

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 21 February 2024

Your submission for this review:

Annual rate pegging doesn't cover existing infrastructure inflation. It also doesn't cover the amount of renewals required for council assets. This review should include looking at IP and R for asset management. The community is often unaware of the difference between expected levels of service and the cost associated. Therefore, it puts political pressure on Councillors to not increase rates and move existing budgets to focus on visual/ front of mind issues. Stormwater infrastructure is constantly undervalued and under treated as it is underground and out of sight. Renewals are lagging significantly. Initiatives and upgrades required are also not planned for financially. The stormwater service management charge is used as a crutch for renewals. Having a mechanism to do a special rate variation, or increase pegging, that doesn't require or reduced dependency on Councillor/political approval would help council's to be proactive on the issue. I have also seen self-censor when it comes to costing infrastructure, so as to not make huge changes in asset portfolio values. This is potentially related to not wanting to alarm auditors from one asset management plan to the next. Giving council's the freedom to realise the true value of their asset portfolio's and have that be an acceptable thing would help. Especially in stormwater infrastructure where the assets locations, condition and details can be unknown until inspections take place. Managing natural assets is also difficult to financially plan for. Including a review of what assets can be considered in council's portfolio/ IP and R would be helpful. creating a new asset class for 'natural assets' would help Council's to start drafting plans to adequately fund interventions and maintenance for natural assets (like creek banks/ sand dunes etc) that need work due to poor condition.