

Media Release

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IPART Decisions on Council Special Variation Applications

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) has released its decisions on 9 NSW council applications for special variations to increase their general income by more than the rate peg.

IPART Chair Carmel Donnelly said of the 9 Special Variation applications, the Tribunal had approved 5, approved a lower increase for 3 and declined one.

Two of the applications were combined with minimum rate increase applications. The Tribunal approved one of these applications and approved a lower increase for the other.

"These decisions are based on our assessment against the Office of Local Government criteria, taking into account the issues raised by stakeholders during our submission period," Ms Donnelly said.

"The councils with approved increases are encouraged to consult with the community to decide how best to implement the allowed increase.

"It's important to note that elected councillors can choose when they implement the approved increase in rates income, including deferring any increases for up to 10 years and also how they set rates across the rating categories."

Every year IPART sets a rate peg for each council in NSW which caps the maximum amount councils can increase the general income they collect from ratepayers (rates income). IPART set the core rate peg for 2024-25 between 4.5% to 5.5%. There is also an allowance for some councils that experienced population growth.

If the elected councillors agree that a council needs additional revenue, the council can apply to IPART for a special variation to increase rates income by more than the rate peg.

IPART assesses special variation applications and minimum rate increase applications against criteria set out in guidelines issued by the Office of Local Government.

Reports on each of the 9 council special variation decisions, 2 minimum rate decisions, and related documents are now available on the IPART website at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au

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Table 1 Summary of IPART's decisions on councils' special variation applications

Council	Application	Decision	Approved annual Increases		
			2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Applications approved in full					
Blayney Shire Council	33.1% over 3 years	Approved	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Narrandera Shire Council	48.1% over 2 years	Approved	25.5%	18.0%	
Randwick City Council	11.67% in 1 year	Approved	11.67%		
Tamworth Regional Council	36.3% over 2 years	Approved	18.5%	15.0%	
Willoughby City Council	15% increase in 1 year	Approved	15.0%		
Applications approved partially					
Goulburn Mulwaree Council	51.2% over 3 years	Approved for 22.5% increase in 2024-25	22.5%		
Griffith City Council	34.9% over 3 years	Approved for 22.10% cumulative increase over 2 years	10.5%	10.5%	
Kempsey Shire Council	42.7% over 3 years	Approved for 24.09% cumulative increase over 2 years	7.9%	15%	
Application not approved					
Snowy Valleys Council	42.38% over 3 years	Not approved			Rate peg

Table 2 Summary of IPART's decisions on councils' minimum rate applications

Council	Application	Decision	New Minimum Rates
Goulburn Mulwaree Council	Business rates only - \$300 increase over 3 years	Business rates only - Approved for \$132 increase in 2024-25	Business rates - \$722 in 2024-25
Narrandera Shire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for residential, business ordinary and farmland rates - \$245 increase over 2 years for business Narrandera rates - \$275 increase over 2 years 	Approved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> for residential, business ordinary and farmland rates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$640 in 2024-25 - \$755 in 2025-26 for business Narrandera rates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$715 in 2024-25 - \$845 in 2025-26