

**GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORTS****ELECTION OF MAYOR**

1309/002 The General Manager confirmed that one nomination for the position of Mayor had been received, being Cr Scott Ferguson.

Accordingly, Cr Scott Ferguson was returned as Mayor for the next 12 months.

**ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

1309/003 The General Manager confirmed that one nomination for the position of Deputy Mayor had been received, being Cr Allan Ewin.

Accordingly, Cr Allan Ewin was returned as Deputy Mayor for the next 12 months.

**CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE AMENDMENT - PRESENTATIONS TO COUNCIL**

1309/004 **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council amend its Code of Meeting Practice to incorporate presentations to Council into the meeting agenda at the point of Public Forum. (Kingham/Radburn)

**SPECIAL VARIATION UPDATE**

1309/005 **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council note the report on the progress being made to prepare for the Special Rate Variation of 15% as contained in the IP&R Documents.
2. That Council include in the IP&R documents a statement that discusses the Special Rate Variation based on the information within those documents. (Ewin/Somerville)

**COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEES - COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATION**

1309/006 **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council confirm representation on the relevant Committees. (Radburn/Ewin)

**MEETING DATES AND TIMES FOR ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL FOR THE FOLLOWING 12 MONTHS**

1309/007 **RESOLVED:**

1. That the dates outlined in the Report by the General Manager, relating to meeting dates and times for ordinary meetings of Council for the next 12 months, be adopted. (Oates/Ewin)

**04) SPECIAL VARIATION UPDATE**  
(General Manager)

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. That Council note the report on the progress being made to prepare for the Special Rate Variation of 15% as contained in the IP&R Documents,
2. That Council include in the IP&R documents a statement that discusses the Special Rate Variation based on the information within those documents.

**REPORT**

As reported to Council previously, the development of information to discuss a Special Rate Variation (SRV) with the community is under preparation. As part of this process to ensure that the community and council is fully aware of the structure of the variation and the outcomes around any increases in rates a number of meetings have been held with independent organisations.

To ensure that the proposed SRV can be afforded by the Blayney Shire community, Council has requested the Western Research Institute to undertake a review of the economic ability of the residential, business and rural communities to pay for the proposed 15% increase in rates. This is an important step from Council to determine if the needs and requests of the community as contained in the community developed IP&R documents can truly be afforded. This report will allow this independent assessment to be undertaken. It will then allow council to ensure that it is not over committing its community to loans and asset renewals above a level that can be sustainable.

A meeting has been held with NSW Treasury (Tcorp) to request them to undertake a review of the Council's long term financial plan. Again this plan has been based on the community expectations contained in the IP&R documents. The Tcorp review is to ensure that Council is providing a financial direction that will improve its assets (roads, bridges, footpaths and community needs) and ensuring that it is not over committing the community to loans and other costs that can not be sustained into the future. This review will test the 15% SRV and determine if it is affordable to the community. Council has taken this review process to ensure that the review is independent from itself or its auditors.

A further meeting has also been held with IPART. This meeting was to advise IPART that Council had approved going to the community to consult about the 15% SRV and to seek advice if in the opinion of IPART that this SRV would be considered overall. The advice from IPART indicated that Council will need to provide advice to them that the community can afford the proposed SRV of 15%. Further that the IP&R documents contain statements that indicate that the long term financial plan has been developed that includes a 15% SRV and that Council undertakes surveys of residents or provides advice on community consultation undertaken that ensures that the Shire community have knowledge of the 15% SRV.

To ensure that the IP&R documents contain a statement that is suitable for IPART the following is offered:

### **Special Rates Variation proposed under the Long Term Financial Plan**

Council has prepared its long term financial plan based on advice received from the community in the development of the Community Strategic Plan and through continuing discussions that will ensure enhancements to villages, sporting facilities and community infrastructure. The long term financial plan predicts that a Special Rate Variation of 15% across all rating categories is required every year from 2014/15 to 2019/2020. This cumulative increase will require that all rates across the shire will double over the six year period remaining under the long term financial plan.

Before Council can increase the rates to 15% annually it is required to consult with the community and to provide evidence to IPART that the community can afford the proposed increases.

### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of preparing documentation and community consultation will be undertaken from existing budgets.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed consultation for a SRV of 15% is in accordance with the approved documents.

### **IP&R:**

The Special Rate Variation is key to all future programs and delivery of improvements to infrastructure and sustainability of the Shire community.

### **Attachments**

Nil