

Date<>

Name <>

Address <>

Have your say

Community Survey- Proposed Rate Variation

Council is writing to you as a ratepayer who holds property within the Gwydir Shire.

The NSW State Government is reviewing the operations of every Council in NSW. In order for Gwydir Shire Council to meet the various benchmarks developed by the NSW State Government to be considered Fit for the Future, the Council will need to reduce its expenditure and raise its rates above the allowable rate pegging limit.

The Council is considering several options in order to submit one to the NSW Government's Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), the body that approves any increase greater than the allowable rate pegging limit allocated each year.

The option submitted is inclusive of the allowable rate pegging limit and will be a permanent on-going adjustment to the Council's rate base.

The Council resolved at its November Council Meeting to advise IPART that Gwydir Shire Council will be seeking an increase in its 2015/16 rates and that the preferred increase finally submitted for approval in February 2015 is likely to be:

An annual rate increase of 15% per year (includes the allowable rate pegging increase) over the next two years (2015/16 and 2016/17) with an overall and permanent cumulative increase of 32.25%

Without any increase to the Council's overall rating income base beyond the rate pegging limit, there will need to be even greater reductions in the range and quality of the services provided to the Gwydir communities.

However, even with the proposed rating increases there will need to be an adjustment to the Council's operational effectiveness and this review is being undertaken at the moment, which will result in a reduction of the current service standards.

Further, Council has also resolved to take this opportunity to re-evaluate the breakup of the rating categories in an attempt to more equitably balance the rates received with the services provided. For example the services that are urban centric should increase the burden onto urban ratepayers (e.g. swimming pools, maintenance of urban parks and gardens) while the services that Council provides to enhance business outcomes (e.g. Tourism activities) should place a greater burden on the business ratepayer. At the moment the percentages received from the various rating categories are detailed in the table below along with the proposed breakup:

Current and Proposed	Farmland	Urban	Business
Current	84.6%	13.15%	2.25%
Proposed	80%	16%	4%

As a part of Council's community consultation process regarding both the development of a new 10 year Community Strategic Plan and the Fit for the Future requirements, Council is encouraging you to complete the attached survey.

This survey can also be accessed via the Council's website www.gwydirshire.com or Facebook page www.facebook.com/GwydirShireCouncil.

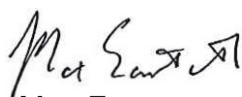
The survey's return date is **Friday 12th December 2014**.

Further, to enable you as a ratepayer to determine the effects of the various scenarios being considered upon your rates, a hotline has been setup for your convenience. Your rateable property assessment number(s) are provided below:

Assessment Number(s): <>

Hotline: Phone **(02) 6724 2044** (9.00am – 4.00pm Weekdays)

Yours sincerely


Max Eastcott
General Manager