

16 December, 2013

Our ref: A13/6149

Dear Ratepayer,

Earlier this year the Council, in consultation with the community, reviewed, updated and adopted the Armidale Community Strategic Plan [www.armidale.nsw.gov.au](http://www.armidale.nsw.gov.au) To achieve this Plan the Council has committed *“to provide community leadership and excellent local government services in a sustainable and efficient manner, to enhance our area’s social, economic and environmental qualities”*.

**Our Infrastructure** is a key element of the Strategic Plan. This element focuses on *“the physical assets under Council’s care and management, which are necessary for the effective functioning of the community. These assets include utility and transport services, as well as public buildings and recreation facilities”*.

The Council has many roles in the delivery of the Strategic Plan. However, as indicated in the Plan, *“the resourcing of the strategies remains a substantial challenge. Lack of real funding for Council outside of rates to provide for growth in public infrastructure remains a challenge”*. Due to our costs rising faster than our income, our public roads, buildings and other assets are deteriorating. To address this, the Council is considering a Special General Variation to rates (which does not include water, sewer and waste rates) to ensure effective services can be provided now and in the future.

Council is seeking the community’s feedback regarding a special variation to rates, commencing in the 2014/15 financial year. During December we will be undertaking the first phase of our consultation process to seek your views and input on the options put forward. We are encouraging the community to participate in an online survey on our website [www.armidale.nsw.gov.au](http://www.armidale.nsw.gov.au) and send written submissions by 10 January 2014. A letter will be sent out in mid to late January clearly detailing individual ratepayer’s financial impact of the preferred proposal. Meanwhile I refer you to the Fact Sheet ‘Special Rate Variation Proposal’ which provides more detailed background information on this proposal.

As Mayor I am committed to the wellbeing, health, safety and engagement of our community. The Vision that we all share will be enhanced through access to a wide range of quality recreational, social and cultural activities. Public roads, buildings and other assets play an important part in achieving the Vision.

Council has a duty of care to maintain stewardship over its public assets and pass on to future generations in a satisfactory condition.

If you require further information on the proposed Special Rate Variation please contact Armidale Dumaresq Council's General Manager Shane Burns on 6770 3822 or 6770 3600.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laurie Bishop', written in a cursive style.

Cr Laurie Bishop  
**Mayor**  
**Armidale Dumaresq Council**