

Thursday 25 August 2022

Consultation commences for proposed 50% increase to land rates

Armidale Regional Council (ARC) is seeking community input on a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Rate Variation (SRV) of around 50% over three years, which would take effect from 2023-24.

The new Council led by mayor Sam Coupland is determined to drive a jobs and growth strategy to change the fortunes of our region and get on top of the backlog in the maintenance of important community infrastructure.

In three years, the SRV would generate an additional \$10.1M per year over and above the \$1.5M per year that council would gain via the already allowable annual increase. The additional \$10.1M per year income from the SRV in 2026 will enable council to bridge the infrastructure renewal funding gap of an average of \$6.9M per year and invest an additional \$3.2M p.a. in operational service delivery.

This is in contrast to \$2M p.a. in cuts under the 'managed decline' scenario if Council does not pursue an increase to land rates.

Armidale Mayor Sam Coupland said the two options for ARC are clear; an SRV as part of the solution to restore the real cost of maintaining assets and providing services to grow and be sustainable or a managed decline where the state of our assets and infrastructure continue to worsen due to an inability to be able to afford to maintain them.

"Obviously, service cuts will have significant impacts on the community, and this is not Council's preferred option," said Mayor Coupland.

"We want people to understand the issues and to participate in these forums to express their views knowing the full picture. The community engagement process will inform Council in considering whether to proceed with an application for a Special Rate Variation," said Mayor Coupland

Residents and ratepayers are invited to read about these issues and have their say in a number of different ways and over the next six weeks:

Enquiries: Contact Armidale Regional Council's Media, Communications & Engagement team
media@armidale.nsw.gov.au or 0448 920309

Understand - download and read the information pack on the Your Say website at yoursay.armidale.nsw.gov.au or visit either the Armidale or Guyra Library or the Armidale Council building to view the information display

Respond - take the survey on the Your Say website to express your views

Attend - come to a public meeting:

13 September - Armidale Town Hall, 6pm to 8.30 pm

14 September - Guyra Bowling Club, 6pm to 8.30pm

15 September - Sauer Memorial Hall Wollomombi - 6pm to 8.30pm

Register – on the Your Say website for an online meeting on 21 September at either 10am or 6pm

Comment - Make your comments on the website discussion forum

Write - send your submission to Council by Friday 30th September

At the conclusion of the current period of community engagement Council will consider whether to proceed with an application for a Special Rate Variation. This will likely take place at the Council meeting scheduled for November 2022. Council will then need to notify IPART of its intent to lodge a Special Rate Variation application in February 2023.

“No matter what Council does, an SRV is required to restore the real cost of maintaining assets and providing services to grow and be sustainable. We want to ensure that we can deliver on our vision to grow our region into the future,” said mayor Coupland.

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