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## Media Release

### Council takes next step to maintain long term financial sustainability

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Council will look to offset the impact of inflationary pressures through an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a Special Rate Variation. The Council recently approved a recommendation to commence an extensive community engagement program regarding this application at its November Ordinary Meeting.

The decision to begin this engagement process was made following careful consideration and financial modelling, which highlighted the ongoing impacts of global inflationary pressures such as elevated oil prices and supply chain disruptions.

Mayor, Cr Steve Allan, said this decision was a difficult one, but necessary to ensure the Council's financial sustainability and capability to deliver services to our community.

"We understand that rising cost of living impacts are being felt right across our community at the moment," Mayor Allan said. "Unfortunately, Bellingen Shire Council has also experienced significant increases to the costs associated with delivering services that will meet the expectations of our community.

"The impact on Bellingen Shire Council has been felt across several areas including significant cost increases to fuel, general insurance, electricity, heating, workers compensation, emergency services levy and superannuation.

"The continued rise of international inflation, elevated oil prices, strained supply chains and the ongoing pandemic all present risks to the global and domestic outlooks. As a result, the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) expects inflation to remain high for a number of years.

Council will engage extensively with our community as part of the IPART application process, with residents encouraged to provide their feedback through several engagement opportunities over the coming months.

"I want to reassure our residents that we would not be taking these steps unless it was absolutely necessary," Mayor Allan said. "Based on the financial forecasts, this is the most appropriate action at this time in responsibly managing Council's budget.

"I strongly encourage community members to take advantage of the upcoming consultation activities we will be hosting regarding the SV.

"This is a great opportunity for residents to engage with the Council, provide feedback and learn more about the reasons for the SV application."

For more details on the Special Rate Variation, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) process and other relevant information, visit the Have Your Say section of our website.

Council will provide more details in the coming weeks on community engagement activities, including 'drop-in sessions to be held in Bellingen, Dorrigo and Urunga as part of the planned engagement process.



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Authorised by Liz Jeremy, General Manager  
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