

# *Community Assets*

## At the Core of Your Neighbourhood

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT  
A PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**



WILLOUGHBY CITY COUNCIL

[www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au)

## A Message from the Mayor



In 2012/2013, Willoughby City Council undertook community consultation about the condition of Willoughby's infrastructure and a proposed Special Rate Variation. The Special Rate Variation aimed to address a financial shortfall required to maintain and improve infrastructure in the City to the level recommended by the community. We received a large amount of feedback both in support of and in opposition to the Special Rate Variation.

Feedback highlighted the importance of identifying cost saving measures within Council operations from increased efficiencies.

It emphasised the importance of investigating additional income sources prior to any changes to rates. It was also suggested that Council should clearly identify where the money was going to be spent.

Over the last six months, Council has been conducting a service review of operations. This has identified potential recurrent annual cost savings together with some additional income sources. However, there is still a shortfall in funding required to bring the assets up to the level supported by the community. The longer the shortfall lasts, the quicker the assets will deteriorate and the costs of maintenance and renewal increase.

Council has resolved to seek community feedback on a proposed Infrastructure Levy over a seven year period. The proposed levy would be added to normal rates and would only be used for infrastructure work.

Four scenarios have been developed which identify alternative options for addressing this issue. Council is now seeking community feedback on these options.

We are asking you to have your say on the four scenarios, shown in Table 3, and to tell us which you prefer. We will use this feedback to determine if we will apply for an Infrastructure Levy, and if so, what levy amount we may seek from IPART.

This levy will set Willoughby up for a better future and allow us to continue to offer the wide range of community services we now have. The action we take now will shape the City of Willoughby for the future. Your contribution is very important and I urge you to participate in this discussion. I look forward to receiving your feedback.

**Cr Gail Giles-Gidney**  
*Mayor, Willoughby City Council*

## Community Infrastructure

Infrastructure is all of the assets across Willoughby such as parks, buildings, footpaths, roads, stormwater infrastructure, bushland, sportsgrounds and playgrounds. In Willoughby these assets have a combined replacement value of more than \$760M. Many of these assets are due for renewal, and the maintenance costs are increasing. Council's Asset Management Plans contain data suggesting that there is currently an average annual renewal backlog of \$5.4M.

## Funding Challenge

Council's Long Term Financial Plan has identified a gap between current projected funding for asset maintenance and renewal and what is required to maintain the facilities to a level determined acceptable by the community. Council is proposing to apply for an Infrastructure Levy to address this funding shortfall. This is a process by which we apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a seven year levy on rates.

The Infrastructure Levy is being considered only after sources of income and cost-saving measures have been examined. This has included undertaking a service review across Council operations to identify improved business operations. Willoughby Council has also developed new business models for some operations to generate income to cover more of the annual costs. Savings and additional income of \$1.8M - \$2.7M has been identified as described in Table 2.

## Community Consultation – what you've told us so far

Over the past 24 months Willoughby Council has undertaken community consultation on our assets and infrastructure. We began by seeking feedback on the community's expectations on the standard of this infrastructure – do our footpaths and roads need more maintenance, do we have enough parks and playgrounds and are they in the right location? Council staff combined this research with detailed information on all of the assets across Willoughby, and their condition and maintenance requirements to develop an accurate picture of our asset renewal requirements over the next 15 years.

We then looked at a rate increase to provide an income source to maintain and improve our infrastructure to the community recommended level. Council undertook extensive community consultation on this option, with the results used to develop the four alternatives presented in this brochure.

**Table 1: Projects Requiring Funding**

|                          | 15/16              | 16/17              | 17/18              | 18/19              | 19/20              | 20/21              | 21/22              | 22/23               |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Footpath</b>          | \$365,153          | \$277,207          | \$57,708           | Nil                | Nil                | Nil                | Nil                | Nil                 |
| <b>Kerb &amp; Gutter</b> | Nil                | Nil                | \$77,819           | \$15,810           | \$81,170           | Nil                | \$30,196           | Nil                 |
| <b>Bridges</b>           | \$181,868          | \$211,695          | \$290,760          | \$235,436          | \$165,362          | \$188,806          | Nil                | \$142,610           |
| <b>Stormwater</b>        | \$464,667          | \$1,141,331        | \$1,303,276        | \$1,115,777        | \$1,155,369        | \$1,162,942        | \$1,737,094        | \$1,739,643         |
| <b>Parks</b>             | \$967,920          | \$939,400          | \$359,151          | \$1,093,773        | \$802,323          | \$997,806          | \$486,601          | \$1,404,748         |
| <b>Playgrounds</b>       | \$202,104          | \$49,814           | \$81,122           | \$130,108          | \$141,052          | \$328,219          | \$78,954           | \$346,527           |
| <b>Sporting Fields</b>   | \$1,116,780        | \$1,227,294        | \$1,253,876        | \$1,431,432        | \$1,621,104        | \$1,868,533        | \$1,945,039        | \$1,499,092         |
| <b>Buildings</b>         | \$1,278,626        | \$1,199,511        | \$1,059,129        | \$2,352,432        | \$2,303,464        | \$2,356,043        | \$2,338,158        | \$5,140,798         |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>\$4,577,118</b> | <b>\$5,046,252</b> | <b>\$4,482,841</b> | <b>\$6,374,768</b> | <b>\$6,269,844</b> | <b>\$6,902,349</b> | <b>\$6,616,042</b> | <b>\$10,273,418</b> |

**Table 2: Increased Efficiencies and Other Income Sources**

|                               | 2015/16          | 2016/17          | 2017/2018        | 2018/2019        | 2019/2020        | 2020/2021        | 2021/2022        | 2022/2023        |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>COST SAVINGS</b>           |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| <b>Service Review Savings</b> | 500,000          | 1,000,000        | 1,000,000        | 1,000,000        | 1,000,000        | 1,000,000        | 1,000,000        | 1,000,000        |
| <b>ADDITIONAL INCOME</b>      |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |                  |
| <b>Car Parks</b>              | 30,000           | 45,000           | 80,000           | 120,000          | 160,000          | 200,000          | 230,000          | 270,000          |
| <b>Advertising Bollards</b>   | 360,000          | 369,000          | 378,225          | 387,681          | 397,373          | 407,307          | 417,490          | 427,927          |
| <b>Bus Shelters</b>           | 747,400          | 762,055          | 776,486          | 793,616          | 810,566          | 828,261          | 845,722          | 862,975          |
| <b>Parking in CBD*</b>        | 200,000          | 200,000          | 200,000          | 200,000          | 200,000          | 200,000          | 200,000          | 200,000          |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>1,837,400</b> | <b>2,376,055</b> | <b>2,434,711</b> | <b>2,501,297</b> | <b>2,567,939</b> | <b>2,635,568</b> | <b>2,693,212</b> | <b>2,760,902</b> |

\* Currently being reviewed as part of the draft Street and Parking Strategy

## Infrastructure Levy - Options for Consideration

Council has developed four rating scenarios to be considered. For the purpose of this exercise we will assume that the normal rate increase (Rate Peg) will be 2.6%. The Rate Peg is the annual rate increase set by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

### Scenario 1

Normal rate peg for 7 years. Does not provide additional funding to reduce renewal gap.

### Scenario 2

One off 5% plus normal rate peg in 2015/2016 followed by normal rate peg for 6 years. Leaves a shortfall of more than 20% of required funding.

### Scenario 3

4.5% plus normal rate peg in 2015/2016 followed by 2% plus normal rate peg in 2016/2017 followed by normal rate peg for 5 years. This scenario meets the renewal gap over the seven year period.

### Scenario 4

5% plus normal rate peg in 2015/2016 followed by 1% plus normal rate peg in 2016/2017 followed by normal rate peg for 5 years. Leaves a shortfall in funding of 5%.

**Table 3: Infrastructure Levy (IL) 2015/2016**

|   |                                 | Residential       |                   | Pensioner       |                   | Business          |                   |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|   |                                 | Minimum           | Average           | Minimum         | Average           | Minimum           | Average           |
| <b>2014/2015</b>  | Rates                           | \$718.35          | \$887.50          | \$718.35        | \$887.50          | \$1,025.85        | \$6,193.00        |
|   | Domestic Waste Management (DWM) | \$505.00          | \$505.00          | \$405.00        | \$405.00          | \$0.00            | \$0.00            |
|   | Stormwater                      | \$12.50           | \$25.00           | \$12.50         | \$25.00           | \$5.00            | \$75.00           |
|   | Pensioner Rebate                |                   |                   | -\$250.00       | -\$250.00         |                   |                   |
|   | <b>Total</b>                    | <b>\$1,235.85</b> | <b>\$1,417.50</b> | <b>\$885.85</b> | <b>\$1,067.50</b> | <b>\$1,030.85</b> | <b>\$6,268.00</b> |
| <b>2015/2016</b>  | In addition to 2014/15 rates    |                   |                   |                 |                   |                   |                   |
| Scenario 1  | 2.6% Rate Peg Only              | \$1,254.53        | \$1,440.58        | \$904.53        | \$1,090.58        | \$1,057.52        | \$6,429.02        |
| Scenario 2*   | 5% IL plus 2.6% Rate Peg        | \$1,290.44        | \$1,484.95        | \$915.44        | \$1,109.95        | \$1,108.81        | \$6,738.67        |
| Scenario 3*   | 4.5% IL plus 2.6% Rate Peg      | \$1,286.85        | \$1,480.51        | \$911.85        | \$1,105.51        | \$1,103.69        | \$6,707.70        |
| Scenario 4*   | 5% IL plus 2.6% Rate Peg        | \$1,290.44        | \$1,484.95        | \$915.44        | \$1,109.95        | \$1,108.81        | \$6,738.67        |
| <b>2016/2017</b>  | In addition to 2015/16 rates    |                   |                   |                 |                   |                   |                   |
| Scenario 1  | 2.6% Rate Peg Only              | \$1,273.69        | \$1,464.25        | \$923.69        | \$1,114.25        | \$1,084.89        | \$6,594.22        |
| Scenario 2*   | 2.6% Rate Peg Only              | \$1,310.54        | \$1,509.78        | \$935.54        | \$1,134.78        | \$1,137.51        | \$6,911.92        |
| Scenario 3*   | 2% IL plus 2.6% Rate Peg        | \$1,322.24        | \$1,524.24        | \$947.24        | \$1,149.24        | \$1,154.22        | \$7,012.81        |
| Scenario 4*   | 1% IL plus 2.6% Rate Peg        | \$1,318.27        | \$1,519.33        | \$943.27        | \$1,144.33        | \$1,148.55        | \$6,978.56        |
| Additional DWM subsidy Pensioner and Self-Funded Retirees   |                                 |                   |                   | -\$25.00        | -\$25.00          |                   |                   |
| *Options 2, 3 & 4 include proposed additional DWM subsidy of \$25.00  |                                 |                   |                   |                 |                   |                   |                   |
| 2015/16 & 2016/17 amounts include rates increased by IL and Rate Peg and 2014/15 DWM & Stormwater charges – Business Stormwater varies. |                                 |                   |                   |                 |                   |                   |                   |

# How you can be involved in the process

Willoughby Council is seeking feedback from our community on the proposed Infrastructure Levy and the four scenarios.

Community feedback can be provided until  
**5pm, 21 October 2014**

For more information or to make a submission online, visit:  
[www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

You can also make a submission in writing, and address it to:

The General Manager  
Willoughby City Council  
PO Box 57  
Chatswood NSW 2057

## Information Stalls

Willoughby StreetFair  
10am – 4pm, Saturday 6 September  
Chatswood CBD

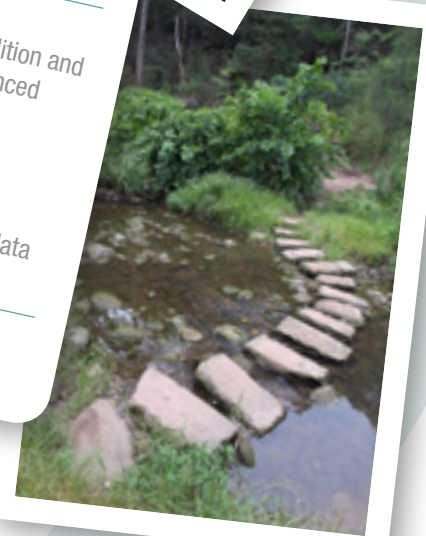
## Public Meetings

6pm, Thursday 9 October  
2pm, Saturday 11 October  
Willoughby City Council Chambers  
31 Victor Street, Chatswood

## Further Resources

Visit [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au) to view our:

- Willoughby City Strategy
- Delivery Program
- Operational Plan and Budget
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Asset Management Plans
- Workforce Plan



## Consultation process

### ITEMS COMPLETED

**November 2012:**  
Community feedback on condition and provision of all assets commenced

**October 2013 - February 2014:**  
Initial consultation

**March - July 2014:**  
Council officers refined financial data

### IN PROGRESS

**August 2014 - January 2015:**  
Further Community consultation



**WILLOUGHBY  
CITY COUNCIL**

*City of Diversity*

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[facebook.com/WilloughbyCityCouncil](https://facebook.com/WilloughbyCityCouncil)  
twitter: @willoughbycity  
[www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au)

August 2014

# How you can be involved in the process

Willoughby Council is seeking feedback from our community on the proposed SRV.

Community feedback can be provided until  
**5pm, Monday 10 February 2014.**

You can make a submission or ask a question online at  
[www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

You can also make a submission in writing, and address it to:

The General Manager  
Willoughby City Council  
PO Box 57  
Chatswood NSW 2057

## Information Displays

Chatswood Library  
Lower ground, 409 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood

## Information Stalls

10am - 12pm and 5pm - 7pm, Monday 16 December  
10am - 12pm and 5pm - 7pm, Tuesday 21 January  
Chatswood Library on The Concourse  
Lower ground, 409 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood

## Public Meeting

7pm, Tuesday 4 February  
Dougherty Community Centre  
7 Victor Street, Chatswood

## What happens now?

**Monday 10 February 2014**

– Community consultation and feedback ends

**Monday 17 February 2014**

– Council will vote and decide if to apply to IPART for a SRV

**Monday 24 February 2014**

– SRV application due to IPART



#CommunityAssets #WilloughbySRV

## Further Resources

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## Community Assets

## At the Core of Your Neighbourhood

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT A PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION



December 2013

## Community Assets – An Overview

- The City of Willoughby provides a large range of services that rely on a pool of assets with a combined replacement value of more than \$760M. Assets include buildings, footpaths, roads, stormwater infrastructure, parks, bushland, sportsgrounds and playgrounds.
- Over time, the range of services Council provides, has changed and expanded dramatically, including the assets required to deliver these services. It's no longer just roads and rubbish, but childcare services, stormwater management and more.
- Many assets are already due for replacement, and Council has been undertaking a continual replacement and upgrade program to meet the needs of our growing city – but there is a \$28M maintenance backlog that will only continue to grow if not addressed.

### Community Consultation – what you've told us so far

Over the past 12 months Willoughby Council has consulted with you, our community, and found that you value the breadth of assets and services Council provides and that you expect assets to be maintained at a high standard.

### How will we meet this funding challenge?

Council's Long Term Financial Plan has identified a gap between current projected funding for asset maintenance and what is needed to ensure assets are maintained to an acceptable level into the future in line with the expectations of our community.

That is why Council is proposing to apply for a Special Rate Variation (SRV), as a way of securing these funds. This is a process by which we apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to increase rates beyond the rate peg.

The SRV is being proposed only after all other sources of income and cost saving measures have been examined. Willoughby Council has also developed new sustainable business models for some sections of its operations such as The Concourse, which generates income to cover its annual costs and provide for its long term asset maintenance.

Two options are provided for your comment:

### OPTION 1

#### No rate increase above rate peg

This scenario is a 'business as usual' model, where there would be no rate increase other than the rate peg.

- Assets will decline over time, meaning increased maintenance backlogs and increased costs
- Does not allow for new assets
- Council would look to make further business efficiency improvements
- Current services remain in the short term, but resources may need to be reallocated in the long term. For example:
  - Reduction in opening hours of some services such as libraries, leisure and community centres
  - Reduced quality of roads, footpaths and stormwater
  - Some buildings may need to be closed
  - The long-term functionality of some sportsgrounds

|                     | No rate increase above rate peg | Average residential rate |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Current rate</b> |                                 | \$873.00                 |
| <b>2014/2015</b>    | 2.3%                            | \$893.08                 |
| <b>2015/2016</b>    | 3%                              | \$919.87                 |
| <b>2016/2017</b>    | 3%                              | \$947.47                 |
| <b>2017/2018</b>    | 3%                              | \$975.89                 |
| <b>2018/2019</b>    | 3%                              | \$1,005.17               |

### OPTION 2

#### Rate increase with Special Rate Variation

This scenario includes a SRV of 28.8 per cent over five years to address the gap in funding to ensure assets are maintained to an acceptable level into the future in line with the expectations of our community.

- Ensures assets are maintained and kept at the current level of service
- Reduces ongoing maintenance costs and keeps the maintenance backlog in check
- Allows for the renewal of capital projects
- Does not allow for new assets or aspirational projects
- Willoughby's assets will be secured for future generations

|                     | Proposed rate rise with SRV and rate peg | Average residential rate |
|---------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <b>Current rate</b> |  | \$873.00                 |
| <b>2014/2015</b>    | 8.3%                                     | \$945.46                 |
| <b>2015/2016</b>    | 5.5%                                     | \$997.46                 |
| <b>2016/2017</b>    | 5%                                       | \$1,047.33               |
| <b>2017/2018</b>    | 5%                                       | \$1,099.70               |
| <b>2018/2019</b>    | 5%                                       | \$1,154.68               |

### Difference between OPTION 1 and OPTION 2

|   | 2014/2015 | 2015/2016 | 2016/2017 | 2017/2018 | 2018/2019 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Difference in average residential rate</b> | \$52.38   | \$77.59   | \$99.86   | \$123.81  | \$149.52  |



6 December 2013

<Name>

<Address 1>

<Address 2>

Dear <Name>,

Over the past 12 months local government has been subject to a number of reviews by the State Government which have highlighted a backlog in asset renewal and replacement in the majority of NSW Councils. As a result of these reviews all councils have been undertaking reviews of their long term financial position.

Willoughby City Council is currently seeking community feedback on a proposed Special Rate Variation to establish a sustainable business model for the management of Council's assets.

The proposal follows a year-long community consultation campaign, seeking feedback on the current standard and quantity of the various assets that make up much of our essential community infrastructure. This community consultation involved online forums, public meetings, information stalls at community fairs and the recruitment of a community panel who assessed the information and developed their own recommendation for Council.

The City of Willoughby provides a wide range of community facilities and services, from playgrounds, bushland and sportsgrounds to footpaths, stormwater systems, roads and buildings. These assets have been valued at more than \$760 million.

While Council has continued to maintain all of these assets and respond to the evolving needs of our community, with the provision of new assets and services, a significant proportion of our existing asset are ageing and in the next decade will require significant reinvestment and replacement. The population of Willoughby is also growing and with it grows the demands on our infrastructure and the services we provide, while the income stream to fund these assets and services hasn't changed significantly.

The consultation undertaken to date has outlined a community expectation that Council will continue to provide the current level of services and that some assets should be provided and maintained at a higher standard than what is currently provided.

The current financial projections outlined in Council's Long Term Financial Plan will not allow Council to meet those expectations. We have investigated and developed an integrated approach to long term and sustainable funding. It involves delivering ongoing efficiencies, new external revenue sources and a Special Rate Variation. The Special Rate Variation is being proposed only after all other sources of income and cost saving measures have been examined.

Outlined below are two scenarios - a business as usual option, and a rate increase through a Special Rate Variation. It is these two options that we are seeking community feedback on.



### **Option 1 – Business as Usual**

Under the business as usual scenario, Council will continue to deliver services and manage its assets within current financial projections. This scenario will result in the standard of our community assets declining over coming years as sufficient resources will not be available to ensure their usefulness. Repair costs will increase as assets are not maintained which will place further pressure on Council budgets.

Council will need to consider ultimately, decisions such as:

1. Reduction in opening hours of some services such as libraries, leisure and community centres.
2. Reduced quality of roads, footpaths and our stormwater system.
3. Whether some buildings will need to be closed.
4. The long-term functionality of some sportsgrounds.

### **Option 2 – Sustainable Service with Special Rate Variation**

A Special Rate Variation will be used to address funding shortfalls to keep assets and services at an acceptable level for the community. Assets will be secured for the long term and improvement works will see ongoing maintenance costs reduce.

The sustainable service proposal will see rates increase by 8.3 per cent in the 2014/2015 financial year, 5.5 per cent in 2015/2016 and 5 per cent in the following three financial years. In the 2014/2015 year with the Special Rate Variation the average residential rate will increase by \$72.46, inclusive of the rate peg.

The enclosed brochure provides detailed information of these two options and what they mean for the City of Willoughby and our ratepayers.

Council is now seeking further community feedback on the two scenarios. This feedback will be provided to Councillors before a decision to apply for a Special Rate Variation is made. All feedback received will be considered, and your individual input is very important. Feedback can be made in writing or online. We will also hold community information stalls and a public meeting to further address community feedback.

I encourage you to be involved in this important community conversation. See the attached brochure for ways you can comment or visit [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

Kind regards

Nick Tobin  
General Manager, Willoughby City Council

## ENGLISH

If you do not understand this document, please visit Council's Administration Building to discuss it with Council staff who will arrange an interpreter service. The Administration Building is located at 31 Victor Street, Chatswood and open from 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Alternatively, you may ring the Translating & Interpreting Service on 131 450 to ask for an interpreter to contact Council for you. Council's phone number is (02) 9777 1000.

## ARABIC

إذا كنت لا تفهم هذه الوثيقة يُرجى زيارة مبنى إدارة مجلس البلدية لبحثها مع موظفي المجلس الذين سيتخذون ترتيبات للحصول على خدمة الترجمة الشفهية. يقع مبنى الإدارة على العنوان 31 Victor Street, Chatswood وهو يفتح من الساعة 8.30 صباحاً إلى 5 مساءً أيام الاثنين إلى الجمعة. يمكنك بدلاً من ذلك الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الخطية والشفهية على الرقم 131 450 واطلب أن يقوم مترجم شفهي بالاتصال بالمجلس بالنيابة عنك. رقم هاتف المجلس هو: (02) 9777 1000.

## ARMENIAN

Եթե չէք հասկնար այս փաստաթուղթը, խնդրեմ այցելեցեք Քաղաքային Խորհուրդի Վարչության Շենքը այդ մասին խօսելու: Քաղաքային Խորհուրդի աշխատակիցներու հետ որոնք ձեզի համար թարգման մը կը կարգադրեն: Վարչության Շենքը կը գտնուի՝ 31 Victor Street, Chatswood եւ բաց է կ.ա. 8.30 – կ.ե.5.00, Երկուշաբթիէն փնչեւ Ուրբաթ: Վարելի է նաեւ հեռաձայնել Թարգմանության Սպասարկության 131450 եւ խնդրել որ թարգման մը կապ հաստատէ Քաղաքային Խորհուրդին հետ ձեզի համար: Քաղաքային Խորհուրդի հեռախօսի համարն է՝ (02) 9777 1000:

## CHINESE SIMPLIFIED

如果您不明白本文件，请前往市政府行政大楼，与市政府职员讨论，市政府职员会安排传译员提供服务。行政大楼位于31 Victor Street, Chatswood，上班时间是周一至周五上午8:30至下午5:00。此外，您也可以致电翻译传译服务处，电话131 450，请传译员为您联系市政府，市政府的电话是(02) 9777 1000。

## CHINESE TRADITIONAL

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## KOREAN

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The Office of the General Manager

21 January 2014

<Addressee Name>  
<Company>  
<Address Line 1>  
<Address Line 2>  
<Address Line 3>

Dear <Addressee>,

**RE: Proposed Special Rate Variation**

Further to our previous correspondence sent to you in December, I am writing to advise that we are still seeking feedback from the community on the proposed Special Rate Variation.

We have been gathering feedback from the community over the past month and we would still like to hear from you. The proposed Special Rate Variation aims to ensure the long term financial stability of Council and keep Council assets and services at an acceptable level for the community.

Your individual input is important to Council and all feedback received will be considered and provided to Councillors before they consider whether to apply to IPART for a Special Rate Variation.

To become involved in this important community decision please visit our website at [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au). You can leave comments on this site or if you prefer you can make a submission in writing to The General Manager at the address below or email [email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:email@willoughby.nsw.gov.au). This site also contains links to Council's Resourcing Strategy which provides information on our assets, workforce and long term financial planning.

I also invite you to a public meeting which is being held on Tuesday 4 February at 7:00pm in the Dougherty Community Centre, 7 Victor Street Chatswood. A comprehensive overview of the proposal will be presented at this meeting and you will have the opportunity to raise any questions or concerns you may have.

If you wish to attend please RSVP to Margaret Harte on (02) 9777 7702 or [Margaret.Harte@willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Margaret.Harte@willoughby.nsw.gov.au) so that we can ensure adequate seating is made available on the night.

Yours faithfully

Nick Tobin  
GENERAL MANAGER

## ENGLISH

If you do not understand this document, please visit Council's Administration Building to discuss it with Council staff who will arrange an interpreter service. The Administration Building is located at 31 Victor Street, Chatswood and open from 8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Alternatively, you may ring the Translating & Interpreting Service on 131 450 to ask for an interpreter to contact Council for you. Council's phone number is (02) 9777 1000.

## ARABIC

إذا كنت لا تفهم هذه الوثيقة يُرجى زيارة مبنى إدارة مجلس البلدية لبحثها مع موظفي المجلس الذين سيتخذون ترتيبات للحصول على خدمة الترجمة الشفهية. يقع مبنى الإدارة على العنوان 31 Victor Street, Chatswood وهو يفتح من الساعة 8.30 صباحاً إلى 5 مساءً أيام الاثنين إلى الجمعة. يمكنك بدلاً من ذلك الاتصال بخدمة الترجمة الخطية والشفهية على الرقم 131 450 واطلب أن يقوم مترجم شفهي بالاتصال بالمجلس بالنيابة عنك. رقم هاتف المجلس هو: (02) 9777 1000.

## ARMENIAN

Եթե չէք հասկնար այս փաստաթուղթը, խնդրեմ այցելեցեք Քաղաքային Խորհուրդի Վարչության Շենքը այդ մասին խօսելու: Քաղաքային Խորհուրդի աշխատակիցներու հետ որոնք ձեզի համար թարգման մը կը կարգադրեն: Վարչության Շենքը կը գտնուի՝ 31 Victor Street, Chatswood եւ բաց է կ.ա. 8.30 – կ.ե.5.00, Երկուշաբթիէն փնչեւ Ուրբաթ: Վարելի է նաեւ հեռաձայնել Թարգմանության Սպասարկության 131450 եւ խնդրել որ թարգման մը կապ հաստատէ Քաղաքային Խորհուրդին հետ ձեզի համար: Քաղաքային Խորհուրդի հեռախօսի համարն է՝ (02) 9777 1000:

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Name Line 1  
Address Line 1  
Address Line 2

Dear xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Over the past two years Council has undertaken extensive consultation on the level of service the community expects in relation to maintaining Council's assets. This consultation process, together with the development of Council's strategic documents such as our Asset Management Plans and Long Term Financial Plan, give us a clear idea of the funding required to maintain assets such as parks, playgrounds, roads and footpaths to an acceptable level.

Part of the consultation mentioned above was asking the community in 2012/13 if there was support for Council to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a Special Rate Variation. Taking feedback on board, Council is currently conducting consultation on a proposed Infrastructure Levy. Specifically we have:

- Undertaken a service review across the council and identified ways to make the council more efficient by streamlining processes and focusing staff resources where they are needed.
- Identified the projects that require an Infrastructure Levy in order to be funded.
- Identified other income sources to be reviewed by Council. These include: car parking revenue, and other potential revenue sources from advertising bollards, bus shelter leasing and parking in the Chatswood CBD.

This levy aims to set Willoughby up for a better future by allowing us to continue to offer the wide range of community services we now have.

The issue of a funding gap to maintain Council's assets to a level which is acceptable to the community is still very much present, and the proposed Infrastructure Levy offers four scenarios which address the funding gap to different degrees. The scenarios and further information are presented in detail in the enclosed brochure.

I encourage you to read the brochure and make a submission on the proposed Infrastructure Levy. You can do this by visiting [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au) or you can make a submission in writing addressed to the General Manager, PO Box 57 Chatswood NSW 2057. The brochure also provides information on public meetings we will be holding during October.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Tobin', followed by a horizontal line.

Nick Tobin  
GENERAL MANAGER

WILLOUGHBY

# Rate rise riles residents

Lauren Murada

THE public has spoken out against Willoughby Council's proposed rate rise with a major backlash to the proposed 27.37 increase.

Following the story in last week's *North Shore Times*, the paper received a number of comments and letters from residents angry about the proposed infrastructure levy.

The proposed special rate variation would be introduced over seven years to help pay for a maintenance backlog. Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney said the decision came after two years of community consultation.

Facebook user Grgo Gregory Matana Skuj said the rate rise was too much for homeowners in the area.

"The properties are probably a million plus or two, but that does not equate that the owners can necessarily



Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney.

afford to pay for rate increases," he said.

"Someone will say, 'well sell up and move elsewhere', yes that is an option, but it is also an option that the council can find funding via other channels."

Cassandra Cole said the council spent too much time focusing on Chatswood and not enough time on other suburbs.

"Maybe instead of focusing solely on Chatswood and its growth, maybe council could look outside to neigh-

bouring commercial/retail areas that are struggling," Ms Cole said.

Rob Manning said a number of councillors were going back on their word by voting for the rate rise.

"Most of the elected councillors stood on platforms saying no rate increases - they need to be held to their pre-election promises," Mr Manning said.

David Stickland said people should stop whining.

"I have no doubt that we all enjoy the many benefits associated with all the great things Willoughby City Council does for, and in, our community," Mr Stickland said.

Joe Grundy said he was glad of the increase.

"Willoughby council over- sees one of the most expensive property districts in NSW, yet rates here are below average for NSW," he said.

## Rates not that scary

THE November 14 front page headline "rates set to soar" and accompanying sound bite "rates in Willoughby will rise by 27.37 per cent" are disappointing and alarmist. But of the "27.37 per cent" rise (over seven years) 19.7 per cent would have happened anyway under usual increases and without public comment. The unusual rate increase would more reasonably be reported as an extra 6.8 per cent increase over the next two years ... much less alarming.

The only reason to total the stretched seven-year window is that council surveyed ratepayers with a range of options "over the next seven years", including stretching rate increases over that time or increasing upfront.

I, for one, am glad for a prompt increase.

Willoughby Council over- sees one of the most expensive property districts in NSW, yet rates here are below average for NSW.

The rules for Willoughby rate increases ensure they have not kept pace with inflation over time.

**JOE GRUNDY, Chatswood**

3/12/14

2/11/14

# RATES SET TO SOAR

## WORKS BACKLOG BLAMED

Lauren Murada

RATES in Willoughby will rise by 27.37 per cent over the next seven years if the council's infrastructure levy is approved.

The council will apply for the levy with the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal in February to fund a maintenance backlog. Money from the special rate variation would be used to maintain parks, playgrounds, footpaths, storm-water drains and community facilities.

Councillors were divided on the issue, with an hour of heated debate followed by a split vote at Monday night's council meeting.

Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney used her casting vote to approve the levy.

"The infrastructure levy will provide financial security for our city by addressing the current financial shortfall required to maintain and improve infrastructure in Willoughby," she said.

If approved, rates would go up by 7.1 per cent in the 2015/16 financial year, then 4.6 per cent in the following year, and 2.6 per cent for five years after that.

Cr Giles-Gidney said the decision came after two years of community consultation to identify the wider community's requirements for assets and willingness to

➔ TO PAGE 5

WILLOUGHBY

➔ FROM PAGE 1

## Deputy Mayor fears vulnerable can't afford rate rises

fund these community facilities. "This decision follows a review of council operations which identified efficiencies and cost savings, finding

material savings without the need for a significant impact on services," she said.

"We also undertook significant financial and asset management modelling to project well into the future and determine the renewal

and maintenance requirements of the city's infrastructure."

A number of councillors spoke out against raising rates, with Deputy Mayor Tony Mustaca saying the most vulnerable residents

could not afford it. "I can see that there is a need but it will hurt the very young families in this community, the old and the poor, they struggle every day," he said.

Cr Stuart Coppock said the council did not need to

raise rates, with roads and footpaths in good condition, although kerb and guttering were not.



Do you support the proposed infrastructure levy?

14/11/14

### Have Your Say: Infrastructure Levy

Over the past 24 months, Willoughby City Council has undertaken community consultation on all assets and infrastructure. Council began by seeking feedback about the community's expectations on the standard of this infrastructure.

Council staff then combined this research with detailed information on all assets across Willoughby, as well as their condition and maintenance requirements to develop an accurate picture of our asset renewal requirements over the next 15 years. A rate increase was proposed to provide an income source to maintain and improve the infrastructure to the community recommended level.

After undertaking extensive community consultation on this option, the results were used to develop four alternatives. The proposed Infrastructure Levy follows on from the Special Rate Variation presented to the community in 2013.

Council has taken community feedback on board and has:

- Undertaken a service review across Council and identified ways to make the council more efficient by streamlining processes and focusing staff resources where they are needed.
- Identified the projects that require an infrastructure levy in order to be funded.

- Identified other income sources to be reviewed by Council. These include: car park revenue, advertising bollards, bus shelter leasing and parking in the Chatswood CBD.

This levy aims to set Willoughby up for a better future by allowing Council to continue to offer a wide range of community services.

Please read the information presented on this site and make a submission at [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

### Carols in Willoughby Park - Call for Stall Holders

Council is seeking food and general goods vendors for the annual Carols in Willoughby Park event, **5pm, Saturday 6 December**

1/10/14

### Public Exhibitions

#### PLANNING PROPOSAL AT 654 - 666 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, 2A OLIVER ROAD AND 1 FREEMAN ROAD, CHATSWOOD

Council has received a Planning Proposal for 654 - 666 Pacific Highway, 2A Oliver Road and 1 Freeman Road, Chatswood. The Planning Proposal involves demolition of all existing buildings and construction of a mixed use development comprising retail / office premises in the basement and ground floor and two residential towers above a podium, the northern tower being 10 storeys and the southern tower being seven storeys.

The Delegate of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has issued a Gateway Determination which requires that the Planning Proposal be placed on public exhibition.

#### DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO WILLOUGHBY DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLAN

Draft amendments to Development Control Plan Part E3.4 '654 - 666 Pacific Highway, 1 Freeman Road and 2A Oliver Road, Chatswood' are also on exhibition. The draft amendments reflect the above planning proposal and the changes to Willoughby Local Environmental Plan 2012 relating to the site.

#### DRAFT VOLUNTARY PLANNING AGREEMENT AND EXPLANATORY NOTE

Council resolved at its meeting on 10 June, 2014, to publicly exhibit a draft Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with this Planning Proposal. The draft VPA proposes local road widening of four metres along Oliver Road and one metre along Freeman Road, and is accompanied by an Explanatory Note.

#### EXHIBITION PERIOD

The Planning Proposal, Draft Amendments to the Development Control Plan, Draft Voluntary Planning Agreement and Explanatory Note have been placed on exhibition for public comment from

**Wednesday 1 October - Wednesday 29 October.** The draft plans may be viewed at [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

### fast lane

#### Levy discussion

A public meeting is being held about Willoughby Council's proposed infrastructure levy at the Willoughby Council Chambers. This public meeting will outline the need for a levy and the four scenarios, and will provide a chance for members of the community to ask questions and provide feedback. The meeting is on October 9 at 6pm and October 11 at 2pm. The chambers are located at Level 6, 31 Victor St, Chatswood. Details: 9777 1000.

1/10/14

## No going back on levy move

THE proposed 27.37 per cent infrastructure levy came into question at Willoughby Council on Monday night when four councillors tried to stop sending the proposal to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal.

Councillors Coppock, Hooper, Saville and Stevens wanted to defer the infrastructure levy until a services review was complete and a new general manager was appointed in 2015.

"The matter was put before us at the 11th hour and we had to make a decision to put it to IPART," Cr Hopper said.

"I think the only thing we should do is rescind it and engage with each other as how we can move together as a whole."

Their rescission request was lost, however, with Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney and councillors Michelle Sloane, Hugh Eriksson, Angelo Rozos, Wendy Norton and Rachel Hill voting it down.

Willoughby Council needs to introduce the rate rise over seven years to help pay for an infrastructure backlog. Cr Sloane said she voted against the rescission because she was sick of debating the issue.

"I don't know what more information we need to make a decision about something that's a strategic issue in this local government area," she said.

28/11/14

# Council ponders levy

## FOUR WAYS

1. No infrastructure levy - average residential rate \$910 in 2015/16
2. A 5 per cent rate rise in the first year, then a rate peg of 2.6 per cent for the next six years - average residential rate \$954 in 2015/16
3. A 4.5 per cent rise in the first year, 2 per cent in the second year, then a rate peg of 2.6 per cent for the next five years - average residential rate \$950 in 2015/16
4. A 5 per cent rate rise in the first year, 1 per cent in the second year, then a rate peg of 2.6 per cent for five years - average residential rate \$954 in 2015/16

### Lauren Murada

RATES could increase by 7.6 per cent in the next financial year if Willoughby Council's Infrastructure Levy goes ahead.

They could go up by an average of \$67 in the 2015/16 financial year to help pay for the council's increasing infrastructure backlog.

Mayor Gail Giles-Gidney said the council needed the money to help repair stormwater drains and upgrade roads, footpaths and parkland.

"We know that we have a

backlog of infrastructure costs and depending on what the community wants in upgrades of our infrastructure will depend on what we do," she said.

"The community is happy with our standard of infrastructure, it's whether they are happy to pay to maintain it is the question."

The council has four options, starting with no increase, going up to a 5 per cent increase on top of a 2.6 per cent rate peg.

Its preferred option is to raise rates by 4.5 per cent next year, then 2 per cent the

following year, on top of a 2.6 per cent rate peg. Rates would then be pegged at 2.6 per cent for five years.

Earlier this year Willoughby Council looked into a special rate variation of 7 per cent to clear the infrastructure backlog, but the council dropped the issue after Mayor Pat Reilly died.

Cr Giles-Gidney said large numbers of the community were in favour of the variation at the time.

"There was a surprising amount of people in support of it," she said. "I think it was because we have a good stan-

dard of living here and they want to maintain that."

Cr Giles-Gidney said the council was also looking at ways to cut costs to help fund the shortfall.

Community consultation will start in the coming weeks, with a decision to be made in October.

The council would then have to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to introduce the levy.



Would you support a rate rise to pay for infrastructure?

20/8/14

### HATSWOOD

## Feedback sought for proposed levy



A PUBLIC meeting is being held tomorrow to get community feedback on Willoughby Council's proposed Infrastructure Levy. It starts at 2pm at Council Chambers, Level 6, 31 Victor St. Details: 9777 1000.

10/10/14

## Canon's fire inspires

I WAS inspired to read of the courageous intervention by Canon Rick Smith when he went to the aid of a pizza delivery driver on Willoughby Rd late last year, after the driver was allegedly apprehended by a bunch of male teens, and pizza as stolen.

It was good to read that though "Canon Smith suffered multiple injuries ... there were no breaks or serious internal injuries".

A good samaritan indeed.

**ANN HARDING, Pymble**

## Rate stay welcome

ALONG with all residents in Willoughby, I welcome the decision by council not to seek a rate rise for 2014-15.

A more cynical observer would however note that the council has simply put this decision on hold until after the mayoral election, possibly to avoid public backlash regarding a whopping 30 per cent rate hike.

Like many readers, instead of

14/2/14

rate rises, I would expect Willoughby Council to seriously explore efficiency targets, revenue generating options and changes to service levels to make sure it is able to live within its means.

**COUNCILLOR NIC WRIGHT,  
WILLOUGHBY COUNCIL**

## Efficiency not all that

PRIME Minister Tony Abbott wants to make the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Special Broadcasting Service more efficient.

Many other politicians and economists, accountants and taxpayers would agree.

Making the ABC and any other organisation more efficient may be what is needed, but just as likely, probably more likely, it is not.

Concentrating, not obsessing on efficiency is often the problem.

Better to ask: is the organisation, the process, the method effective?

It is often far more important to make an organisation more effective; at the same time it may make it, not more efficient but less efficient.

STATEWIDE

# Rate pegs back in play

## REFORM TO HELP COUNCILS

Adam Bell

TO HELP financially crippled councils get back in the black, the State Government has put changes to the rate pegging system back on the table.

As part of a package of reforms to be announced within weeks, the government has promised to revisit the annual rate peg which limits how much councils can hike up their rates each year.

This year, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal set the standard increase at 2.3 per cent.

But the Minister for Local Government Paul Toole said

the fact that 31 councils in NSW sought special permission to raise rates this year shows the system needed an overhaul.

"It is an issue that has been raised by councils for over 20 years," he said.

Thirteen councils in Sydney including Willoughby and Ku-ring-gai were allowed to increase their rates this financial year to help them stay afloat or to pay for urgent capital works.

The government is expected to announce its response to the independent review of local government, released earlier this year, which recommended rate-pegging.

29/3/14

# Have your say on rates

Lauren Murada

HAVE your say on Willoughby Council's rate rise proposal at a public meeting on February 4.

Council staff will answer questions about the rise at the Dougherty Community Centre, Chatswood, 7pm.

Rates are proposed to increase over the next five years from 2014-2015 by an aggregated 28.8 per cent, cumulative 32.7 per cent.

This will mean an increase of \$72.46 in 2014-2015

## RESIDENTS INVITED TO PUBLIC MEETING

for the average residential rate, if council is successful in this application.

The proposal aims to provide a sustainable and long term financial plan of buildings, footpaths, roads,

stormwater infrastructure, parks, bushland, sports grounds and playgrounds.

Willoughby Mayor Pat Reilly said it's a chance to learn the facts.

"The proposal will have

an enormous input on the long term quality of life in Willoughby and it is so important that the views of our community are at the forefront of this decision," he said.

For more information go to [haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au)

a music school in willoughby

N ST 7/2/14

WILLOUGHBY

# Council votes to defer rates rise

Charis Chang

WILLOUGHBY Council has decided not to proceed with a proposed rate rise this year.

Acting Mayor Gall Gidney proposed in a mayoral minute on Monday night that a rate rise for 2014-15 be abandoned.

Her motion suggested that council defer its decision on increases until a service review of the organisation was

complete as this would identify cost savings and potential sources of revenue.

Cr Giles-Gidney, who is the acting mayor following the death of Pat Reilly last month, said a new application for a rate rise could be considered for the 2015-16 financial year.

The motion, passed unanimously, seemed "a bit ridiculous".

mously was voted on just one night before the council was due to host a public meeting on its plans for a 28.8 per cent increase over five years.

Cr Nic Wright, who has opposed the rate rise, said cancelling the meeting with only a few hours notice seemed "a bit ridiculous".

"It probably could have been handled better," he said.

Meanwhile, Cr Angelo Rozos was concerned that delaying a decision on rate rises could put council at risk of "extraordinary" increases down the line.

The council has a \$28 million infrastructure backlog

with improvements needed to stormwater infrastructure, roads, footpaths and community facilities.

It has previously stated that if rates weren't increased that the community risked losing aged services, youth services and immunisation programs as well as facing significant increases

## WILLOUGHBY TO KEEP STATUS QUO, INVESTIGATE ALTERNATIVES

in fees for sport and recreation facilities.

Willoughby general manager Nick Tobin said the council would need to address the need for rate rises in this term but delaying a decision until later this year would not be "terminal" to council.

Are you happy with this outcome?

[northshoretimes.com.au](http://northshoretimes.com.au)

7/2/14

### Proposal for Special Rate Variation - Public Meeting

Willoughby residents can have their say on Council's proposal to apply for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) for current and future assets management at a **Public Meeting at 7pm, Tuesday 4 February**, at the Dougherty Community Centre, 7 Victor Street, Chatswood.

Under the proposed SRV, rates will increase over the next five years from 2014/2015 by an aggregated 28.8% (cumulative 32.27%). This will mean an increase of \$72.46 in 2014/2015 for the average residential rate, if Council is successful in this application.

Two model scenarios have been created and analysed for their input:

#### Case 1 – Business as Usual

The current budget will remain the same and will not provide for maintaining existing infrastructure - creating a poor financial income in the short, medium and long term.

#### Case 2 – Sustainable Service with Special Rate Variation

A Special Rate Variation will be used to address gaps in funding to keep assets and services at an acceptable level for the community.

A range of information and community feedback will be provided at [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au) until 10 February, or at Chatswood Library on The Concourse, Lower ground, 409 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood.

### WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

#### Monday 10 February 2014 -

Community consultation and feedback ends

#### Monday 17 February 2014 -

Councillors will vote and decide if to apply to IPART for a SRV

#### Monday 24 February 2014 -

SRV application due to IPART

### Further Resources

Visit [www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://www.willoughby.nsw.gov.au) to view our:

- Willoughby City Strategy
- Delivery Program
- Operational Plan and Budget
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Asset Management Plans
- Workforce Plan

## No to council's hike

WILLOUGHBY Council is proposing to seek a special rate variation of around 6 per cent.

The proposal should be rejected on the following grounds.

Council has failed to provide any detail of the assets claimed to be under-maintained, and the funds needed to be spent, nor a priority list of upgrades by project.

For ratepayers then, there is no transparency. In asking for more ratepayer contribution, the council has failed to demonstrate its ability to manage.

Willoughby Council is a monopoly provider in most areas, appears to have become used to annually-increasing budgets and spending all of the money raised - and at times borrowing more.

It is simplistic to believe the only way to fund the claimed essential works is by raising greater income. Reducing costs is just one other option and must be considered; if it is "one off" work, borrowing and amortising the cost over a long period, is another.

The council has not given details of the actual impacts of not raising our rates. This must be provided so ratepayers can consider the impacts of leaving income as it is.

In summary, I don't feel the council has provided anywhere near enough information for an informed decision.

**W HORWOOD, St Leonards**

## Comment on rates

I WRITE to present the facts regarding council's proposed special rate variation.

The proposal is to increase rates by 28.8 per cent aggregated over five years (32.27 per cent cumulative), as opposed to (the) expected IPART approvals of 14.3 per cent aggregated over five years (15.14 per cent cumulative).

At no time has council's rate in-

come increased annually by 30 per cent. All past rises above statutory approvals have received extensive public consultation.

Efficiency and income producing options were presented to the council on December 9. The report stated, "Council officers believe that initial savings of \$1m can be attained." The current long-term financial plan includes new non-rating income sources of \$1m per annum from 2015.

This proposal aims to provide a sustainable and long-term financial plan for the delivery and ongoing maintenance of Willoughby's assets, and will have an enormous impact on long-term quality of life in Willoughby.

It is important that the views of our community are heard.

I invite all residents to attend a public meeting on Tuesday, February 4 at 7am at the Dougherty Community Centre, Chatswood.

As mayor, I will continue to ensure that the community have a say in the future of Willoughby.

I encourage all ratepayers to provide their comments on the

proposal, which can be made until February 10.

Further details are available at [willoughby.nsw.gov.au](http://willoughby.nsw.gov.au).

**MAYOR PAT REILLY, Willoughby Council**

## Ring the bells more

I AM not a member of Naremburn Parish, so was lucky enough to stumble across the Sunday night bell ringing at St Leonards.

I was asked into the bell tower to watch the bellringers. What a great story this church and their bells have!

My husband and I travelled to Paris last year and stayed on the Ile de la Cite. We heard the mighty bells of the Notre Dame Cathedral ring non-stop from 5-6pm every night, and it was marvellous.

St Leonards' bellringers are permitted to ring openly for 15 minutes twice on Sunday.

There is a Section 96 application before council, closing on January 31, to let the bells ring for longer and to increase the sound level so they can be heard, especially on

22/1/14

22/1/14

# Council consults

## RESIDENTS TO HAVE SAY ON RATE INCREASE

Lauren Murada

COMMUNITY consultation has begun on Willoughby Council's special rate variation, with rates to go up by \$72 if it's approved for the 2014-15 financial year.

A statement from council said residents can choose to address the \$28 million backlog with the rate increase, or go on with business as usual.

"Under this scenario (no increase), council will continue to deliver services and manage its assets within current financial projections," the statement said.

"This scenario will result in the standard of our community assets declining over coming years as sufficient resources will not be available to maintain them.

"Maintenance costs will

### GET INVOLVED

- To have your say go to [haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au) by February 10
- Willoughby Council will be holding an information stall at the Chatswood Library on December 16 and January 21 between 10am to noon and 5pm to 7pm
- There will be a public meeting on February 4 at 7pm at the Dougherty Community Centre, Chatswood

increase as assets are not renewed, which will place further pressure on council budgets."

Without the increase council will have to look at reducing the opening hours of libraries and community facilities, reduce mainten-

ance of roads and storm-water systems and close some buildings and grounds following wet weather.

Mayor Pat Reilly said the community expects a higher level of quality of assets.

"The community believe council should make sufficient funding allocation to asset maintenance and renewal without reducing the level of service provided across council programs and facilities."

Under the proposed special rate variation rates will increase over the five years from 2014-15 by an aggregated 28.8 per cent (cumulative 32.27 per cent).

If the community is in favour of the rate variation, they will apply to the independent pricing and regulatory tribunal by February 24.

20/12/13

### Paying for town hall

ALLAN Coldin, you would be welcome to join us and share our "lovely town hall" if you are equally willing to help pay off our debt for it, which involves, according to a letter we have received, an increase in the rates of 28.8 per cent over five years, a situation even a child could see beforehand was going to occur.

The council of course refused to listen to reason. Surprise!

BRIDGED COMBE, Chatswood

24/1/14

### Cut costs at council

I REFER to the Willoughby Councils Proposal to apply for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to IPART.

I realise that costs need to be addressed but have councils heard of living within their means like those of us who are retired.

I suggest that the council look at ways of reducing costs rather than

finding ways of increasing them.

LEO VILENSKY, Castle Cove

31/1/14

### EDITORIAL

## Councils look for community input

Residents often complain they have not been properly consulted by councils. But in the case of the proposed rate rises by both Ku-ring-gai and Willoughby Councils, this could not be further from the truth.

Willoughby Council has put it all on the table when it comes to a backlog in infrastructure works and raising rates to address the problem. The council is calling on the community to have their say, and will have information stalls and hold a public meeting to ensure residents are on the right page. Ku-ring-gai Council is also calling for public comment. Now is the time to have your voice heard on this issue.

20/12/13

### WILLOUGHBY

## Meeting about 28.8pc rate hike

WILLOUGHBY Council will hold a public meeting on Tuesday night to discuss its proposal to increase rates by 28.8 per cent over five years.

Feedback will tell the council whether to apply for a special rate variation.

The meeting is at the Dougherty Centre, 7 Victor St, Chatswood, from 7-9pm. Inquiries on 9777 7702.

31/1/14

## More information

AS A mere ratepayer of the City of Willoughby I feel most uninformed by what is provided by the Willoughby City Council in a brochure Community Assets - at the Core of Your Neighbourhood, in which it is "offering" ratepayers no rate increases but deteriorating assets, or "rate increases with special rate variations".

To add to my dilemma I read a recent letter to your paper from Cr Stuart Coppock, decrying the need for any rate increases.

The information presented in the council's brochure is quite inadequate - basically offering all or nothing. Cr Coppock believes that the case for requiring additional funding to maintain community assets is not proven.

It is not good enough to expect ratepayers to blithely cough up when confronted by blank cheque demands for rate increases amid conflicting views from council members.

It is not too much to expect the council to present a proper business plan to ratepayers.

DOUGLAS GRANT,  
Lane Cove North

10/1/14

### Proposal for Special Rate Variation

Willoughby City Council is seeking community response regarding the proposal to apply for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) for current and future assets management.

Under the proposed Special Rate Variation rates will increase over the five years from 2014/2015 by an aggregated 28.8% (cumulative 32.27%). This will mean an increase of \$72.46 in 2014/2015 for the average residential rate, if Council is successful in this application.

Two model scenarios have been created and analysed for their input:

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#### Case 2 – Sustainable Service with Special Rate Variation

A Special Rate Variation will be used to address gaps in funding to keep assets and services at an acceptable level for the community.

A range of information and community feedback will be provided at [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au) until 10 February, or at the following:

#### Information Displays

Chatswood Library on The Concourse,

Lower ground, 409 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood

#### Information Stalls

10am - 12pm and 5pm - 7pm,

Monday 16 December, 2013 and Tuesday 21 January, 2014

Chatswood Library on The Concourse,

Lower ground, 409 Victoria Avenue, Chatswood

#### Public Meeting

7pm, Tuesday 4 February

Dougherty Community Centre, 7 Victor St, Chatswood

You can also make a submission in writing and address it to:

The General Manager

Willoughby City Council

31 Victor Street

Chatswood NSW 2067

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Community consultation and feedback ends

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- Workforce Plan



Willoughby deputy mayor Stuart Coppock.

THE rate rise is not necessarily "inevitable" as suggested.

This is the fourth rate increase under the current mayor, who has repeatedly promised "no rate increases". The latest such promise was in 2102 during the local government election.

This proposed rate increase is a 20 per cent hike. This is the second largest over the last 15 years, the largest being 30 per cent.

The threat of closure of libraries, childcare centres and other services is without foundation. It is a view of some council officers.

Councillors make such decisions on closures, not the officers. No report, recommendation or material making a recommendation of cuts or closures has been presented to the councillors or the community; none!

The proposed consultation for the 20 per cent rate increase is to occur over the Christmas period when most residents take time off or leave the city for family holidays. Not a good time for consultation and in my opinion, this could have been avoided.

Council staff have been aware of the infrastructure upgrade and repair details for a considerable time. Yet, at effectively five minutes to midnight, without a real idea of what might be involved in cost-cutting or what financial alternatives are available (a mix of cost efficiencies and a lesser rate increase, or even a levy), residents are told a rate increase is "inevitable".

This is simply not good enough.

**STUART COPPOCK,**

**Willoughby deputy mayor**

13/12/13

11/12/13

20/12/13

# Sharing of services a first step

## COUNCILLOR SEEKS SAVINGS

Lauren Murada

### AT A GLANCE

■ A local government review set up by the State Government proposed Willoughby, Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman and North Sydney councils amalgamate.

ANGELO Rozos wants to see councils sharing services as a way to ease into amalgamations.

The Willoughby Middle Harbour Ward councillor said although many people were anti-amalgamations, he could see it as a positive step to increase efficiency.

"The big issue we are all facing is the backlog of infrastructure," he said.

"Councils are no longer roads, rates and rubbish. We have to provide services in childcare, stormwater drains, state-of-the-art recreational facilities. It's costly and we need to look at providing opportunities for efficiency and work together with our neighbours."

Or Rozos also suggested sharing services across IT, garbage collection and purchasing new equipment through critical mass.

"We need to look at shared resources and get it (amalgamations) done in a staged process," he said.

"If it's a good council and it's run properly and it's

efficient there should be more services and higher quality." Local Government Review Panel said in its Future Direction for NSW Local Government 20 Essential Steps Report that Willoughby should amalgamate with Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Mosman, North Sydney councils.

General manager Nick Tobin said bigger, better resourced councils could make a substantial contribution to infrastructure planning and delivery.

"A collective approach with a broader vision for the future should not be limited to simply proposing Local Government amalgamation but should examine new models that also involve the other levels of government," he said.

# Rate rise inevitable if lifestyle to be maintained - mayor

**Lauren Murada**

Greg Woodhams said the special rate variation would maintain and renew assets to improve infrastructure for the community.

"If we don't have that revenue (from a rate rise) we may have to cancel programs or push out the works program," Mr Woodhams said.

"Then we would need

more money for the works to do in a later period."

If rates aren't increased, the community risks losing aged services, youth services and immunisation programs as well as significant increases in user fees for sport and recreation facilities, reduced maintenance of open space and bushland and public events cancelled.

The council will open community consultation on Sunday through its website and plans to hold a public meeting soon.

When the consultation period closes in February, if the public wants the rate rise, the council will apply for the 6 per cent rise through the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal.

The increase would be on top of the consumer price index rise, which is expected to be 2.3 per cent, taking the total to 8.3 per cent.

Willoughby Mayor Pat Reilly said a rate increase was inevitable. "We do have socio-economic standards around here and if we want to have a certain lifestyle there are going

to be certain costs," Cr Reilly said.

Willoughby Council has a \$28 million infrastructure backlog with improvements needed to stormwater infrastructure, roads, footpaths and community facilities.

**What are your thoughts on the proposed rate rise?**  
[northshoretimes.com.au](http://northshoretimes.com.au)

V1 - NSSE01Z01MA

NORTH SHORE TIMES, Friday, November 29, 2013

03

29/11/13

dual occupancy homes, townhouses, home units everywhere, and more are getting built all the time.

Then there are the high rise towers going up at Chatswood station.

Also high rise towers at Thomas St getting built, with more units.

How many home units have been built in the last few years?

All these units, townhouses, houses, shops pay rates.

Willoughby Council has never had it so good. So why a rate rise? Simple really, greed.

**PHIL RYAN, Willoughby**

6/12/13

## Rate rise is just greed

WILLOUGHBY Council wants to increase our rates. Why? There are

## Council not thinking

SO WILLOUGHBY City Council has to raise our rates.

I thought they must have had plenty in the bank when they replaced all the green bins, surely most were still serviceable.

That money would have fixed a few footpaths. What were they thinking?

**GAYE HYSLOP, Willoughby East**

11/12/13

Friday 17 January 2014

**Media Release**

## **Public Meeting - Special Rate Variation**

Willoughby residents can have their say on Willoughby Council's proposal to apply for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) at a Public Meeting at 7pm, Tuesday 4 February, at the Dougherty Community Centre, 7 Victor Street, Chatswood.

The proposal aims to provide a sustainable and long term financial plan for the delivery and ongoing maintenance of Willoughby's assets, including buildings, footpaths, roads, stormwater infrastructure, parks, bushland, sportsgrounds and playgrounds.

Under the proposed SRV, rates will increase over the next five years from 2014/2015 by an aggregated 28.8% (cumulative 32.7%). This will mean an increase of \$72.46 in 2014/2015 for the average residential rate, if Council is successful in this application.

"This is a chance for you, our community to be presented with the facts, ask questions and have your thoughts heard," said Willoughby Mayor, Pat Reilly.

"The proposal will have an enormous input on the long term quality of life in Willoughby and it is so important that the views of our community are at the forefront of this decision.

"I encourage all ratepayers to attend the public meeting, or provide comment on the proposal either in writing or at [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au) by 10 February," Mayor Reilly said.

- Ends -

**For media enquiries, to arrange an interview or photo please contact:**

Rebecca Hill  
Media and Marketing Group Manager  
E: [Rebecca.Hill@Willoughby.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Rebecca.Hill@Willoughby.nsw.gov.au)  
P: 9777 7703  
M: 0421 492 757

**Tuesday 4 February 2014**

## **Media Release**

### **Councillors Resolve not to Apply for Rate Increase**

Willoughby City Councillors have resolved not to apply to IPART for an increase in rate revenue. The decision was made at last night's council meeting (3 February) following a Mayoral Minute from Acting Mayor, Councillor Gail Giles-Gidney.

Councillor Giles-Gidney said the resolution not to make the application would allow council the opportunity to review all other cost-saving measures.

"Willoughby Council's Senior Management team are currently undertaking a thorough service review across the entire council to ascertain what organisational changes could be made to improve service delivery," she said.

"This service review may allow service streamlining and reduced costs, enabling funds to be allocated back to asset improvements. It is important that we assess all possible alternatives prior to applying for a rate increase.

"Following the issuing of the service review report, Council will reconsider an application for a rate increase in the 2015 / 2016 financial year," she said.

The service review has been in progress for 12 months, and is scheduled to be reported to Council in June 2014. Council will continue work on the asset management plans in order to refine the asset funding backlog.

- Ends -

**For media enquiries, to arrange an interview or photo please contact:**

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