

MAYORAL MINUTE

Mayor Tracy Norman

4. COUNCIL IMPROVEMENT PLAN - SPECIAL RATE VARIATION EF16/22

Precis:

Council improvement plan and consideration of a special rate variation.

Councillors are aware of the current funding shortfall in council's budget and the infrastructure backlog talked about at length during the merger proposal period. We are all like minded in wanting to see Dungog Shire Council prosper and improve the current situation.

Councillors are also aware of the current structural incapacity of some timber bridges following a briefing on council's timber bridge infrastructure. Council's Asset Management Plans also highlight the deficiencies in current available expenditure and the required expenditure to maintain the assets.

Council's annual reports over the last few years have also highlighted the infrastructure backlog and the funding needed to bring councils roads network up to a satisfactory standard. Accordingly it is considered necessary to investigate a special rate variation as an avenue to assist Council move forward.

The work involved in applying for a special rate variation is significant, the level of community consultation required is again significant and the dialogue with the community needs to be around where the funding priorities lie, what services do they want, what service level do they expect and are they prepared to pay for it.

As noted above any special rate variation requires extensive community engagement which Council will need to demonstrate to IPART if an application for a special rate variation is made.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

As noted in the body of the report Council has produced a deficit budget for a number of years and the infrastructure backlog highlights a significant shortfall in current funding to that required to bring councils assets up to a satisfactory level.

Consultative

The rate variation process requires Council to demonstrate the extent of engagement with the community when finalising the submission to IPART.

Senior staff have been communicating with IPART to discuss the process and to enable staff to guide Councillors as regards the process as it will be the Councillors that will have to embrace the process and be able to engage with the community.

Minute No. 37550

A MOTION was moved by Cr Norman that Council investigate a special rate variation to address council's infrastructure backlog with the view to pursue a special rate variation for the 2018/2019 financial year.

On being put the motion was carried.