

Rate rise will cover projects

RATES will increase by 12.5% for 2014/15 if Richmond Valley Council obtains approval for a permanent special rate variation.

At last month's council meeting, councillors voted unanimously to seek approval from the community and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for a permanent special rate variation.

The variation would be a 10% increase above the

rate cap (currently 2.5%) for the 2014/15 financial year, followed by four successive annual variations of 3% above the cap.

The increase would not apply to water, sewerage or garbage rates, only general rates, according to a letter circulated to residents by the council.

Mayor Ernie Bennett said the rate increases were necessary to deliver every project in the community strategic plan at a

cost of \$13 million.

"If we don't make ourselves viable we could be open to amalgamation," he said.

"Nobody wants to pay more but you can't have things unless you pay for them."

Mr Bennett said the council could increase the rates and deliver all the projects in the plan or leave them as they were and let the community miss out.