



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/CB8BBEA
[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 Clive Powell	IN22/51FBB409
[REDACTED]	IN22/5DEC3189
[REDACTED]	IN22/5DEC3189
[REDACTED]	IN22/5DEC3189
[REDACTED]	IN22/5DEC3189
Submissions	
Peter Robinson IN22/6045BBBF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 7 False claims made by OSOCI on Social Media
Clive Powell IN22/1B99073	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 8 Media Briefing sent to Council from OSOCI
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] IN22/38BED2CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 9 Concerns over the Special Rate Variation
OSOCI IN22/2C7577CC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 10 OSOCI Pamphlet handed out at TSC hosted Community Forum
[REDACTED] IN22/CB8BBEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 11 Rate Rise and Pensioner Rebate – sent to all levels of government
[REDACTED] IN22/11435D46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 12 Objection to proposed rates rise
[REDACTED] IN22/182DAF4F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 13 Objection to proposed rates rise
[REDACTED] IN22/6EF22542	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 14 Objection to proposed rates rise
[REDACTED] IN22/745C23D8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment 15 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

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 Independent	<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.

Council warning

COUNCIL

By CAOY BIDDLE

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click wall neighbouring the Imperial Hotel, in an alley off Faulkner Street, on the

Police commenced the New England police district has "commenced an investiga-

Joyce being dressed by mining magnate Gina Rinehart. "I think hopefully it starts a

protected money in politics. Photo: Laurie Bullock

Shannung Mr Marsi 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.

Council warning of administration as it considers rate hike

From P1

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Rates consultation begins

COUNCIL

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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

CB

By Cady Biddle

August 18 2022 - 5:00am

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 resident 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 CPI.

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

\$2.20



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.

SPRING

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 ANOTHER
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 TO WIN
\$10,000



**YOUR
 NEW
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 INSIDE TODAY

Labor

MEDIA RELEASE

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 dissembling 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

OPINION

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 \$605 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 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 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 Petrie 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 Petrie, 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 "junkets" 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?
Glive Powell, OSOCI President

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



A3

29 AUGUST 2022

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	
11 Residential Tenterfield	26200 @ 0.59957	First Due	\$762.72
Base Amount		31/08/2022	
Rates Category		Second Due	\$762.79
		30/11/2022	
Service Charges		Third Due	\$762.79
301 Residential Water Service Availability	\$618.00	28/02/2023	
314 Water Infrastructure Charge	\$77.00	Fourth Due	\$762.79
315 Residential Sewerage Availability	\$1,320.00	31/05/2023	
326 Waste Collection - Domestic 240L Bin	\$575.00	TOTAL DUE	
327 Waste Management Facility Charge	\$288.50		\$3,051.09
340 Stormwater Management Charge - Res	\$25.00		
350 Waste Recycling Collection - Res	\$86.50		
Pension Rebate	-\$425.00		
NET AMOUNT DUE	\$3,051.09		

Please Note:
Increase applies to the total of Rates Category and Base Rate.

message: The proposed rate rise will only apply to the first two lines of your Rates notice

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 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 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 for Councils across NSW and introduced an Additional Special Variation (ASV) process to bring the rate peg for 2022-2023 financial year back up to 2.5%. However, Council

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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l that Councils use to adjust their fixed
ome when reducing operating expenses
me does not balance the budget.

eady, Armidale Regional Council has
nounced they intend to apply for a 50% rate
e; Snowy Monaro Regional Council for a
0% rate rise and Port Stephens Council for
to 40% rate rise.

HOW ARE MY RATES CALCULATED?

ites are calculated according to the property
id value, determined by the NSW Valuer
eneral.

Rates are charged to property owners and
will vary according to:

- 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 a
determined by the Independent Pricing and
Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). Each year
IPART determines a percentage we ca
increase rates to meet increasing costs – th
year it is 0.07%.

Currently, Tenterfield Shire has the lowe
average rates across our region, chargin
less than Uralla, Glen Innes, Gwydir an
Kyogle (apart from the average ordina
business rate for which Uralla is lowest).

We have managed this low rate base f
some time. Nevertheless, forecasting tells u
this will no longer be sustainable and if v
maintain rates at current levels our servic
levels will need to reduce.

After providing this information to th
community, if Council elects to move forwa
with a variation to the current rates, a form
application to IPART will be required.

WHAT WILL THE INCREASED RATE INCOME BE USED FOR?

Council is facing a forecasted financ
shortfall of more than \$47 million over
years. That means our costs are rising fast
than our income, and the gap between c
income and the funds needed to upke
infrastructure assets and services to a lev
expected by the community and required
legislation is growing.

The key purpose for Council applying for
special rate variation (SRV) is to mainta
financial sustainability by eliminating th
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, Cou
will be required to report in its Ann
Financial Statement to the Office of Lo
Government each year on the Special R
Variation expenditure.

Council will be required to report t
increased rate revenue advised in
application and where it has been spent. T
community will also be able to access t
Council's Quarterly Budget Review Repo
and Long-Term Financial Plan which refle
Council's Financial Position and the fundi
allocations in accordance with the Spec
Rate Variation.

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 35% 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), an 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 for 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



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 Mingoola 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





COMMUNITY FORUM PROPOSED RATE RISE


SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2022

10.30am - 12.30pm

URBENVILLE COMMUNITY HALL

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).

Contact:

 (02) 6736 6000

 www.tenterfield.nsw.gov.au

 www.facebook.com/TenterfieldShireCouncil





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

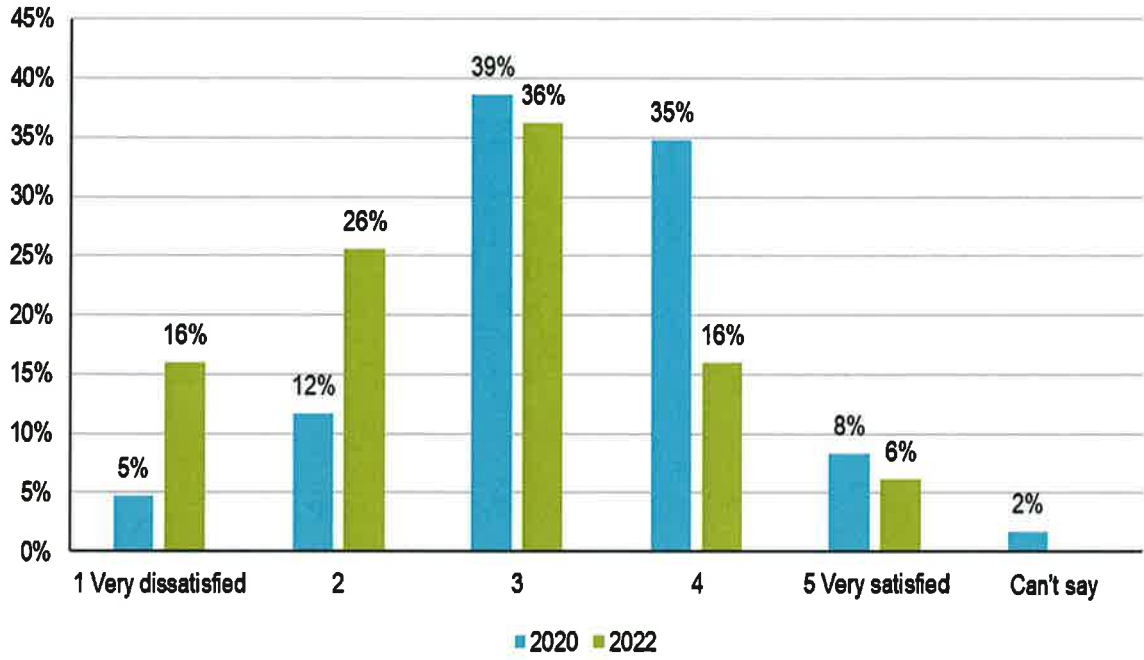
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Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

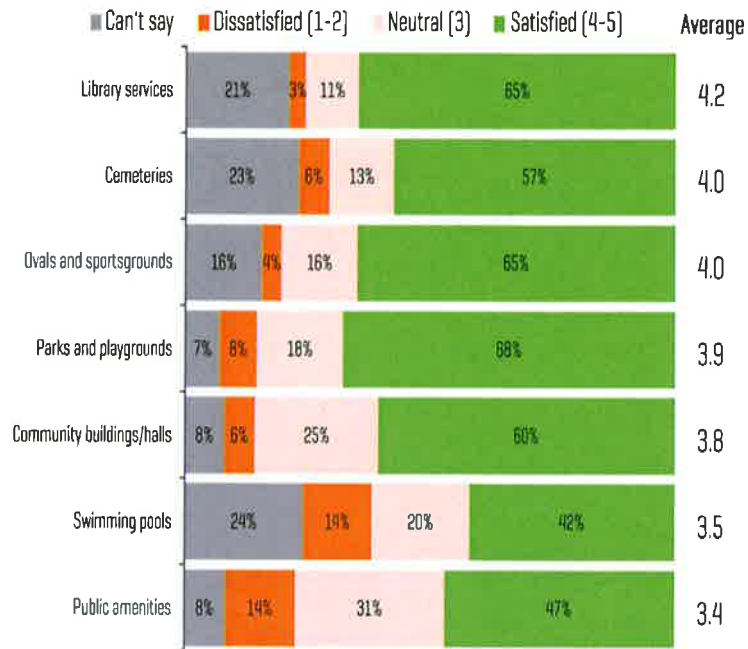
Overall Satisfaction



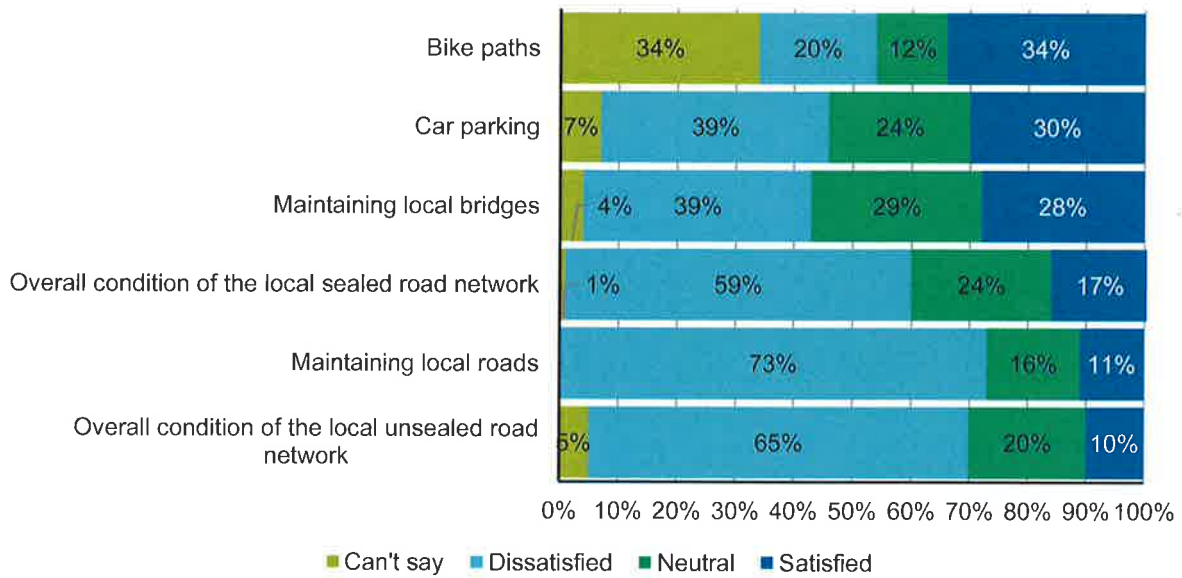
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Community Services

2020



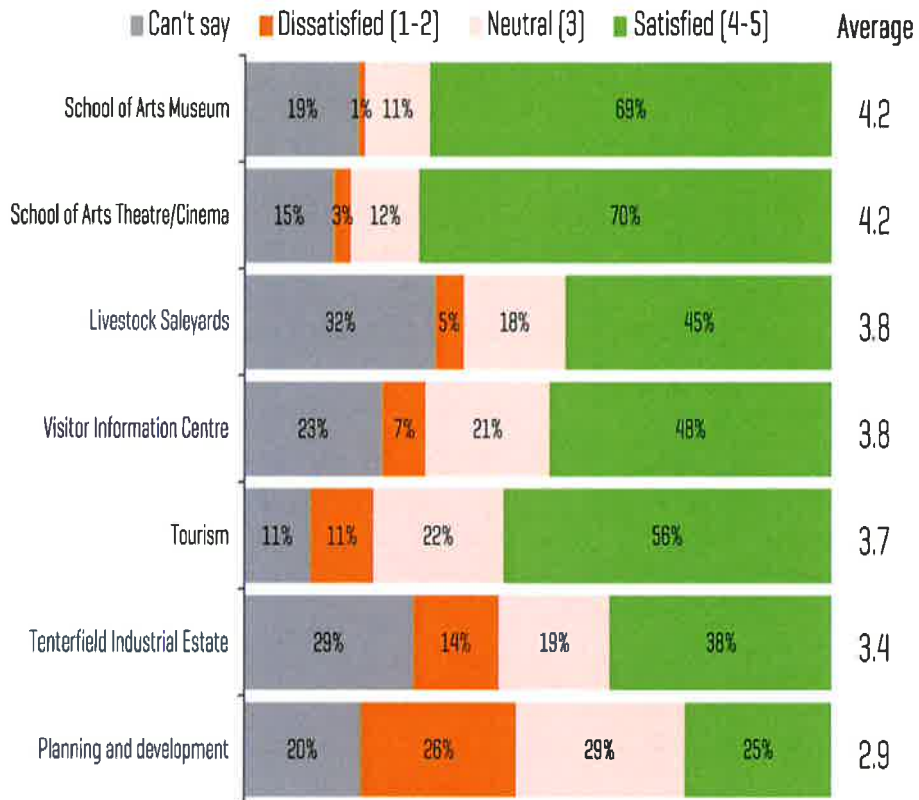
2022



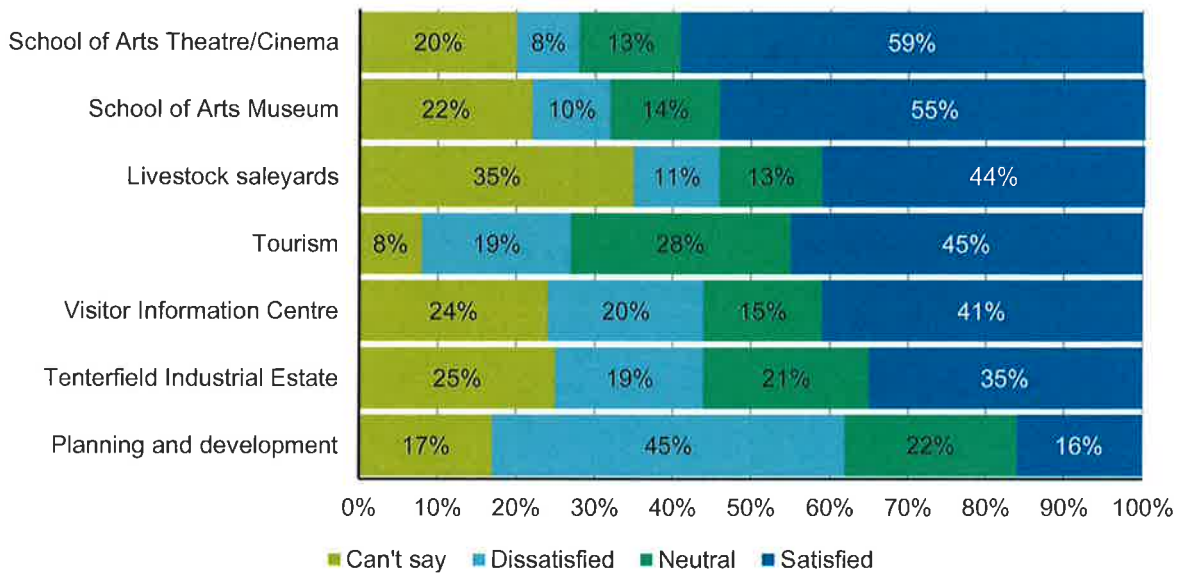
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Economy Services

2020



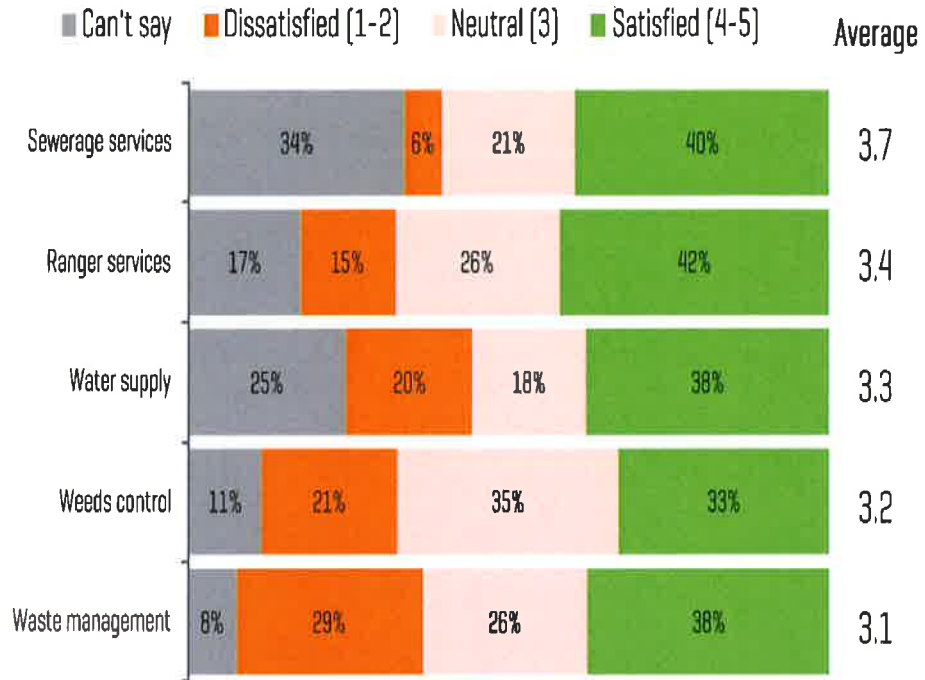
2022



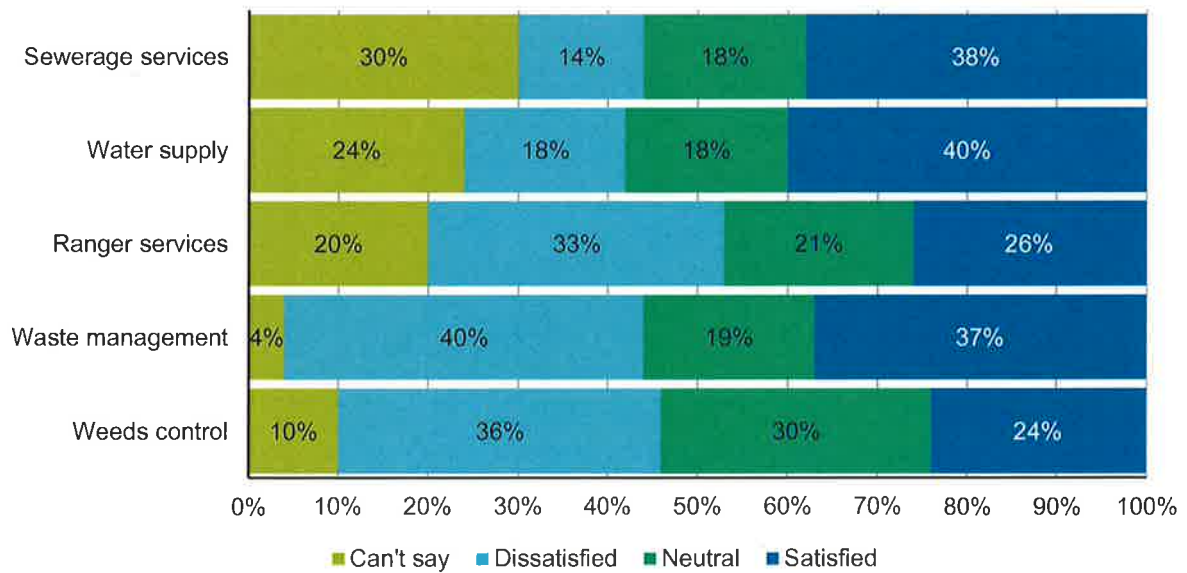
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Environmental Services

2020



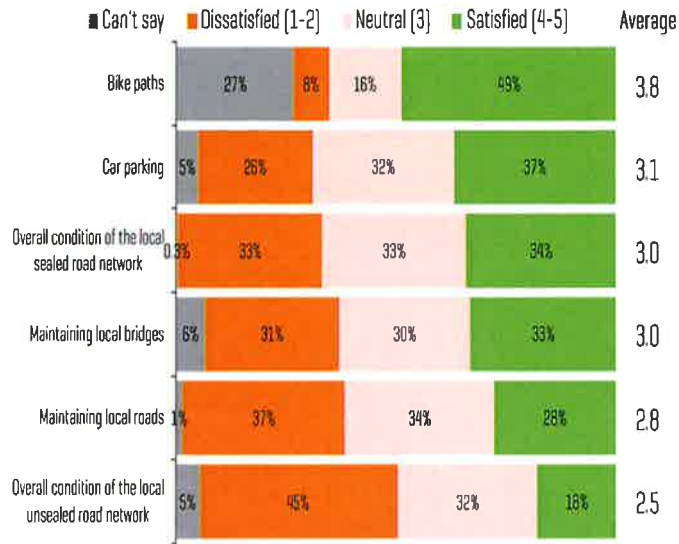
2022



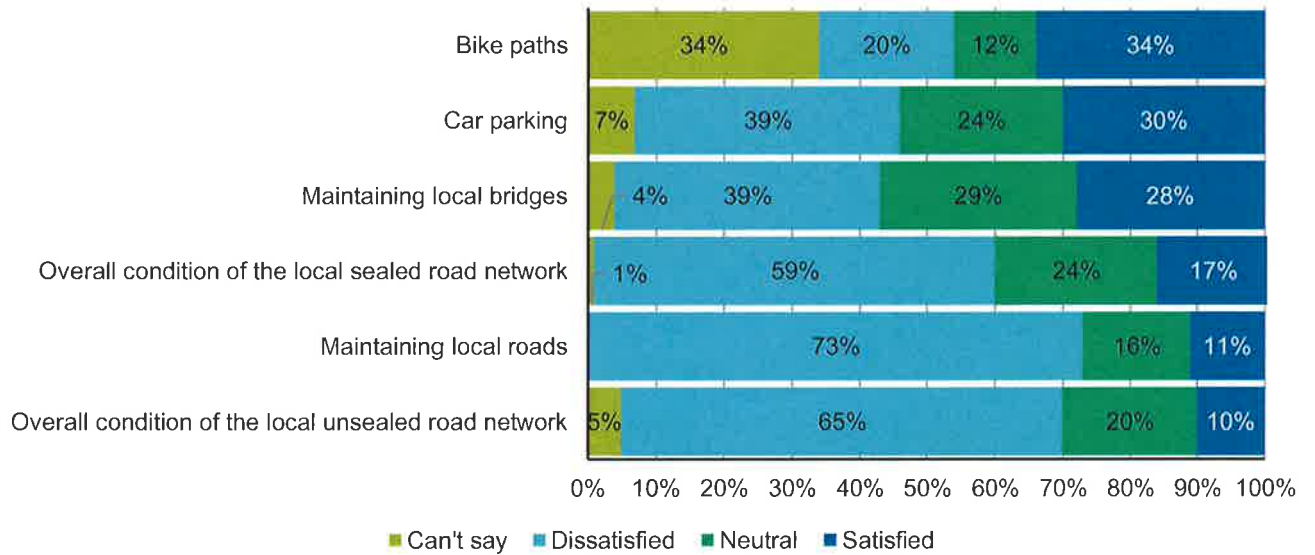
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Transport Services

2020



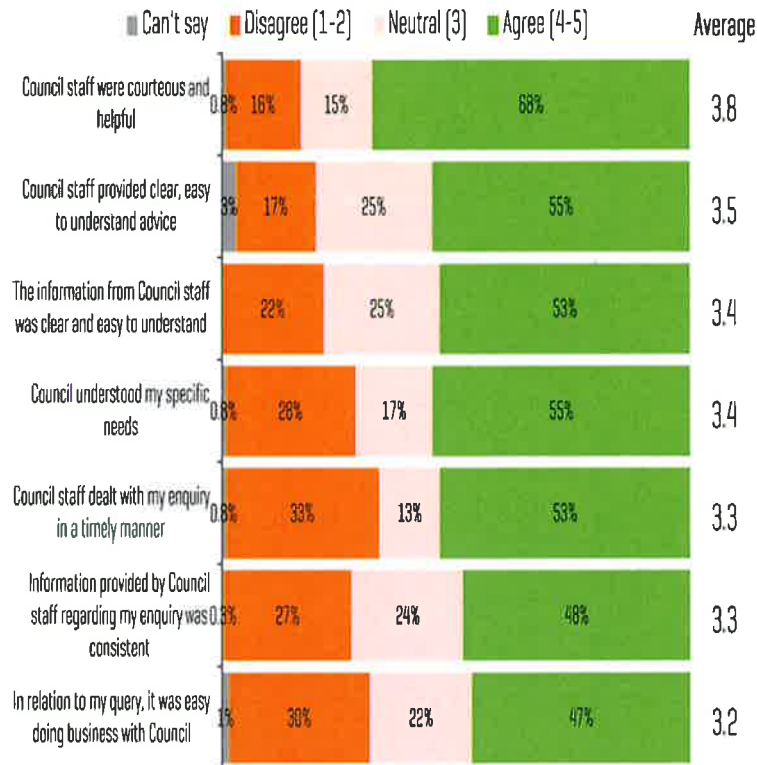
2022



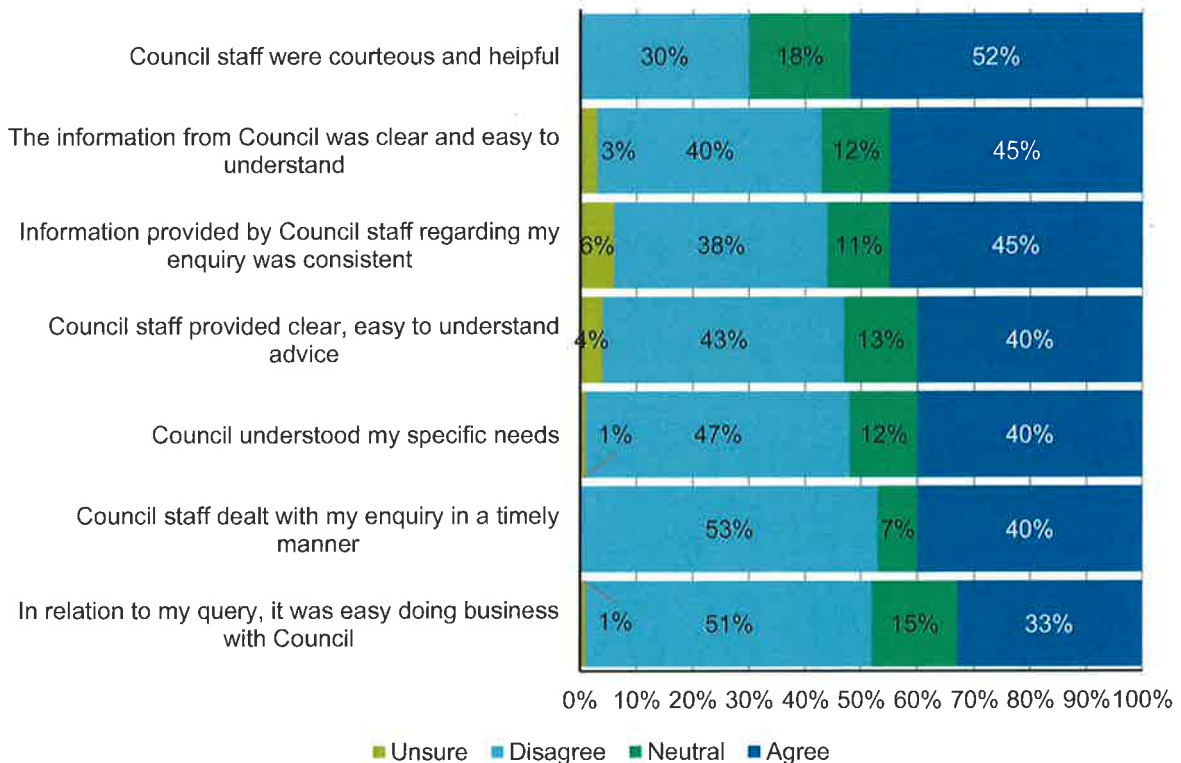
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Customer Perceptions of Customer Service

2020



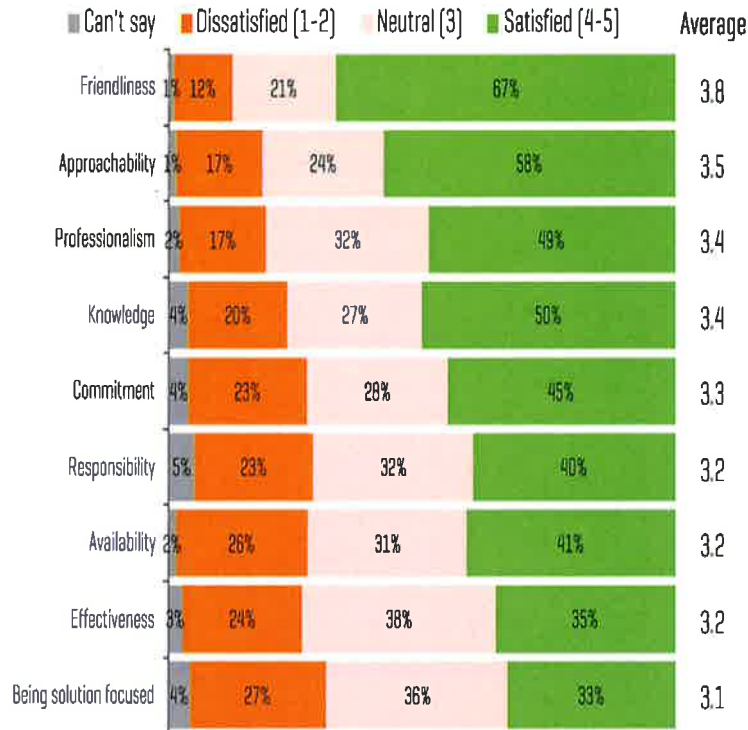
2022



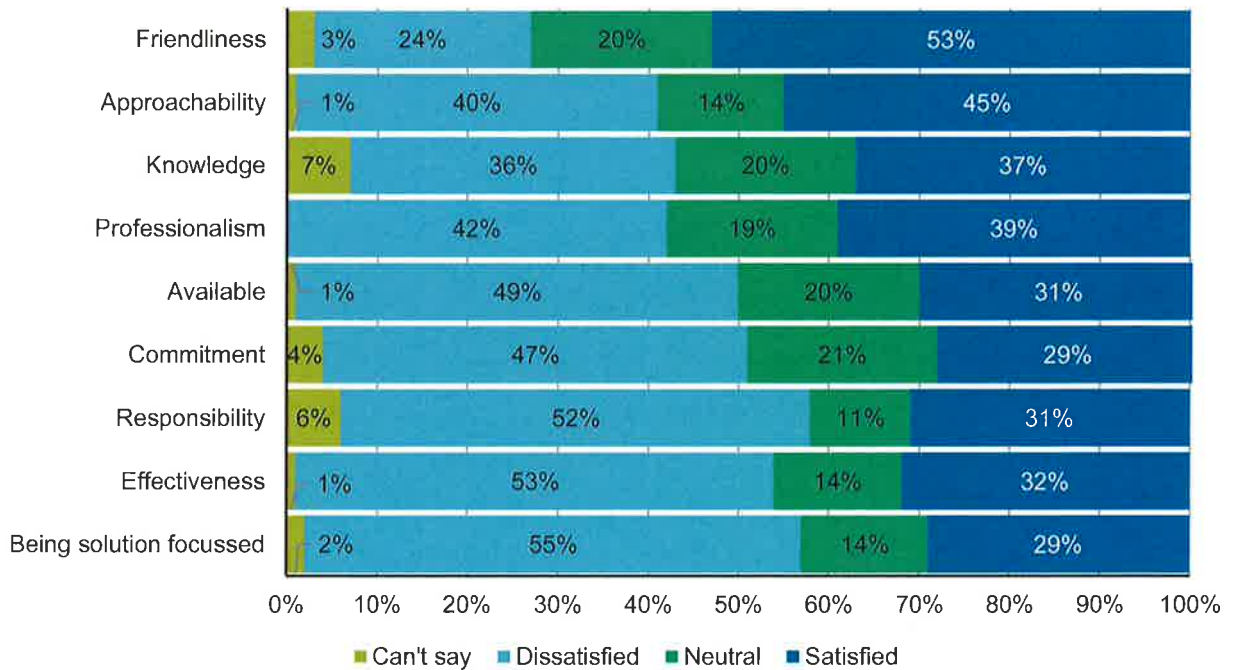
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Customer Perceptions of Council Staff

2020



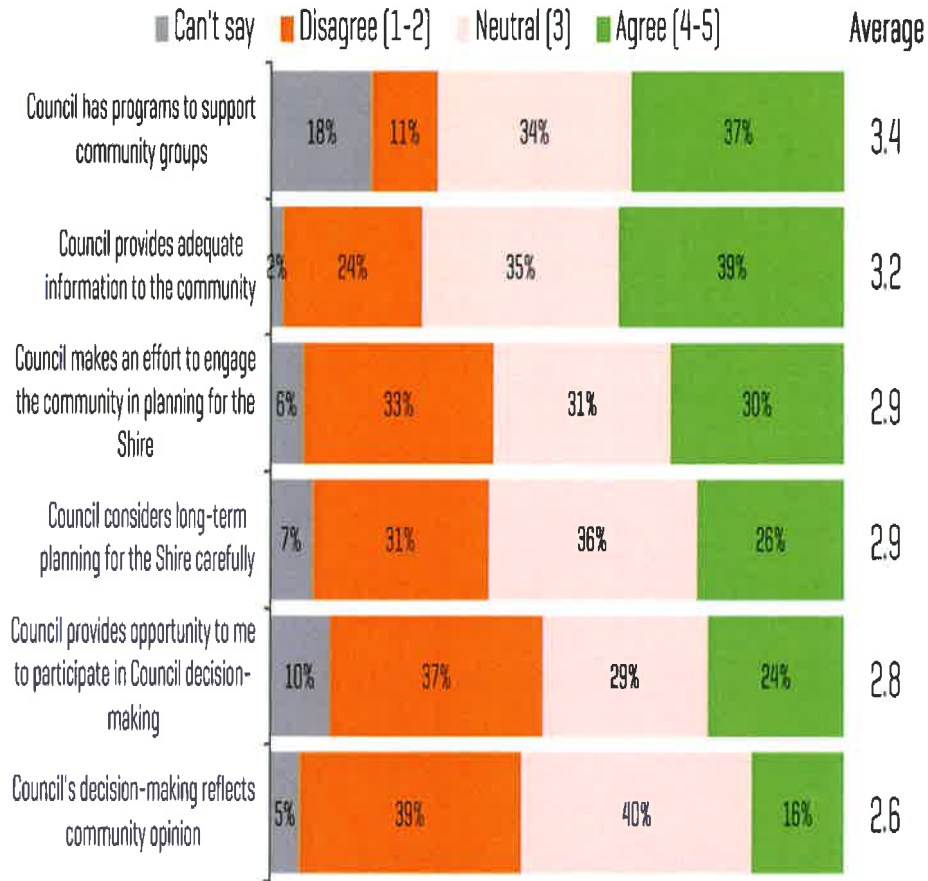
2022



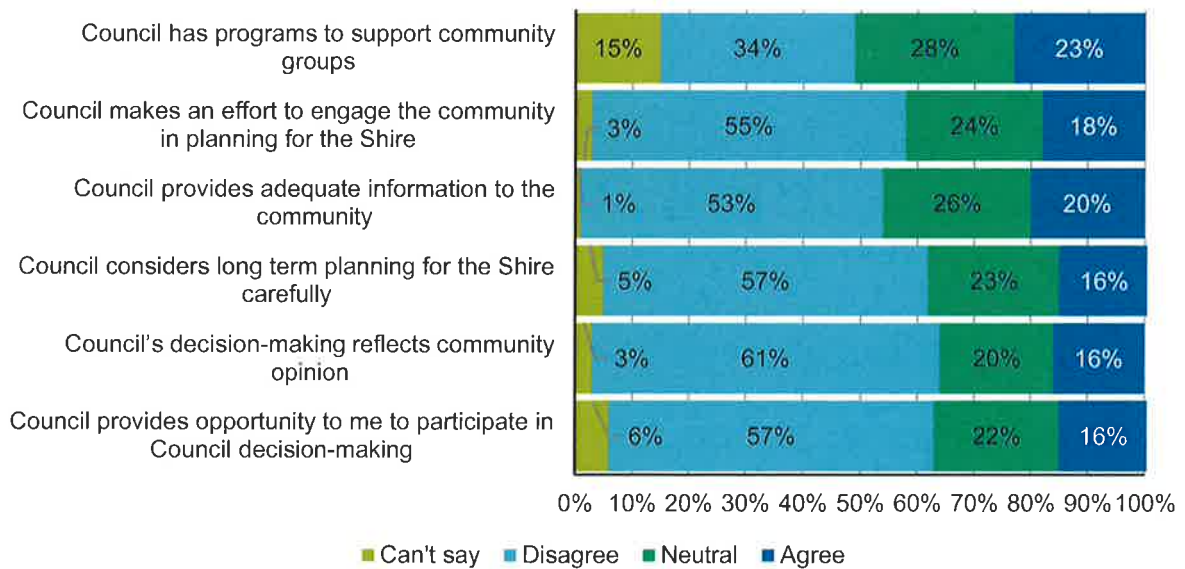
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Perceptions of Community Engagement

2020

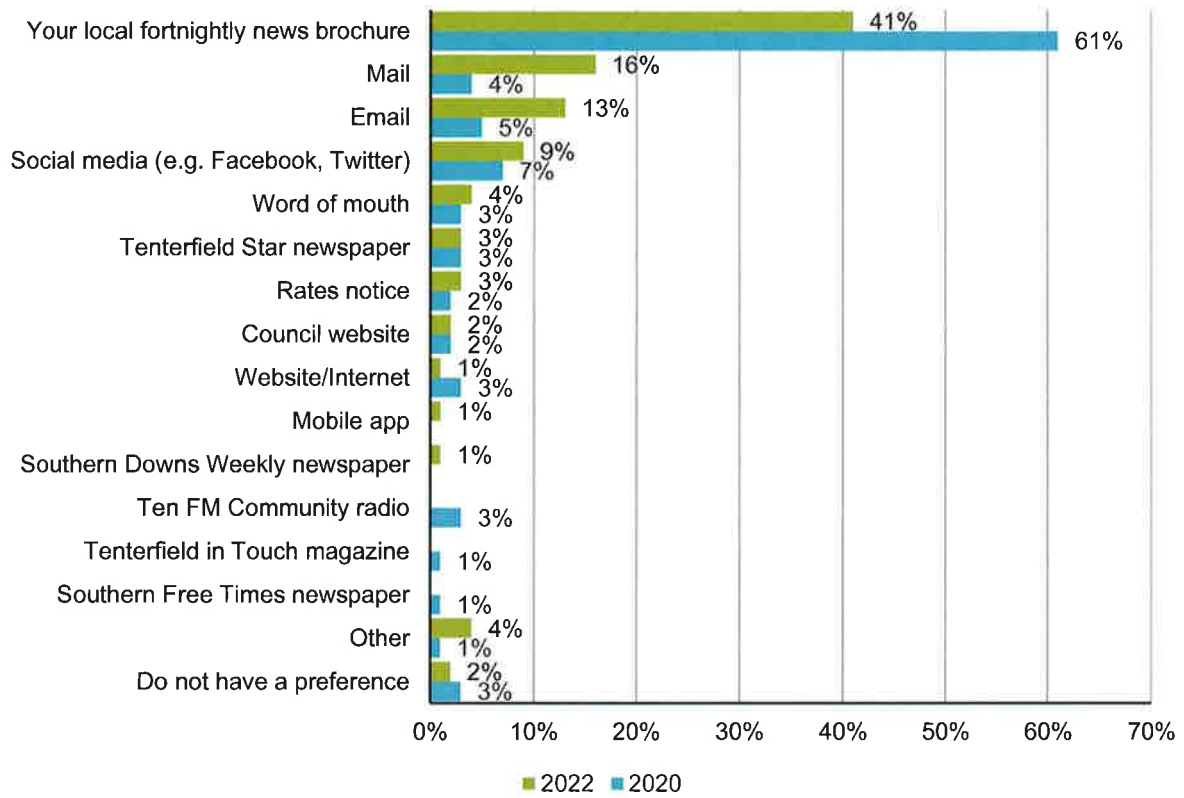


2022



Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

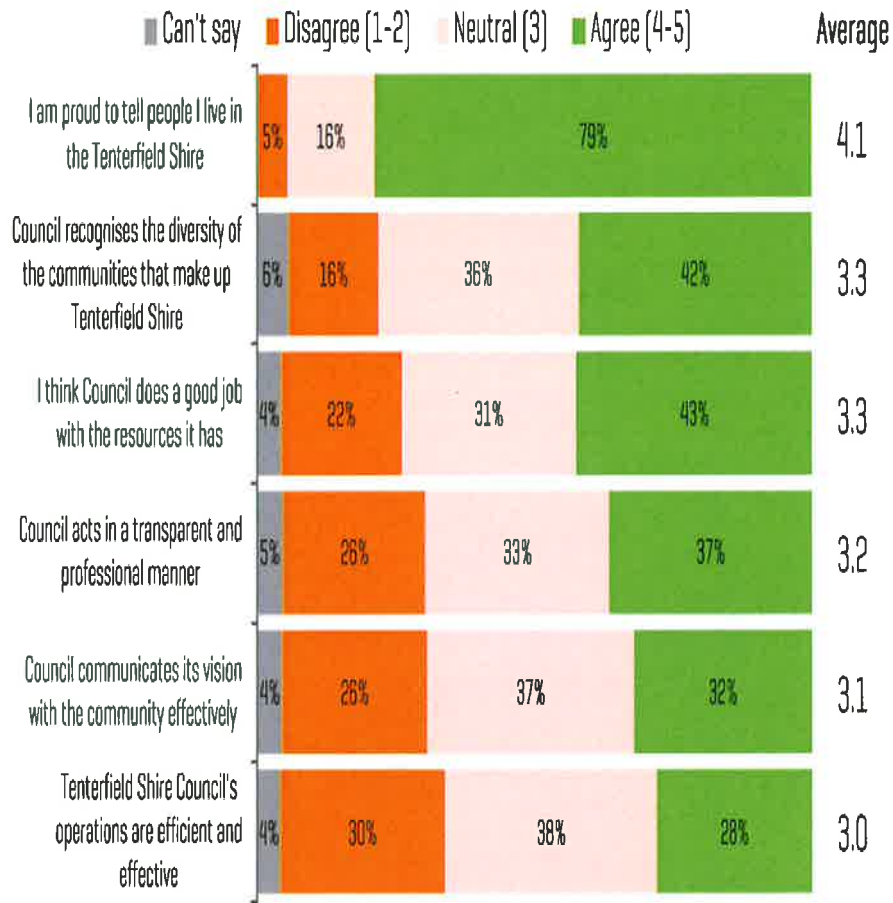
Preferred Source for Receiving Council Information



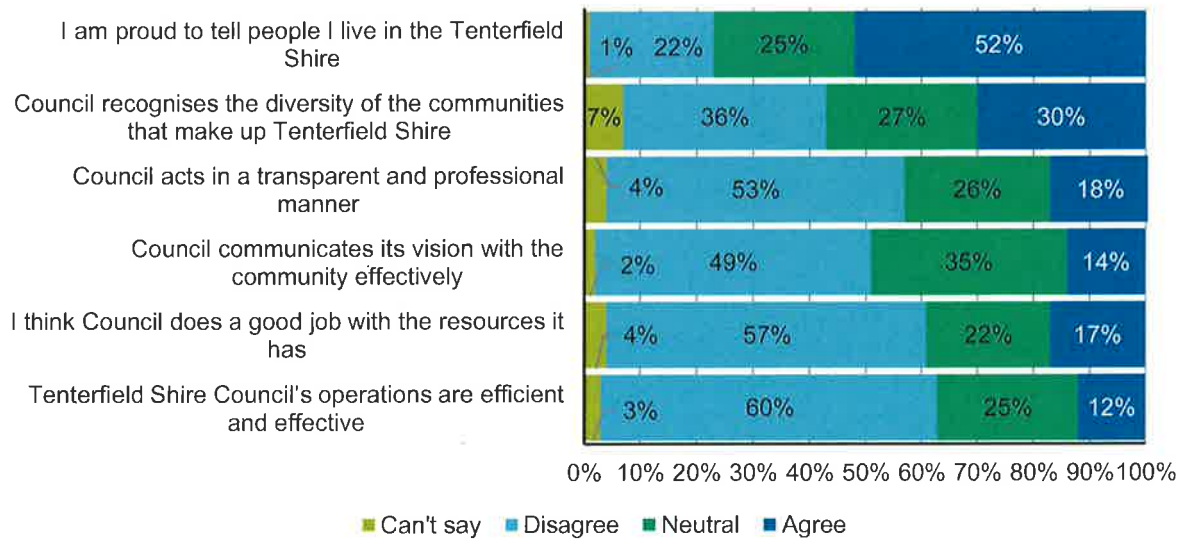
Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Perceptions of Council Leadership

2020

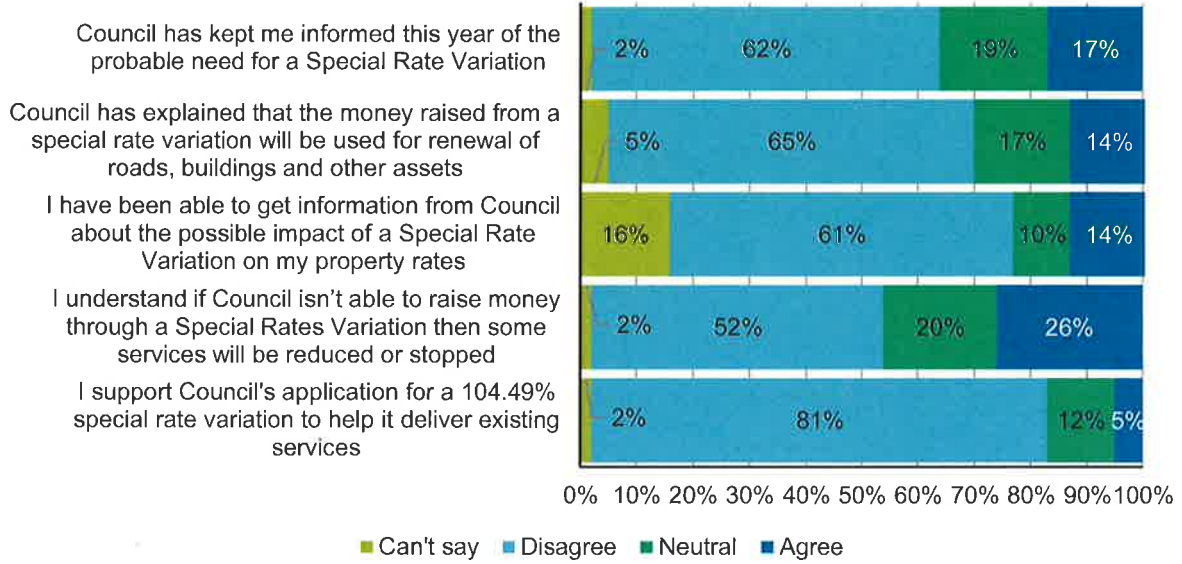


2022



Customer Satisfaction Surveys Comparison 2020 - 2022

Special Rates Variation





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 2022/2023	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 Business	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	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	0.02%	\$ 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

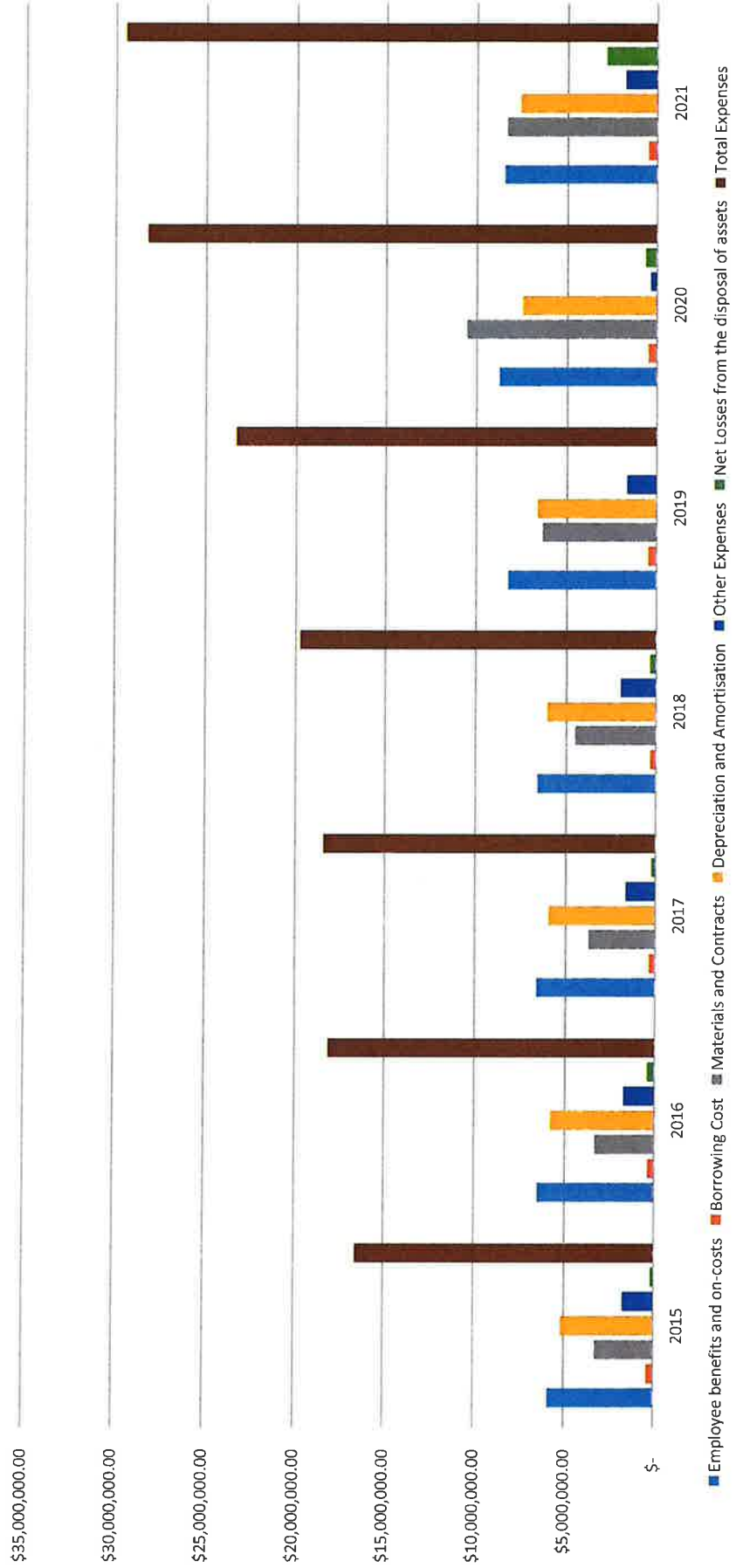
Year	Rate Peg	SRV	Total
2022/2023	0.7%		0.7%
2021/2022	2.0%		2.0%
2020/2021	2.6%		2.6%
2019/2020	2.7%		2.7%
2018/2019	2.3%		2.3%

Q3: Peter Robinson

How much have Council's operational expenses increased over the past 5 years?

Q3

Expenses From Continuing Operations All Funds

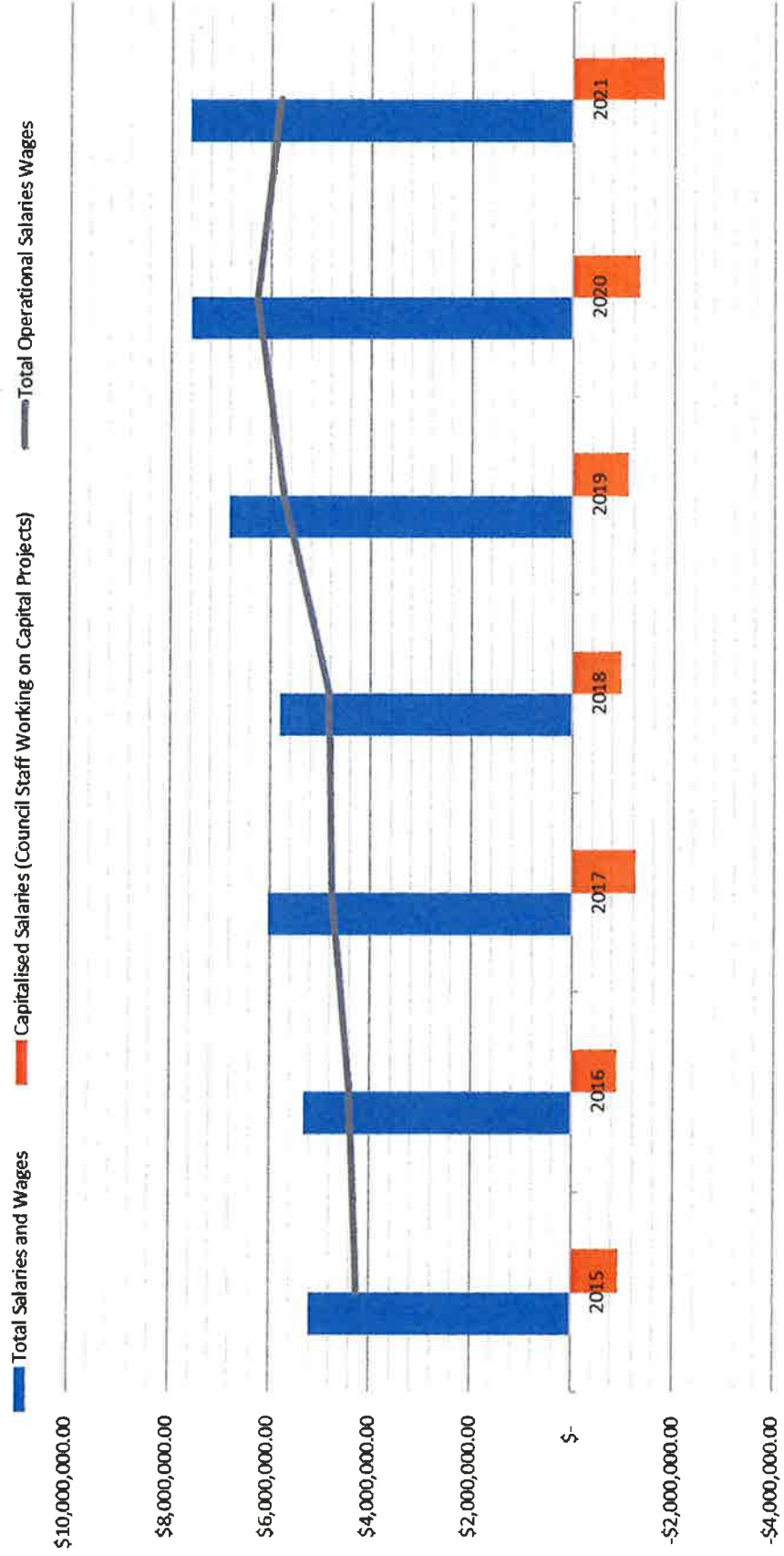


Q4: Peter Robinson

What has been Council's
total wages bill over the
past 5 years?

Q4

Salaries and Wages Only for Operational Purposes (All Funds)

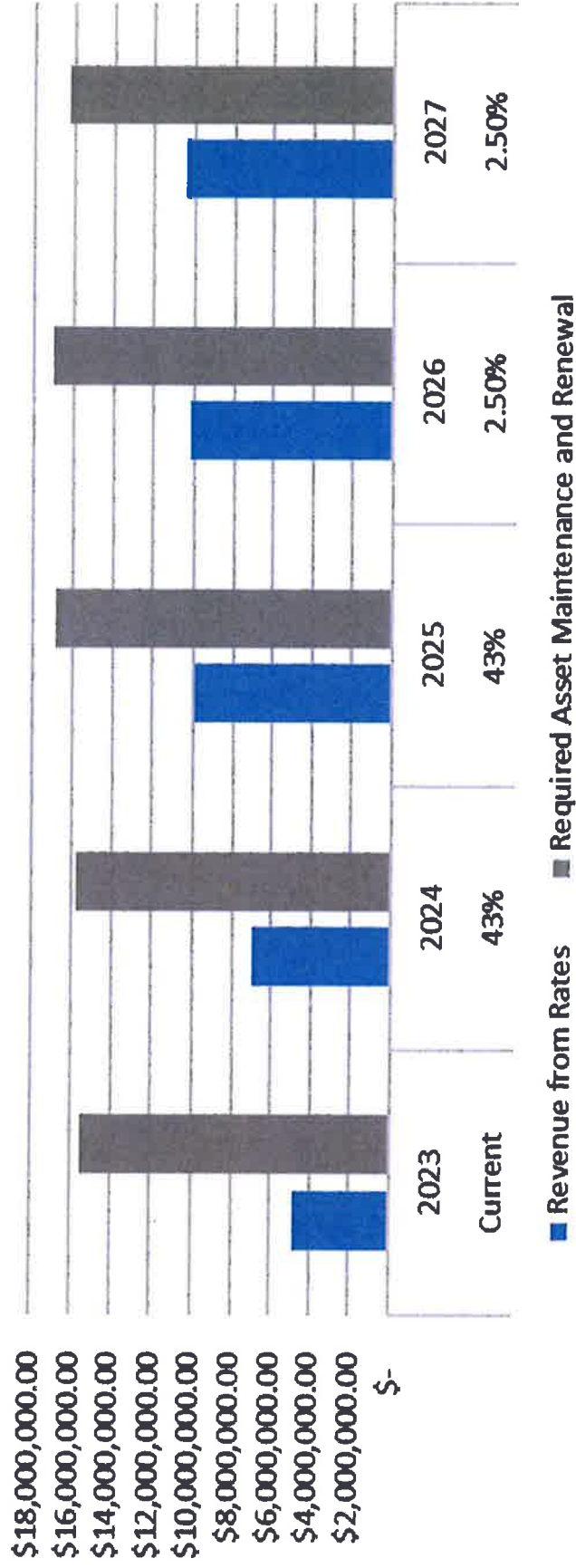


Q5: Peter Robinson

What unforeseen major
increases in expenses have
occurred recently?

Q5

Revenue from Rates Vs Assets Maintenance and Renewal (Excluding Water, Sewer, Waste and Stormwater)

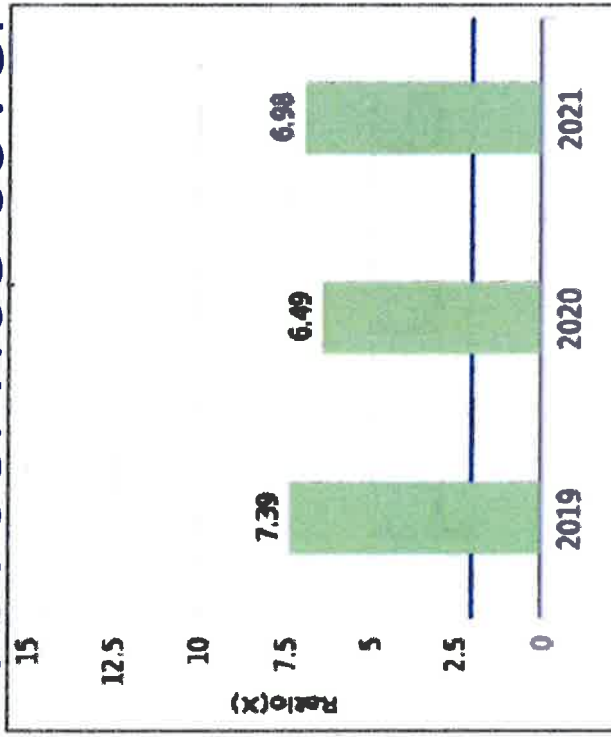


Q6: Peter Robinson

What are any realistic proposals to repay this debt and return to credit?

Q6

Debt service cover ratio



Benchmark: — > 2.00x

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

Purpose of debt service cover ratio

This ratio measures the availability of operating cash to service debt including interest, principal and lease payments

Commentary on 2020/21 result

2020/21 ratio 6.98x

This ratio continues to be above the benchmark.

Ratio achieves benchmark

Ratio is outside benchmark

Q7: Anonymous

Is the rate rise being
applied for only temporary
rise?

Q8: Anonymous

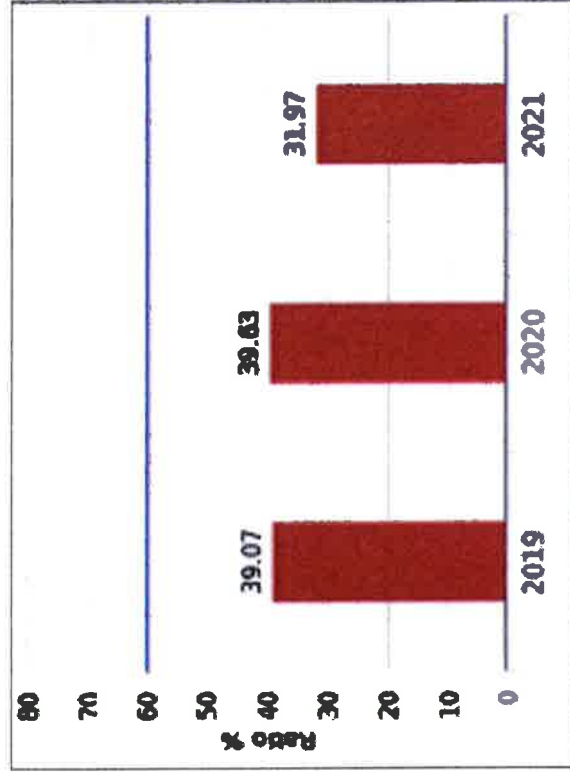
Is the statement on the OSOCI pamphlet 104.49% rate rise is permanent or false?

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



Benchmark: — > 60.00%

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

Purpose of own source operating revenue ratio

This ratio measures fiscal flexibility. It is the degree of reliance on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions.

Commentary on 2020/21 result

2020/21 ratio 31.97%

The deterioration in this ratio is an indicator that a Special Rate Variation is required to improve Council's income stream from non-grant funded sources.

Ratio achieves benchmark

Ratio is outside benchmark

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.

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



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 <i>less road length and less public open space per capita than avg.</i>)	\$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

Daryl,

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

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 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.

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,



PO Box 
TENTERFIELD NSW 2372

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.

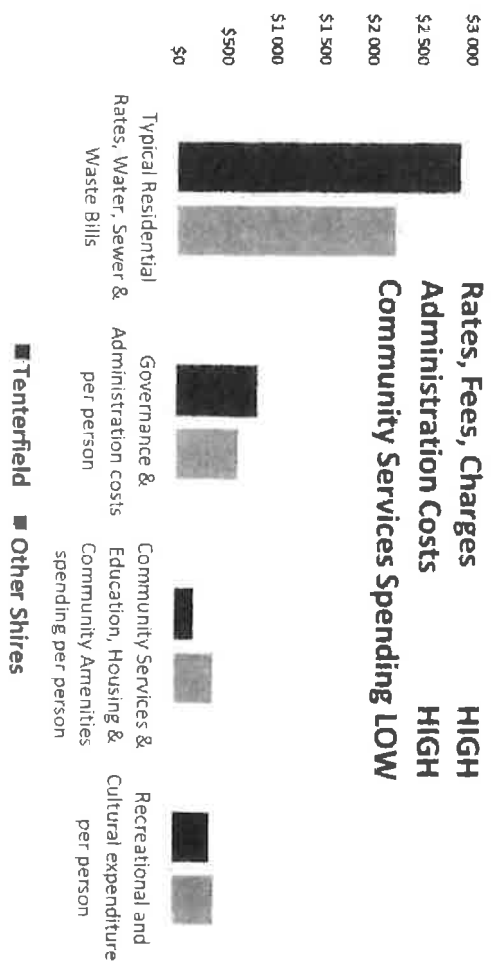
Meanwhile, median personal income in Tenterfield was \$25,480 in 2021 – many people live below the poverty line.

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

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
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:

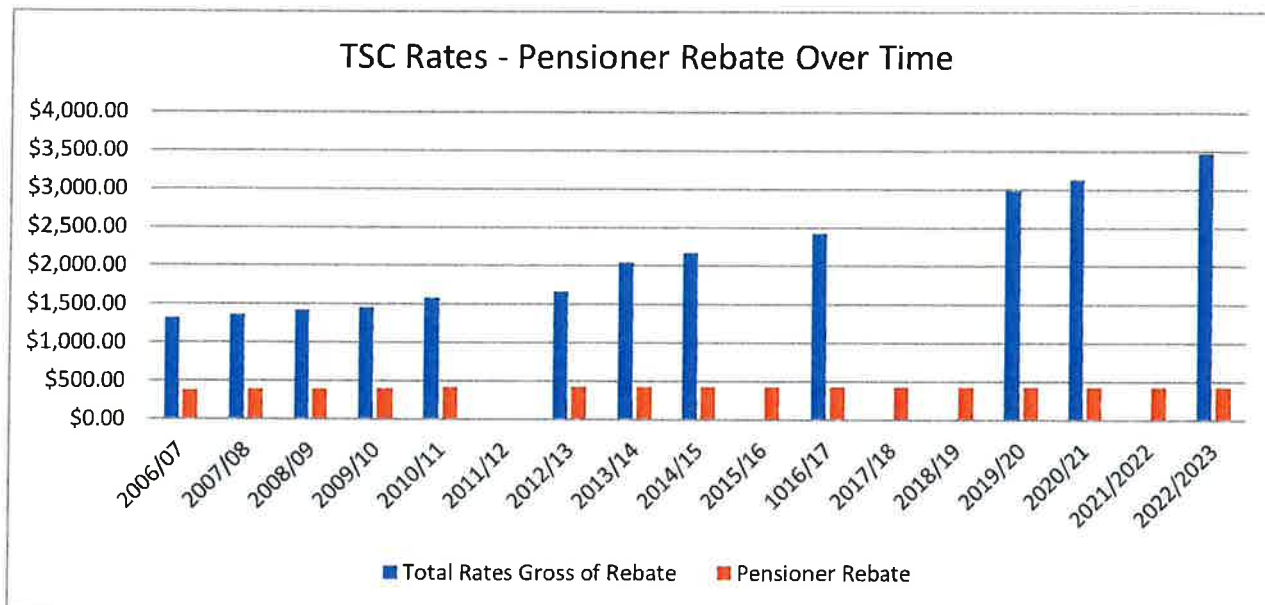
- NSW Premier, Dominic Perrotet
- NSW Leader of the Opposition, Chris Minns

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

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

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.

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.

[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

Subject: [REDACTED]
Re: Murray's Cap Rise
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 ~~_____~~
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,

~~_____~~



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]

ATTACHMENT 'B' 1

Print Selector

I050PN - 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

Ptr: Y AGE

Act: Rgn: STANTHORPE

(STN) DOB [REDACTED] Enq: PTR

Bst: AGE/CUR CRF_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:

NOTE PER 12mths

Equals **MAX PAYMENT:** \$19354.40

Provisional Rate: \$19354.40

LESS Foreign Pen DD:

** Direct deduction*

LESS INCOME Reduct.Amt:

NOTIONAL RATE: \$19354.40

LESS Compensation DD:

Less NZ Agreement DD: \$4670.55

LESS AEIS/NEIS as DD:

ANNUAL PAYABLE RATE: \$14683.85

INCOME REDUCED RATE: \$19354.40 Savings Prov exist see PSVI: NO

DAILY RATE: \$40.3401

** [REDACTED]*

0040 OVR 002/007



CLK1LETTERG319735420

received 6-7-22 ✓

1

Reference: [REDACTED]

ATTACHMENTS
'C' 1+2



[REDACTED]
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	Centrepay Deductions	\$10.00	24 Jun 2022

Continued on the back

Contact information

If you have any questions about this letter please ring:



13 300 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



CLK1LETTERG319941011

2

Reference **280 714 965L**



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:

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– 1.30pm

servicesaustralia.gov.au

E-MAILED
25/9/22 JBM
All Councillors



TENTERFIELD TOTAL CARE

your life, your way

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.

[REDACTED]

Date Tue Aug 30 04:32:02 PM AEST 2022
To " council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au"
<council@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>;
cc Bronwyn Petrie <b.petrie@tenterfield.nsw.gov.au>;
bcc
Subject 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]

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]

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]

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?**

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 signature block]

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) – decrease 192

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
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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	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	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

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
LOANS TOTAL			\$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	TOTAL INCL. WATER			
								OPERATING GRANTS UNTIED 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	30140	6908		3263	8614	42017	17826	34793	32480	44089	

NOTES

**** DATA NOT AVAILABLE ON WEBSITE YET

DATA FROM MEETING PAPERS JUNE	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
IN \$MIL						
WATER	\$814	\$575	****	***	****	****
SEWER	\$5,794	\$4,830	****	****	****	****
WASTE	\$7,255	\$3,091	****	****	****	****
STORMWATER	\$1,014	\$1,030	****	****	****	****
FROM REPORTS	****	\$9,029	\$6,394	\$7,925	1,150	\$1,248
INVESTMENTS		\$9,029	\$8,366	\$10,333		
LOAN REPAYMENTS	\$940	\$915	\$770			

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

Attachment 1

SCANNED

TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL		
7 NOV 2019		
ICR20198870		
	At. Fees	Rate
LI		
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

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]