC rates notice including services, not just the two lines apportioned to "rates".

The pensioner rebate has not increased since 2012, remaining at \$425.00 since that time. In the decade since the rebate has flatlined, the Tenterfield Shire Council rates have skyrocketed as can be seen in this graph for a Deane Street Urbenville NSW property where rates notices are available back to 2006/07. (Notices were not available for the years with a gap however, the trend is evident.)



The pensioner rebate is set in legislation (Local Government Act 1993 Section 575) and it is a set dollar amount, not a percentage of rates. The cost of providing the pensioner rebate is divided between the NSW State Government (55%) and the Tenterfield Shire Council (45%).

According to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the Office of Local Government website, the official response to the question "Is there any plan to increase the concession amounts?", the response is:

"Although expanding the current concession may be desirable, the NSW Government has to take into account the budgetary implications of any change to current funding arrangement. The cost of providing mandatory concessions is met by both state and local government. Any increase would affect the capacity of the NSW Government and councils to provide other programs and services to the community."

In presenting you with these facts, please respond to the following questions:

Would please provide your response as to the consideration of the budgetary implications to the ordinary pensioner householder of these exponential rate rises vs the pensioner rebate which has not increased for a decade. Please do not quote the response to the FAQ. I request a genuine consideration of the impact on pensioners in the Tenterfield Shire of the rate increases. This question extends to the impact of the Tenterfield Shire Council's proposed application to IPART for a Special Rate Variation this financial year, of 43% in 2023-2024 and again in 2024-2025 leading to a cumulative increase of 104.9% as detailed in TSC Council meeting papers. Please do not respond saying that this increase only applies to the rateable land value of council rates notices, as all other fees and services are also increasing exponentially as shown in the next table:

		SRV 43% per year for 2 years - 104.9% cum		
	2022- 2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	
Base Rate	\$294.00	\$420.42	\$601.20	43% each year
Ad Valorem Rate	\$302.29	\$432.27	\$618.15	43% each year
Residential Water Service Availability	\$618.00	\$667.44	\$720.83	assumes 8% increase each year (avge of past 3 year increases), noting this was a 15% increase in 2022-2023.
Water Infrastructure Charge	\$77.00	\$77.00	\$77.00	
Residential Sewerage Availability	\$1,320.00	\$1,386.00	\$1,455.30	assumes 5% increase each year; same 5% for past 3 years.
Waste Collection Domestic 240L Bin	\$575.00	\$609.50	\$646.07	assumes 6% increase each year (avge of past 3 year increases), noting this was an 8% increase in 2022-2023
Waste Management Facility Charge	\$288.50	\$305.81	\$324.15	assumes 6% increase each year (avge of past 3 year increases), noting this was an 8% increase in 2022-2023
Stormwater Management Charge - Residential	\$25.00	\$25.00	\$25.00	
Total rates notice	\$3,499.79	\$3,923.44	\$4,467.70	

So for elders in our community who are single pensioners with no other source of income, in the 2022-2023 financial year their annual pension income could be in the realm of up to \$26,000 (assuming all supplements received) and their rates notice will account for about 13% or up to 2 calendar months, of annual income. Would you please respond to this question: where is the sustainability in that situation for our elders? Governments and Councils have a range of income-producing sources that can be tapped so as to not "affect the capacity of the NSW Government and councils to provide other programs and services to the community" as stated in the quote from the Local Government website.

Anecdotally, elders in the Urbenville community who are currently able to live in their homes and carry out the everyday activities of daily living, are now very fearful for their futures. Elderly neighbours are faced with the option of having to enter aged care as they can no longer afford to live in their own homes. And yet the Commonwealth Government is advocating people stay in their homes for as long as possible. Would you please respond to this question: Are you happy to be forcing elders in our regional community into aged care facilities before it is required for them?

In the papers presented to the April 2022 Urbenville community consultation session, TSC included a scenarios of how the rates would look in 2023-2024 with the SRV of 43% applied, including pre-bottom line, the pensioner rebate of \$425.00, which of course not everyone receives. Mayor Petrie and CEO Mr Buckingham, please respond to this question: Do you think it is in the interests of open community consultation to include a pre-bottom line deduction in the rates notice scenario a rebate for which only a percentage of the population is eligible?

Review of the Local Government Act 1993

There appears to be a review under way since 2019 of the Local Government Act, utilising reports generated by IPART dated 2016. IPART documents reveal issues identified with the pensioner rebate and make a number of recommendations (p128, IPART Review of the Local Government Rating System, Final Report, 2016). In a nutshell, the recommendation was to increase the pensioner rebate up to \$1,000 per year, for new pensioners, on a rate payment deferral basis, with the amount owing repaid on change in ownership of the property concerned. There are a number of issues raised, however, and again in a nutshell, this seems to be a substantial recognition of the fact that the current pensioner rebate is woefully inadequate. And this was back in 2016.

The same IPART document makes reference to considering pensioner rebates being applied to the other charges forming part of the total rates notice – water, sewerage – but dismisses this consideration as it is not part of the particular remit of the IPART review. A direct quote from the same IPART document:

"The impact of the pensioner concession is most prominent in regional areas with a high - and rising - proportion of pensioners. Since local councils are capped on the revenue they can receive (general income), the current pensioner scheme requires other ratepayers in the council area to pay higher rates. These areas are generally lower socioeconomic areas with lower ability to pay. This means the current pensioner concession scheme is becoming unsustainable as it is imposing additional costs on those least able to bear such costs."

There are a number of modelling scenarios available demonstrating the Tenterfield Shire Council demographics, which are essentially an ageing population (ergo, more people on the pension), and a reduction in population overall (pre-COVID, however).

So my final question is to the State Government Ministers, as the question of the pension rebate is under your remit. It is noted that in its response to the IPART review,

"The Government does not support the recommended changes to the local government rates pensioner concessions framework and does not support significant changes to the existing rating exemptions framework. The Government is committed to not disadvantaging vulnerable communities."

In view of the information presented above, in particular, the Tenterfield Shire Council's increases in rates, fees, charges, over time, and now a Special Rate Variation of 43% per year for the next two financial years (2023-2024, and again in 2024-2025) on the table, how are you planning to "not disadvantage vulnerable communities", ie elders living in remote and rural communities who wish to stay in their own home but are forced into other options ?

In responding to the above questions, I ask you to consider that

Every viewpoint is valid, and should be taken into account.

I look forward to receiving your responses to these questions.

Sincerely



A12

Hi there,

[REDACTED] has contacted you via the contact form on your website. The following information was filled out and sent to you.

First Name: [REDACTED]

Last Name: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Message: Can you please reconsider the extraordinary hike in rates? Home owners cannot sustain this with interest rates heading up. Please amend for the sake of the community before there is a mass exodus and stress levels go through the roof.

A notification email has been sent to Yvette to let them know that someone from your team will be in touch as soon as possible.

A13

To whom it may concern,

Im writing to you today to voice my objection of proposed rates rise.
Im on a disability pension and find it difficult to make ends meet with inflation and
lack of increase in pension

So if the proposed rate rise goes ahead I will have no option but to sell and leave
the area as I will not be able to live .

Yours

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Urbenville NSW 2475.

A14

[REDACTED]
Date Tue Aug 23 12:12:12 PM AEST 2022
To council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au;
cc info@osoci.org;
bcc
Subject Tenterfield Council Rates

To Tenterfield Shire Council. I write this email on behalf of my wife and I who are Tenterfield Multiple Ratepayers. We don't intend to book any Council Consultation sessions as my previous emails to Councillors have only been replied to by one out of three, so my hope is that this will be seen by all sitting Councillors including the Mayor. I have gone online and read a lot of information about Expenditure by Council in all areas and a disturbing picture emerges. Tenterfield is probably the most expensive Shire to live in when all things are considered and unfortunately, the biggest section of our costs is in Administration. I recently went to a Public Meeting organised by OSOCI where it was also pointed out that Council had 81 staff in 2017 and currently has 115 staff with openings for a further 20. I wonder how Council could operate effectively with 85 then, but now require 135, when the population under it's administration has changed little in that time period. Some other disturbing statistics show that the **Administration costs per Capita** in the Shire have risen from \$33.41 in 2013/14 to \$373 in 2018/19. The 2019/20 figures from that chart are shown as \$834.24 but that doesn't make sense as that figure is higher than the full Rates at that time. I think that the figures have been jumbled and should probably read \$384.24. Of course they have recently gone up yet again. This is an astronomic X10+ rise in Cost per Capita, which is also astronomically more than the total CPI index for that period of time. From what I remember being quoted by a Real Estate Agent when first looking at properties to purchase in Tenterfield around 2010, Rates back then were approximately \$1000/annum, including Water and Sewer. Another possible explanation for the Staffing issue is, that in more recent times, the State and Federal Governments may have been encouraging Councils to "pad-up" their staff to improve Employment figures at the expense of Australian Ratepayers. Otherwise, Council must be so poorly run as a business that it wouldn't come close to surviving in the real world of Commerce and Industry. I don't think I need to explain any further what needs to be done. And yes, we are extremely annoyed at the proposed massive Rate increases over the next few years. Yours truly with concern. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Tenterfield NSW 2372. Mobile Ph. [REDACTED]

Tenterfield Shire Council
Council Chambers
Rouse Street

A15
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
Tenterfield NSW

OBJECTION TO PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION RISE

We, **[Redacted]**, are lodging an objection to the Proposed Special Rate Rise based on:

Financial Hardship:

1. We have very static income, as many 'over 65' & other residents & ratepayers do, but also are affected by 'Reciprocal Arrangements' between Australia & New Zealand, as Murray was born, lived in & worked part of his life in NZ .

In short, this represents an actual lower pension income per 'couple' than couples on 'normal' Age Pension p'ments (\$679.00 f/t. with no investments etc). see attachment 'A'.

This means that BOTH of us have a 'loss of income' annually of \$4,670.55 from our Australian pensions (yes, they take \$1/\$1 off my p'ment, while Murray gets an annual Pension p'ment of \$10,037.47 from NZ.

I get NO p'ment from NZ. See attachments 'B' 1 & 2.

Therefore, I have approx. 50% less p/f than other 'partners' of pension age, due to Aust. taking \$1/\$1 off me. Why? 'Because these are the 'parameters' with which Centrelink can define payments from O/S under Reciprocal Arrangements!

This leaves us both with an Australian 'effective' fortnightly income of \$499.94 each (\$999.88 combined) while 'normal rates' per couple would be \$1,358.00 per fortnight. see attachments 'C' 1 & 2 .

2. Based on current 'Base Rate' Rate costs, this represents 3.12% of our total lower than average pension income.

A 'cumulative' possible rate rise on the Base Rate of rates, would represent an increase to 6.39% of our income.

We have the same general expenses as everyone else, i.e.. insurances, car & house maintenances, financial commitments, health & medical costs, food & petrol etc etc ..

Continued to conclusion over page ..

Page 2/

I have been a resident & previous business owner in TSC for over 40yrs ~~XXXXXX~~
a resident here for nearly 20yrs. Both of us choosing to live & retire here, which
may become impossible with any further income stress.

A cumulative rate increase of 104% will cause, not just to us but MANY people in
Tenterfield, Financial Hardship & stress. * see our figures previous page.

It is imperative that TSC reduce THEIR spending back to a sustainable level ...
just as residents & ratepayers would be effectively being asked to do with a Special
Rates Rise.

Not only would it be foreseen that ratepayers & renters of properties (as rents
WILL rise out of mid - low income accessibility) WILL leave to relocate, so will
those who run businesses or close ... sadly, it's happening already. Not many
people anywhere could absorb more financial commitments after the last 3yrs all
have experienced in our & other areas.

Yes, EVERYONE is being impacted by these stresses .. present & past .. but
shouldn't we ALL be expected to 'live within our means' at ALL times?

The Special Rate Variation should be avoided by implementation of sound
financial & business practices. Selling off Council Assets is not a permanent
solution. When they're gone, they're gone & more expensive to replace later.

Should a SRV be passed & implemented, it would be a shame to see services in
Tenterfield decline further, when it should be attracting residents to the Shire for
future growth in all areas & age groups.

Increase in growth & population attracts services, employment, businesses &
wealth from those areas that ultimately help support the population & those that
represent them.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this community consultation,

Yours Sincerely,

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

PRINTED OUT 6-7-22



ATTACHMENT 'A'

Home > Ageing > Retirement years > Top payments > Age Pension > How much you can get

How much you can get

We use income and assets tests to work out how much Age Pension you get.

on this page

[Normal rates](#)

[Transitional rates](#)

There are different rates of Age Pension payments for single and partnered people. If you have a partner we need income and asset information for both of you.

Read about how your [relationship status](#) can affect your payment rate ^[1].

If you or your partner get [income from or have assets outside Australia](#) ^[2], it may affect your rate.

There are also different rates for some people who were getting a pension in 2009.

The Department of Social Services regularly reviews these rates to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index. The amounts on this page are the maximum rates each fortnight. In some circumstances, you can choose to get your payment each [week](#) ^[3]. Depending on your circumstances, you may also get an [advance payment](#) ^[4].

Normal rates

Per fortnight ▲	Single ▲	Couple each ▲	Couple combined ▲	Couple apart due to ill health ▲
Maximum basic rate	\$900.80	\$679.00	\$1358	\$900.80
Maximum Pension Supplement ^[5]	\$72.70	\$54.80	\$109.60	\$72.70
Energy Supplement ^[6]	\$14.10	\$10.60	\$21.20	\$14.10
Total	\$987.60	\$744.40	\$1488.80	\$987.60

Transitional rates

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Centrelink Customer Record

Page 1 of 1

ATTACHMENT 'B' 1

Script Selector
1050PN - For income/assets/rate see 'Pension Income Assets and Rate' (PIAR)
Nxt: Lock Sys: PEN Env: G
QLD2 US1 1106 MFL735 7 JUL 2022
CRN: [REDACTED]
(F) [REDACTED] Rct: [REDACTED]
XRN: IES4619535003 [REDACTED] Ptr: Y AGE
Act: Rgn: STANTHORPE
(STN) DOE [REDACTED] Enq: PTR
BSt: AGE/CUR CRP AGP/CAN-END NSA/CAN-CPP DSP/CAN-IBT EPF/REJ-
U25 DMN APL DI+

----->>> Pensions Rate Calculation (PRC) <<<----- Page 1
of 431

Effective Period 1 JUL 2022 to: on going AMR: 2566

Maximum Basic Rate: \$17654.00 ADD Add-
on Supplement:

ADD Basic Supplement:	\$540.80	ADD Remote Area Allow:	
ADD Remain Supplement:	\$117.00	ADD O'seas Child Comp:	
ADD Max Rent Assistanc:	\$0.00	ADD Incentive Allowance:	
ADD Minimum Supplement:	\$767.00	ADD Ex-	
Gratia Payment:			
ADD Energy Supplement:	\$275.60	ADD Internship Incent:	

Equals MAX PAYMENT: \$19354.40 Provisional Rate: \$19354.40
LESS Foreign Pen DD:

NOTIONAL RATE: \$19354.40
LESS INCOME Reduct.Amt: Less NZ Agreement DD: \$4670.55
LESS Compensation DD: ANNUAL PAYABLE RATE: \$14683.85
LESS AEIS/NEIS as DD: DAILY RATE: \$40.3401
INCOME REDUCED RATE: \$19354.40 Savings Prov exist see PSVI: NO

* [REDACTED] 0040 OVR 002/007

[http://sap-c4p-cr.csd.gov.au:8080/sap\(bD11biZjPTQ2MQ==\)/bc/bsp/sap/zcfs_ext3270...](http://sap-c4p-cr.csd.gov.au:8080/sap(bD11biZjPTQ2MQ==)/bc/bsp/sap/zcfs_ext3270...) 7/07/2022

Locked Bag 7834 Canberra Bc, ACT 2610



CLK1LETTERG319735420

received 6-7-22 ✓

1

Reference [REDACTED]

ATTACHMENTS
'C' 1+2



TENTERFIELD NSW 2372



Australian Government
Services Australia

centrelink

29 June 2022

This Income Statement shows information we hold about you on your Centrelink record. If you decide to show this information to anyone else for any reason, you can choose to show all the information or to block some information out.

Income Statement

DOB [REDACTED]
Customer Partnered Y
Maximum Rate Age Pension Y
Number of Children Assessed 0

Previous regular entitlements and payments

Payment Type	Amount	Date Paid	Date of Grant
Age Pension	\$499.94	24 Jun 2022	9 Jul 2020
Energy Supplement	\$10.60	24 Jun 2022	9 Jul 2020
Pension Supplement	\$54.80	24 Jun 2022	9 Jul 2020

Previous irregular payments

There are no previous irregular payments to report.

Deductions from your payment

Payment Type	Deduction	Amount	Date Paid
Age Pension	Centrelink Deductions	\$10.00	24 Jun 2022

Continued on the back

Contact information

If you have any questions about this letter please ring:



132 300 OR
13 1202 for Multilingual Services

Monday — Friday 8.00 am — 5.00 pm
(Please quote reference number **201 137 477T**)



Your local Centrelink Office:
10 Corundum Street
Stanthorpe QLD 4380



Office Hours:
Mon to Fri 8:30am to 4:30pm Closed 12:30
— 1.30pm

servicesaustralia.gov.au

1/1-1

Locked Bag 7834 Canberra Bc, ACT 2610



CLK1LETTERG319941011

Reference: [REDACTED]



TENTERFIELD NSW 2372



Australian Government
Services Australia

centrelink

6 July 2022

This Income Statement shows information we hold about you on your Centrelink record. If you decide to show this information to anyone else for any reason, you can choose to show all the information or to block some information out.

Income Statement

DOB [REDACTED]
Customer Partnered Y
Maximum Rate Age Pension Y
Number of Children Assessed 0

Previous regular entitlements and payments

Payment Type	Amount	Date Paid	Date of Grant
Age Pension	\$499.94	24 Jun 2022	9 Jul 2018
Energy Supplement	\$10.60	24 Jun 2022	9 Jul 2018
Pension Supplement	\$54.80	24 Jun 2022	9 Jul 2018
Carer Allowance	\$136.50	24 Jun 2022	26 May 2005

Previous irregular payments

There are no previous irregular payments to report.

Deductions from your payment

Payment Type	Deduction	Amount	Date Paid
Age Pension	Centrepay Deductions	\$10.00	24 Jun 2022

Continued on the back

Contact information

If you have any questions about this letter please ring:



132 300 OR
13 1202 for Multilingual Services

Monday – Friday 8.00 am – 5.00 pm
(Please quote reference number 280 714 965L)



Your local Centrelink Office:
10 Corundum Street
Stanthorpe QLD 4380



Office Hours:
Mon to Fri 8:30am to 4:30pm Closed 12:30
– 1:30pm

servicesaustralia.gov.au

1/1-1



E-MAILED
25/9/22 JDM

A16
All
Councillors

Tenterfield Total Care Inc have provided 19,308 hours of service to the aged and disabled community in the last year. This includes meals (approximately 750 per month), personal care services (showering etc), assistance to medical appointments and shopping, assistance with domestic duties that they are no longer physically able to achieve, respite for carers, as well as social activities. Tenterfield Total Care have invested heavily in the building facilities including new kitchen and flooring to achieve an increase in service capacity for meals. We currently provide services to approximately 115 aged care clients and 10 disability clients per week. In addition, we provide brokerage services for clients that are unable to secure services from other providers and this can add an additional 10 clients to our weekly roster. The need for services in the area is growing and our waitlist for services is now approaching close to 50. We have also received numerous enquiries regarding multiple people unable to access services from Drake and will need to investigate recruiting for that area to ensure these vulnerable members of our community are not left without care. We are only able to achieve these numbers by keeping our overhead costs as minimal as possible. Any increase in this will result in more members of our community not receiving the essential care they need to remain in their own home and resulting in more pressure being placed on our already full aged care facilities.

✓ ADDRESS: 136-138 Manners Street, Tenterfield NSW 2372 **Phone:** (02) 6736 4947
Web: www.tenterfieldhacc.com.au **Email:** admin@tenterfieldhacc.com.au

A17

[REDACTED]
Date

To

cc

bcc

Subject

Tue Aug 30 04:32:02 PM AEST 2022

" council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au"

<council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>;

Bronwyn Petrie <b.petrie@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>;

Questions for rates forum

Hello Ladies and Gentlemen of the council,

I submit the following for consideration as I feel that the council ,elected councillors and hard working council employees are being unjustly attacked by a small non representative group some of whom may not be rate payers.

Not all rate payers agree with what the small group are espousing.

Some of us both residents and rate payers realise that if the council was fiscally irresponsible and allowed the council to become unfinancial then there is the avenue for the state government to dismiss the elected council and appoint administration and that could lead to extraordinarily high costs to fix everything in the shire without regards to the financial impact on residents and rate payers.

The reality is we have a problem and I believe the council are attempting to resolve the problem in the only legal way they can with the least amount of hurt for rate payers.

STATEMENTS

- There appears to be a vindictive campaign of misinformation and partial information (with some relevant information being ignored or left out) regarding proposed rate rise applications to the state government this campaign appears to be instigated and undertaken by a self appointed minority group of people.
- It would also appear that there is a rumour campaign also being conducted by some of the people involved in the self appointed group. Unsolicited verbal information offered to me by members of the group was completely incorrect and quoted ridiculous exaggerations of financial information.
- A Pamphlet was handed to me at the local shopping centre supposedly from a stated incorporated association that contained what appeared to be totally incorrect statements and incorrect figures figures relating to rate rise application.
- The statement is made on the pamphlet that the rate rises would be permanent.
- I have carried out a search of the Governments register of incorporated bodies and there is no record of incorporation.
- The farm land general rate rise figures on the pamphlet was incorrect.
- I was informed verbally by a person handing out the pamphlets that there were other ways for the council to raise money without raising the rates, that the council could start private businesses and compete with other established businesses within the shire and make a profit enough to stop the rates rise.

- There appears to be a broadcasting of biased interviews being allowed by the local radio station I have heard several of these broadcast by one particular person at the radio station. The information that appeared to be broadcast as true information really appeared to be a personal opinion exercise by the people involved.
- One of the statements made to me by a representative of the group was that the council had lost an enormous amount of money through bad investments and that had caused a financial crisis.
- I saw where the group were raising money by offering \$10 memberships .

QUESTIONS

Is it true :-

1. That the rate rise being applied for is only a temporary rise to correct an unfortunate outgoings to income imbalance that has accumulated over a number of years and that has not been addressed in the past?
2. That the statement on the pamphlet that 104.49% rate rise is permanent is completely false?
3. Investigating ways of minimizing general rate rises within the shire by assessing all avenues legally allowed on behalf of the shire residents and rate payers?
4. That the 10 year plan referred to in the pamphlet is Flawed and that it does not reflect community needs and aspirations or does it simply not meet what a small recently formed group want?

Have any of the people involved in this self appointed group /companies with been involved in any of the following:-

1. Did any of the group apply to be elected to council at the recent elections or did apathy reign because it is easier to complain than to manage fixing a problem?
2. Applying for council positions where they have been unsuccessful in the applications?
3. Applying for or tendering for council projects where they were not successful in the applications or tenders?
4. Applying for or tendering for works funded by the state government where the tenders or applications did not comply with the tender documents or works requirements?
5. Is person acting on behalf local radio station and broadcasting the interviews actually a management member and senior member the self appointed group ?

6. Failures financially or operationally of businesses they owned or managed in the last 10 years?
7. Who gets the group membership payments and who controls the bank accounts?

Is it possible for the council to take legal action against the instigators of the group for incorrect and misinformation statements:-

1. Can the individuals involved if they can be identified be individually sued for the community damage and financial losses they are causing?
2. Can the group and all members be held liable jointly for the community damage and financial losses they are causing?
3. Can the what appears to be a false claim of incorporation lead to charges against the individuals involved in Our Council Our Shire group by the government or the council?

Is it true that the council are looking at :-

1. Selling the information center.
2. Selling The airfield?
3. Selling the community childcare building?
4. Selling the Community radio station?
5. Selling the Band Hall?
6. Terminating the lease of the school of arts?
7. Starting private businesses to compete with existing businesses in the shire and if they make a loss then are the rate payers responsible for the losses?

Is it possible for a council representative possibly the CEO to address each of the statements made in the pamphlet and to either refute, confirm or correct them with factual and complete information.

Possibly a printed hand out to be given to every person attending the forum and also have it published in the Tenterfield Star.

It may be appropriate to have the local radio station readout the unedited information on the handout for all residents to hear and consider. Possibly the most popular announcer or even the morning announcer.

[REDACTED]

A18

From: [redacted] [mailto:[redacted]]
Sent: Tuesday, 30 August 2022 12:43 PM
To: 'council@tenterfieldnsw.gov.au' <council@tenterfieldnsw.gov.au>
Subject: Proposed special rate variation

To whom it may concern

As ratepayers we wish to lodge our objection to the proposed Special Rate Variation.

Many people have come to Tenterfield, in the past, because a small country town was affordable (from a real estate perspective) and rates were at an acceptable level.

We are not among the wealthy landholders, in the area. We manage on a pension and would find an increase, such as Council proposes, to be extremely difficult to meet. Also, we note that in the 18 years we have resided here the pensioner rebate has not increased.

We realise that funds are urgently needed due to whatever reason has caused this dilemma. Any business has a budget which needs to be managed. This seems sadly lacking in this instance.

It seems to us that the Council is top heavy in administration staff for such a small town, to the detriment of its ratepayers. This needs to be addressed.

Selling off Council assets is a band aid approach and a very short term solution. When the majority of assets are sold, what then?

We, as ratepayers, are very disappointed in the Council's handling of the affairs of our town.

We don't pretend to have a solution for the Council's massive problems. It's possible going into Administration would be the best solution for all.
Costly maybe, in the short term, but a clean slate and a fresh beginning with hopefully responsible management.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email as IPART needs to know that many ratepayers, in Tenterfield, are not agreeable to the proposed Special Rate Variation and wish to have our objections on record,

[redacted]

A19

From: [REDACTED]
Date: 6 September 2022 at 3:16:33 pm AEST
To: Bronwyn Petrie <b.petrie@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Thank you

Hello Bronwyn,

I attended the Community Forum on Saturday 3rd September at the Tenterfield Memorial Hall and wanted to pass on my appreciation and thanks for your role in leading and addressing the discussions.

Through varied conversations and through reading occasional correspondence in the local paper, I am aware of misinformation and a number of opinions that are untrue or simply ridiculous. My observations are that these opinions and the 'grandstanding' only serve those that are speaking them, the comments are not coming from a good place or in no way are they solution focused. I watched and heard you a number of times during the Forum remain respectful while not dismissing the speaker, you remained opened to varied and opposing opinions while speaking the facts with honesty, kindness and transparency. As community members we need to hear the facts and figures, the legislation that underpins the decisions that are being made and also the reality of what we will be living with over the next number of years.

You spoke calmly while communicating the very hard decisions that Council are needing to make, decisions that need to be informed and in line with what the Community need within this Shire. It was very clear during the whole event that while you understand the need to progress the issue of a rate rise, you will remain empathetic and show kindness to those affected while this progress is being made.

Please accept my thanks for managing the forum meeting with respect and dignity.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Tuesday, 13 September 2022

A20

Ref: TSC Annual Reports

Community Goals

COMM 1 Tenterfield Shire is a vibrant, welcoming and safe community.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Tenterfield Shire has been a "vibrant, welcoming, and safe community", and I am disheartened to see the aggression, and hear about personal attacks, coming from all sides of the argument for this proposed 104% rate rise.

I have been a TSC ratepayer for six years. My parents have been ratepayers in the Shire for over 30 years. I am very concerned for the townships and people of the Shire if this proposed special rate variation (SRV) goes ahead.

I attended the public forum recently held in Tenterfield where I was given the opportunity to ask questions to the Councillors and senior staff- answers were subsequently deferred. I have attended meetings with the "Our Shire Our Council Initiative" group opposing the rate rise, and last Monday I attended an interview with the CEO and a senior Finance Officer. I felt clarity was lacking in their responses, and as no Councillors were present, I am putting forward my concerns in this letter.

I understand over the 2022-2032 Long-Term Financial Plan, Council will raise an extra \$50 million from its ratepayers through this proposed 104% SRV, a figure confirmed by the CEO. **Were you aware of this figure and was there any discussion on the impact on how taking an extra \$50 million from ratepayers over the next 10 years would affect the Shire's businesses, pensioners, organisations, and communities?** I personally fear that taking this extra money from our already struggling pockets will adversely affect the economics and "vibrancy" of our people and communities.

Tenterfield Shire's weekly median Income is \$490 per person, in NSW the median weekly income is \$813, and in Australia the figure is \$805 per week. These figures indicate that Tenterfield Shire sits well below the average, and considering all the other rising costs, the rate rise is not affordable, and our businesses and communities would struggle. The average age within our Shire is 55 years, we are a retiring community with more and more pensioners.

In Tenterfield Shire's 2017-2027 Long-Term Financial Plan (page 9), it states "The projected surplus (before capital grants) accumulated across the 10-year period for General Fund is a \$5.27 million surplus". Now five years later in the 2022-2032 Long Term Financial Plan, under a new CEO and Council, a \$50 million deficit is projected. A turnaround of \$55.27 million in 5 years. **Were you as a Councillor fully informed of why such a huge change in circumstances now exists?**

Tuesday, 13 September 2022

I understand from Council's recent Special Edition Newsletter and from the recent public forum, that the Federal Government's Financial Assistant Grants (FAGs) which Councils rely on, are expected to decrease for our Shire. FAGs to wealthier Councils such as city Councils and coastal Councils that have other avenues for revenue raising- such as parking metres etc, can indeed expect their FAGs to decrease. However, it can be said that it is highly "unlikely" that FAGs will decrease to rural, regional, and/or "struggling" Councils. As the Mayor stated in the recent public forum "Tenterfield Shire has been fortunate in our grants", it is therefore reasonable to expect this will continue. We should always be prepared for a decrease – yes – but to use this as another reason for a 104% SRV is dubious.

Maintenance of roads and bridges has been the focus given to the ratepayers for the 104% rate rise. The "Asset Condition" document provided in the 2022-2032 Long-Term Financial Plan does not show a dire situation. I accept that asset management is always a focus and source of discontent for ratepayers. I agree if Council better managed how and when they provide maintenance and upgrading our assets, less money would be wasted, such as with the current repairing to the newly bitumen Bryan's Gap Road. It is also worth noting that in adverse weather events Government subsidises Councils on repairs to infrastructure. In the 2020-2021 Annual Report, it was reported that a main portion from a 53% special rate rise (SRV) from 2014, had been spent upgrading roads and bridges. **Why is the situation still so desperate?** (Ref: pages 57-58, Annual Report 2021-2022, & pages 51-52 Annual Report 2019-2020).

I also ask what was the total cost of the refurbishment to the administration building, and how much of that cost came from the 2014 SRV, and whether this was put to the ratepayers when the SRV was proposed? (Ref: pages 57-58 Annual Report 2020-2021, & pages 51-52 Annual Report 2019-2020).

Another reason for the necessity of this SRV we are told, is that Council has loans that need repaying. Of course, Council has loans, all Councils have loans. Interest rates have been very low over the past years, and this should have assisted Tenterfield Shire's budget. All loans need to be repaid yes – but this is up to the Shire's finance department to plan and budget for repayments- like all of us with household debts. It would be fair to say that as individuals we can't receive a loan unless we prove how we can make the repayments. I would imagine Councils would operate with Governments in a similar way- that is why we have CEO's and Finance Managers - to manage Shire loans effectively.

Lastly, TSC's Income Statement for the year ended 30 June 2021 shows Council to have a surplus of \$17,493 million. I understand this amount to be mostly allocated money unspent within the financial year – yet overall, this shows Council to be in a

Tuesday, 13 September 2022

better position than what has been outlined to ratepayers, and as the CEO recently stated, "we are not broke". **Why is it now so necessary to force a 104% (over 3-years) increase on the ratepayers, why the rush? Do you as a Councillor have all the answers and details for this, because if you don't then this SRV should not be on the table?**

In conclusion, I draw your attention to the address by our new CEO in the 2020-2021 Annual Report, page 3.

"I plan to roll out an economic development master plan that recognises said opportunities and is designed to attract investment, create jobs and opportunities for all our residents and community's and importantly, position our part of the world as a compelling place to live, invest and play. There will be a lot of community discussions and opportunities for widespread community input into our master planning, and all villages have vital roles to play.....

We will work smarter, use technology and develop robust plans and strategies to ensure a bright future. I am personally excited as there are ample opportunities to reset and reinvent ourselves. Daryl Buckingham

If this is what Council has indeed achieved with our senior staff, then can the ratepayers please see more of the details because as it stands currently - it does not add up.

All we see is a money grab that ratepayers must fund. All we hear is that we need this rate rise to continue maintaining our roads and bridges and keep our libraries and swimming pools....

I ask, on behalf of your constituents, to withdraw this proposed 104% rate rise, and any such rate rise, and look at better "robust plans and strategies" to allow Tenterfield Shire to remain a "vibrant, welcoming and safe community".

Kind regards

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

A21

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 28 September 2022 2:40 PM
To: Daryl Buckingham <d.buckingham@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Bronwyn Petrie <b.petrie@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>
Cc: Tim Bonner <t.bonner@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Peter Petty <p.petty@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Tom Peters <t.peters@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; John Macnish <j.macnish@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Peter Murphy <p.murphy@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Kim Rhodes <k.rhodes@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Giana Saccon <g.saccon@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Greg Sauer <g.sauer@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Geoffery Nye <g.nye@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Fwd: LETTER TO PREMIER of NSW re TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL

G'day to all

Attached are documents and copy of the letter for you to address.
The copies of the letter and the attachments have been posted on 8th September 2022 to Minister for LG The Hon Wendy Tuckerman and several other entities listed in the last page of the letter.
I received some responses already.

As I stated in the letter, all figures and amounts have been taken from public documents the council uploaded to the Tenterfield Shire Council website.

Therefore it will be very easy for you to respond to the findings in 21 days in writing. After receiving your response we will be calling for public meeting of our ratespayers to inform all of them about your answers and accountability, so we could decide to vote YES or NO to the TSC proposed further SRV.

Furthermore please update your IP & R tabled in April 2022, as it is not up to date and lot of projects have not been included, or have been taken out (Urbenville Water treatment \$1.5mil - grant, Legume \$2.9mil Bushfire recovery grant = missing, / Urbenville swimming pool \$160k, no one asked for it and there is not even interest to have one as only 12km is one in Woodenbong.....)
The comparison of the group of 5 similar councils rates is very wrong and full of errors too.

Than please supply 50 hard copies of updated documents by 31st October 2022 via our Concillors Tim Bonner or Peter Petty, as we do not have manpower to print and assemble them ourselves. Most of our residents are farmers with limited access or knowledge for internet, therefore the hard copies are required.

Regards

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet
52 Martin Place,
Sydney New South Wales 2000

Dear Mr Dominic Perrottet – Premier of NSW

Urbenville: 8th September 2022

I, Katarina Schwottova, hereby bring to your urgent attention the following facts about the Financial mismanagement of Tenterfield Shire Council (TSC)

In 2014-15 IPART approved Special Rate Variation (SRV) for Tenterfield Shire Council as per the following:

FY 2014-15 15%

FY 2015-16 10%

FY 2016-17 10%

FY 2017-18 10%

under the code 508A of 53.07% in TOTAL for those 4 years and to stay permanent.

Tenterfield Shire Council (TSC) followed these directions thoroughly.

The yearly rates notices are itemized without subtotals for rates and subtotals for water, sewerage, stormwater and items for waste. Ratepayers are confused when looking at Total on the yearly notice with the increase (not small) and talking about rate increase.

In April 2022 the TSC representatives visited Urbenville and brought with them several of very colourful documents

Delivery Program 2022-2026, Operational Plan 2022-2023, Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032, Long Term Financial Plan 2022-2032, Community Engagement Strategy

Sitting with the groups of residents (6 at the table) TSC have been carrying the discussions.

1. No one could talk about the figures proposed, object them or even discuss them, as no one have seen the documents before the day of the meeting. TSC representatives just brought them that morning and the left-over copies of documents were collected by TSC and taken with them. We have not been able to distribute these documents to the residents not able to attend and may be interested to see those documents.
2. There were NO meetings prior to April 2022, NO documents with proposals of TSC for discussion about the needs of the communities in the Shire. Despite these facts TSC reported:

4 Year Delivery Plan 2020/21 - In strategic direction planning DP2.03 – Review of Community Engagement Strategy and ongoing delivery:

Comments: Community engagement always has room for improvement, largely dictated by how much money is available to orchestrate. There have been many changes and many programs, Grant funding is one example, where Councillors & staff regularly seek community input.

These were and are never practiced.

3. In May 2022 in the TSC "Newsletter" in the Mayoral Message

Addressing Recent Community Discussions: ".... As part of the review of the Long Term Financial Plan, an application for Special Rate Variation (SRV) rate rise of 81% over two to three years has been proposed to fund current and future Council operation...."

4. 5th July 2022 we organized a meeting with TSC to gain answers to some financial issues, capital works plan and "proposed" spending for next 5 years included in the documents brought to the meeting in April 2022.
Our meeting was with CEO Darryl Buckingham, CFO Kylie Smith and our Councillor Tim Bonner in Tenterfield – 320 km return trip from Urbenville NSW 2475 - to discuss some concerns of our residents. Mainly the answers have been: "... all information and documents are on our website...." And "...we cannot move money between the restricted funds..."
5. Upon our return we CONDUCTED the thorough studies of the documents on the TSC and IPART websites.
6. 13th August 2022 Lee Ryan and myself called for Public Meeting in Urbenville Hall to inform residents about the first findings, that there is No breach in Rates charges, but the increase is in Water and Sewer charges. Every attendee was given hard copies of detailed agenda and attachments with calculations to be taken with them.

OUR FINDINGS: (from data accessible on website of Tenterfield Shire Council)

In 2015-16 Under the Code 508A the IPART in 2014 approved SRV for 4 years in total 53.07% and thereafter permanent. The TSC situation was:

	Population:	6990 (Census 2011)
	TSC :	92 employees
	Wages:	\$6,611.000
Income:	Rates and base rates:	\$3,404.000
	Water/ sewerage / storm water	\$4,160.000
Loans:	\$4,595.000	
	Interest to be paid from SRV between \$30k -\$60k and at the end \$10k (TSC document from 2014 lodgement to IPART)	

In 2020-21 Data for 2022 not available on website yet from audited reports

	Population:	6798 (Census 2021) – <u>decrease 192</u>
	TSC :	112 employees equivalent to FTE
	Wages:	\$8,473.000
Income:	Rates and base rates:	\$4,467.000
	Water/ sewerage / storm water:	\$6,108.000 = 46.83% increase from 2015-16
Loans:	December 2021: 13,358.789 increased in March 2022 to \$19,016.929	

Interest paid \$700.000 yearly, Loans on 20 years terms, therefore TSC has bigger borrowing capacity to acquire more loans to cover bad management.

The ordinary rates are in line with the approved SRV.

The increase is in Water / Sewerage (ATTACHEMENT # 1)

As per rates payer's notices in 2021-2022 & 2022-2023 further increases occurred, therefore as per now a TOTAL increase in Water /Sewerage is 63.85% against 2015-16.

In comparison increases for same period:

Kyogle Shire council	36.89%	Glen Innes Severn Council	22.73%
Richmond Valley Council:	21.74%	Clarence Valley Council	11.78%

In 2018-19 \$77.00 Water Infrastructure charge was added to Rates notices for 2160 ratepayers in shire.

In Media release 19 August 2019 after the Rates Notices have been issued It was explained, that \$77.00 Water Infrastructure charge had to be introduced ... to part fund the Tenterfield Water Treatment Facility" ... Total project was \$9.645.000.

In TSC Annual report 2018-19 page 49 DP23:01 it was stated - ...Successful funding of \$7 million" as In March 2019 \$7 million was granted to TSC for this project by NSW State Government.

Next Financial year 6th June 2020 TSC received another grant of \$2,645million for this project by Federal Government from Building Better Regions Fund.

NOTE: Despite the whole project is fully funded by grants, the charge of \$77.00 stayed fraudulently every year for 2160 ratepayers, even in current financial year 2022-2023 consequent 5th year.

In the same year 2018-19 when TSC collected previous Water grants in value of \$4,488.000 and increased water/sewer income by 19% from 2014-15 in excess of \$1,433.000, TSC used these to increase

WAGES...!!!

In 2017-18 the total wages have been \$6,604.000 and in 2018-19 they jumped to \$8,244.000 and in 2019-20 to \$8,751.000 Total increase of 32.51%.in 2 years. No increase in FTE

This event was stated in Auditor's Report Notes:

1. General Purpose Financial Statement Financial year June 2019: Auditor's report page 79 of 84 (2) ... " increase in grants and contribution ...\$7,4 million and decrease in other grants used increases of \$1.6 million in employee benefits expenses and material cost increase.
2. General Purpose Financial Statement Financial year June 2020: Auditor's Report page 85-86 (1&2) ... "Rates and annual charges revenue (10.3 millions) increase by \$675.000 ...due to rate peg increases an a new water infrastructure annual charge....

Repeted NOTE: Despite the whole project is fully funded by grants, the charge of \$77.00 stayed fraudulently every year for 2160 ratepayers, even in current financial year 2022-2023 consequent 5th year.

Same pages: ... "other expense increase of \$489.000 due to additional cost incurred for new phone system and IT system support.."

NOTE: Cost for new phone system for 112 employees??? and not all of them working in the Administrative building. The grant of \$50.000 for IT upgrade was received as well.

Council's income is from public money, rates, charges, fees and other income plus State and Federal Government Grants.

LG ACT 1993 : Where services are subsidised through general rate income, it is on the basis that Council plays an important role in ensuring access and participation to ALL residents for the use of these community based programs and services.

Therefore, they have to be accountable, transparent, maintain consultations and look after the needs of the community.

The TSC Website is full of reports, for example Monthly reports FY 2022 are between 350-450 pages!!!! In FY 2017 same monthly reports were 89 pages. Even our Councillor admitted he doesn't read the whole reports and said that Councillors are objecting to the size of them.

THERE IS NO MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT, TO SEE THE COUNCIL'S MONTHLY PERFORMANCE, IT ONLY COMES TO THE WEBSITE IN NOVEMBER - 4 MONTHS AFTER THE END OF FINANCIAL YEAR.

We are asking for clear reports for ratepayers in figures: budget column /revenue income & grants in separate columns /than column for actual month figures and next to it cumulative figures of actuals.

The Council Reporting needs overhaul very quickly, simplified monthly financial reports so we CAN follow what is happening in our Shire.

THE BUDGET

After viewing the budget it appeared as a big mess as well. Three (3) Quarterly reviews, funds shifted and only in explanation in "big soup" - after the amount for the project was taken out it is not transparent where the amount was shifted.

We want to see the report of individual infrastructure achievements. Columns for Budget (or Project value) funding – 2 columns: one from council revenue and second from grants/, column of actual figures monthly and next to it column for cumulative. In the Explanation: Variations to the project and where the funds are coming from. Same transparency for all other expenses.

Due to these messy (3) budget reviews **SHIFTING OF EXTERNALLY RESTRICTED FUNDS OCCURRED**. Examples:

1. 2021 December QBR (Quarter Budget Review)

Water supply (\$33.000) – reduce operational income

Sewer (43.000) - reduce operational income

NOTE: Our Water charges 2020-2021 have been \$300.000 higher against 2019-20 financial year!

2. 2022 March QBR

WATER FUND	(\$247.803) was transferred to GENERAL FUND
SEWER FUND	(\$171.252) was transferred to GENERAL FUND
WASTE FUND	(\$73.446) was transferred to GENERAL FUND

Another Extract from:

3. General Purpose Financial Statement Financial year June 2021 page 87 of 92 (3) Auditor's Report

...." Council acknowledges it has used externally restricted funds for purpose other than their intended use..."

Next paragraph reads: ..."Council is unable to verify that funds raised by SRV or charges were not used to pay for general fund expenses. Council acknowledges it may have used restricted SRV and charges funds for purpose other than their intended use without Ministerial approval.
Breaches Section 409 & 410 of ACT 1993

OUR QUESTION:

Is someone actually reading these reports, checking how income from charges and grants are used until is TOO LATE?

OTHER FINDING

TSC Mayoral message in MAY 22 NEWSLETTER

...." The General Fund covers roads, bridges and other transport infrastructure, buildings, wages and depreciation (depreciation totals more than a third of our budget)...."

NOTE : We are aware, that depreciation is not money out....

Further in the same Newsletter: ..." The Administrative building was refurbished to include an Emergency Control centre, while redoing the external cladding due to deterioration..... The refurb was initially funded through \$200,000 government fund, \$200,000 of Council co-funding for the Emergency Centre, \$813,000 from sale of the Mobile Service Station and \$500,000 brought forward from the Maintenance and asset renewal budget. The unforeseen structural repairs have been financed from council funds. The total cost is \$2,078,000.

1. In the "proposed " documents brought to the April 2022 meeting there is in the budget capital works further \$300,000 for Roof restoration in 2022-23 due to too heavy cladding what roof could not structurally carry .

Our Questions are:

- a) The contract for Admin building refurbishment was awarded to BJS Constructions in value \$1,137,886 (originally the need for Emergency Centre in Tenterfield dollar for dollar \$200k grant/ \$200k from Council funds)
- b) Where is the Engineer's report before cladding was done, what kind and how much should be installed
- c) \$813,000 the proceeds of sale an asset, we understand under discretion of TSC, after years of drought, fires and flood damages in rural areas of the shire, if TSC is acting in the interest of the community the money should go for the community needs (damaged roads, parks, community buildings...) use of proceeds \$813,000 from sale of the petrol station shouldn't be under TSC discretion only.

FINAL SUMMARY of Findings about bad TSC performance.

1. Increase in Wages in 2018/19 by \$1.6million is creating yearly SHORTFALL in General Operating fund

2018-19	\$1,6million	\$1,600million
2019-20	\$1.6million +3.5% + further \$507.000 increase	\$2,163million shortfall
2020-21	\$2,163million +3.5%	\$2,249million shortfall
2021-22	\$2,249million + 3.5%	\$2,327million shortfall
2022-23	\$2,327million +3.5%	\$2,409million shortfall
TOTAL		\$10,748 million shortfall

2. Overspending on Administration building renovation

Cost reported in May 2022	\$2,078.000	
2022-23 roof rebuild	\$ 300.000	
Original Budget		\$1,137.886
TOTAL		\$1,240.114 overspent

3. \$77.00 Infrastructure charges for Tenterfield Water Treatment

Fraudulent charges to 2160 rate payers from 2018-19	
\$77.00 x 5 years x 2160 ratepayers	
TOTAL	
	\$831.600 unlawful.

4. Restricted Funds shifting to General Fund

TOTAL	
	\$492.501 Not Ministerial approval

5. Total charges for water & sewerage plus GRANTS RECEIVED (ATTACHEMENTS 1 & 2)

From FY 2016 to FY 2021 (Note data not issued for detailed funds spending in FY 2015)

Collected: \$42,017.000 Expenses: \$17,826.000

NOTE: all data were extracted from TSC reporting.

- a) The reports on Expenses are incorrect or
- b) Funds have NOT been spent on the intended purpose (example FY 2021)

6. Loans taken as per today and all previous loans are on long term mainly 20 years repayment.

Councils are allowed to take loans from the bank on long terms 15-20 years. Long terms lower repayments create opportunity to borrow more than is covered by income from rates and charges and it creates enormous spending in interest. From 2022 FY interest \$900.000 yearly. Council executives are mainly on contract 12 months to 5 years. Meaning the misuse of funds and bad management has to be fixed by next executives and ratepayers.

These discoveries are WARNINGS of mismanagement, ignorance and despotic decisions of TSC management, previous and current.

Working with public funds and reporting only yearly, budget shifting quarterly and NO regular LG Ministerial control gives strong possibility for mismanagement, funds shifting, wrong reporting and misuse of funds. Only in cumulative reporting it could be transparent how the funds are used and maybe unlawfully shifted.

This increase in loan interest and shortfall caused by increased wages is forcing TSC to ask for another SRV, that all ratepayers have to cover.

I am appealing on behalf of residents of Tenterfield Shire:

Please **DO NOT ALLOW FURTHER SRV to Tenterfield Shire Council**, as breaches of LG ACT 1993 are evident, spending on wages in 2018-2020 creating ongoing Shortfall, benevolent spending and loans interest, and beautifying the buildings in Tenterfield only. (These issues have been already stated by Tenterfield Progress Association in 2014 Submission to IPART).

In 2019 The Ratepayers Petition (784 signatures) –was part of Ordinary meeting on 27 November 2019 asking to stop further increase of rates and charges. (Copy is attached as well)

Note: The same year the TSC increased wages by \$1.6million for 100 employees.

I am retired former Financial Controller for more than 30 years in Australia and I moved to Urbenville NSW two years ago.

As my new friends and neighbours have been complaining about huge yearly "rates" increase I offered my help to look into it. Because the Reports on the website are so complicated, it took me two (2) months to prepare this "Report".

I only hope, that SOMEONE will pay attention this time, as the serious issues went unnoticed in the huge online reports.

We definitely wouldn't like the situation of Central Coast Council mismanagement leading to the bankruptcy to repeat in Tenterfield shire.

Your sincerely

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Copies to:

MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT - THE HON. WENDY TUCKERMAN MP

IPART - CARMEN DONNELLY PSM – CHAIR

IPART - LIZ LIVINGSTON CEO ,2-24 RAWSON PL, SYDNEY NSW 2000

CHRIS MINNS - LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

GREG WARREN - SHADOW MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

URBENVILLE PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

RESULTS BY FUNDS - WATER /SEWER													ATTACHEMENT # 2				
WATER													SEWERAGE				
2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	TOTALS	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	TOTALS		
RATES & CHARGES	797	878	812	827	917	1179	1238	6648	1575	1625	1762	1825	2000	2218	2344	13349	
USER CHARGES	638	710	966	1079	1112	865	1355	6725	56	67	127	124/165	188	158	234	830	
INTEREST		47	26	23	11	18	6	131		35	40	36	2	21	7	141	
OTHER REVENUE		13	10	609	5	4	-72	569		19	18	628	13	12	84	774	
GRANT OPERATION		120	106	125	125	1509	218	2203		25	26	26	28	28	27	160	
GRANT CAPITAL		420	1876	2226	20	2300	1670	8512		13	17	X	22	33	16	101	
RENTAL/OTHER		X			X						X	33	24	X		57	
TOTAL INCOME	1435	2188	3796	4889	2190	5875	4415	24788	1631	1784	1990	2548	2277	2470	2712	15412	
EMPLOYMENT	****	574	581	671	755	847	542	3970	****	450	459	482	434	279	270	2374	
BORROWING COST	****	21	21	33	159	225	225	684	****	170	165	160	155	149	142	941	
MATERIAL AND CONTRACT	****	339	350	633	878	1979	958	5137	****	315	279	437	640	664	636	2971	
OTHER EXPENSE	****	232	243	141	71	105	76	868	****	189	195	132	79	79	93	767	
LOSS OF ASSET DISPOSAL	X	X	X	X	25	X	18	43	****		X	X	X	X	23	23	
WATER PURCHASE	X	X	X	48	X	X		48	****	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	
TOTAL EXPENSES	0	1166	1195	1526	1888	3156	1819	10750	0	1124	1098	1211	1308	1171	1164	7076	
DEPRECIATION	****	527	556	594	630	747	734	3788	****	754	783	457	484	495	507	3480	
NON CURRENT LOANS	****	314	304	3627	6351	6111	5931	5931	****	2071	2003	1929	1849	1763	1670	1670	
LOANS TOTAL	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021										
				\$4,595	\$7,690	\$10,055	\$10,310	\$13,708									

NOTE ***** DETAILS NOT AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE FOR WATER AND SEWERAGE FUND EXPENSES

ATTACHMENT # 1

STATISTICS FROM TSC WEBSITE REPORTS REGARDING WATER & SEWERAGE CHARGES

FINANCIAL YEAR	WATER & SEWERAGE (\$\$\$\$MIL) YEARLY FINANCIAL REPORTS	TOTAL VALUE YEARLY INCREASE VERSUS 2014	% INCREASE FROM 2014 CUMULATIVE	OPERATING WATER & SEWERAGE GRANTS	CAPITAL WATER & SEWERAGE GRANTS	TOTAL WATER & SEWER INCOME INCL GRANTS	TOTAL EXPENSES TSC FINANCIAL REPORTS	OPERATING GRANTS UNITED TOTAL \$ MIL	OPERATING GRANTS RESTRICT TOTAL \$ MIL	CAPITAL GRANTS TOTAL \$ MIL
	A			B	C	A + B + C				
,14/15	3872	****	****	****	****	****	****	4256	1215	686
,15/16	4160	288	7%	145	433	4738	2290	4307	2650	860
,16/17	4281	409	11%	1032	1893	7206	2293	6551	1850	3312
,17/18	4608	736	19%	151	2226	6985	2737	4634	1369	3866
,18/19	5181	1309	34%	153	42	5376	3196	4950	9234	9439
,19/20	5802	1930	50%	1537	2333	9672	4327	5000	9331	6126
,20/21	6108	2236	58%	245	1687	8040	2983	5095	6831	19800
,21/22****	*6311	2030	63%			*6311				
,22/23*****	*6816	2535	71%			*6816				
TOTAL WATER & SEWER 22 & 23 FY EXCLUDED	<u>30140</u>	<u>6908</u>		<u>3263</u>	<u>8614</u>	<u>42017</u>	<u>17826</u>	<u>34793</u>	<u>32480</u>	<u>44089</u>

NOTES

**** DATA NOT AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE YET

DATA FROM MEETING PAPERS JUNE	IN \$MIL	CASH IN BANK 30 JUNE 2022	CASH IN BANK 30 JUNE 2021	CASH IN BANK 30 JUNE 2020	CASH IN BANK 30 JUNE 2019	CASH IN BANK 30 JUNE 2018	CASH IN BANK 30 JUNE 2017
		\$814	\$575	****	****	****	****
WATER							
SEWER		\$5,794	\$4,830	****	****	****	****
WASTE		\$7,255	\$3,091	****	****	****	****
STORMWATER		\$1,014	\$1,030	****	****	****	****
TOTAL	****	\$9,029	\$6,394	\$7,925	1,150	\$1,248	

NOT CLEAR IF CASH IN THE BANK DOESN'T INCLUDE LOANS UNUSED FUNDS.???

ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2019

ATTACHMENT BOOKLET 1

Attachment No. 1 Ratepayers' Petition

SCANNED

Attachment 1

TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL		
7 NOV 2019		
ICR20198870		
CL	Adrian	Rob
CGO		
COO		
MCSGR	✓	

Mayor Peter Petty,
Deputy Mayor Greg Sauer,
Tenterfield Shire Council

7 November 2019

Presented in person

Dear Mayor, Deputy Mayor,

Ratepayers' Petition

These 784 petition signatures represent a Shire wide appeal to Councillors to spare struggling ratepayers another year of double digit percentage increases in Council's fees and charges.

In commending this petition for Councillors' consideration, I would like to express the hope that there will be a positive response thereto.

Kind regards,



Peter Murphy
Petition Moderator

mail : 161 Logan Street, Tenterfield NSW 2372

email : haveyoursaytenterfield@gmail.com

mobile : 0411 295 380

A22

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 30 September 2022 2:52 PM
To: Bronwyn Petrie <b.petrie@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; John Macnish <j.macnish@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Peter Petty <p.petty@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Tim Bonner <t.bonner@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Tom Peters <t.peters@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Peter Murphy <p.murphy@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Kim Rhodes <k.rhodes@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Giana Saccon <g.saccon@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Greg Sauer <g.sauer@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>; Geoffery Nye <g.nye@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>
Cc: Daryl Buckingham <d.buckingham@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Input to TSC proposal for 104.49% SRV

Dear Councillors,

I am a resident and ratepayer in Tenterfield Shire who has been out of the country while you held information sessions regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation. Therefore, I provide my input to council in this email.

My input is that I:

1. Do not support a Special Rate Variation, and
2. Consider that the council should first reduce expenditure, reduce waste and increase other income to determine if it is possible to balance the budget – before making any proposals to increase the costs to ratepayers and residents.

Considerations

1. The Council and Administration have been saying that Tenterfield is only doing what other councils are – and that many other councils are applying for significant SRVs this year. If you are going to us this as justification for a SRV here, please provide and publish the names of any such councils in OLG Group 10 and the percentage SRV increases they propose. I note that none of our neighbouring shires make any mention of doing that on their websites.
2. Nothing the council has presented provides justification for a rate rise of the magnitude of 104.49%. Other councils of similar size and similar income per capita from rates, fees and charges are not applying for rate variations. I note however that their administration and governance expenditure is a lot less.
3. If TSC is granted a SRV of 104.49% the total cost of residential rates, fees and charges here will be over 50% higher than the average for all councils in OLG Group 10. What is so special about Tenterfield that it should need such massive funding?
4. The council should still be getting value from the 53% SRV granted in 2014, 70% of which was for road and bridge improvements extending out to 2023/24. TSC spends slightly more than half as much per km on roads and bridges compared with the average of neighbouring shires, regardless of whether they have more or less rainfall, slope and bridges.
5. TSC says if the SRV is not approved it will go into administration. If it is not approved, what actions will TSC take then – and why not take them now and avoid administration?
6. TSC average residential rates, fees and charges now equal 11% of the median personal income for Tenterfield residents? Do you recognise that you are proposing that this cost rise to approx. 14% by 2024/25? Do you consider this to be reasonable?

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]



Capacity to Pay
Tenterfield Shire Council
October 2022



Document status

Job #	Version	Approving Director	Date
7668	4.0	G Smith	October 2022

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Executive summary

Tenterfield Shire Council ('Council') is currently exploring a special rate variation (SRV) to ensure financial capacity to maintain existing service levels into the future. Therefore, Council is currently in the process of reviewing the potential impact on the community of an SRV. This report emphasises the capacity to pay principle, given that some ratepayers have more ability to pay rates than others.

This report provides an analysis and evaluation of relative wealth and financial capacity; it looks at the financial vulnerability and exposure of different community groups within the local government area (LGA). The key findings are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Area summary

Area	Findings
Tenterfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highest proportion of retirees, but lowest proportion of pensioner assessments• Highest proportion renting• Highest proportion of vulnerable households.
Liston-Urbenville – Rural North	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Highest proportion of working age population• Highest levels of equivalised household income• Highest unemployment rate.
Drake – Rural South	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Largest proportion of fully owned homes, lowest proportion mortgaged• Lowest levels of equivalised household income• Highest proportion of pensioners assessments.

Tenterfield Shire LGA has some of the lowest rates amongst NSW group 10 large rural councils. When comparing to six similar councils, Tenterfield Shire sits towards the bottom. Additionally, when analysing against these six similar councils, total rates revenue as a percentage of total operating expenditure, for the LGA is only 16%, well below most comparable councils.

During our review, we also noted that Tenterfield Shire has a relatively low proportion of outstanding rates at 4.4% (2021), ranking 5th best amongst all group 10 large rural councils. In 2022, this dropped further to 4.0%, a strong indicator of both capacity and willingness to pay rates especially given that the benchmark for outstanding rates is less than 10% for regional and rural areas.

However, it was observed that the LGA experiences significant levels of disadvantage. This is demonstrated most clearly through indicators such as equivalised household income (77% of the LGA within the lowest two quartiles) and SEIFA indexes, which rank the LGA in the 11th (IRSD) and 12th (IRSAD) percentiles when measuring socio-economic disadvantage and advantage. Countering this is the high proportion of fully owned homes (50%) relative to NSW regional averages, and relatively low values when it comes to monthly mortgage repayments.

It is estimated that average residential rates will increase by \$5 per week over what they would under normal rate increases in 2023/24, and a further average rise of \$8 per week in 2024/25. At the end of the two years, average residential rates will be \$722 higher per property than if there was no SRV.

Farmland rates are estimated to increase by an average of \$12 in the first SRV year, and a further \$18 per week in the second year (estimated average two year impact will be \$1,585 per property). Business rates are



estimated to increase by an average of \$7 per week in the first SRV year, an average of a further \$10 per week (estimated average two year impact will be \$856 per property).

Further, Council proposes increases to annual charges for water, sewer and waste (\$4 in the 2023/24 financial year, and a further \$3 per week in the 2024/25 financial year).

Council should ensure that it acknowledges disadvantage within the community when bringing rates revenue up to levels similar to other group 10 large rural councils, and to the level required to service the community. This would include ensuring that the SRV increases are supported by Council's rates hardship policy.

Introduction

Tenterfield Shire Council is currently exploring an SRV to ensure that it can maintain existing service levels into the future. A number of factors are considered when determining the size and need for an SRV including, equity, efficiency and capacity to pay. This report puts due emphasis on the capacity to pay principle given that some ratepayers have more ability to pay rates than others.

This report provides an analysis and evaluation of relative wealth and financial capacity; it looks at the financial vulnerability and exposure of different community groups within the LGA.

Key considerations include:

- regions of social disadvantage
- particularly vulnerable groups of individuals
- patterns of household expenditure.

These findings will then be compared to proposed rate increases to identify whether there are any groups or individuals that are being particularly impacted and/or marginalised.

Data for this review was obtained from the following sources:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics, *2016 and 2021 Census Data*, 'Data by Regions'.
- Profile ID – Tenterfield Shire Council community/economic profiles.
- Remplan – Regional Development Australia Northern Inland profiles
- National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NEIR) 2021.
- Housing and Homelessness Policy Consortium (ACT Shelter, ACTCOSS, Women's Centre for Health Matters, Youth Coalition of Act), February 2016, *Snapshot: Housing stress and its effects*.

Background

Tenterfield Shire Council is divided into three regional areas. Council is looking to ensure that through the special rates variation process, community groups are not significantly disadvantaged, and that relative equity is promoted as each region has differing economic and socio-economic profiles. A summary of the areas using 2021 Estimated Resident Population¹ (ERP) has been provided in the following Table 1 and Figure 1.

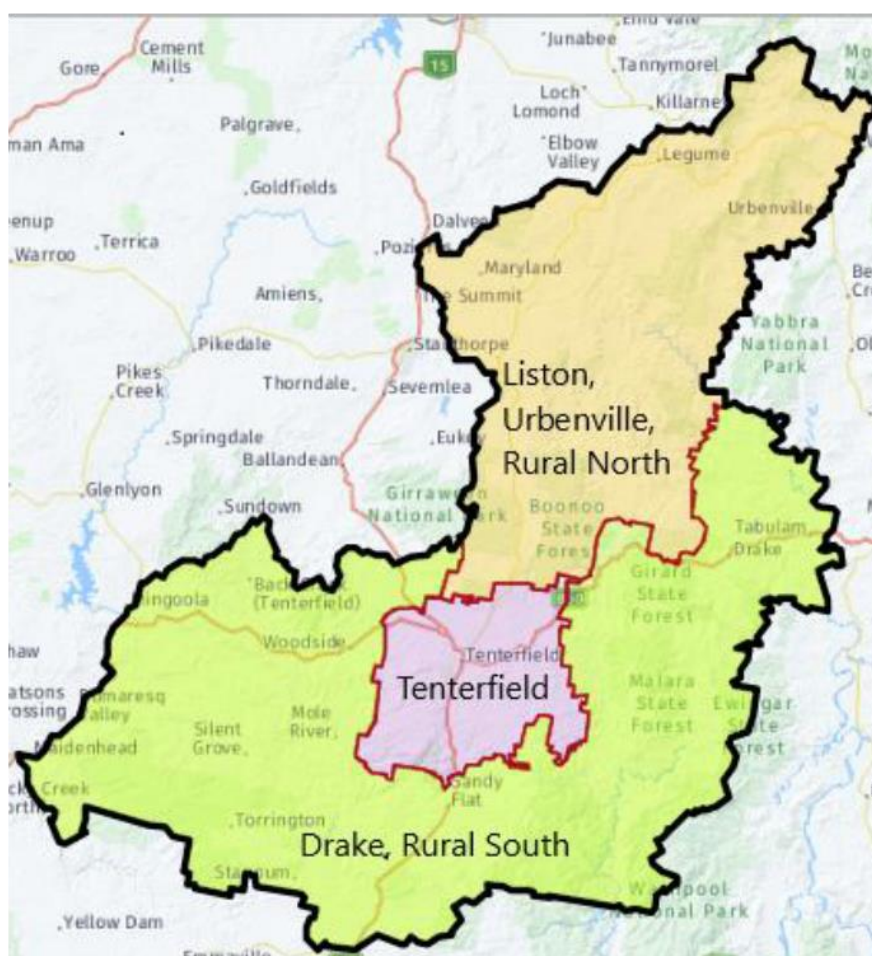
¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Regional Population Growth, Australia (3218.0). Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id.



Table 2 Tenterfield Shire Council area summary

Geographical area	Population (2021)	Suburbs
Tenterfield	4,069	Most of the locality of Tenterfield, with the remaining small part located in the Drake - Rural South small area.
Liston-Urbenville – Rural North	1,195	Acacia Creek, Amosfield, Bookookoorara, Boonoo Boonoo, Boorook, Carrolls Creek, Cottonvale, Cullendore, Koreelah, Legume, Liston, Lower Acacia Creek, Maryland, Rivertree, Ruby Creek, Undercliffe, Upper Tooloom, Willsons Downfall and Wylie Creek, parts of Urbenville and Woodenbong, small section of Tabulam.
Drake – Rural South	1,535	Back Creek, Bolivia, Drake, Drake Village, Dumaresq Valley, Forest Land, Jennings, Mingoola, Mole River, Rocky River, Sandy Flat, Sandy Hill, Silent Grove, Tarban, Timbarra, Torrington and Woodside, parts of Deepwater, Emmaville and Stannum, most of Tabulam, small part of Tenterfield.
Total LGA	6,799	

Figure 1 Tenterfield Shire Council areas





Methodology

Our methodology in examining the relative wealth between the different areas focuses on the following:

- **Areas of social disadvantage**

We will first look into the different characteristics and make up of each area to determine whether there are any particular areas of social disadvantage. This will include an investigation into:

- the age structure of each region
- the typical make up of each household
- household income, including the effect of dependants
- SEIFA rankings.

- **Particularly vulnerable groups of individuals**

We will then investigate whether there are any particular groups within each area that, despite the overall wealth of the area, would be particularly vulnerable and affected by a change in rates. These include:

- property owners
- persons who have or need core assistance
- individuals who are currently unemployed
- analysis of household mortgage repayments
- pensioners.

- **Patterns in household expenditure**

We will then examine trends in household expenditure and discuss what impacts they may have on an individual's ability to pay.

We will then compare these findings to the proposed rating variation to determine whether there are any particular groups or individuals that would be significantly impacted.



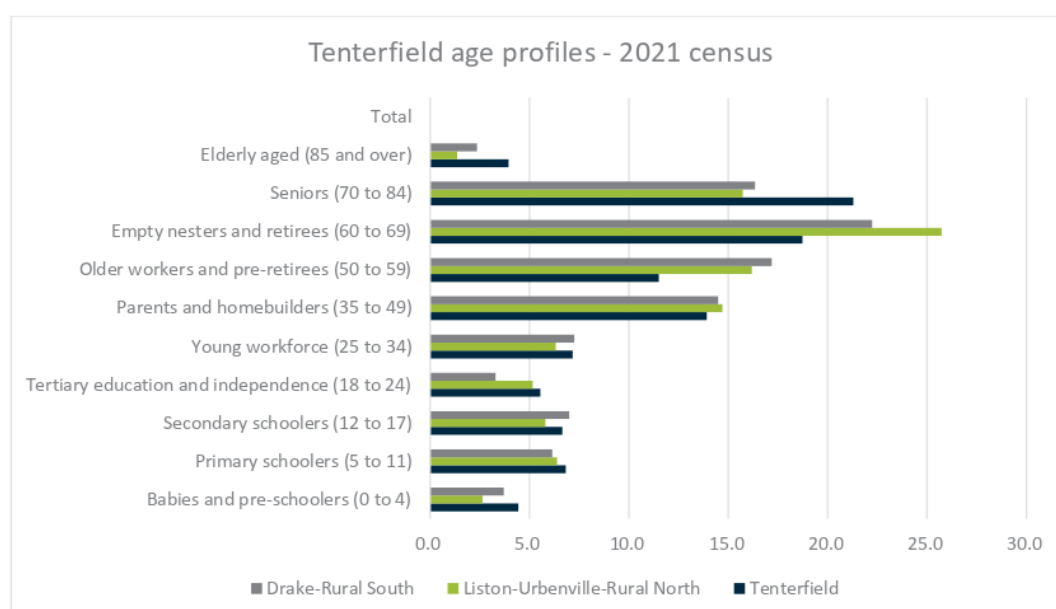
Areas of social disadvantage

Each area has differing demographic characteristics and we first want to identify 'who are the people' that make up each area, 'what do they do' and 'how do they live'.

Age profiles by region

Data has been broken into groups which are reflective of typical life stages. This provides insight into the number of dependants, size of the workforce and number of retirees in each area.

Figure 2 Age profiles by region²



Grouping these results in terms of the following categories (dependants, workforce, and retirees) and ranking them in terms of proportion of population (with one representing the largest proportion) generates the following results.

Table 3 Age profile rankings

Rank	Tenterfield	Liston-Urbenville-Rural North	Drake-Rural South
Dependents	1	3	2
Working age	3	1	2
Retirees	1	2	3

From these results we observe the following:

Overall the LGA has a high proportion of retirees (44%) relative to Regional NSW averages (29%).

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id.



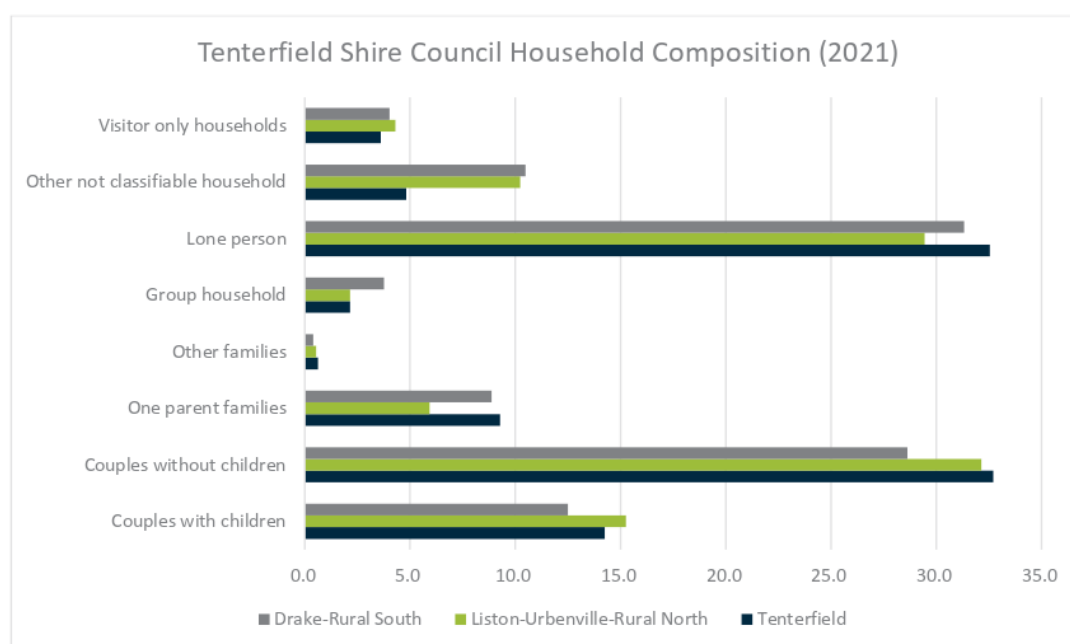
Accordingly, the proportions of dependents (18%) and working age (38%) population are also low relative to NSW averages (22% and 50% respectively). These averages are consistent across the LGA.

It was observed that the Rural Areas to the north (26%) and south (22%) both have relatively high proportions within the empty nesters and retirees brackets (60-79 years old) compared to the LGA as a whole (21%) however as we move into the seniors and elderly age ranges (70+), the proportion shifts, with this age range making up 25% of the population of the Tenterfield area, compared 17% in the north and 19% in the south.

Household types

Alongside the age structure of each region, it is important to determine the typical trends in the make-up of households. This provides a more complete picture of the people, families and communities in each area. A summary of household type is provided in the figure below.

Figure 3 Household composition³



The 'lone person' and 'one parent family' households are considered to be more vulnerable to the impacts of rate increases due to a reduced/singular income stream. Combining these categories together into an 'at risk' group shows that the level of at-risk households in the LGA (40%) is close to Regional NSW (37%). There is a slightly higher proportion of at-risk households in Tenterfield area (at 42%) compared to Liston-Urbenville-Rural North (35%). This is due to a higher proportion of Lone person households in Tenterfield (33%) compared to the Regional NSW average of 26%. It is observed that the proportion of one-parent families in the LGA is relatively low at 9% compared to the Regional NSW average of 11%.

³ Ibid.



Housing tenure

By observing housing tenure levels in the community, we are able to identify which areas would be most impacted by a change in council rates, i.e. the direct impact of a change in rates will be felt by homeowners, whereas renters may experience an indirect increase/decrease dependant on their lease agreement/decisions of their landlord. Furthermore, individuals in social housing are unlikely to be impacted by a change in rates.

Table 4 Tenterfield Shire Council housing tenure⁴

Housing Tenure - % of households	Tenterfield	Liston-Urbenville-Rural North	Drake-Rural South	LGA
Fully owned	49	48	52	50
Mortgage	19	20	16	19
Renting - Total	21	14	9	17
Renting - Social housing	4	1	2	3
Renting - Private	17	14	6	14
Renting - Not stated	0		1	0
Other tenure type	3	5	7	4
Not stated	8	13	16	10
Total households	100	100	100	100

The LGA level of resident ratepayers (fully owned plus mortgagees) of 69% is above the Regional NSW average (66%) and well above the average for other councils within the region as identified Regional Development Australia (RDA) Northern Inland average (52%⁵). This level of 69% is consistent across the LGA.

It was noted that the LGA has a very high proportion (50% across the LGA) of households where the home is fully owned. This compares very favourably to Regional NSW average (36%) and the RDA Northern Inland average (30%). Drake-Rural South area has slightly higher proportion as being fully owned (52%, compared with 49% in Tenterfield and 48% in Liston, Urbenville-Rural North).

High levels of fully owned homes are an indicator of greater household wealth, and therefore a greater capacity to pay as they will not be encumbered by mortgage.

Equivalised household income

Equivalised household income can be viewed as an indicator of the economic resources available to a standardised household. It is calculated by dividing total household income by an equivalence factor. The factor is calculated in the following way:

- first adult = 1
- each additional adult + child over 15 = + 0.5
- each child under 15 = + 0.3.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Regional Development Australia Northern Inland NSW Remplan Economy



Dividing by the equivalence factor, household income becomes comparable to that of a lone individual, thereby making households with dependants and multiple occupants comparable to those without. By factoring in dependants into household incomes, we are provided with a better indicator of the resources available to a household.

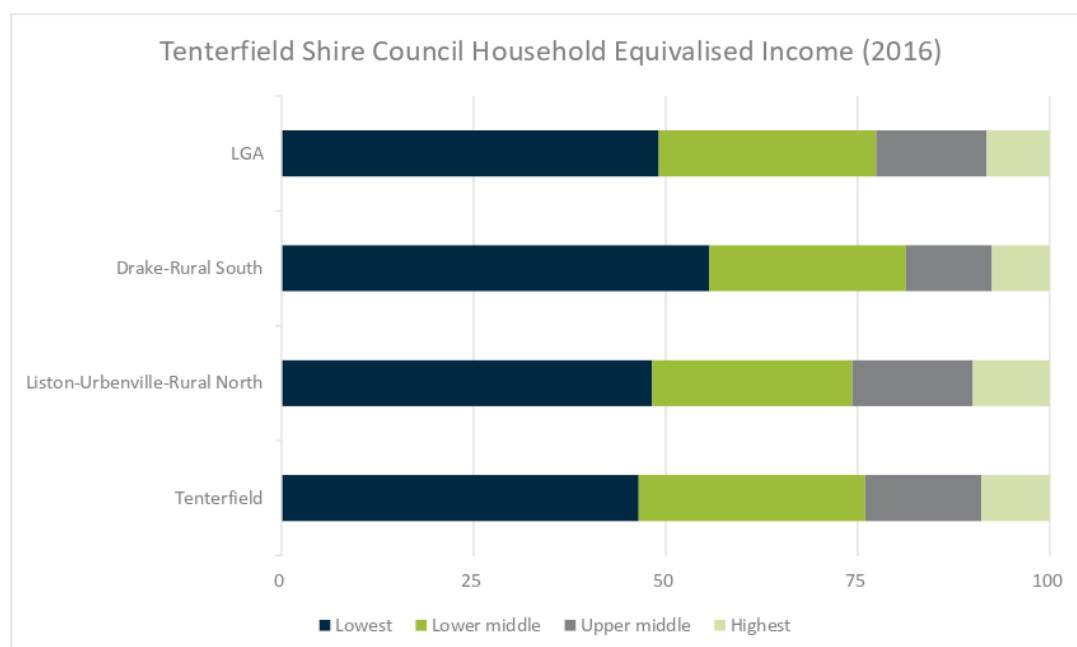
As this is a relative comparison, data has been presented in quartiles. A quartile describes a way of dividing up values into four quarters or intervals; regions of disadvantage will have a higher proportion of households in the bottom two quartiles than those of greater wealth and advantage. These quartiles were determined by reviewing the distribution of household incomes within NSW and then dividing them into four equal groups or quartiles.

The data has been presented in ranges for the following equivalised weekly income levels:

- Lowest: \$0 - \$497 – this range is representative of the bottom 25% of all equivalised household incomes in NSW.
- Medium lowest: \$498 - \$891 – this range is representative of the bottom 25% - 50% of all equivalised household incomes in NSW.
- Medium highest: \$892 - \$1,464 – this range is representative of the top 25% - 50% of all equivalised household incomes in NSW.
- Highest: \$1,465 and over – this range is representative of the top 25% of all equivalised household incomes in NSW.

Figure 4 summarises the equivalised household income ranges (2016) for each area.

Figure 4 Equivalised household income⁶



⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id.



We can make the following observations from the 2016 data:

- Drake-Rural South has the region had the highest proportion of households in the bottom two quartiles (81%), and lowest proportions in the middle two quartiles (37%) and highest two quartiles (19%).
- Liston-Urbenville-Rural North has the lowest proportion of households in the bottom two quartiles (74%), and the highest proportion in the highest two quartiles (26%).
- Ranking of areas by greatest disadvantage (percentage of households in lower brackets) are closely followed by each region:
 1 – Drake-Rural South 2 – Tenterfield 3 – Liston-Urbenville-Rural North
- Ranking of areas by greatest middle class (percentage of households in middle brackets) are closely followed by each region:
 – 1 – Tenterfield 2 – Liston-Urbenville-Rural North 3 Drake-Rural South
- Ranking of areas by advantage (percentage of households in the highest bracket):
 – 1 – Liston-Urbenville-Rural North 2 – Tenterfield 3 – Drake-Rural South

Table 5 Regional comparison of equivalised household income⁷

Quartile Groups (2016)	Tenterfield	Liston-Urbenville-Rural North	Drake-Rural South	LGA	Regional NSW
Lowest	47	48	56	49	31
Lower middle	30	26	26	28	29
Upper middle	15	16	11	14	24
Highest	9	10	8	8	17
Total Households	100	100	100	100	100

From Table 5 we observe that overall, the LGA has generally low levels of equivalised income. Across the 77% of households are within the bottom two quartiles (regional NSW has 59%, and NSW 50%).

Socio-economic index

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is an economic tool developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to rank areas in Australia according to their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. It takes into consideration a broad range of variables such as income, education, employment, occupation, housing, etc and is standardised such that the average Australian represents a score of 1000.

In our research we explored two of the indexes published by the ABS:

- **Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD)**
 This index ranks areas from most disadvantaged to least disadvantaged, i.e. a lower score will have a greater proportion of relatively disadvantaged people in the area.
 From this score however you cannot conclude whether a high-ranking area will have a large portion of relatively advantaged people, just that it has a low proportion of disadvantage.
- **Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD)**

⁷ Ibid.



This index considers variables of both advantage and disadvantage and, as such, scores and ranks areas from most disadvantaged to most advantaged.

The ABS has also published the variables which have the most impact on both indices, these include:

- IRSD variables of disadvantage:
 - low equivalised household incomes
 - households with children and unemployed parents
 - percentage of occupied dwellings with no internet connection
 - percentage of employed people classified as labourers.
- IRSAD variables of advantage only (disadvantage similar to IRSD):
 - high equivalised household incomes
 - percentage of households making high mortgage repayments
 - percentage of employed people classified as professionals
 - percentage of employed people classified as managers.

Further analysis of these factors is provided in the discussion section. A regional summary, including national percentiles (2016) is provided in the table below.

Table 6 Regional SEIFA scores and percentiles (2016) ⁸

Area	SEIFA IRSD	Percentile *	SEIFA IRSAD	Percentile
Tenterfield LGA	910.0	11	902.0	12
RDA Northern Inland NSW ⁹	950.0	20	not available	not available
Regional NSW	971.0	29	1,040.0	77
New South Wales	1,001.0	45	1,011.0	62
Australia	1,001.9	46	1,003.1	57

* Percentile is a measure used to show the value on a scale of 100 that the score falls within.

In reviewing the IRSD index (2016), we observe that the LGA has a greater level of disadvantage compared with both the RDA's Northern Inland Region, Regional NSW, NSW and the nation's averages. Tenterfield Shire Council's IRSD score of 910.0 is below Regional NSW (971.0), NSW (1,001.0) and the nation (1,001.9) and places the LGA into the 11th percentile. This means that 11% of Australia's suburbs have a SEIFA index lower than this area (more disadvantaged), while 89% are higher.

IRSAD includes levels of both advantage and disadvantage. Tenterfield Shire Council's score of 902.0 is again below that of Regional NSW (959.0), NSW (1,011.0) and the nation (1,003.1) and places the LGA into the 12th percentile. This lower score means that there are proportionately lower incidences of advantage throughout the LGA relative to NSW and to Australia. A lower IRSAD score compared to IRSD score is indicative of less opportunities within the LGA, e.g. lower equivalised incomes, lower education levels, fewer employment opportunities within the area, or more unskilled jobs, and housing. It is noted that this data is from 2016, with the latest 2021 SEIFA rankings not expected to be released until 2023.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Regional Development Australia Northern Inland NSW Remplan Economy



Table 7 Area level SEIFA scores and percentiles ¹⁰

Area	SEIFA IRSD	Percentile	SEIFA IRSAD	Percentile
Tenterfield	920.0	13	902.0	12
Liston-Urbenville-Rural North	890.4	9	898.1	11
Drake-Rural South	893.7	9	900.7	12

When reviewing SEIFA rankings at an area level, we see the distribution of advantage and disadvantage through the LGA is consistent, albeit with slightly lower levels of disadvantage in the Tenterfield area when compared with the northern and southern areas of the LGA. Additionally, there is consistency between the IRSD and IRSAD scores, indicating fewer instances of advantage within the LGA.

Vulnerable groups or individuals

This section of the report considers whether there are any spatial patterns of individuals or groups who either need additional community services or are more sensitive to a change in rates.

Workforce status

The levels of full or part-time employment and unemployment are indicative of the strength of the local economy and social characteristics of the population.

Table 8 Community workforce status 2016 Census ¹¹

Tenterfield Shire - Persons (Usual residence)	Tenterfield	Liston-Urbenville-Rural North	Drake-Rural South	LGA
Total Employed	92.6	90.5	90.9	92.4
Employed full-time	50.9	56.6	52.7	52.9
Employed part-time	38.6	31.1	35.8	36.4
Hours worked not stated	3.1	2.8	2.3	3.1
Unemployed (Unemployment rate)	7.4	9.5	9.1	7.6
Looking for full-time work	4.5	6.3	6.2	4.7
Looking for part-time work	2.9	3.2	3.0	2.9
Total labour force	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Tenterfield Shire Council's overall unemployment rate as at the 2016 Census date was 7.6% (equating to 195 people), above the RDA Northern Inland average of 6.4%, Regional NSW average of 6.6% and NSW average of 6.3%. However, it was observed that the Rural North and Rural South have higher rates at 9.5% (equating to 43 people) and 9.1% (equating to 44 people) respectively.

Note, pensioners and other non participants are not included in the total labour force.

¹⁰ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id.

¹¹ Ibid.



Workforce industries and regions

Table 9 Industry workforce analysis¹²

Industry sector - employed FTE (2016)	Tenterfield	Liston-Urbenville-Rural North	Drake-Rural South	LGA
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	11.5	40.6	48.5	23.2
Mining	1.8	1.0	--	1.4
Manufacturing	3.7	2.2	3.0	3.2
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	1.1	--	--	0.6
Construction	9.2	5.9	6.3	7.8
Wholesale trade	1.4	0.7	0.1	1.3
Retail Trade	11.9	4.1	7.6	9.6
Accommodation and Food Services	8.5	5.9	3.0	6.9
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	4.3	5.8	3.6	4.3
Information Media and Telecommunications	0.6	--	--	0.5
Financial and Insurance Services	1.1	1.1	0.1	0.9
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	1.5	2.3	0.1	1.3
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	4.0	1.6	4.1	3.5
Administrative and Support Services	2.3	0.7	--	1.8
Public Administration and Safety	7.4	1.4	6.2	6.0
Education and Training	8.1	8.8	6.0	7.8
Health Care and Social Assistance	13.5	8.8	6.3	11.8
Arts and Recreation Services	1.0	1.0	--	1.0
Other Services	3.2	3.5	0.1	2.8
Inadequately described or not stated	4.1	4.7	5.1	4.4
Total employed persons aged 15+	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The largest employer within the LGA is the agriculture forestry and fishing industry, at 23%. This varies when compared with the Northern Inland region of NSW, where the proportion of population employed in this industry is 15%¹³. The proportion of people employed by this industry in the LGA is, as expected far greater in the Liston-Urbenville-Rural North and the Drake-Rural South areas. Within Tenterfield the proportion is much lower at 12%. Other significant industries within the Tenterfield area are Health Care and Social Assistance (14%) and Retail Trade (12%).

It is noted that 77% of Tenterfield Shire's residents work within the LGA, with the remaining workers travelling outside the LGA to work (mainly to Southern Downs and Kyogle).

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Regional Development Australia Northern Inland NSW Remplan Economy



Core assistance

Table 10 highlights the areas within the LGA that have higher concentrations of people who need assistance in their day-to-day lives with self-care, body movements or communication, often because of a disability, long-term health condition or old age.

Table 10 Number of people requiring core assistance¹⁴

Residents requiring assistance (2021)	Number	Percent %
Tenterfield	338	8.1
Liston-Urbenville-Rural North	98	8.1
Drake-Rural South	117	8.1
Tenterfield Shire	553	8.1
Regional NSW	193,513	6.8
New South Wales	464,712	5.8

At the LGA level 8.1% of people require assistance with core activities, compared to the Regional NSW average of 6.8%. This is consistent across the LGA, even though the Tenterfield area does have a higher proportion of its population aged 70 plus (25%).

Pensioners

A distinction is made between retirees and eligible pensioners. To be classified as a pensioner for the purposes of receiving rate rebates, ratepayers must be receiving Centrelink payments such as the age pension or have partial capacity to work, such as having a disability, being a carer or being a low-income parent. These individuals have reduced income streams and can be vulnerable to financial shocks and price rises.

Table 11 Number of eligible pensioner assessments

Number of pensioner properties	Total assessments	Pensioner assessments	Pensioner assessments %
Tenterfield	2,384	616	26%
Liston-Urbenville-Rural North	942	133	14%
Drake-Rural South	1,542	225	15%
LGA	4,868	974	20%

As expected, given the high proportion of retirees (with 44% of residents aged 60 and over), the area of Tenterfield has the largest proportion of its population (26%) and the highest absolute number of eligible pensioners (616 assessments). Drake-Rural South and Liston-Urbenville-Rural North have much lower proportions of their population being eligible pensioners, indicating less disadvantage. It is noted that eligible pensioners (those receiving Centrelink payments) within the LGA have access to mandatory rebates (up to a maximum of \$250 per year) on their rates. Council also has rates hardship policies in place.

¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id.



Household mortgages

The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) defines households experiencing 'housing stress' as those that satisfy both of the following criteria:

- equivalised household income is within the lowest 40% of the state's income distribution
- housing costs (i.e. mortgage and/or rent repayments) are greater than 30% of household income.

Research funded by the ACT Government on housing and homelessness issues in the ACT found that, due to financial pressures¹⁵:

- 19% of households facing housing stress compromised a lot on their grocery spend over a 12-month period
- 24% of households facing housing stress found rent/mortgage repayments quite/very difficult in the last three months.

Households facing housing stress are highly likely to be under significant financial stress and vulnerable to sudden increases in council rates.

As a substitute for housing stress data with respect to the Tenterfield Shire Council LGA we have reviewed the levels of household loan repayments. An analysis of housing loan repayment quartiles in conjunction with equivalised income quartiles can indicate potential stress.

The data has been presented in ranges for the following monthly mortgage repayment levels:

- Lowest: \$0 - \$1,263 – this range is representative of the bottom 25% of all monthly mortgage repayments in NSW.
- Medium lowest: \$1,264 - \$1,989 – this range is representative of the bottom 25% - 50% of all monthly mortgage repayments in NSW.
- Medium highest: \$1,990 - \$2,865 – this range is representative of the top 25% - 50% of all monthly mortgage repayments in NSW.
- Highest: \$2,866 and over – this range is representative of the top 25% of all monthly mortgage repayments in NSW.

Table 12 Housing loan repayment quartiles¹⁶

Loan repayment quartile group (2016)	Tenterfield	Liston-Urbenville-Rural North	Drake-Rural South	LGA
Lowest	51.9	72.7	69.2	60.2
Lower middle	26.8	13.6	17.5	23.1
Upper middle	15.7	6.0	7.8	11.6
Highest	5.6	7.7	5.5	5.1
Total households with stated mortgage repayments	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

¹⁵ Housing and Homelessness Policy Consortium (ACT Shelter, ACTCOSS, Women's Centre for Health Matters, Youth Coalition of Act), 2016. *Snapshot: Housing stress and its effects*.

¹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2016. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id.



Overall, 83% of housing loan repayments within the LGA are within the lowest two monthly loan repayment quartiles, well above Regional NSW (67%). Tenterfield Shire LGA has 77% of its residents in the bottom two quartiles of equivalised income, which is above the Regional NSW (60%) levels from the 2016 Census data.

Drilling down, we observe that Tenterfield area had the highest proportion at 21% of housing loan repayments in the highest two monthly loan repayment quartiles – this equated to 74 households. Comparing to equivalised income, this area had the second highest proportion of households in the highest two quartiles (24%), however there was still a significant proportion (76%) in the bottom two equivalised income quartiles. Therefore it is considered probable that there will be some mortgage stress.

Liston-Urbenville-Rural North had 86% of households within the bottom two monthly loan repayment quartiles, greater than the Regional NSW average (68%). This meant only 14 households had monthly loan repayments in the top two quartiles. This area had the highest proportion of households in the highest two equivalised income quartiles (26%). Therefore there is less likely to be significant mortgage stress.

The Drake-Rural South area had 87% of households within the bottom two monthly loan repayment quartiles, greater Regional NSW average (68%). This meant only 14 households had monthly loan repayments in the top two quartiles. Therefore there is unlikely to be significant mortgage stress.

Trends in cost of living

Table 13 Five-year comparison of cost of living in Regional NSW¹⁷

Regional NSW	2020/21		2015/16	
Household expenditure (totals)	\$ per household	% of expenditure	\$ per household	% of expenditure
Food	9,754	10%	10,099	9%
Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	4,307	4%	5,305	5%
Clothing and footwear	4,165	4%	3,929	4%
Furnishings and equipment	4,926	5%	4,801	5%
Health	6,474	7%	6,206	6%
Transport	8,427	9%	11,286	11%
Communications	2,025	2%	1,793	2%
Recreation and culture	10,815	11%	12,013	11%
Education	5,233	5%	5,385	5%
Hotels, cafes and restaurants	6,128	6%	8,817	8%
Miscellaneous goods and services	13,876	14%	16,102	15%
Housing	19,140	19%	18,373	17%
Utilities	3,276	3%	3,693	3%
Total expenditure	98,546	100%	107,803	100%
Net savings	26,724	21%	15,254	12%
Total disposable income	125,270	0%	123,057	0%
Non discretionary	53,261	54%	55,379	51%
Discretionary	45,285	46%	52,423	49%

*Non-discretionary spending includes the following categories: food, clothing and footwear, health, transport, communications, housing and utilities.

¹⁷ National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), 2021. Compiled and presented in economy.id by. Data based on 2016-17 price base for all years. NIEIR-ID data are inflation adjusted each year to allow direct comparison, and annual data releases adjust previous years' figures to a new base year.



The cost of living can best be described as the cost of maintaining a certain standard of living. Identifying trends in future costs, particularly with regards to discretionary and non-discretionary income.

We were unable to access cost of living data with respect to the Tenterfield Shire LGA. Therefore we analysed data for Regional NSW as a whole, the adjacent Northern Rivers region, as well data for a number of LGA's within the Northern Inland region – such as Armidale, Tamworth, and Gunnedah. This allows us to infer some general conclusions as to cost of living trends over the five year period between 2015/16 through to 2020/21.

The cost of living trends for this period for Regional NSW is presented in Table 13. This shows that over this five year period net savings have relatively increased, now representing 21% of total disposable income. Also, over this period there has been an overall increase in the proportion of non discretionary expenditure to now represent 54% of total expenditure. This is driven by increased housing costs, which now represent 19% of household expenditure. There has been a drop in discretionary expenditure, particularly in hotels, cafes and restaurants.

Analysis of data from other LGA's within the Northern Inland area support these trends, with Net Savings increasing to represent 21% of total disposable income. Likewise, the Northern Rivers region saw an increase in net savings (to 23% of disposable income) over the same five year period. These areas all saw similar trends in non discretionary / discretionary expenditure, particularly housing and hotels, cafes and restaurants. The increases in net savings indicate an improved capacity to pay within the community.

Property prices and other indicators

The Median house property prices within the Tenterfield LGA has increased by 33% over the 12 months ending 30 September 2022. This period saw 109 houses sold for a median price of \$391,000. The 5 year median price trend is significant, with the median price in October 2017 being \$239,000 (based on 109 sales)¹⁸. This growth represents a significant increase in household wealth.

Discussion

The LGA overall is in the 11th percentile in terms of socio-economic disadvantage (IRSD) and 12th percentile when considering both disadvantage and advantage (IRSAD). This compares unfavourably to Regional NSW (29th and 32nd percentiles) but closer in line to the Northern Inland region (20th percentile for IRSD).

The SEIFA rankings show that the disadvantage is relatively consistent throughout the LGA. We observe the lowest levels of disadvantage is within the rural areas to the north and south. (both within the 9th percentile IRSD, compared with Tenterfield (13th Percentile).

The inclusion of factors indicating advantage as well as disadvantage (IRSAD) results in slightly higher rankings in the rural areas, but a slightly lower ranking Tenterfield.

¹⁸ Tenterfield Property Market, House Prices, Investment Data & Suburb Profiles - realestate.com.au



Key aspects of the Tenterfield area, which had a SEIFA IRSAD ranking of 12th percentile:

- the area had the highest employment level (93%), and lowest unemployment rate (7%)
- the area had the second largest proportion within the highest equivalised income quartile (9%), and the second smallest proportion in the lowest equivalised income quartile (47%).

Key aspects of the Liston-Urbenville-Rural North area, which had a SEIFA IRSAD ranking of 11th percentile:

- the area had the highest unemployment rate at 10%, noting that only 6% of the population is looking for full-time work
- the area had the largest proportion within the highest equivalised income quartile (10%).

Key aspects of the Drake-Rural South, which had a SEIFA IRSAD ranking of 12th percentile:

- the area had the highest proportion of fully owned homes (52%).
- the area had the largest proportion within the lowest equivalised income quartile (56%).

It is important to note, that there is a disparity between the most advantaged and disadvantaged areas within Council's LGA. With respect to IRSAD rankings (i.e. both disadvantage and advantage), the regions of Tenterfield Shire Council LGA sit within the 12% most disadvantaged areas of Australia. With respect to IRSD (i.e. only disadvantage), the LGA sits within this 11% level of disadvantage. This means that these areas do not have pockets of advantage to offset the levels of disadvantage.

As was observed from the review of SEIFA rankings within Council, the ABS identified the following factors as having the greatest impact on an area's SEIFA score:

- level of income
- type of employment
- vulnerable households.

These factors align closely with our common characteristics of disadvantaged/advantaged households:

- equivalised household income
- proportion of disadvantaged (lone individual/one parent) households
- proportion of vulnerable households (housing stress/unemployment/require core assistance).

Proposed special rate variation impacts

Analysis of the special rate variation impacts has been prepared based upon a combination of Council rates book data, which uses 2019 land valuations by the NSW Valuer General. The NSW Valuer General is expected to release updated land valuations before the end of 2022, which may have an impact upon the distribution of rates across Tenterfield Shire. Council may reassess the impact on ratepayers once new land valuations have been received.



Table 14 Estimated 2023/24 average rates by category¹⁹

LGA 2023/24 est.	Est. Average Residential 2023/24	Est. Average Farmland 2023/24	Est. Average Business 2023/24	Est. Average Mining 2023/24
Glen Innes Severn	939	3,312	1,847	0
Gwydir	810	5,969	1,765	0
Kyogle	1,220	2,055	1,490	0
Oberon	1,025	2,082	1,144	0
Upper Lachlan	604	1,986	1,154	2,124
Uralla	755	4,103	704	0
Tenterfield Shire (4.2% 2023/24 IPART rate peg increase)	771	1,673	911	1,059
Tenterfield Shire (43% SRV year 1, including rate peg of 4.2%)	1,057	2,310	1,250	1,452
Year 1 SRV increase	286	637	339	393

Table 15 Estimated 2024/25 average rates by category²⁰

LGA 2024/25 est.	Est. Average Residential 2024/25	Est. Average Farmland 2024/25	Est. Average Business 2024/25	Est. Average Mining 2024/25
Glen Innes Severn	962	3,394	1,893	0
Gwydir	830	6,118	1,809	0
Kyogle	1,250	2,106	1,527	0
Oberon	1,050	2,134	1,172	0
Upper Lachlan	619	2,036	1,183	2,177
Uralla	774	4,206	722	0
Tenterfield Shire (2.5% 2024/25 increase)	790	1,715	934	1,085
Tenterfield Shire (43% SRV year 2, including rate peg of 2.5%)	1,512	3,300	1,790	2,077
Total SRV increase (including impact of year 1)	722	1,585	826	992

Table 14 above outlines estimated average rates by rating category for the 2023/24 financial year for a selection of comparable group 10 large rural NSW councils. Should Council continue the current rates path, Tenterfield Shire average residential rates would rank as the third lowest within this grouping. In this grouping, Kyogle has the highest estimated 2023/24 average residential rates, at \$1,220 per property, well above Tenterfield Shire's estimated (normal rate increases only, no SRV) estimated 2024/25 average residential rates of \$790. Kyogle has similar socio-economic scores and reasonable levels of outstanding rates, so it is a good comparison. Should Council be successful in implementing the first year of its SRV, then average residential rates are estimated to be \$1,057 per property in, placing them at second highest within this grouping of seven councils. Table 15 then extends this into the second year of the proposed SRV. Should Council be successful with its SRV, it is estimated that average residential rates will be highest amongst this group of councils. This would be an increase of \$722 over where average rates would be under normal rates increases. These increases equate to an average of \$5.48 per week in year one, and a further \$8.36 per week in year two.

¹⁹ OLG Time Series Data, average rates projections using IPART rate peg and Tenterfield Shire prepared estimates

²⁰ Ibid.



With only normal rate increases as approved by IPART, in 2023/24 Tenterfield Shire is estimated to levy the lowest average Farmland rate per property compared with comparable LGA's as identified in Table 14. After the implementation of year one of the SRV, this would move Tenterfield Shire up to the fourth highest in this grouping. In year two of the proposed SRV (2024/25), Table 15 shows estimated average farmland rates which would still rank as fourth highest within this grouping of councils. Compared to where rates would be under normal increases, average farmland rates are estimated to increase by \$12.22 per week in year one, and a further \$18.18 per week in year two. It is observed that those councils with higher rates all have higher levels of output per farmland assessments compared to Tenterfield (refer Appendix A).

Considering normal rate increases, average Business rates in 2023/24 are estimated to rank sixth compared with comparable LGA's as identified in Table 14. After implementation of year one of the SRV, Tenterfield Shire moved to fourth highest in this grouping, In year two of the SRV, Table 15 demonstrates that Tenterfield Shire's estimated business rates will rank third highest amongst this grouping. Compared to where rates would be under normal increases, average business rates are estimated to increase by \$6.50 per week in year one, and a further \$9.92 per week in year two.

Average mining rates are lowest within this grouping. The proposed SRV increases would still mean that mining rates remain at the lowest level within this grouping.

These rates increases should be read in conjunction with the proposed increases to annual charges. Tenterfield Shire proposes to increase annual charges (for water, sewer and waste) by \$183 in 2023/24, and a further \$162 in 2024/25. This equates to a weekly increase of \$3.51 in the 2023/24 financial year, and a further \$3.12 per week in the 2024/25 financial year. A summary of these increases are provided in Appendix B.



Table 16 Estimated 2023/24 and 2024/25 average residential rates by category for all group 10 councils ²¹

ALL GROUP 10 LARGE RURAL (ACTUAL FY21) Tenterfield SRV 43% (year 1 only)	2023/24 estimated average residential rates	2023/24 estimated Ranking (residential)	2024/25 estimated average residential rates	2024/25 estimated Ranking (residential)
Berrigan	815	12	836	12
Bland	1,420	3	1,455	4
Blayney	1,350	4	1,384	5
Cobar	1,540	2	1,578	2
Dungog	1,589	1	1,748	1
Edward River	1,090	6	1,118	7
Forbes	945	9	969	9
Glen Innes Severn	939	10	962	10
Gwydir	810	14	830	14
Junee	870	11	892	11
Kyogle	1,220	5	1,250	6
Lachlan	660	20	676	20
Liverpool Plains	807	15	828	15
Narrandera	732	17	750	17
Narromine	725	18	743	18
Oberon	1,025	8	1,050	8
Temora	691	19	708	19
Tenterfield Shire with SRV	1,057	7	1,512	3
Upper Lachlan	604	21	619	21
Uralla	755	16	774	16
Walgett	423	22	434	22
Wentworth	814	13	834	13

Should Council be successful in implementing the first year of its SRV, then average residential rates are estimated to increase such that Tenterfield Shire is ranked seventh highest compared to other group 10 (large rural) NSW councils. In 2024/25, assuming the second year of the SRV, we estimate that Tenterfield Shire would rank third highest in terms of average residential rates (assuming none of these other group 10 councils has an SRV).

It is noted that Tenterfield Shire has a small subcategory of “urban” residential properties that inflate the average rates within the above rankings. With the proposed SRV, estimated average residential rates (excluding urban subcategory) in 2023/24 will be \$872, compared to \$637 with normal rates increases. In 2024/25 it will increase to \$1,247, compared to \$653 with normal rates increases. With normal rate increases (no SRV), in 2024/25 Tenterfield Shire’s estimated average residential rate (excluding the urban subcategory) would rank in the bottom 4 of the group 10 large rural councils.

²¹ Ibid.



Table 17 Rates as a percentage of operating expenses ²²

Rates vs Operating expenses 2020-21 Actual	Total Operating Expenses Actual 2020-21 (\$)	Total Rates Revenue 2020-21 Actual (\$)	Rates as % of operating expenses	Rank
Glen Innes Severn	36,406,000	7,160,000	19.7	5
Gwydir	33,283,000	8,235,000	24.7	2
Kyogle	29,412,000	7,355,000	25.0	1
Oberon	19,476,000	4,696,000	24.1	3
Upper Lachlan	33,832,000	7,372,000	21.8	4
Uralla	23,357,000	4,015,000	17.2	6
Tenterfield Shire	29,475,000	4,718,000	16.0	7

Table 17 above shows actual rates revenue as a percentage of total council operating expenditure for the 2020-21 financial year, for selected comparable LGA's. It is observed that within this grouping, Tenterfield Shire's ratio of 16% is the lowest level of rates revenue as a percentage of total operating expenditure. This is a strong indication that Council's rates are below the level required to service the community.

Table 18 Outstanding rates (2021)²³

LGA – Group 10 (large rural) councils only	NSW Rank	2021 Outstanding
Blayney Shire Council	1	1.5
Upper Lachlan Shire Council	6	2.4
Temora Shire Council	12	3.3
Berrigan Shire Council	22	4.1
Tenterfield Shire Council	29	4.4
Gwydir Shire Council	38	4.7
Glen Innes Severn Council	49	5.2
Bland Shire Council	61	5.8
Dungog Shire Council	69	6.2
Kyogle Council	77	6.7
Edward River Council	79	7.0
Forbes Shire Council	81	7.2
Oberon Council	88	7.6
Narromine Shire Council	89	7.9
Lachlan Shire Council	100	8.9
Uralla Shire Council	101	9.0
Narrandera Shire Council	103	9.3
Wentworth Shire Council	106	9.7
Junee Shire Council	107	9.8
Cobar Shire Council	108	9.8
Liverpool Plains Shire Council	110	10.0
Walgett Shire Council	116	11.4

Table 18 above shows that Tenterfield Shire has very low outstanding rates. This is a strong indicator of willingness and capacity to pay, especially given that the benchmark for outstanding rates is less than 10% for regional and rural areas.

²² OLG Time Series Data 2020-21

²³ Ibid.



Conclusion

Tenterfield Shire LGA has some of the lowest rates amongst NSW group 10 large rural councils. When comparing to six similar councils, Tenterfield Shire sits towards the bottom. Additionally, when analysing against these six similar councils, total rates revenue as a percentage of total operating expenditure, for the LGA is only 16%, well below most comparable councils.

During our review, we also noted that Tenterfield Shire has a relatively low proportion of outstanding rates at 4.4% (2021), ranking 5th best amongst all group 10 large rural councils. In 2022, this dropped further to 4.0%, a strong indicator of both capacity and willingness to pay rates especially given that the benchmark for outstanding rates is less than 10% for regional and rural areas.

However, it was observed that the LGA experiences significant levels of disadvantage. This is demonstrated most clearly through indicators such as equivalised household income (77% of the LGA within the lowest two quartiles) and SEIFA indexes, which rank the LGA in the 11th (IRSD) and 12th (IRSAD) percentiles when measuring socio-economic disadvantage and advantage. Countering this is the high proportion of fully owned homes (50%) relative to NSW regional averages, and relatively low values when it comes to monthly mortgage repayments.

Overall, it is estimated that average residential rates will increase by \$5 per week over what they would under normal rate increases in 2023/24. There will be a further average rise of \$8 per week in 2024/25 compared to the normal rate increases.

Farmland rates are estimated to increase by an average of \$12 in the first SRV year, and a further \$18 per week in the second year. Business rates are estimated to increase by an average of \$7 per week in the first SRV year, with the second year expected to see a further average increase of a further \$10 per week.

Further, Council proposes increases to annual charges (\$4 in the 2023/24 financial year, and a further \$3 per week in the 2024/25 financial year).

Council should ensure that it acknowledges disadvantage within the community when bringing rates revenue up to levels similar to other group 10 large rural councils, and to the level required to service the community. This would include ensuring that the SRV increases are supported by an appropriate hardship policy.



Appendix A Economic output – agriculture, forestry and fishing

Northern Inland LGA's Regional Output - Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	\$000s	Number of farmland assessments	Output per farmland assessment \$000s	Rank per assessment
Armidale Regional	497,410	1,478	336.542	2
Glen Innes Severn	231,424	1,017	227.555	9
Gunnedah	289,842	1,139	254.470	6
Gwydir	315,261	1,157	272.482	5
Inverell	293,187	1,503	195.068	11
Liverpool Plains	282,549	1,009	280.029	4
Moree Plains	545,336	1,412	386.216	1
Narrabri	395,545	1,648	240.015	8
Tamworth Regional	660,736	3,032	217.921	10
Tenterfield	213,003	1,435	148.434	12
Uralla	147,318	601	245.122	7
Walcha	231,507	743	311.584	3

Source: Regional Development Australia Northern Inland NSW Remplan Economy

Agriculture, forestry and fishing industries make up the largest proportion of economic output for the LGA's sales at \$213m for 2020-21, with 69% of this being exports. Therefore this sector is critical to the economy of the LGA. It is observed that analysing against other Northern Inland LGA's, Tenterfield Shire has the lowest output per farmland assessment. It is observed that Glenn Innes, Gwydir and Uralla are all estimated to have higher average farmland rates compared to Tenterfield Shire, even after SRV implementation.



Appendix B Proposed increases to annual charges (water, sewer and waste)

Council is proposing to also increase annual charges as per the following table.

Proposed annual charges	Annual		Change Per week	
Proposed annual charges	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25
Water charge	711	782		
Water charge increase	93	71	1.78	1.36
Sewer	1,386	1,455		
Sewer increase	66	69	1.27	1.32
Waste	312	334		
Waste increase	24	22	0.45	0.42
Total increase in charges	183	162	3.50	3.11

The total increase proposed to annual charges reflects the increasing cost of provisioning these services. It is estimated that the average increase to these will be \$3.50 per week in 2023/24, and a further \$3.11 per week in 2024/25, meaning a cumulative increase of \$6.61 per week during the same period of Council's proposed SRV.