

We fully support Hawkesbury City Council's application for a Special Rate Variation.

The current Council has undertaken extensive consultation with the local community outlining the financial challenge that it faces in generating sufficient revenue, to provide the required level of maintenance, renewal and replacement of assets it manages on behalf of our community.

As part of the consultation process Council presented three resourcing options to residents to raise the balance of the revenue required to increase investment in asset maintenance, renewal and replacement, and address the infrastructure backlog. Council also prepared a comprehensive provisional works program in the various areas of the LGA primarily targeted at undertaking asset renewal works to address the infrastructure backlog, so the Community could see the effects that each of the rate options they were proposing would have.

This level of consultation and planning was unprecedented in the history of Hawkesbury City Council. It fully outlined to the community the three options it had to allow a transparent decision to be made by residents. We supported the Option 3 increase in rates that has been presented in Council's SRV application then and we support it again now.

Nobody would purposely choose to increase rates but unfortunately the lack of strategic planning undertaken by previous Councils, together with previous SRV approvals for smaller rating increases than requested and, the cost shifting from State Government to Local Government has left this Council with no other option.

We need to get the Hawkesbury Local Government Area back on track and meeting the visions of local residents. It's no good complaining, as many residents are doing, that the maintenance is not being done when you don't have the financial ability to undertake the work in this geographically vast LGA.

It is acknowledged that one section of the LGA will be disadvantaged due to a concurrent increase in their land valuations, and we are sure that there will be many submissions lodged against the SRV purely because of their rate increase this year. But, the remaining residents in the LGA should not be disadvantaged because as the NSW Valuer General advised that "the rise in valuations were as a result of nearby land sales and that those areas experiencing some of the strongest increase in land values are a result of the demand for land with potential for future residential development and well located lifestyle properties". The rest of the LGA were not so lucky to have our property prices increase and should not now be disadvantaged by having this SRV application rejected or reduced just to appease this minority of residents.

We need this opportunity in the Hawkesbury LGA to have the same level of services and assets that other areas have and to do so we need to have the full application of the SRV approved.