

Author name: A. Karja

Date of submission: Friday, 5 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Our Council was a forced amalgamation, which no doubt has attributed financial situation with administrative costs and supporting staff into redundancy with reducing staffing requirements. These costs should not have to be shouldered by the community. We average 700kms travel into and out of town per week. The wear and tear on our vehicles, due to the ill repair of local roads, has not been accounted for in the household cost of living. Fuel costs are through the roof (we pay close to \$2/L for fuel in Cooma, which has to not only fuel our trips into town for work and food, but also fuel our farming equipment). We have 1 child at school, 1 in daycare, 2 adults who work off farm to subsidise the costs of being primary producers who support the Australian economy. And now, after being burnt out, flooded, having our business and off farm income impacted by Covid and having vermin plague us we are now expected to pay 53% more to our council who have yet to make any internal efficiencies in an attempt to support their constituents?! It's unfathomable.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. The fact that the council has mismanaged funds for the past decade is not good enough reason to raise our rates by more than 50%. Particularly given the current high cost of living, the fact that majority of residents are either farmers (whose households already work multiple jobs to make ends meet) or are aged pensioners and that we are all still recovering from the Black Summer Bushfires that ravaged our area (that we are still paying for in re-fencing burnt fences and re-stocking animals), I don't believe that they have looked internally to make efficiencies rather than simply charge us more money to live here. It also appears that the valuer general valuations have recently, surprisingly increased for the first time in recent memory..... and given that rate prices are based on land valuations..... this is very alarming as it will result in the predicted rate rises impacting our bottom line even more than anticipated.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

The options we were given were ridiculous: No rate change, services get worse 53% over 3-5 years, services stay the same (due to inflation) Or 53% now and its Utopia Seriously.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

There have been a few Facebook posts and a letter mail out. If it weren't for the efforts of a few community groups I wouldn't have even known I could make a submission to oppose the proposal.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They listened to the fact that majority of the community voted against their proposal and then they chose to do it anyway.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Given that the proposed increases to our rates is 53%, I cannot see how we can continue to be financially productive as Primary Producers. We have survived the impact of bushfires, and then Covid (which limited our ability to get farming supplies given they are all imported, generally from China) and now this. We are bleeding out, and the people we have elected to represent us would rather bleed us further than help us.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. They don't care.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

This is the first I've heard of this Also, I'd prefer I didn't have to jump through hoops and red tape to MAYBE get financial support for a situation that they caused.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I don't know?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and



cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Given that they have only graded our road twice since the Black Summer Bushfires (and one of those times was only a partial grading to the the entrance of the property that the firefighting C130 crashed at when the dignitaries where here for the anniversary commemoration) I doubt their commitment to any promise of community upkeep. We pay for garbage collection in our rates.... and we are not offered garbage collection. We can drive 10km to put our bins in a community collection (but we have to wait until someone else dies before we can get a bin spot there) or drive our own rubbish 32km to the local tip and put our rubbish there. Would Sydney residents be OK paying for garbage collection services that they have to take their own rubbish to?? I don't think so). Consider our local council community pool. It's run by a private enterprise who doesn't allow other businesses to operate within the premises. How is this supporting and servicing the community? We already see that council dont enforce weed control on small land holdings that are not primary production, putting the burden and costs of weed control back onto farmers. The costs of chemical control has sky rocketed since Covid. This rate increase will unfairly target primary producers who are already struggling to get back on their feet after fires, floods, Covid and rate hikes.



Author name: B. Griffiths

Date of submission: Friday, 5 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No as we have not been told what they did with their finances, why we are in such bad financial state, and what they intend to do with the extra rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

I don't think so but I am not sure. I am not aware of the extent council went to to canvas the state government to supply extra funds.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Not clearly, and certainly not to the individual rate payer.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

They sent out a letter in which they gave the options they wanted including the no rate rise option, but we had to put the options 1 to 4 in our preference order, which meant that on a preferential basis we had to allocate some vote to the other 3 options we did not want. If we did not want a rate rise we had no option to just vote for that. I think this option is not in keeping with democracy, its just like pick your poison. So no I dint agree that they did.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They voted in the first instance for a full rate rise, then after community disdain for this one councilor suggested a staggered rate rise which after a lot of arguing passed. Still not what many people want.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I am not aware that Council bothered to ask the community if they can afford a rate rise, or studied the impact on those many rate payers who are finding paying all the other bill hard, and yet they don't seem to care enough about the difficulties they will create for those people.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. As above not at all.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

This has not been made public knowledge, I have not met anybody who is aware of how they will address hardship.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I am not sure about exhibited, but the rest is true they did.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No response, they are having a full audit of the financials being done now, which was narrowly voted passed by one vote.



Author name: B. Philbrick

Date of submission: Monday, 1 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

As I stated previously, an independent audit needs to be undertaken urgently. Results MUST be published to the community. The accounting system needs urgent review. Local land values have recently risen by over 50% and this will definitely impact way the Council rates are calculated. A suggestion was made that an increase of 10% be made this year's rates, then 15% for the following years, rather than the horrendous increase in the council's application. If the Council's application is awarded it will punish the most vulnerable members of this community, ie pensioners and lower income residents. The average age of farmers is over 60, many are asset rich, but cash poor. The General Manager's contract has not been renewed. The Mayor gave a glowing radio interview of his work, if it was so good, why was he not re-appointed?

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO. Before any different revenue path can be implemented, a full independent Audit needs to be undertake as a matter of priority.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

This information has not been provided to ratepayers. A survey was conducted earlier this year and even with 80+% of respondents not agreeing the rate rises, the council ignored these wishes and still insisted on the rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

NO. In a rural town, each house block/property can be a different size, so all council rate charges can vary markedly. Yes there were approximate figures provided but no accurate figure was provided.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

NO. I attended a number of community meetings and apart from a five minute presentation by a "nominated" ratepayer, any discussion was strongly discouraged by the Mayor. In fact her tone to those of us who attended was less than cooperative. Even though, we the ratepayers are the councillor's employers.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

No active action was taken. A few token press briefings via the local radio or local newspaper. There are areas in this Council that cannot receive local radio and do not purchase newspapers. Their "unethical" original submission to IPART where they did not provide the actual percentage of ratepayer respondents who disagreed with the increase, show the the complete disrespect to the community response.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Information available on the 2021 Census provides that over 67% of the population of this area is over pension age. Cost of living pressure is already impacting the quality of life in rural areas. Petrol, food, electricity travel to attend medical appointments and other cost already affect the older ratepayers. A number of older ratepayers have also commented, "which do I pay my house insurance or the council rates"?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

A comment was made by a Councillor "Not sure which one", that "Those who can afford to pay SHOULD, and others would have a payment plan" There is already a payment plan, ie ability to pay quarterly. The Council's application for the increase causes a great deal of anxiety in the whole community, not only to pensioners and low income residents, but also to members of the community purchasing their property with the increase in the Interest Rates, causing an increase in mortgage payments.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Refer to previous comment - how can they address hardship, will they provide "soup kitchens, subsidised accommodation" or other measures. The towns in the "Snow" region, ie Thredbo, Jindabyne, Lake Crackenback have accommodation specifically for the snow season. Much of this accommodation is owned under "Management Investments Schemes" and is mainly only used during the snow season. If rate rises are applied to this accommodation, much would be on sale as owners could not afford to retain them, this will greatly affect the Council's revenue base.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?



These documents are available to view at the local council offices, in the libraries, but cannot be taken away to review at home. Information is also available online at the SMRC website, many senior ratepayers either do not have internet access or the knowledge to access these documents.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

When the councils were amalgamated over 10 years ago, Bombala Council had a surplus of over \$12 million, but that was absorbed (without any reference to the Bombala community) into general funds and now the majority of the Council's focus is on towns like Jindabyne. Any contract awarded SHOULD definitely be reviewed to ensure value for money. Roadwork equipment like bulldozers, graders, tractors and other equipment was sold off, so now if any works need to be done equipment is transported many kilometres at increased costs.



Author name: D. Jowett-Poulos

Date of submission: Friday, 21 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Rate increases should be the last action. Look carefully where \$\$ are spent, seriously consider a de merger of council areas - it has not worked in our rural region. Increase in funding of councils by state and federal govts is crucial - we are all suffering regionally. The big stakeholders in our region need to be held accountable - Snowy 2, NPWS, ski resorts - are they all contributing an equitable and appropriate \$\$ to our local community ?

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council appears to be determined to pursue the SV with little or no alternatives to cut costs or look at where savings could be made

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Our shire is experiencing unprecedented financial strain. A tourist destination with a lack of infrastructure but sky rocketing land values. In our case - \$1mill increase in VG land value. The council has a huge challenge - as we all do - but rate increases is a quick fix. The merger of the three councils has not had the economies of scale savings predicted

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council does not understand how hard these increases will be on the community

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Inadequate

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I am not aware of them

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Inadequate



Author name: D. Woodhouse

Date of submission: Monday, 1 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Council has only considered its own financial situation and given no consideration to the rate payers. In my case, I am a rural ratepayer and pay substantially more than urban ratepayers (\$9208 per annum ). No consideration has been given to the fact that rural rate payers receive no services that residential ratepayers receive. In my case the area that I farm is 777 hectares which is below the area considered to be viable. The accepted minimum farm size in this area is 1100-1200 hectares. Council should consider this when setting rural rates.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council has stated it wants to help the next generation with no consideration of the current ratepayers.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No satisfactory alternative has been put forward

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Many ratepayers in community have attended several extraordinary meetings to discuss the rate increase, however the Mayor has told us not to speak because we do not have a voice.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has voted to go ahead with the increase over a 5 year period which will do little to help ratepayers who have received huge valuation increases this year from the VG's office.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

My present rates are \$9208.00 per year for 777.7 hectares of farmland. The VG's valuation for this land has increased from \$2043750 in 2019 to \$7190000 this year. This huge increase should give council the extra revenue it requires without increasing the current rate.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council has given no consideration to these issues.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council has not made any comment on addressing community hardship.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

These documents were not widely circulated.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has said it has no debt, but wants to create financial reserves for projects that many in the community regard as non-essential infrastructure.



## Rates & Charges 2022/2023



D G Woodhouse

BERRIDALE NSW 2628



016  
I001775  
R1\_3923

**Assessment Number**

**Rating Year**

2022/2023

**Issue Date**

20/04/2023

**Due Date**

31/05/2023

**Amount Due**

\$2,302.00

**Property Valuation Number**

**Description and location of property rated by Snowy Monaro Regional Council**

BERRIDALE NSW 2628

**Particulars of Rates Instalment**

### 4TH INSTALMENT NOTICE

Instalment No. 4 due 31/05/2023

\$2,302.00

Please deduct any payments made since 20/04/2023

Council alerts purchasers of land or property in SMRC region, be it for residential purposes or otherwise, that Legal and Practical Access to the purchased land is the responsibility of the purchaser.

Please note: Interest will accrue on overdue amounts at 6.00% per annum.

**Total Amount**

\$2,302.00

**GO GREEN. GO ELECTRONIC.**

Receive your rates notices via email

Register now at [snowymonaro.enotices.com.au](http://snowymonaro.enotices.com.au)  
with eNotices reference number:



**Rates Payment Advice**

**Please detach and return with your payment**

Please see reverse for further information and methods of payment

Name: D G Woodhouse

Assessment Number:

Amount Due: \$2,302.00

Due Date: 31/05/2023



Present this remittance advice at any  
SMRC Office



Post this remittance advice with your  
cheque made payable to:  
Snowy Monaro Regional Council



**VISA**

Pay by phone, fax, mail or in person.  
Please see reverse for details.

Contact us on 1300 345 345  
for further information.



Billers Code:  
Reference:

**Please check your BPAY  
details before payment.**





Valuer General

# Notice Of Valuation

Land value as at 01/07/2019



Return to: PO Box 745, Bathurst NSW 2795

Valuation District SNOWY MONARO REGIONAL  
Property Number [REDACTED]

19



D [REDACTED] WOODHOUSE

[REDACTED]  
BERRIDALE NSW 2628

The Register of Land Values shows you to be the owner(s) or lessee(s) of the property detailed below.

D [REDACTED] WOODHOUSE

Address of Property [REDACTED] BERRIDALE NSW 2628

Description of land (Lot/Section/Plan)

[REDACTED]

Zone Primary Production

Area 777.763 hectares (calculated)

Dimensions

## Valuation Details

Land value as at

01/07/2019

Land value

\$2043750

This is a supplementary Notice of Valuation. It details the land value as at the 1 July in a valuing year used for council rating purposes.

Supplementary Notices of Valuation are issued outside the usual three to four year valuation cycle because of specific changes to circumstances surrounding the property.

Last date to object 28/12/2022

## Basis for valuation

The land value is the freehold value of the land having regard to restrictions imposed by a lease from the crown.

This land value reflects the property market conditions as at 01/07/2019. The land value reflects the physical condition and the way in which the land could be used as at 07/10/2022.

David Parker, NSW Valuer General

The land value recorded on this Notice of Valuation has been determined under the *Valuation of Land Act 1916* for rating and taxing purposes. Land values have regard to the requirements of rating and taxing legislation and should not be used for any other purpose without the specific agreement of the Valuer General.





Return to: PO Box 745, Bathurst NSW 2795

**Valuation District** SNOWY MONARO REGIONAL  
**Property Number** [REDACTED]

19



D [REDACTED] WOODHOUSE

[REDACTED]  
BERRIDALE NSW 2628

The Register of Land Values shows you to be the owner(s) or lessee(s) of the property detailed below.  
D [REDACTED] WOODHOUSE

**Address of Property** [REDACTED] BERRIDALE NSW 2628  
**Description of land (Lot/Section/Plan)**

**Zone** Primary Production  
**Area** 777.763 hectares (calculated)  
**Dimensions**

### Valuation Details

Land value as at	01/07/2022
Land value	\$7,190,000

**Last date to object** 24/06/2023

### Basis for valuation

The land value is the freehold value of the land having regard to restrictions imposed by a lease from the crown.  
This land value reflects the property market conditions as at 01/07/2022. The land value reflects the physical condition and the way in which the land could be used as at 17/10/2022.

**Stewart McLachlan, Executive Director, Valuer General NSW as delegate of the Valuer General.**

The land value recorded on this Notice of Valuation has been determined under the Valuation of Land Act 1916 for rating and taxing purposes. Land values have regard to the requirements of rating and taxing legislation and should not be used for any other purpose without the specific agreement of the Valuer General.



Author name: J. Wholohan

Date of submission: Friday, 5 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

All properties in Snowy Monaro Regional Council have only just received updated property valuations from the NSW Valuer General's office (in the last two weeks). The majority have gone up substantially, my own by 74%. If the ratepayers are to get hit with both this higher valuation (on which rates charges are based/multiplied) as well as the Special Rate Variation, the cost impact will be simply unaffordable. Council have said that some properties in the area have had their valuations increase by between 200 & 400%. I implore you to not grant the Special Rate Variation in light of the new property valuations as the cost of this "double whammy" will be too much to bear for so many people.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: L. Blyton

Date of submission: Friday, 5 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

There has been no fore seen to the growth of the region. No consideration to the elderly who are trying to be independent. No consideration to the low income family of the region. No independent audit of the the financial of the council. No consideration of day to day increase of daily living. No fully discloser of the council expenditure. No explanation of the wastage of funds eg speakers being brought for the park in Cooma when other needs are not prioritised.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The council has miss lead the community on the construction period of the special variation of the rate raise. Has not considered the impact on the residents of the Monaro region. Has not listened to the residents via the survey.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Has not included the rates raise in the natural increase of the value of land in the area

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Has not disclose the monthly financial statements of the council. There are many areas the the statement of income and expenses do not match and the monthly statements dont match, monthly statements are missing and misleading

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Asking of an independent audited has been ignored. The community survey has been ignored even to a stance by the major in a meeting standing up to tell the public that they dont have a say, in what goes on the council.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The council ignored the response from the community. Did not consider the results of the survey stating the results of having an 86% reply was false. Passed the variable against the support of other councillors.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The impact of the sv has not taken in to consideration of the sv being beyond the financial capacity of the rate payers specialty with increase of the value of the land value.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Not all of the funding has be disclosed especially with government funding.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

There is no hardship proposal, if youre behind in your rates a solicitor company has brought the debt increase the rates added their cost, making harder for low income families in the region.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

The sv has been various with no specific reason.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

This is a region that has been hit by firer, Covid, drought and a huge impact on low income families and elderly.



## Petition to IPART in relation to pensioners and the proposed SRV of 55.25% over five years from 2023/24 by Snowy Monaro Regional Council

Our petition covers the four aspects below:

### 1. Absence of consideration to pensioners shown by council

In their submission to IPART, Port Stephens Council (PSC) showed far greater concern for their residents, surveying them with regard to their ability to pay increased rates. PSC found **29% of pensioners** and 15% of non-pensioners couldn't afford to pay an increased SRV while SMRC showed no concern in their approach to presenting options.

### 2. By 2027/28 pensioners will pay more than double the 2022/23 amount

The \$250 rebate for pensioners was mandated by the state government in 1989 over three decades ago – without a rise since! A rebate worth far less now than three decades ago coupled with a massive rise creates a financial burden that the pension is not calculated to accommodate.

Residential council rates with SRV of 55.25% over 5 years and rate peg and pension comparison figures up to 2027/28

Figures based on: Pension (average for single person) with \$250 rebate, 4% increase per year and rate peg at 4% per year

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Current rate (minus \$250 rebate)	\$730.29					
<b>Increase amounts</b>						
SRV increase amounts		\$120	\$238	\$369	\$514	\$675
Rate amounts inc SRV -rebate		\$850	\$969	\$1,100	\$1,245	\$1,405
Rate amounts including rate peg (calculated on total)		\$884	\$1,007	\$1,144	\$1,295	\$1,462
% increase (\$730 to \$1,462) in 5 years based on SRV and rate peg						100.15%
<b>Pension and % of income paid for rates</b>						
Pension with 4% increase year-on-year from 2023/24	\$26,689	\$27,664	\$28,771	\$29,921	\$31,118	\$32,363
Rate amounts with rate peg only	\$730	\$760	\$790	\$821	\$854	\$889
% of income paid to council with rate peg only	2.74%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%
% of income paid to council with SRV and rate peg		3.20%	3.50%	3.82%	4.16%	4.52%



### **3. Increase of rebate in line with SRV increase**

We propose an increase of the rebate from \$250 to \$500 which still means that we will be paying \$1,212 in 2027/28, a 66% increase on the \$730 pensioners currently pay.

### **4. Mismanagement by council**

It is mismanagement by council that is the cause of this exorbitant rate rise, not fault by pensioners. Council needs to get creative about raising funds rather than turning to residents and trying to gouge money from them they simply cannot afford.

From Snowy Monaro Community Advocates

1. Investigation in the water tank cover up by the previous government and a replacement tank.
2. Review of the true costs and benefits of the Snowy 2.0 project. Why was there never a cost placed against doing business in the Kosciuszko National Park?
3. A \$ review of the impacts of Snowy 2.0's transfer of RedFin across KNP and the impacts to the lucrative trout fishing industry.
4. A review of the maintenance of public roads being damaged due to the higher than designed usage by Snowy 2.0
5. An independent review into Snowy Monaro Regional Council's governance role by Councillors. E.G. how does the Council spend \$2.7.M in "restricted funds" without Councillors required legislated authorization and after the event without any appropriate governance response from the Councillors
6. SAP(Special Activation Precinct) Barilaro proposed areas within KNP be rezoned as SAP's. There needs to be a review of why they benefit the protection of KNP? We say a SAP in a National Park are an oxymoron.



Author name: M. Coughlan

Date of submission: Thursday, 20 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
Take into consideration the huge increases in land value due to people from out of area overpaying for property.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Yes but this was all done prior to the large increases in land value due to covid spending locally. Now we will get hit with double the rates as they are based on the huge new land values.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Once again prior to the valuer general's increases in value was delivered after rate increases we set

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Took the lower amount but still massive increases especially on top of crazy new land valuing

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is massive, new housing estate developments approved with developers not being forced to pay for upgrades to water and sewer infrastructure. Now long term residents have to help foot the bill!

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The community is not happy and in many instances unwilling to pay and possibly unable to pay

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Have not seen the detail

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Have not seen any detail of cost containment and efficiency



Author name: M. Newman

Date of submission: Friday, 5 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

1. Management and governance shortcomings Councils financial reports are regularly wrong. For example, the December 2022 Quarterly Statements presented the actual values from the September 2022 statements. Each period since some councillors have pointed out that the cash position of council has been mis-reported. SMRC has also not operated in line with standard practice nor has it been managed in compliance with the Local Government legislation. Errors in the accounts mean that councillors and SMRC executives cannot take timely management action to keep council on budget. 2. Reckless decision making SMRC has a history of spending on optional and non-essential projects that have a net negative impact on its operating results. For example, it invested in a library in Jindabyne knowing that it would have a net operating cost that SMRC could not afford to fund. Likewise it is currently investing in a sports hub in Cooma that will have a net operating cost more than \$200,000 per year. 3. Wont address over servicing / poor efficiency SMRC has failed to address over servicing and poor efficiency by loss making services despite the community rejecting increasing revenue. I have provided photos of Council built footpath 100s of metres long in front of the Adaminaby Police Station that is over 400mm thick and has no re-enforcement. Aus Standards state 75-100mm thick is the norm so there for we have spent 4 times the amount and they have then sold 4 times the amount of topsoil taken away. This is just one example how this council just wastes money and demands the Community must pay more. They should tighten their own belts. 4. Questionable quality and independence of SMRCs financial sustainability review The SRV uses a report developed by the AEC Group as part of an independent financial sustainability review. It is understood that AEC changed their recommended rate rise (34% over six years) to be 43% in FY 2023/24 after being appointed by SMRC to do more work. Many on the community are wondering if AECs work was flawed given that council ignored their advice. 5. A deeply flawed community consultation The consultation was deeply flawed: The options presented and that formed the survey were worded inconsistently with the scenarios outlined in the Long Term Financial Plan. Option 1 was misleadingly worded with many people believing it was a 53% rate increase for one year only (Option 1) when in fact it was a permanent increase followed by rate peg increases thereafter. Option 2 was misleadingly worded with many people believing it was a 55.25% increase over five years, when in fact it was a 69% increase over five years. The survey required people to rank three options in their order of preference. This meant that people had to assign a preference to options they may not have supported at all. Many community members did not complete the survey as a result. The survey tool had a smart phone version that was prone to mis-capture the respondents correct preferential order. 6. The communitys preference was ignored A vast majority of survey responses were in favour of Option 3, effectively a period of austerity rather than an SRV. Had the survey flaws not occurred this percentage would likely have been far higher. However, despite getting a very clear result, our councillors ignored the communitys wishes. 7. Uncertainty of leadership and capacity Council recently resolved to end the employment contract of the general manager. Both the mayor and deputy mayor were outvoted on the matter. The leadership of both the elected council and also the council executive is in disarray as a result. Council does not have the capacity at this time to deal with any SRV effectively nor to introduce or execute cost containment nor efficiency programs. The termination of the current general managers contract also casts a pall over the validity of the SRV application process. This concern is further amplified by the large numbers of CFO's council has lost in recent times. IPART is also referred to the recent OLG review into SMRC in this regard to this and other finance concerns. Council also recently resolved to undertake a financial audit. It is clear that the elected councillors have little confidence in the validity of the reported financial results. For IPART to make any determination based on the questionable information provided would be an act of recklessness. I further note that the councillors routinely struggle to approve the budget reviews due to the errors in the business papers. 8. Wrong timing Also it is appropriate to allow the new general manager, once appointed, to chart their direction for SMRC finances. Any actions by IPART should be deferred until the new general manager is appointed and has sufficient time to comprehend the true state of council's finances.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, council has not identified specifically what the additional funds will be used for. They have worded documents and meeting to include "Upgrading of buildings" yet the Mayor has been canvassing an Architect to build an entire, "NEW COUNCIL Building"

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, details of alternatives have not been provided for comment.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No, the council materially mislead the community on the exact amount. On Council's Have Your Say SRV page in October 2022, Council included a Fact Sheet that showed Option 2 as a 55.25% increase over 5 years (extract below). However, Council's revised application to IPART shows Options 2 as a cumulative increase of 68.87% over 5 years (see p10 2 March SRV application). Council has continued to mislead the community in its Media Release of 14 April 2023 where it notes that Option 2 is a 55.25% increase over 5 years (see attachments



Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes, Council received some 2000 submissions representing around 10% of the residents. Of those submissions 86% voted against the 53% SRV increase and 63% voted for no SRV at all.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council completely disregarded the 86% of community responses against the 53% SRV. A deeply flawed community consultation. The consultation was deeply flawed: The options presented and that formed the survey were worded inconsistently with the scenarios outlined in the Long Term Financial Plan. Option 1 was misleadingly worded with many people believing it was a 53% rate increase for one year only (Option 1) when in fact it was a permanent increase followed by rate peg increases thereafter. Option 2 was misleadingly worded with many people believing it was a 55.25% increase over five years, when in fact it was a 69% increase over five years. The survey required people to rank three options in their order of preference. This meant that people had to assign a preference to options they may not have supported at all. Many community members did not complete the survey as a result. The survey tool had a smart phone version that was prone to mis-capture the respondents correct preferential order.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed increase is unreasonable based on the 86% of responses against the 53% SRV. Housing interest rates are rising and so is electricity. People cannot afford any rate rise but would prefer Council to tighten their own belts and have better practice of cost/time/man management.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

The community are unwilling to pay, 63% of over 2000 responses called for no SRV. Another rate rise was announced this morning 5/May/23

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The plan still requires full payment over time. Ultimately failing to pay the rates will see your property sold from underneath you. Already there has been a number of residents in the LGA that have sold or have their houses up for sale. On speaking to them they have said they are unable to pay the increase in rates. Also consideration has been the massive jump in Unimproved land values in the Area by the Valuation General. The Majority has tripled over 5 years and yet Council land values did not increase during the years 2019 and 2020

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No, in previous community consultation on SRV the council dismissed some 80% of submissions calling for no rate increase prior to a financial audit being undertaken. There has been no formal announcement of the result or the reasoning why they have disregarded the community's input.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No cogent explanation has been presented to the community.



# OPTIONS

## **Option 1 – 53% rate increase to be paid in 2023/24**

Enables an additional investment of \$64.3 million in asset renewal to stabilise the current infrastructure backlog and to undertake additional renewal and maintenance of our roads and other community assets. Current service levels will be maintained while also progressively improving the operating result i.e. financial sustainability.

## **Option 2 – 55.25% rate increase spread over five years starting from 2023/24**

Enables an additional staged investment of \$51.1 million in asset renewal to progressively stabilise the current infrastructure backlog and to undertake additional renewal and maintenance of our roads and other community assets. Over time, current service levels will be maintained while also progressively improving the operating result i.e. financial sustainability.

## **Option 3 – No SRV, Rate Peg Only**

Assets and service levels will deteriorate, and the current infrastructure backlog will continue to grow as additional assets deteriorate below satisfactory condition. Council will be required to reduce services and close unsafe facilities.















Author name: n. Kilpatrick

Date of submission: Friday, 5 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. The Council has not clearly indicated where the money will be spent. The information provided was misleading in the cumulative effect of the proposed rate rise.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. The Council has had no community meetings or open forums. No alternative details have been offered. In councils on line survey the overwhelming majority of respondents rejected the rate rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. They did not.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Some 2000 people responded and 86 % voted against the initial proposed increase. ^3 % voted for no increase at all.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

By and large the council has ignored community feedback.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is an unreasonable amount.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council still requires full payment.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council still requires full payment.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has offered no satisfactory explanation. Its financial reporting is not transparent. It does not address persistent community complaints in regard to poor performance and unnecessary spending. It has not accepted community requests for review and audit. There has been a large turnover of CFO. From the time of merger council has gone from profit to loss.



Author name: P. Daley

Date of submission: Saturday, 29 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The Snowy Monaro Regional Council has been burdened with a flawed staffing structure since the merger of the Bombala, Cooma-monaro and Snowy River Shires in 2016. There has been no commitment to making the organisation more efficient. The senior staff positions have increased not only in number but also in the salaries paid to those staff members. Additional and unnecessary positions have been created with no improvement to either efficiencies or service delivery. All those positions have led to more red tape and meaningless reports and policies. The current structure is centralised and is not fit for purpose for a local government area as large and as diverse as the Snowy Monaro Region. A recent report to Council in April 2023 regarding the structure recommended no action be taken and only examined the structure from the top down, not from the bottom up which is what should happen in order to see the delivery side of Council fit for purpose. That recommendation was decided on by exception, giving the public no reasons or explanations for the decision. While ever the Council is allowed to increase its rates without considering an efficient staff structure, there will be no change to the top heavy and inefficient organisation that exists today and the result will be a run down in infrastructure and continuing deficit budgets. This organisation is in dire need of a major overhaul and allowing the special rate variation being applied for will not improve this Council nor provide the catalyst for change. When the merger of the three councils was proposed I was hopeful that it would give opportunity for the councils to improve on the inefficiencies of the former councils but the appointment of the unfit for purpose General Manager quickly demonstrated that the merger in its present form will not be and has not been successful. Further, I don't think a demerger is the best way to go. A MAJOR restructure is what this council needs, not providing more money to squander on staff salaries and consultants

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

YES

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

YES

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

YES

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council completely disregarded the community submissions on the proposed special rate variation. The initial decision was quickly resolved and it was only following a recession motion that the initial proposal for a huge one off rate increase was overturned and replaced with the less expensive option to the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is totally unreasonable to allow any rate increase without thoroughly examining Councils structure and service delivery priorities.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

This community is classified as a low socioeconomic population and therefore this Council must examine all means of delivering services efficiently and effectively. I don't believe Council has fully considered the financial ability of its community to pay for the increased rates.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No comment

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I don't believe so.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and



cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

There has been explanation of any productivity improvements other than to sprukey about how the additional funds will make huge improvements to our road network and allow for proper maintenance of Councils assets. There were also threats made that services would need to be cut if the special rate variation is not applied for or improved. Any explanation made on either did not provide any substance.



Author name: S. Bate

Date of submission: Tuesday, 25 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

IPART need to address a reversal of the business model of Regions being the life blood of the greater populace (cities) and ironically paying more in rates, electricity, fuel, building materials etc than city counterparts The State and Federal governments should be supplementing the higher price regions pay including and not restricted to: food Fuel Electricity Water rates Land rates Building materials To conclude Regions supply the greater populace (Cities) with the following and not restricted to: Recreation Water Electricity Fuel for cities from Regional ports Vegetables Fruit Meat grain Bitumen Sand for glass Lime for cement Ore for manufacturing and export Wood Bricks All other building materials Wool/cotton/hemp for clothing Regions supply all primary life giving essentials for the cities throughout the Nation. Yet the Regions pay extraordinarily high rates on essential services. The prediction can only be the ruin of the life giving support Regions give cities Nationally. Regions should not be paying any more for Rates than their city counterparts and State and Federal Governments need to supplement primary essential services throughout all regions (including rates) who will in turn be able to continue be the life blood of the greater populace Of this great Nation.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NA

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

NA

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

NA

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

NA

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

NA

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

NA

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

NA

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

NA

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

NA

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

NA



Author name: S. Woolcock

Date of submission: Thursday, 20 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I have not seen any justification to implement such a large rate increase above standard allowed increases. Especially in Jindabyne where the population is steadily increasing and substantial growth is planned in the short to medium term. The rateable base should be on a steady rise & council should demonstrate why they cannot deliver services to its current rate base and why the additional ratepayers that will soon reside in our area, is not enough to provide an economy of scale required to efficiently deliver councils services.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Not in my opinion

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not really, only the threat of decreasing services.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

I believe they have tried, but we live in a world where people show very little interest in Council & Government matters & remained disengaged until it is too late.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I believe the community clearly rejected the council desire to increase fees without explaining why they have not been able to contain current costs of providing service.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Overall the Snowy Monaro Council area covers a wide demographic of personal wealth and financial opportunities. Our area requires a large number of persons on lower incomes to work for farms, tourism & supporting service industries. Nearly all lower income people are struggling with costs of living & people we need in this area will not move here for work as cost of living is already way too high, with very few opportunities to obtain affordable accommodation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Several members of our community can afford the proposed rate rise with little to be effect on their lives, whereas others who are already struggling will find this as another reason to consider moving out of our area. It is also detrimental to any valuable low income employees who may be considering relocating to the Snowy Monaro. These people are in huge demand & our community is highly reliant on them.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I do not recall seeing or reading anything that would be considered genuinely beneficial to anyone who is already in financial hardship. I would like to add that I am personally fine and could cope easily with the rate rise, however I like to think that young people living in our area and providing service to me and my family can live a good & comfortable life.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Completely unsure of this. I am however sure it could be found on a web site somewhere that the majority of disengaged ratepayers will never read.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Unsure if Council has put any real effort into maximising efficiency in delivering its services.



Author name: T. Egan

Date of submission: Friday, 5 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Council have no consideration for taxpayers, therefore why should residents pay for more excessive spending, that then feeds the monster .???

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, Council's excessive spending on unnecessary infrastructure has led to massive shortfalls, and assume the only way is to increase rates not cut waste spending

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, council has given ratepayers no other choice in reassessing cost savings other than massive rate increases

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No, fringe residents in the council area cop increases of up to \$2200 per household in low disposable income areas, with no real benefits from rate increases, only in more density areas, where excessive spending has created council budget shortfalls.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, point blank, No just very vague information if you ask,

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council completely ignored a council funded survey the first survey, that was 88% against their proposal, and only had to withdraw after some councillors rescinded the first survey.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

We are retired with two property's in the fringes of council area, with our income a Veterans disabled pension, it will affect our living costs by approximately another 22% of our disposable income, with no discernible benefit to our village.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

The general topic of conversation within our community is "We are not going to pay, let them try to take my home when I fall into arrears, because I can't afford it"

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

██████████, charge you interest on a rate increase that is not justified due to poor fiscal management by them for over 8 years.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

In a fashion

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

██████████, if I ran a business in their financial style... it would be trading insolvent



Author name: T. Redondo

Date of submission: Friday, 14 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

All the above questions are a bit complicated for me but what I can tell you is, the councilors don't have any idea what they're doing and are taking the easy way out by contracting all their work, we are being robbed blind. If you read the review survey responses and written feedback on the council website, you will see the mood of the people. Money is being thrown around on rubbish like a drunken sailor. Here's an example....Council wants to built public toilets in Bredbo at a cost of \$800 000, you figure it out. The business of maintaining machinery etc is too much hard work for them. I mean you take a good look at them, do they look to you like a crew that could run a construction site? lol no, they are lawyers. Council needs to be audited and sacked for their incompetence.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Yes and it points to not having a clue on how to run a business.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

There is no alternative, it's their way and that's all there is to it. You can see that in review survey responses and written feedback on the council website.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes and half of us fainted.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Next question!

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Like Jesus on the hill, they had a BS answer for everything. It's their way or the highway.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

WE CAN'T AFFORD IT.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. What community, as if they care.....not half obvious by the attitude they take towards our feedback.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

How is the council going to address hardship if they caused it in the first place through mismanagement. God help us all if I have to rely on them to address my hardships.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Sir/Madam, the council has no idea on how to run a business. THEY MUST BE SACKED.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 2 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Ignored us completely unreasonable

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Totally unreasonable

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Nil

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No comment

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Unknown

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

None forthcoming



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 3 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The former Bombala, Cooma Monaro, and Snowy River Councils had all forecast the need for significant SRVs in their LTFPs prior to the implementation of the merger in 2016. It was inevitable that SMRC would also require a significant SRV after inheriting the unsustainable financial positions of each of the former Councils. Despite localised rhetoric that one particular Council was 'more' financially sound than others prior to the merger, the true position of that Council has since been shown to be completely different. Over time, the systemic lack of fundamental maintenance and resourcing for some of the most basic of Council-provided services by that Council has been revealed, and was nothing short of appalling. SMRC covers a very large geographical area, with a relatively low population. The low population density does not enable efficiencies with provision of many services, especially with high travelling distances. The instability of the current group of Councillors is also concerning as there are poor decisions being made on many operational aspects that they shouldn't be involved in. Some Councillors also appear to be making decisions and/or public comments just to appease a vocal minority who put themselves forward as representing the broader community. All this is creating is disharmony and distrust. The quality and capacity of some of the Councillors elected since the Merger has not led to good decision making or sound governance.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Yes, however it has probably understated the position inherited by SMRC from the merger of the former Bombala, Cooma Monaro, and Snowy River Councils. The financial positions of at least some of the previous Councils, and in particular the expected financial benefits promoted by KPMG as contained in the information from the Merger case, has since been shown to be flawed. Each of the 3 former Councils had indicated the need for significant SRVs in their LTFPs which were included in the Merger case (2015/16) so there could be no expectation that the financial position would be different some 7 years later. The period following the Merger exposed several examples of inaccurate or misleading information from at least some of the former Councils, particularly in the areas of Waste Management, inadequate Water Supply operation and maintenance of some Council water supplies, inadequate operation, maintenance and management of some Council sewer systems, extremely poor condition and lack of maintenance of many local bridges and roads.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes. However, wholesale cutting of existing services is not a good outcome.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes. Examples of increases across various rate categories were provided, and comparisons with average rates for various categories with other rural/regional Councils were also provided.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Feedback was reported as shown in SMRCs attached documents

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

While no-one wants to pay more, the proposed increases are reasonable when consideration of all underlying facets are taken into consideration. SEIFA indexes do not indicate an overwhelming incapacity of the average resident to accommodate increases. Without the SRV, service levels will suffer and this will be an unacceptable outcome.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Capacity to pay is one thing, willingness is another completely different aspect. As above, no-one really wants to pay increased rates, however, it is arguable that the pricing of services provided has been inadequately set in the past. SEIFA indexes do not show an overwhelming incapacity to pay for the majority of the 'average' residents. Other cost of living impacts are perhaps fueling a narrative around 'inability' to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Appears to be consistent with the requirements of the LG Act

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted



by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes from what I can see

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

SMRC has shown some productivity improvements however more are required. It is however hampered by the protections afforded through the LG Act for protection of staff numbers in certain localities - which is just another Merger hangover embedded in legislation.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 4 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. SMRC has not clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's general fund. In 2022, Snowy Monaro Regional Council (SMRC) engaged AEC Group Pty Ltd to undertake a financial sustainability review of Council in response to concerns regarding the financial sustainability of the Council raised by the community, the NSW Audit Office, the NSW Office of Local Government and individual Councillors. The prime objective of the Financial Sustainability Review (FSR) was to identify robust options to ensure the Council can operate sustainably and efficiently into the future. The FSR was delivered to Council in November 2022 and made 24 recommendations. The recommendations identified that a significant contributor to Council's unsustainable financial position was due to systemic deficiencies in financial governance, controls and council decision-making. It also found that Council needed to enhance strategic planning and productivity and efficiency of services (see pp v - vii, Financial Sustainability Review, Snowy Monaro Regional Council, October 2022, [aecgrouppltd.com](http://aecgrouppltd.com), included in Council's SRV application). In 2022, the NSW Office of Local Government advised Council that it had identified several concerns regarding the financial performance and position of the Council, including: Council not meeting industry benchmarks, anomalies in financial reporting, high turnover in the Responsible Accounting Officer position, and complaints received by the NSW Office of Local Government regarding the financial performance and sustainability of the Council. The NSW Audit Office found deficiencies in Snowy Monaro Regional Council's annual financial statements for the 2022/23 financial year and delivered a qualified assessment of the statements. In response to the findings in the AEC FSR and the NSW Office of Local Government ongoing review of Council's financial performance over recent years, Council has been working on identifying the resourcing needed to achieve the outcomes in the FSR. Council has also initiated a performance improvement program, and a 4-year implementation timeframe to address the findings in the FSR which commenced in late 2022. The AEC FSR, the OLG review and the NSW Audit Office's qualified assessment are indicators that, currently, SMRC is not Fit For Purpose. Implementation of the Council performance improvement work plans to address the findings in the AEC FSR and the review undertaken of SMRC by the NSW Office of Local Government should be concluded before Council's SRV application covering the 5 year period from 2023/24 is approved by IPART. In these circumstances, I believe strongly, that approval of an SRV for 5 years would be at odds with IPART's role of making decisions and recommendations that protect consumers from unreasonable price increases, improve providers' efficiency and service delivery quality and that promote competitive neutrality principles, and should not be approved at this time.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes and No. Yes - See details in Question 1 (Criteria 1) above. No- Council did not canvas with the community alternative options to increase annual operating revenue, other than via an SRV, or options to decrease Council's annual operating expenditure. Council only canvassed three annual rate increase alternatives to raise its operating revenue: i) annual rate increases from 2023/24 based on the annual rate peg approved by IPART; ii) a 53% special rate variation increase in 2023/24, followed by the annual rate pegs approved by IPART; and, iii) a 55.25% rate increase spread over over 5 years from 2023/24.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. This is a fundamental flaw in Council's SRV application and should, in and of itself, be sufficient grounds for IPART to disallow Council's application. The reasons are as follows: Council has misled the community on the quantum of the rate increase included in its revised SRV application to IPART dated 2 March 2023, and the percentage increase in rates over the 5 year period of the proposed SRV. In its application to IPART, Council notes that it is Scenario 2 in its Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) 2022-2032 that was placed on public exhibition in 2022. Council's original LTFP 2022-2032 for FY 2023/24 was adopted by Council on 23 June 2022 as part of its Resourcing Strategy 2022-2032 included in Council's suite of Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documents. Following receipt of the AEC FSR, Council prepared a revised Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) which was circulated for public comment on Council's Your Say webpage in November 2022. Following the closure of public comments on the LTFP at the end of January 2023, Council revised and amended the LTFP in late January 2023 to the original draft documents circulated publicly in November 2022. The revised LTFP was adopted by Council at its monthly meeting on 30 January 2023 and submitted with Council's SRV application to IPART. On Council's Have Your Say SRV web page during the public consultations from November 2022 to January 2023, Council provided three rate increase options (see answer to Question 2 (Criterion 1) above). Option 2/Scenario 2, which is the basis of Council's SRV application to IPART, proposed a 55.25% rate increase spread over five years from 2023/24 (see Attachment A) Council also included a Fact Sheet on its Your Say webpage that showed Option 2 as a 55.25% increase over 5 years (see SMRC Fact Sheet, Attachment B). Council's revised application to IPART shows Option 2/Scenario 2 that was placed on public exhibition as a cumulative increase of 68.87% over 5 years. This conflicts with the Option 2/Scenario 2 of a 55.25% increase over 5 years that was publicly exhibited by Council (see p10, SMRC SRV Application, dated 2 March 2023) and which was one of the 3 options in Council's on line survey and publicly exhibited on its Your Say webpage. Moreover, Council's Long Term



Financial Plan (LTFP) lodged with its SRV application also notes that Scenario 2 was for an SRV of 55.25% (including rate-pegging) over 5 years commencing in 2023/24 (see para 7.5, p35, SMRC LTFP 2022-2032 (1/2/2023) included with Council's SRV application). Clearly, the community has been misled about the quantum of the proposed SRV submitted by Council to IPART for approval. And it must be noted, that at no stage, either during Councils public consultations processes on its SRV application or its public consultations on its LTFP or suite of IP&R documents for 2022/23 did SMRC seek to inform the community regarding the incorrect cumulative increase in rates over the 5-year period under Option 2/Scenario 2 noted in your public consultation processes or Fact Sheets on the SRV options. Council has continued to mislead the community regarding the total cumulative rate increase over 5 years of the proposed SRV. On 14 April 2023 Council, after the revised SRV application had been lodged with IPART, Council issued a media release that advised, inter alia, that Council had applied to IPART for a 55.25% rate increase spread over five years starting from 2023/24 (see Attachment C, dot point 4 Summary of the Snowy Monaro SRV Process - SMRC Media Release: Open now for feedback: IPART consultation on Snowy Monaro Special Rate Variation, SMRC 14 April 2023)

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

One thousand, nine hundred and sixty three (1963) SMRC ratepayers responded to Council's online community survey for the 3 proposed SRV options on Councils Your Say webpage during the public exhibition period from November 2022 to January 2023. Of the total survey responses, 63% of respondents voted for No SRV - Option 3 in Councils online survey (see Attachments A (1-4). A further 23% voted for Option 2/Scenario 2 - 12.25% increase in year one, followed by 10.75% over the next 4 years. This result is probably unreliable and higher than would have been the case if respondents had been aware that the cumulative increase over 5 years amounted to 68.87%, not 55.25%. The community response to Councils SRV survey is a very significant and statistically representative community response that demonstrate very little support for an SRV. This result presents a high confidence level of the community's views. Council's SRV application to IPART fails to highlight that 63% of the 1963 people who completed Council's online survey voted for no SRV. And also fails to highlight that only 23% voted for Option 2/Scenario 2 - a 55% rate increase spread over 5 years, which Council has lodged with IPART. (see for example pp 24-25 of Council's 2 March 2023 SRV application). Notwithstanding a strong and conclusive community response to Councils proposed special variation - 63% against any SRV, with only 23% in support of the publicly exhibited 55.25% rate increase over 5 years, Council disregarded community feedback and lodged an SRV application for a cumulative 68.87% rate increase over 5 years. As noted above, in view of SMRC Council having misled the community publicly on a number of occasions on the cumulative quantum of its proposed SRV over 5 years, which it did not seek to remedy publicly, it would be inappropriate for IPART to approve the current SRV application lodged by Snowy Monaro Regional Council. To do otherwise would undermine not only the SMRC community's assessment of the independence of IPART, but it is also very likely to have flow-on effects to other community views throughout NSW, including business and industry, on IPART's role and independence and the rigour of its pricing regulatory framework and processes.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

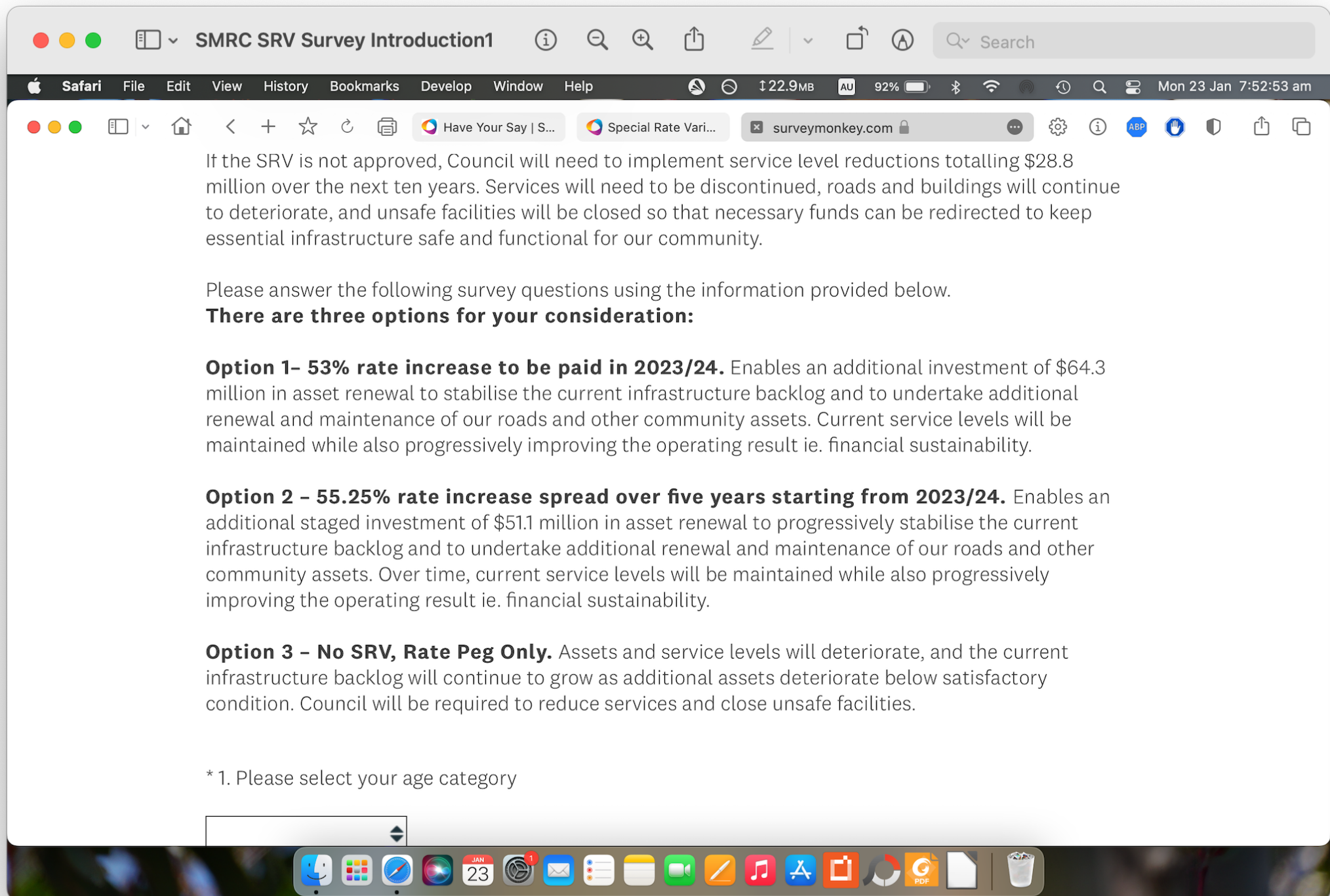
Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. As outlined in my answers to earlier questions and criteria, Council totally disregarded a statistically valid and emphatic community survey response that clearly reflected an unwillingness to pay for an SRV. The community's unwillingness to pay has been expressed publicly continuously over the past 18 months on local ABC South East Radio interviews with community members and in numerous SMRC-related social media posts on Facebook community pages. In addition, the NO SRV message has also been reflected in resolutions passed by the incorporated Snowy Monaro Ratepayers and Residents Association since 2022. All of the community's strong and consistent public expressed and recorded views against a proposed SRV have been disregarded by Council, and either not mentioned or glossed over in its SRV application and supporting documents presented to IPART.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.







**SMRC Your Say SRV Options**

[yoursaysnowymonaro.com.au](#)

### Why do we need a Special Rate Variation (SRV)?

The rate increases set by the NSW State Government have not kept pace with cost escalations faced by Council in providing services to our community. Like many other NSW councils, SMRC has not generated revenue sufficient to undertake enough investment in community assets.

Our service delivery costs have increased significantly – fuelling our vehicles to repair roads, clean toilets, mow lawns, pay wages, etc – and the costs involved in purchasing materials, hiring contractors and paying suppliers have also increased.

The additional funds received through the SRV will increase the money available to address and correct Council's operating position will enable sufficient funds to be available for renewal and maintenance of assets and the continuation of current service levels.

### What will happen if the special rate variation is not implemented?

If the SRV is not approved, Council will need to implement service level reductions totalling \$28.8 million over the next ten years. Services will need to be discontinued, roads and buildings will continue to deteriorate, and unsafe facilities will be closed so that necessary funds can be redirected to keep essential infrastructure safe and functional for our community.

### There are three options for your consideration:

**Option 1 – 53% rate increase to be paid in 2023/24.** Enables an additional investment of \$64.3 million in asset renewal to stabilise the current infrastructure backlog and to undertake additional renewal and maintenance of our roads and other community assets. Current service levels will be maintained while also progressively improving the operating result ie. financial sustainability.

**Option 2 – 55.25% rate increase spread over five years starting from 2023/24.** Enables an additional staged investment of \$51.1 million in asset renewal to progressively stabilise the current infrastructure backlog and to undertake additional renewal and maintenance of our roads and other community assets. Over time, current service levels will be maintained while also progressively improving the operating result ie. financial sustainability.

**Option 3 – No SRV, Rate Peg Only.** Assets and service levels will deteriorate, and the current infrastructure backlog will continue to grow as additional assets deteriorate below satisfactory condition. Council will be required to reduce

[SMRC Community Engagement Strategy SRV 2022-23 \(293 KB\) \(pdf\)](#)

#### Lifecycle

- Open**  
This consultation is open for contributions.
- Under Review**  
Contributions to this consultation are closed for evaluation and review. The project team will report back on key outcomes.
- Final report**  
The final outcomes of the consultation are documented here. This may include a summary of all contributions collected as well as recommendations for future action.

#### Key Dates

**4pm to 7pm Drop-In at the Jindabyne Library**  
**08 December 2022**





# SNOWY MONARO REGIONAL COUNCIL

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# SNOWY MONARO REGIONAL COUNCIL

Home / Special Rate Variation

## Special Rate Variation



The first stage of the Special Rate Variation consultation has now concluded. Councillors will meet at 1pm on Monday 30 January 2023 for an Extraordinary Meeting in Cooma to review survey responses and written feedback.

Visit [www.snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au/Council/Meetings](http://www.snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au/Council/Meetings) to tune into the webcast.

Results from this initial consultation and from the forthcoming meeting will be made available soon.

**There are a number of FAQs answered on the left of the screen and nearly 100 publically answered questions below for your information and review.**

### BACKGROUND

At the Extraordinary Council Meeting on Thursday 24 November 2022, the Council decided to proceed with notifying the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) that Snowy Monaro Regional Council intends to apply for a permanent Special Rate Variation (SRV).

### What is a Special Rate Variation (SRV) and Rate-Pegging?

Rates increase each year in line with an amount set by the State Government. This amount is calculated every year and is called the 'rate peg'. This is decided by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

For the 2023/24 financial year the rate peg applied to Snowy Monaro Regional Council, will be 4.0%.

If a council's rate revenue is not enough to maintain service levels, it can apply to IPART to increase overall rate revenue by more than the rate peg. This is known as a Special Rate Variation (SRV). In order to apply for an SRV, councils must demonstrate to the community and IPART that they need the money and have implemented improvements to be more efficient and productive.

### Why do we need a Special Rate Variation (SRV)?

The rate increases set by the NSW State Government have not kept pace with cost escalations faced by Council in providing services to our community. Like many other NSW councils, SMRC has not generated revenue sufficient to undertake enough investment in community assets.

Our service delivery costs have increased significantly – fuelling our vehicles to repair roads, clean toilets, mow lawns, pay wages, etc – and the costs involved in purchasing materials, hiring contractors and paying suppliers have also increased.



**What will your rates look like based on the proposed SRV options? Use our rates calculator to find out.**

SRV Rates Calculator (343 KB) (xlsx)

### Documents

2022 AEC Report Snowy Monaro Financial Sustainability Review (2.58 MB) (pdf)

SMRC Long Term Financial Plan (2.08 MB) (pdf)

SMRC Asset Management Strategy 2022-2032 (2.57 MB) (pdf)

SMRC Workforce Management Strategy 2022-2026 (1.34 MB) (pdf)

Special Rate Variation Fact Sheets (with tables) (3.13 MB) (pdf)

SMRC Community Engagement Strategy SRV 2022-23 (293 KB) (pdf)

1. SMRC Application-Form-Part-A-Special-Rate-Variation-2023-24 s508A Five Year Combined File (2.38 MB) (pdf)

2. Application-form-Part-B-Special-rate-variation-2023-24 s508A Five Year (2.27 MB) (pdf)

### Lifecycle



#### Open

This consultation is open for contributions.



#### Under Review



The additional funds received through the SRV will increase the money available to address and correct Council's operating position will enable sufficient funds to be available for renewal and maintenance of assets and the continuation of current service levels.

What will happen if the special rate variation is not implemented?

If the SRV is not approved, Council will need to implement service level reductions totalling \$28.8 million over the next ten years. Services will need to be discontinued, roads and buildings will continue to deteriorate, and unsafe facilities will be closed so that necessary funds can be redirected to keep essential infrastructure safe and functional for our community.

There are three options for your consideration:

**Option 1 – 53% rate increase to be paid in 2023/24.** Enables an additional investment of \$64.3 million in asset renewal to stabilise the current infrastructure backlog and to undertake additional renewal and maintenance of our roads and other community assets. Current service levels will be maintained while also progressively improving the operating result ie. financial sustainability.

**Option 2 – 55.25% rate increase spread over five years starting from 2023/24.** Enables an additional staged investment of \$51.1 million in asset renewal to progressively stabilise the current infrastructure backlog and to undertake additional renewal and maintenance of our roads and other community assets. Over time, current service levels will be maintained while also progressively improving the operating result ie. financial sustainability.

**Option 3 – No SRV, Rate Peg Only.** Assets and service levels will deteriorate, and the current infrastructure backlog will continue to grow as additional assets deteriorate below satisfactory condition. Council will be required to reduce services and close unsafe facilities.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF THE SRV ON MY RATES?

Table 1 shows the impact of implementing the SRV on the average rates by rate category.

Table 1 - Increase in 2023/24 Average Rate

Rating Category	2022/23 Rate	Average Rate 2023/24		
		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Residential	\$980.29	\$1,499.84	\$1,100.38	\$1,019.50
Farmland	\$2,026.30	\$3,100.24	\$2,274.52	\$2,107.35
Business	\$1,071.29	\$1,639.07	\$1,202.52	\$1,114.14
Electricity Generation	\$43,806.17	\$67,023.44	\$49,172.43	\$45,558.42

Tables 2 to 5 show the impact of implementing the SRV on the average rates by rate category between 2023/24 and 2027/28.

Table 2 - Cumulative increase over 5 years – Average Rate Residential Category

Residential Category	Cumulative Increase over 5yrs					Total
	2023/24 to 2027/28					
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
Option 1	\$519.55	\$557.05	\$595.48	\$634.88	\$675.26	\$2,982.22
Option 2	\$120.09	\$238.38	\$369.38	\$514.47	\$675.16	\$1,917.48
Option 3	\$39.21	\$64.70	\$90.82	\$117.60	\$145.05	\$457.39

Table 3 - Cumulative increase over 5 years – Average Rate Farmland Category

Farmland Category	Cumulative Increase over 5yrs					Total
	2023/24 to 2027/28					
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
Option 1	\$1,073.94	\$1,151.45	\$1,230.89	\$1,312.32	\$1,395.78	\$6,164.37
Option 2	\$248.22	\$492.73	\$763.53	\$1,063.44	\$1,395.58	\$3,963.50
Option 3	\$81.05	\$133.74	\$187.74	\$243.09	\$299.82	\$945.43

Table 4 - Cumulative increase over 5 years – Average Business Category

Business Category	Cumulative Increase over 5yrs					Total
	2023/24 to 2027/28					
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	

Contributions to this consultation are closed for evaluation and review. The project team will report back on key outcomes.

Final report

The final outcomes of the consultation are documented here. This may include a summary of all contributions collected as well as recommendations for future action.

Key Dates

- 4pm to 7pm Drop-In at the Jindabyne Library  
08 December 2022
- 9am to 11am Pop-up at the Cooma Post Office  
09 December 2022
- 1pm to 3pm Drop-In session at the Bombala Library/Community Centre  
09 December 2022
- 5.30pm to 7pm Online Information Session  
10 January 2023
- 7pm to 8.30pm Online Information Session  
18 January 2023

FAQs

- What is the difference between Option 1 and Option 2?
- Why do we have to rank the options in order of preference?
- If approved, when would the Special Rates Variation (SRV) start to take effect? When will it end?
- What if I am going through financial hardship?
- How does The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART) assess the application for a Special Rates Variation (SRV) for the Snowy Monaro Regional Council?
- Is Snowy Monaro Regional Council the only Council applying for an SRV?
- Doesn't my land value increase every three years and therefore increases my rates too?
- If there is a rate rise, how will I know when Council has spent this money?
- I rent, so I do not pay rates directly, but I live in the Snowy Monaro Regional Council area, will this affect me?
- There are lots of grants available, why can't we just seek more grant funding?
- If the population increases the rates increase, don't they?
- When you developed the Community Strategic Plan, did you limit big idea thinking



Option 1	\$567.78	\$608.76	\$650.76	\$693.81	\$737.94	\$3,259.06
Option 2	\$131.23	\$260.50	\$403.67	\$562.23	\$737.83	\$2,095.47
Option 3	\$42.85	\$70.71	\$99.26	\$128.52	\$158.51	\$499.84

Table 5 - Cumulative increase over 5 years – Average Electricity Generation Category

Electricity Generation Category	Cumulative Increase over 5yrs 2023/24 to 2027/28					Total
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
Option 1	\$23,217.27	\$24,892.86	\$26,610.33	\$28,370.74	\$30,175.17	\$133,266.37
Option 2	\$5,366.26	\$10,652.29	\$16,506.58	\$22,990.20	\$30,170.81	\$85,686.13
Option 3	\$1,752.25	\$2,891.21	\$4,058.64	\$5,255.26	\$6,481.80	\$20,439.16

Over the course of this consultation we have engaged with our community, to ensure all interested parties were informed and provided an opportunity to provide feedback on the options presented for an SRV application proposal. The details of our various community engagement activities can be found in the Key Dates section of this page (right of the screen on a PC and at the bottom of the page on a smartphone or tablet).

If you have any questions please get in touch with us at 1300 345 345.

QUESTIONS

CLOSED: This discussion has concluded.

Please read through questions posted and answers replied as its possible we may have already answered your query. There are nearly 100 questions and answers for you to review below.

Our team is here to help you better understand the application process to Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) and the options recommended for consideration for our council.

#Ratescalaculation (1)	Pension (1)	Water (1)	Sewer (1)	Rubbish (1)	Infrastructure (4)
Funding (2)	Consultation (2)	Pensioners (1)	Services (4)	Community (1)	Facilities (1)
Consolidation (1)	Increase (1)	Rate Base (1)	Consultation (1)	Roads (2)	Repairs (1)
Insurance (1)	Sustainability (2)	Financial Sustainability Review (1)	Staff (1)	Salaries (1)	Projects (1)
Garbage Collection (1)	Drinking Water (1)	Rates (2)	Annual Charges (1)	Feedback (1)	Legislation (1)
Tourism (1)	Administration (1)	Average (1)			

Search

Q

Do you have a Breakdown of expenditure for each option? Do you have projections on water, sewer and waste rates/charges going forward? Projection on cost to update asset management plans and integrate into the LTFP and resourcing Strategy? Is there a Strategy that looks at opportunities for Council to maximise benefits including own source income and opportunities from the SAP? Has Council established a Expenditure Review Committee ?

B1 asked, 3 months ago

The documentation you are requesting is included in the Asset Management Plan, Workforce Plan and Long-Term Financial Plan. The Financial Sustainability Review made a number of recommendations for Council to improve its efficiencies and financial position and these have been adopted in full by Council.

Council is the expenditure review committee. In addition to the financial sustainability review, Council has undertaken a number of service reviews. Each of these reviews has made a number of recommendations to maximise the effectiveness of Council's expenditure, including some changes in the number, and the roles, of employees.

Q

Can you please justify for me as to why, in your Options, there is such a dramatic jump in Option 3 from 4% to Option 1 - 53% and Option 2 55.25%. Apart from the obvious financial, economic, emotional and mental anguish that council's preferred 53% rate increase is going to cause its ratepayers – facts that surely have not escaped the attention and consideration of councillors - can you explain to me why the rate increase choices in council's "survey" have to make such a dramatic jump from the pegged rate of 4% to 53%. Why can't a rate percentage increase of a lesser amount be provided as an option? Under the current economic circumstances that Australia is, and will be facing for several more years, why is it not being considered by council to have a special variation rate of a much lesser - and economically kinder and sensible -percentage than a huge jump from the pegged 4% (Option 3) to 53%. This would make more commonsense. We believe the survey is flawed as it does not allow participantst to choose only one option. It does not allow only one choice and the survey will not get submitted if the two other options and not ranked. We feel that by making ratepayers rank all three


- to what Council could afford?
- What is a rate peg?
- Is the Council saying it is efficient and cannot save any money?
- Why are our rates going up, aren't they already high?
- Why won't Council do an audit?
- Why is the rate increase proposed by Council different to what was in the financial sustainability review?
- How come this is such an urgent problem now? Why can't we put it off?
- Why can't we simply cut costs and not have a rate increase?
- How did you come up with a figure?
- I have been told that everyone has told the Council they don't want a rate increase, but the Council is not listening. Why won't the Council listen to the community?

Who's Listening

Tracy Sligar

Chief Financial Officer

Phone 1300 345 345




David Rawlings

Chief Strategy Officer

Snowy Monaro Regional Council

Phone 1300 345 345

Email David.Rawlings@snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au



Links & External Resources

- CPA Australia: A guide to understanding the financial reports of local governments



options that there is an ulterior motive by council to use the forced data option selection to justify options 1 and 2. We respectfully suggest council goes back to its 'proposed rate increase drawing board' and develop a rate increase option that is more realistic and affordable for all ratepayers and use the revenue raised in a commonsense and practical way that benefits all ratepayers equitably. Thank you and we look forward to answers to our questions. Mrs H Gordon and Family

3 months ago

4% represents the rate peg and does not include any SRV. It is the option commonly raised as desired by the community, often expressed as 'living within our means'. It involves significant reductions in services. The 2 remaining options represent the funds required to address the structural deficit Council has. One is the full rate applied at year one (53%) and the second is spread across multiple years. This is what is required to at least close the historical financial loss the Council is facing.

**Q** Why - at a time when a special rate variation is proposed for the purpose of urgently raising \$28.8 million for essential works - has more than \$30 million been allocated to four non-essential projects that will benefit just two of our 12 towns and villages: (1) Jindabyne Library (SMRC Annual Report 2021-2022 page 91); (2) Jindabyne Pool (SMRC Annual Report 2021-2022 page 91) (3) Jindabyne Shared Trail Project (SMRC Annual Report 2021-2022 page 87); and (4) Cooma Sports Hub (SMRC Annual Report 2021-2022 page 87)?

asked, 3 months ago

Thank you for your question, Pip, and much like the works being undertaken in Bombala at the Showground and in Delegate at the School of Arts; each of the projects you refer to are funded through government grants.

**Q** One of the earliest decisions of this current Council was to vote to receive the highest level of remuneration increase. While this remuneration is only a fraction of the ongoing costs of Council, it remains a very bad "look" set against the recommendations from the Financial Sustainability Review which has as its first recommendation: "Submit a Special Rate Variation (SRV) Application based on increasing General Fund rates revenue by \$19.4 million over the next 10 years. This can be achieved through a 43% increase above the rate peg in 2023/24 or a staged increase over a number of years." Why are you not taking the advice of this expensive consultancy regarding 43%? How did you arrive at 53% or 55.25% instead? As you have to supply IPART with a detailed plan of how you will spend the SRV, why don't you do that work now and present it to the community, so we know what we are actually supposed to be voting for? The SRV is one of about 40 individual recommendations as to how Council can improve its operating position. How about you tick off some of those bigger items before you ask us to throw money at inefficient and outdated practices

Not an Accountant asked, 3 months ago

Council have adopted the recommendations of the Financial Sustainability Review in full. The recommendations combined, including the SRV, will see Council in a much better position to maintain assets and continue services to the community. As you would have noted there are many more recommendations. Some of those have been costed and those costs included in the long term financial plan. The two different percentages come about due to the need to raise the same amount of funding over the ten years to meet the financial sustainability criteria. The later increases are put into place the greater they are, as each year expenditure increases by more than revenue due to inflation.

The SRV is to fix the historical structural deficit to allow Council to start investing back into the infrastructure that has been deteriorating year after year. It will primarily go into roads, but also buildings and other structures. You were voting as to whether you wished to keep all the infrastructure and services Council currently provides (options 2 and 3) or have a much lower level of services (option 1)

**Q** Why is the only option a rate increase? Maybe if the management could show an attempt to save money within the council office rate payers might be willing to chip in a little more!! The whole place is very inefficient from the outside looking in.

Mic B asked, 3 months ago

Option 3 is only increasing rates by the standard percentage set by IPART. Inflation impacts on the costs of Council. No increase in rates would worsen the financial sustainability of Council, leading to even more deterioration of the infrastructure.

The rate increase is only one of several recommendations in the financial sustainability review. These are explained in the documents provided and can be referenced in several of the answers below. Council has been reducing expenditure relative to rising costs. The financial sustainability review shows that the trend for the deficit starting with the last four years of the predecessor councils. At no stage have the predecessor councils or SMRC have been spending enough to properly maintain community assets such as roads, community halls, swimming pools, parks and gardens. Nor has there been sufficient cash put aside for future expenditure and emergencies. Reducing costs further will only exacerbate the deterioration of the assets.

**Q** Question 1 Why are farmland rates the most expensive when, in our case, we have no waste or water services, no garbage collection services and no infrastructure provided by council other than 3kms of Bumbalong Road, graded infrequently. Question 2 - I don't want to rate all options in the survey. I only want to rate Option 1. My survey is not being submitted because of my choice not to rate Options 2 and 3. I think that Council is trying to trick us by forcing us to rate all options and then use this date to put forward the other options. This smacks of deceit. Can you let me know how I can let council know that I only want to chose Option 1 and not rate the other two options? Question 3 - what are the Jindabyne SAP assets and what does this mean. Question 4 - when do the new rates become effective Question 5 - when is the next council election

asked, 3 months ago

Rates are set based on the value of the land. General rates do not pay for waste, water or sewer. Those are covered by separate charges. Rates are not a fee for use, they are a tax to fund the services that the Council determines the overall community needs. Those services then need to be funded by the community. Based on where you live you currently



benefit from the rating structure. The cost of providing your road for the properties along it on a fee for use system would be around \$23,700. The rates from the properties along your road total \$9,260.

While you may only want one option sometimes in life there has to be compromises. By knowing peoples second choices we can get a better understanding of what people may prefer if they cannot have what they want. Your only other option is to send in an email, which will then go into the feedback. All feedback will be considered by Councillors prior to a final decision being made.

The Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct is a NSW Government program to boost the snowy mountains tourism economy to transition into a shorter snow season as well as creating a year-round tourism economy. To kick start the program the NSW Government is planning to build a bypass, other road improvements and water and sewer upgrades. The existing roads that are bypassed and the new streetscapes, parks and water and sewer will then be handed to Council. Council will then have to manage and maintain those assets.

The rates become effective each year from 1 July.

The next election will be on 24 September 2024.

**Q The 2022-2023 Operational Plan outlined that service levels for the transport network were yet to be defined. What is the status of this commitment? How will residents and ratepayers understand the difference between the options if the transport network service levels are not defined? Are the infrastructure projects defined in the operational plan committed or are they subject to the SRV as well?**  
Redacted asked, 3 months ago

Council will continue with the project to determine service levels. The SRV decision is on whether the community wants to keep all the existing services and infrastructure or reduce how much is provided. For roads there is a certain cost that needs to be spent. You cannot spend less and keep the road over the long term. It deteriorates faster than it should and then costs more over its lifetime than if you had spent the money to properly maintain it in the first place. The service levels will look at issues such as how much faster the community may want us to patch a pothole and where we mow grass on roadsides, but first decide if the actual road will be funded.

If it is decided not to fund the current infrastructure and services Council will then need to start a discussion on what it is that is no longer provided. This may or may not impact on roads, depending on what is considered the priority. We cannot at this stage say if the feedback will prioritise the available funds on roads, parks, toilets, sport fields, etc. The 2021 customer satisfaction survey indicated that sealed roads were the most important service we provide. Unsealed roads rated 11th out of the 24 services listed.

Currently the funds available are not sufficient to properly maintain and replace the existing infrastructure. The first two options start to address that issue by increasing the funding for the ongoing renewal of the infrastructure. In option 3 the amount of infrastructure and services needs to be reduced until a financially sustainable point is reached. As an example of the impact of the SRV, under our current funding we will be able to properly maintain 136km of the unsealed road network. Under options 1 or 2 we would be able to maintain 1,400km of road network.

Infrastructure projects in the operational plan are committed and the majority are either in full, or in part, externally funded.

**Q How will the additional \$500m funding released by the NSW Government Regional and Local Roads Repair Program impact the SRV? Has council applied for funding? Can the criteria be met without a pavement management solution?**  
Redacted asked, 3 months ago

Yes, Council has applied for this funding. Council will secure a pre-determined allocation from the NSW government based on the total length of our road network. This program is to fund urgent road repairs, priority corrective maintenance works and the repair of potholes on local and regional roads. The revenue raised from the SRV, if approved, will contribute to funding the ongoing renewal of Council's road network in a planned and orderly manner, based on an asset management system. The key difference is a planned renewal program will ensure that the road network does not deteriorate. The Regional and Local Roads Repair program targets rehabilitation of already deteriorated roads to bring them back to a reasonable condition. This is in addition to disaster recovery funding that is also helping return roads to pre-disaster condition. Therefore the funding from the NSW program and the SRV are used for two different purposes. Where at all possible the NSW program funding will target road asset renewal, it will not replace the need for the SRV revenue.

The program is based on the length of road network managed by the Council. It is limited to maintenance and repairs and cannot be used for road renewals. As such it will not rely on a pavement management system to guide the works.

**Q How do you expect people to find such a massive increase in rates? Especially people on fixed incomes below the 'average' wage. There will be a lot of people who will end up significantly behind in their rates. Or is this part of your plan so you earn more in interest on outstanding rates? Also if you had not realised already, there is a housing crisis caused by influx of workers for Snowy 2.0 and resultant rent increases. By increasing rates, rental prices will again significantly increase causing more people to be unable to afford housing. Rates increases of this magnitude will have a knock on effect of locals spending less in town because they have less or no money to spend; shop owners having to increase prices to cover the rates increase, leading to even less spending in town. And around we go. I vote no for any SRV until Council shows in detail why they are in the red, especially as the amalgamation was supposed to significantly reduce costs, exactly, down to the last dollar. What cost savings they intend to take and exactly what they intend to spend the money on, with accurate costings. The rate payers need to be fully informed of the whole financial story. Additionally, the comment above that maybe you need to ask the State government for more funding. The council comment to this was you, the rate payer should write to your local member. Yes, this is an option but the Council should be the main body pushing for more money from the State government. The rate payers cannot put forward a case of why they need more money and the associated costings. Stop trying to pass the buck.**

Redacted asked, 3 months ago


The detail of why the Council is in deficit is in the financial sustainability review. The savings forecast in the merger proposal were achieved however the merger proposal recognised that the merged council would continue to generate deficits, but smaller than that predicted for the three predecessor councils if they had continued. The merger savings



were never going to be sufficient to fund the structural deficit the Council inherited. All this information is in the financial sustainability review report.

Councils, individually and collectively, have been lobbying for more money for decades and the only result has been for the level of funding has been reduced. Councils do not have influence over the State Government. Only when the funding of local services becomes an election issue due to pressure from the community that any change is likely to occur. Without that pressure we can only deal with the situation that we are in.

**Q** The socio-economic profile for the Snowy Monaro, outlined in the Long Term Financial Plan, ranks strongly in the IRSD, IRSAD, IER and IEO. Is there any way to break these data sets down into townships? Is there consideration of impact on the different township economies within the SMRC or has the strategy only considered the entire region as a whole? The Risk Assessment and Challenges/Opportunities component of the Long Term Financial Strategy does not take into consideration potential short-term impacts on low socio-economic families within the region, which includes but is not limited to the potential of rate costs being passed onto low-income tenants. Should option 1 or 2 be taken up, does council have a strategy to A) identify and B) support families who will have increased financial hardship? Noting that current support services (public and private) within the region are already thinly stretched and finding it difficult to source appropriate staff, does council have a plan to provide timely support to those that reach out across the region?

 asked, 3 months ago

The impact of rates across the various communities was considered when the rates were harmonised. Following community consultation, a model was put forward from members of the community working group that there should be a system where each community contributed based on their land values. When you compare land values to household incomes you can see that overall the land values reflect the earnings within those towns. So the townships with lower earnings pay lower rates.

Council has hardship provisions for those who may be suffering short term hardship as a result of the changes. We only have provisions for ratepayers, but that can allow for deferral of payment and interest free periods to help with the adjustment.

Council does not have funding to provide support services. If we wished to fund increased social support services the funding for this would need to be added to the proposed rate increase. We do work closely with many of the providers and will continue to do so to encourage a reasonable level of support services across the region.

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Page last updated: 17 Apr 2023, 12:23 PM



# Special Rate Variation

## Proposed Options 2023/24

At the Extraordinary Council Meeting on Thursday 24 November 2022, the Council decided to proceed with notifying the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) that Snowy Monaro Regional Council intends to apply for a permanent Special Rate Variation (SRV).

### What is a Special Rate Variation (SRV) and Rate-Pegging?

Rates increase each year in line with an amount set by the State Government. This amount is calculated every year and is called the 'rate peg'. This is decided by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). For the 2023/24 financial year the rate peg applied to Snowy Monaro Regional Council, will be 4.0%.

If a council's rate revenue is not enough to maintain service levels, it can apply to IPART to increase overall rate revenue by more than the rate peg. This is known as a Special Rate Variation (SRV). In order to apply for an SRV, councils must demonstrate to the community and IPART that they need the money and have implemented improvements to be more efficient and productive.

### Why do we need a Special Rate Variation (SRV)?

The rate increases set by the NSW State Government have not kept pace with cost escalations faced by Council in providing services to our community. Like many other NSW councils, SMRC has not generated revenue sufficient to undertake enough investment in community assets.

Our service delivery costs have increased significantly – fuelling our vehicles to repair roads, clean toilets, mow lawns, pay wages, etc – and the costs involved in purchasing materials, hiring contractors and paying suppliers has also increased.

The additional funds received through the SRV will increase the money available to address and correct Council's operating position and will enable sufficient funds to be available for renewal and maintenance of assets and the continuation of current service levels.

### What will happen if the Special Rate Variation is not implemented?

If the SRV is not approved, Council will need to implement service level reductions totalling \$28.8 million over the next ten years. Services will need to be discontinued, roads and buildings will continue to deteriorate, and unsafe facilities will be closed so that necessary funds can be redirected to keep essential infrastructure safe and functional for our community.

## OPTIONS

### Option 1 – 53% rate increase to be paid in 2023/24

Enables an additional investment of \$64.3 million in asset renewal to stabilise the current infrastructure backlog and to undertake additional renewal and maintenance of our roads and other community assets. Current service levels will be maintained while also progressively improving the operating result i.e. financial sustainability.

### Option 2 – 55.25% rate increase spread over five years starting from 2023/24

Enables an additional staged investment of \$51.1 million in asset renewal to progressively stabilise the current infrastructure backlog and to undertake additional renewal and maintenance of our roads and other community assets. Over time, current service levels will be maintained while also progressively improving the operating result i.e. financial sustainability.

### Option 3 – No SRV, Rate Peg Only

Assets and service levels will deteriorate, and the current infrastructure backlog will continue to grow as additional assets deteriorate below satisfactory condition. Council will be required to reduce services and close unsafe facilities.



## What is the impact of the Special Rate Variation (SRV) on my rates?

Table 1 shows the impact of implementing the SRV on the average rates by each rate category.

**Table 1 - Increase in 2023/24 Average Rate**

Rating Category	2022/23 Rate	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Residential	\$980.29	\$1,499.84	\$1,100.38	\$1,019.50
Farmland	\$2,026.30	\$3,100.24	\$2,274.52	\$2,107.35
Business	\$1,071.29	\$1,639.07	\$1,202.52	\$1,114.14
Electricity Generation	\$43,806.17	\$67,023.44	\$49,172.43	\$45,558.42

## What will the SRV funds be used for?

Three options are provided for consideration based on rate increases;

- two SRV options
- one limited to the rate-peg

The proposed SRV will generate the necessary revenue that will be used to fund our existing services and provide required funding for the following:

- Resealing bitumen roads
- Putting gravel back on our unsealed roads
- Improve our stormwater infrastructure
- Replacement of bridges that are failing
- Bringing our community and other buildings back to a good condition
- Investment in asset management capability

Option 1 will enable for the above service levels to commence from 2023/24, whereas Option 2 will allow for a staged increase in asset renewals and maintenance of current service levels over a number of years.

The Resourcing Strategy is on public exhibition, and can be accessed on Council's [Your Say website](#) or at any Council office. Residents are being asked for their views on the three options.

## Current council services



To find out more scan the QR Code or visit: [yoursaysnowymonaro.com.au](https://yoursaysnowymonaro.com.au)

24/7 Customer service line  
**1300 345 345**

PO Box 714 COOMA NSW 2630  
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# Special Rate Variation

## Proposed Options 2023/24

### What is the impact of the Special Rate Variation (SRV) on my rates?

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**Table 1 - Increase in 2023/24 Average Rate**

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		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Residential	\$980.29	\$1,499.84	\$1,100.38	\$1,019.50
Farmland	\$2,026.30	\$3,100.24	\$2,274.52	\$2,107.35
Business	\$1,071.29	\$1,639.07	\$1,202.52	\$1,114.14
Electricity Generation	\$43,806.17	\$67,023.44	\$49,172.43	\$45,558.42

Tables 2 to 5 show the impact of implementing the SRV on the average rates by each rate category between 2023/24 and 2027/28.

**Table 2 - Cumulative increase over 5 years – Residential Category - Average Rate**

Residential Category	Cumulative Increase over 5yrs 2023/24 to 2027/28					Total
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
Option 1	\$519.55	\$557.05	\$595.48	\$634.88	\$675.26	<b>\$2,982.22</b>
Option 2	\$120.09	\$238.38	\$369.38	\$514.47	\$675.16	<b>\$1,917.48</b>
Option 3	\$39.21	\$64.70	\$90.82	\$117.60	\$145.05	<b>\$457.39</b>

**Table 3 - Cumulative increase over 5 years – Farmland Category - Average Rate**

Farmland Category	Cumulative Increase over 5yrs 2023/24 to 2027/28					Total
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
Option 1	\$1,073.94	\$1,151.45	\$1,230.89	\$1,312.32	\$1,395.78	<b>\$6,164.37</b>
Option 2	\$248.22	\$492.73	\$763.53	\$1,063.44	\$1,395.58	<b>\$3,963.50</b>
Option 3	\$81.05	\$133.74	\$187.74	\$243.09	\$299.82	<b>\$945.43</b>

**Table 4 - Cumulative increase over 5 years – Business Category - Average Rate**

Business Category	Cumulative Increase over 5yrs 2023/24 to 2027/28					Total
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
Option 1	\$567.78	\$608.76	\$650.76	\$693.81	\$737.94	<b>\$3,259.06</b>
Option 2	\$131.23	\$260.50	\$403.67	\$562.23	\$737.83	<b>\$2,095.47</b>
Option 3	\$42.85	\$70.705	\$99.255	\$128.519	\$158.514	<b>\$499.84</b>

**Table 5 - Cumulative increase over 5 years – Electricity Generation Category - Average Rate**

Electricity Generation Category	Cumulative Increase over 5yrs 2023/24 to 2027/28					Total
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	
Option 1	\$23,217.27	\$24,892.86	\$26,610.33	\$28,370.74	\$30,175.17	<b>\$133,266.37</b>
Option 2	\$5,366.26	\$10,652.29	\$16,506.58	\$22,990.20	\$30,170.81	<b>\$85,686.13</b>
Option 3	\$1,752.25	\$2,891.21	\$4,058.64	\$5,255.26	\$6,481.80	<b>\$20,439.16</b>





# Media Release

Friday 14 April 2023

## Open now for feedback: IPART consultation on Snowy Monaro Special Rate Variation

The NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) has opened their public consultation on Snowy Monaro Regional Council's proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV).

This latest opportunity for residents and ratepayers in our region to have their say on the potential changes to rates is open for feedback now until Friday 5 May 2023.

**Have your say today. Visit <https://qrco.de/SMRC-SRV>**

Once IPART's consultation closes, the tribunal will assess Council's application and make a determination to either approve or deny the proposed SRV. IPART can approve a different variation than Council's applied-for increase.

The tribunal's decision will be based on balancing affordability for residents and Council's financial need – determined through a comprehensive set of assessment criteria. These can be found on the IPART website linked above.

### Summary of the Snowy Monaro SRV process:

- A public consultation on a potential Special Rate Variation (SRV) was held from late 2022 through late January 2023 – consisting of submissions from the community, and in-person and online opportunities to learn more and participate in the process
- Council announced its intention to seek a SRV in January 2023, following a decision at the January Council Meeting
- Council announced that it was altering its application in February 2023, seeking a smaller five-year (rather than larger one year) SRV
- Snowy Monaro Regional Council applied to IPART for a 55.25% rate increase spread over five years starting from 2023/24
- IPART's consultation is now open for feedback, before IPART makes a determination on the application and advises Council in June 2023
- If the SRV application is approved, councillors will decide at a Council meeting whether to proceed with the approved increase

For more information, please contact Snowy Monaro Regional Council:  
[council@snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au) or 1300 345 345.

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#### Media Contact

Communications Team – 1300 345 345 – [communications@snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au](mailto:communications@snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au)

Go to [www.snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au](http://www.snowymonaro.nsw.gov.au) or follow Council's Facebook page.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 4 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

- A smaller increase and spread over time is more appropriate. - An extensive report on efficiencies and productivity to be addressed and provided to the community. - A full independent audit of council to be executed. - An extensive analysis into services and facilities to be performed and provide options to the community if some should be removed, reduced or increased.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Specifications for what the revenue will be exactly used for have not been outlined.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. The council did not extensively consider alternatives with the community such as obtaining feedback on what services or facilities could be reduced prior to submitting for a SRV.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

It was not clear and very confusing as originally a 43% increase was suggested by the independent review and audit on council and then all of a sudden council wanted 53% in one go. Increases to a dollar value were confusing and many community members were not understanding what dollar value increase would exactly apply to them.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

The awareness has mostly been online and offline community members have been left out quite a bit. Seeing that many community members are of the offline type in this shire, a pamphlet in the mail to have them engaged would have been appropriate.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Appalling action! The survey had the most responses the council had ever received in its history from surveys and overwhelming the survey results outcome was a NO to a rate rise and yet the council ignored all this.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The impact has not been considered extensively nor appropriately, given the huge rising costs in living, interest rates etc etc. Many community members will not afford to pay massive rate increases. Very unreasonable!

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

It was not considered and the huge immediate increase is unreasonable as mentioned in the previous question. Many will not afford to pay causing stress and heartache in the community.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

They stated that people could apply for hardship and help, which indicates to me that the council knows this will cause hardship and financial burden on the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

It was exhibited across the Christmas holiday period of which many members of the community are away or busy with holiday festivities and not focusing on council matters. Was the period for review short also? Yes. More time to consider and look at more options like reducing services was not considered.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Productivity and efficiency improvements have not been outlined to the community, and that's if there has been any. All the focus and energy was just to increase rates as the easy and quickest option.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 4 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

This is my second submission on the SRV application lodged by Snowy Monaro Regional Council. It should be added to my submission lodged via IPART's Your Say SRV webpage on 4 May 2023 and brought to the attention of the Tribunal as part of its consideration of the SMRC SRV. My first submission highlighted that the Snowy Monaro community had been misled by Council on the cumulative quantum increase of the proposed SRV over the 5 year period from 2023/24 as outlined in the application submitted by Snowy Monaro Regional Council. That is, the community was informed and advised publicly by Council during formal community consultations and subsequent Council advice that the total increase would be 55.25% not the cumulative total increase of 68.87% shown in Council's SRV application to IPART. Council's LTFP 2022-2032 which is included in Council's SRV application and the public advice to the community provided by Council on its Your Say website on the total cumulative increase in rates over 5 years refers to an SRV of 55.25% (including rate-pegging) over 5 years commencing in 2023/24 (see p 35 of the LTFP). This is Scenario Two in Council's LTFP (p 10, LTFP) and Option 2 in Council's online Public Survey Questionnaire on its Your Say website (see attached screen shot file). As noted by Council in its LTFP and in the online survey, Scenario Two/Option 2 comprises: a 12.25% rate increase in 2023/24, and then 10.75% in each of the following 4 years. Does this equate to a 55.25% increase in rates over 5 years come? Using a simple interest calculation and adding the 5 annual increases ( $12.25 + 10.75 + 10.75 + 10.75 + 10.75$ ) this equals 55.25. However, a simple addition approach leads to an erroneous answer. The correct mathematical and financial accounting approach requires the use of an annual compounding formula. This correct approach results in a total increase of 68.87% over 5 years (shown in Table 1 on p10 of Council's SRV application). So, if Scenario 2 in SMRC's LTFP incorrectly concludes that the cumulative rate increase is 55.25% over 5 years (rather than the correct cumulative increase of 68.87%), the assumptions and conclusions reached on the total revenue raised in the LTFP exhibited publicly and submitted with Council's SRV application must also be incorrect. Scenario 2 of its LTFP 2022-2032 Council notes that: this option will generate additional rating revenue of \$76.7 million over the 10-year period from 2023/24 when compared to Scenario 3 (Base Case). As this is based on an incorrect cumulative increase figure it must be assumed that the revenue raised conclusion is also incorrect. This error must also be repeated throughout the other revenue calculations in Scenario 2 and the tables in paragraphs 7.6 - 7.8 Scenario 2 Summary Financial Statements, Scenario 2 NSW Local Government Performance Indicators and Scenario 2 - Capital Works in the LTFP. The conclusions and amounts must, by definition, also be incorrect. The major mathematical and financial accounting error by SMRC in its LTFP (and which was also replicated in documents and advice publicly exhibited and provided by Council during its community consultation process on the SRV application) is likely to be replicated throughout the documents, arguments and financial calculations submitted by Council in support of its SRV application. Specifically, Application Part A and Part B, and Other Attachment Part - 5B. The calculations and conclusions in these, and the application more generally, should not be relied on and need to be questioned and forensically scrutinised by IPART. This seriously calls into question the validity and accuracy of Council's SRV application and the reliability of the documents submitted in support of its application. This poses the question: Can the Tribunal have a high level of confidence that its assessment and decision on SMRC's application are based on high quality, accurate evidence that meet IPART's regulatory and analytical frameworks, and transparency objectives. The answer to this question and decisions made by the Tribunal on the SMRC SRV application will affect not only IPART's ongoing regulation of special rates but can also have a knock on effect on IPART's annual local government rate peg process and its broader pricing and licencing regulatory framework in NSW?

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Please refer also to my previous submission of 4 May 2023. I would be grateful if the additional comments at the end of this submission are given close consideration by IPART and drawn to the attention of the Tribunal for its consideration of the SRV application lodged by Snowy Monaro Regional Council. Note: I request that my email contact details be treated as confidential and not published on IPART's website. This should also apply to my email contact details included with my first submission of 4 May 2023.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?  
See previous submission 1

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?  
See previous submission 1

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.



See previous submission 1

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.  
See previous submission 1

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Only minimum explanation was given by Council to the community. Written and oral requests for detailed information on productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period were not addressed by Council. Council's consistent public messaging to the community was: either a large SRV or a reduction in local government services, and no detailed information on the range of services (core and non-core) provided by Council or where reductions in service delivery could be made (other than divestment of residential aged care facilities)



\* 4. Please rank the options in order of preference

Option 2 - an increase in rates applied over five years - 12.25% in 2023/24, and 10.75% in each of the four years after with some service reductions in the first five years

Option 1 - an increase in rates of 53% in 2023/24 maintaining service levels

Option 3 - no SRV - an increase in rates of rate-peg only (4%) with significant service level reductions

\* 5. Prior to this survey, were you aware that Council was exploring a Special Rate Variation?

\* 6. How were you informed of the Special Rate Variation? (Please select all that apply)

☐

Mailout/Letter

☐

Council website

☐

Community meeting

☐

Newspaper advertisement

☐

Council news page or update column



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 5 May 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

1. Management and governance shortcomings Councils financial reports are regularly wrong. For example, the December 2022 Quarterly Statements presented the actual values from the September 2022 statements. Each period since some councillors have pointed out that the cash position of council has been mis-reported. SMRC has also not operated in line with standard practice nor has it been managed in compliance with the Local Government legislation. Errors in the accounts mean that councillors and SMRC executives cannot take timely management action to keep council on budget 2. Reckless decision making SMRC has a history of spending on optional and non-essential projects that have a net negative impact on its operating results. For example, it invested in a library in Jindabyne knowing that it would have a net operating cost that SMRC could not afford to fund. Likewise it is currently investing in a sports hub in Cooma that will have a net operating cost more than \$200,000 per year. 3. Wont address over servicing / poor efficiency SMRC has failed to address over servicing and poor efficiency by loss making services despite the community rejecting increasing revenue. 4. Questionable quality and independence of SMRCs financial sustainability review The SRV uses a report developed by the AEC Group as part of an independent financial sustainability review. It is understood that AEC changed their recommended rate rise (34% over six years) to be 43% in FY 2023/24 after being appointed by SMRC to do more work. Many on the community are wondering if AECs work was flawed given that council ignored their advice. 5. A deeply flawed community consultation The consultation was deeply flawed: The options presented and that formed the survey were worded inconsistently with the scenarios outlined in the Long Term Financial Plan. Option 1 was misleadingly worded with many people believing it was a 53% rate increase for one year only (Option 1) when in fact it was a permanent increase followed by rate peg increases thereafter. Option 2 was misleadingly worded with many people believing it was a 55.25% increase over five years, when in fact it was a 69% increase over five years. The survey required people to rank three options in their order of preference. This meant that people had to assign a preference to options they may not have supported at all. Many community members did not complete the survey as a result. The survey tool had a smart phone version that was prone to mis-capture the respondents correct preferential order. 6. The communitys preference was ignored A vast majority of survey responses were in favour of Option 3, effectively a period of austerity rather than an SRV. Had the survey flaws not occurred this percentage would likely have been far higher. However, despite getting a very clear result, our councillors ignored the communitys wishes. 7. Uncertainty of leadership and capacity Council recently resolved to end the employment contract of the general manager. Both the mayor and deputy mayor were outvoted on the matter. The leadership of both the elected council and also the council executive is in disarray as a result. Council does not have the capacity at this time to deal with any SRV effectively nor to introduce or execute cost containment nor efficiency programs. The termination of the current general managers contract also casts a pall over the validity of the SRV application process. This concern is further amplified by the large numbers of CFO's council has lost in recent times. IPART is also referred to the recent OLG review into SMRC in this regard to this and other finance concerns. Council also recently resolved to undertake a financial audit. It is clear that the elected councillors have little confidence in the validity of the reported financial results. For IPART to make any determination based on the questionable information provided would be an act of recklessness. I further note that the councillors routinely struggle to approve the budget reviews due to the errors in the business papers 8. Wrong timing Also it is appropriate to allow the new general manager, once appointed, to chart their direction for SMRC finances. Any actions by IPART should be deferred until the new general manager is appointed and has sufficient time to comprehend the true state of council's finances

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, council has not identified specifically what the additional funds will be used for.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, details of alternatives have not been provided for comment.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No, the council materially mislead the community on the exact amount. On Council's Have Your Say SRV page in October 2022, Council included a Fact Sheet that showed Option 2 as a 55.25% increase over 5 years. However, Council's revised application to IPART shows Options 2 as a cumulative increase of 68.87% over 5 years (see p10 2 March SRV application). Council has continued to mislead the community in its Media Release of 14 April 2023 where it notes that Option 2 is a 55.25% increase over 5 years

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes, Council received some 2000 submissions representing around 10% of the residents. Of those submissions 86% voted against the 53% SRV increase and 63% voted for no SRV at all.



Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council completely disregarded the 86% of community responses against the 53% SRV.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I don't believe the Council has reviewed the reasonableness given the 86% of responses against the 53%

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The community are unwilling to pay, 63% of over 2000 responses called for no SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The plan still requires full payment over time. Ultimately failing to pay the rates will see action to recoup costs with potential for your property to be sold against your will.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No, in previous community consultation on SRV the council dismissed some 80% of submissions calling for no rate increase prior to a financial audit being undertaken.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No cogent or appropriate explanation has been presented to the community.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 13 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No they havent

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Only the percentage not the dollar rate

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The mayor said the community does not have a voice and didnt want to listen to any of the community concerns

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Many if. It all cannot afford the new rate rise and we get noting in return

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

They dont care

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Dont think they have one

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not sure

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

They are broke and have no clue



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 14 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The SMRC need to be audited and questions asked as to why they have let the financial situation become so desperate. There needs to be actual transparency on what, how, and why the council spends rate-payers money. Example, why build a ~\$15 million sports complex, and only to then turn around and wonder how SMRC is going to pay for its yearly maintenance of ~\$1 million. SMRC did not consider ongoing maintenance costs of such a facility, and only focussed on the new 'toy', the sports facility. Councils everywhere should stick with providing the mandated basics that are non-negotiable - meaning, such works will be fully funded by rate-payers, and such monies never to be re-directed to other 'projects'. All other "nice to have" projects must only be done and approved by rate-payers, otherwise, such project should never be undertaken.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Whilst the council has demonstrated the need for a vast increase in revenue to just maintain the current levels of works, they have NOT "clearly established" or demonstrated a "different revenue path" to increase revenues. Instead, they have chosen to try and drain rate payers of even more money, to finance what the council should have been providing all along. The Snowy Monaro Regional Council, are asking rate payers to pay in excess of 50% more in rates, for no corresponding benefit to the community or rate payers.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. They have given very little thought to alternative revenue streams that do not severely impact rate payers. Their level of incompetence is astounding. For example, they built a multi-use sporting complex for around \$15 million, but gave little to no thought on how to pay the \$1 million per annum to maintain the facility on completion. Their "go to" plan is to have rate payers fund the maintenance of a facility that's not used by the majority of rate-paying residents. Another example, they're currently building a new library in Jindabyne. What is the forecast patronage of this new library? Who goes to a library any more when the Internet is at their fingertips? Again, funding an expensive building, filling it with books, presumably, at what cost, and for what percentage of the shire population that will use it? How is it funded ongoing? People never pay entry or loan fees at a library, so how is it sustainable?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, they want to increase rates by at least 50% ongoing and gave an estimated dollar amount, but they did very little to explain how any efficiencies will be realised ongoing as a result.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

NO. They have NOT done any community engagement concerning this re-submission for a Special Variation.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

As far as I can tell, the council received community feedback, which led to their decision to rescind the first Special Variation application, as they were trying to get approval for a 53% increase. The community said NO. In response, the SMRC submitted a letter to IPART, rescinding the Special Variation application, only to re-submit another application by 3rd March 2023 allegedly, asking for option 2 of their original SV proposal, which still asks for ~50% increase in rates ongoing plus the peg rate. The community, as I understand it, totally rejected these radical rate increase proposals, and most opted for the council to reduce 'additional' services, and stick to the basics of what councils should be doing, and be more financially responsible. There appears to be zero accountability of how council spends rate-payers money.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The ~50% increase in rates is totally unacceptable. Inflation and the current cost of living is already hitting households very hard, and now the SMRC wants to extract more money from an ever diminishing pot of rate-payer monies, for little to no improvement on services currently under the SMRC's charter. SMRC is literally asking rate-payers for more, to see no benefit in return. This proposal is completely unreasonable. Ask yourself, would you pay ~50% more in rates for no visible benefit to the community?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. SMRC have admitted that the average income in the shire is not stellar, but this has not stopped them from making a submission for a radical increase in rates. In terms of "willingness to pay", SMRC are, figuratively speaking, trying to hold rate-payers at gun-point. They know that rate-payers will never be willing to pay ~50% more in rates. And have stated in one of proposed "options" to not seek an increase, but services will be cut. I, and many others, opted to have services cut - the additional, nice-



to-have but can't afford services. If SMRC had been doing their job, they would have seen the financial projections, and formulated a fiscally responsible plan to make a bad situation better. Instead, they have let the financial situation become so desperate, they are trying to get approval from IPART, to cover up their incompetence, and have rate-payers pay dearly for it. There is no willingness to pay the extortionate increase.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The council has not clearly addressed hardship. I wrote them on this point, but received a generalised, non-specific answer to my very specific question. I asked about rate-payers who default on payments. On page 2 of my rates notice it says in BLOCK CAPITALS: PROCEEDING WILL BE TAKEN FOR THE RECOVERY OF ANY AMOUNT OVERDUE AS PROVIDE IN THE ACT. THEREFORE, PLEASE PAY PROMPTLY. Given the current cost of living due to inflation and high interest rates, I asked the SMRC: "What is the council's projections for the Rate and Charges Written Off for 2023/24, and how many properties were sold in 2021/2022 to reclaim rates in arrears, knowing that \$352,496 was spent on debt recovery. Does SMRC predict that more properties will be foreclosed in 2023/24 as a result of this apparent money grab? " SMRC Answer: "No properties were sold for unpaid rates. We work with ratepayers facing financial difficulties, through Councils financial hardship policy, to find solutions to get them back into a sound financial position. It is only where all other attempts to get people on track with their rates that sale of property is considered. " They did not answer my question about their hardship projections for 2023/24. Given what SMRC are asking for, there must be an increase in rate-payers claiming hardship. If they have a policy for financial hardship for rate-payers, why don't they have a similar policy for council expenses that doesn't involved asking rate-payers for more? The council's plan is to continue as "Business as Usual". This is not a plan; clearly, the current plan does not work.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Don't know. Probably.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

There are no tangible productivity improvements declared. There are no cost containment strategies ongoing, just a reliance on extracting more money from rate-payers. There is a distinct lack of trust in the SMRC.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 14 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

We cannot be ignorant to the rising costs affecting home owners, business and Councils. Council has been impacted by severe weather events and general maintenance requirements. The costs are rising and as Council funding is not infinite, the rates must increase to assist with these costs. I want and expect a certain standard of services from Council and I understand that I must pay my share for this; just as for my own personal budgets

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council have clearly established the need for, and the purpose of a different revenue path. I have been very aware of Council's communications and discussions leading up to this Special Rate Variation request

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes, I believe that Council has canvassed alternatives and are being very sensible in their endeavours

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Council has very clearly communicated to us the proposed increases - in percentage and dollar amounts - I used their rate calculator via their website to discover the different amounts I can expect to pay. they also communicated to check current Valuer General website and use that to confirm my lands current value

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

I believe Council made every effort to engage the community. I am aware of media releases, newspaper communications, social media updates, Council Website information as well as community 'pop up' stalls throughout the area (I think there was also an online zoom opportunity too)

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

This was heavily discussed at Council meeting and debated - the original submission was changed after listening to the community

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I was happy with the original submission. After using the Council's rate calculator, I found the 53% increase was not as bad as I thought. The newer submission is even cheaper so I certainly cannot complain. The community wants value for money and I think this Council has made the right considerations. The submission will not cover everything, but I am confident that the increase will allow Council the funds to continue providing the essential services we require. There has been a lot of negativity on social media by a small number of people which made me quite concerned but when I did my own research, I discovered the truth was nowhere near as bad. Such a shame a small number of 'loud' people can put out propaganda in such a way as to 'scare' easily led people.....

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

The community certainly made efforts to let Council know their concerns and I believe the concerns have been accounted for in the decision to submit this application to vary rates. The original submission was for a 53% rise, after hearing from the community, the Council retracted that and put in for a lesser increase. We are currently living with an increase to the cost of living across a broad variety (food, power; home loans etc.). Unfortunately Council cannot afford to continue providing services that have increased in cost without passing on those costs to us, the rate payers. Council has communicated hardship opportunities and in my experience, have always been open to payment arrangements, so I know that I have options if I need them.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council has a Hardship Assistance program that I can apply for. It assesses my individual situation and allows me to go on a payment plan if necessary. I can also organise a direct debit set up through them to pay in smaller amounts over more frequency (I have used this service before and it definitely was a relief in my circumstance). On the Council website they have a copy of their policy and it is clear and concise.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?



Yes. The documents were exhibited before they applied for the variation

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

As mentioned previously, I made sure I did my own research on the proposed rate variation. I did this because I wanted to make sure the money was going to be spent in the best interests. I believe that the Council has adequately quantified their strategies and plans



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 14 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Yes. Our Council has been very clear, thorough and transparent about establishing and communicating the need for extra revenue via a SRV.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes, they have reviewed their expenditure, income and administrative systems and proposed three alternatives to the community, including a "no rates rise above indexed/automatic".

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, they clearly laid this out to the community and undertook extensive consultation.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Absolutely yes. One could not fault them on their engagement of the community in this process, both in its level and the strategy.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They had extensive discussions at Council meetings, following extensive meetings with the community, and then changed their position from Option 3 (immediate rate rise) to Option 2 (staged rate rise) during a close-called vote (6 to 5) at (I think) a special meeting called in response to community concerns.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The impact is small compared with other costs of living and it is well within the vast majority of the populace's capacity to pay. The scaremongering about affordability is simply not a reflection of the demographics in this LGA's community. Yes, there are those who will struggle but there are options provided for those people in this case.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council has considered this carefully but they have no choice: they have been starved of funds by the State government and overloaded with responsibilities (such as weeds, roads and residential development). They have listed to the community's concerns about willingness to pay and have offered them the option (of reduced services) if the SRV is not accepted.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I have not read this in detail but I believe that they have made such provisions and I am happy with that arrangement. I believe that there are very few who would not be able to pay. (The LGA is full of "second homes" and the economy is lively and growing. )

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not sure

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Not sure



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 15 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I believe that with out the full transparency of an external audit, that SMRC have refused to conduct several times, that residents can have full faith and trust in the council that a rate rise is the best way forward. I do not want to reward council with providing more funds to fix mistakes that they have made in managing the council. I believe that a rigorous assessment of existing practices is required and a full financial audit must be provided to ensure that ratepayers money is not being misappropriated and wasted.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

I do not feel that the SMRC has clearly articulated how the increased rates will be utilised in providing improved services. In addition they have not clearly stated ways in which they have implemented internal methods for improving efficiencies and cost saving methods. I am aware of the predicted deficit but the only messaging from council has been that revenue must be increased from rate payers, I believe that the council has allowed itself to get in this situation through poor management and oversight. Until these issues are resolved I cannot support a rate increase.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

The council has conducted a survey of ratepayers who overwhelmingly indicated a lack of support for a rate increase. I also feel that the survey was stacked with options and did not allow a true objection to a rate increase, it was a variety of options that were presented and all were increases of some kind. Ratepayers showed minimal support for an increase and council have still decided that they will proceed with applying for the increase, which shows a major flaw in the process. The community consultation has cost the ratepayers money and it is clear that the wishes of the community have been disregarded by SMRC.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The SMRC website is hard to navigate and information is buried where it is difficult to find. As a ratepayer I do not believe that I have been informed clearly enough about the dollar value increase to my own rates. I have had to try and track them down and I do not feel confidence in the accuracy of the information.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

The council community engagement felt tokenistic and there were limited opportunities for residents to engage in their local community to gain the clarity and information they needed. The majority of information came from online sources. During this period of time council have turned off comments in their social media, which meant in an area of geographic isolation, it limited the ability to engagement and see clarification on the needs for the rate rise. Council financials records and efforts to minimise expenditure have not been clearly documented or shared.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council have completely disregarded the overwhelming view of residents regarding the special variation. The community consultation consisted of options that all were some type of rise, no ability to clearly select/object to a rise. The consultation was conducted and the messaging from council has been that they did what was minimally necessary to take the rate rise to ipart and they were going to proceed anyway, regardless of the outcome. I would have like to have seen an option included to object to all proposed rate increases included in the consultation and a better analysis shared with the community afterwards. There is a lack of transparency that is building mistrust within the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

In Jindabyne, there has already been considerable increases into the affordability of the the area. Increasing rates will add to this . The area has seen dramatic increases in the sales value of properties as more people buy into the area. This has seen the land value increase dramatically and this hasnt been factored into the rates and the impact on residents in the future. Earning capacity hasnt kept pace with the increase and this will put additional pressures on residents. Additionally jindabyne has a high number of properties that are used as investments and this places extra pressure on the infrastructure. I do not believe that council has explored the options available to provide a balance between long term and short term residents. As a resident I was safe roads to drive on. I do not have waste services,mains water or sewerage at my property, so I am not sure how my substantial increase will benefit me.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

The council has disregarded the communities wishes with many stating that the increase in unreasonable and will negatively effect their ability to pay the rates .



Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I am not aware of anything extra the council has decided to implement as part of the hardship policy.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Most likely in their hard to navigate website.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I do not believe the council has been transparent enough in its cost cutting or cost containment methods. I do not clearly understand what efforts council has made to minimise expenditure and mismanagement.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 16 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The council is inept and the NSW government should be looking at a more efficient council to meet modern needs

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, the council isn't open and transparent in any dealings with the public. The word is they want to build new office buildings.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No they have just mentioned they can't continue to provide services which I believe the public agreed to lose some.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

I don't remember receiving a dollar amount and their track record of engagement isn't great.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

They are awful at engagement with the public, in the end they dismiss people and push their thoughts on you. They are also negative to detractors on a personal level on social media. The mayor and deputy mayor are both guilty of this, this makes interactions with the council difficult.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Might of buried a newsletter somewhere

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It's unreasonable and unrealistic to ask for 50% extra in the next 12 months. This is poorly thought out and aggressive.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

They haven't thought about how the community will be able to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Haven't seen it anywhere

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I believe it has

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No way, the books aren't open and they continue to tell us the costs vary



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 20 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No suitable alternatives.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. Council waste money so are digging for more.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council asked for community feedback, and then ignored it.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Home owners cannot afford a rate rise. It will result in "locals" selling and moving.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council were told every time they asked that we can't afford ot, and have attempted to proceed anyway.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

What hardship relief? Never heard about it.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has not provided sufficient financials to show that improvements will be made.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 20 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

In light of the above issues and considering the new valuations just received by the Valuer General's office, I truly hope that this special rate variation will not be approved. The council as it stands now can not be trusted to have the best interest of the whole of the council area as they are only interested in putting forward Jindabyne as a tourism draw in the hopes that can bring more free dollars into the area. The rest of the community shouldn't go begging.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. They should address efficiency of council procedures and works first. Also the promised Audit never happened, so ratepayers do not have a clue why the council is so poorly managed.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not really. Their "Your Say" page ignored the wishes of the majority of submissions against a rate rise. They only allowed the option of rating 1 to 3 on which type of rate rise would be preferred. There was no option for discussion allowed. And no option to pick "other" as in a council demerger option.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, but now that has all changed with the new valuations from the Valuer General just being received. Our property value has increased over three fold since the last valuation. The council can not expect ratepayers to pay the proposed increases based on these new valuations.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

There were plenty of facebook announcements regarding meetings. But as we are a rural and in some areas remote community, not all people were effectively reached.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They ignored the feedback given by the community with the major stating that she knew what was best for the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Even spread over five years, the rate rises will greatly impact households especially in this current hyper-inflationary environment and now with the new land values dramatically increasing, it will tip some people over the edge.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

They ignored the pleas of those who are less able to pay and only concentrate on the more upmarket community of Jindabyne. That is where the heart of the council is operating. They want to attract tourism and state dollars to fund projects that the council will in the end be responsible for their upkeep. That shouldn't be allowed considering they ignore the rest of the community and can not maintain what stock they already have.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council may well have a proposed intention to address hardship. But in the end, the ratepayer will still need to pay.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I don't know. I do know that the documents are available to view on the IPART website.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

All they plan on doing is more of the same. They never fully explained or quantified any productivity improvements or containment strategies because there have not been any. No audit means any verbal output by the council regarding otherwise can not be trusted or proven.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 21 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Rural living without council services. No town water No town sewage No rubbish collection. Paying higher rates for no extra services. 18monthly rural dirt road grading, left pot holes in road and locals filled in themselves as it was dangerous for the school bus entering and exiting road,

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not aware of any

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The council hasnt listened to the community

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The community isnt willing to pay. Very high housing prices are pushing locally families away and Sydney people are buying in. Country wages Sydney prices. NSW land valuations had increase by 400% in 2023 therefor rates will increase as rates as based on land value.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Not aware of the plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No aware

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Nil



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 25 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I think the council needs To be honest with the community as to where all the money has gone that was in their control prior to any of these increases being put in place There is lot of concern with in the community before any more action occurs

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 27 April 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

My thoughts are that they should demerge. Since the merger everything has declined in terms of efficiencies.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council did outline inability to maintain assets. As a rate payer I believe money has been wasted on nice to have projects instead of focusing on maintaining essential assets eg road repairs, verge mowing as kangaroos cant be seen, existing public facilities eg toilets, halls, etc The smaller communities such as Anglers Reach & Old Adaminaby are neglected by council and these areas are expected to pay massive increases in rates. I strongly object to a rate rise of this nature.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council have stated that without a rate rise there will be further degradation of assets. If council just focused on existing assets which they have neglected for many years instead of fanciful ideas like a path around Lake Jindabyne at a massive cost they would not be crying poor.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Council have provided information on the rate increase however valuer general have just issued the latest valuations which have increased substantially. Residents face increased living costs from all directions. And now this adds to that financial strain. Council need to inspect road repairs after the subcontracted workers claim repairs are completed to a satisfactory level because on minor roads the repairs fail within a week of completion. This just wastes money as the repairs have to be done again!!

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes they have.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

There has been an overwhelming response from rate payers against the special variation increase. Council are not retreating from their stance. Mismanagement of money paid to contractors who over charge for works is one area they could improve on.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable to add to the rising cost of living. Passing on rate costs to renters is forcing family out of properties causing displacement and impacting on local economies of rural areas. Why have the council allowed themselves to get into this position?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I dont believe they have considered impacts on smaller communities. This increase will have negative impacts on small businesses as well as house rate payers. Smaller rural communities are already struggling and only get very basic services.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Payment plans still cause hardship as rate payers have to pay the increase anyway.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes. However the vote only got over the line by 1.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

There was not enough detail on how they will restrain spending.



Author name: L. Wood

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

This current council has ignored ratepayers request to not raise rates and are pushing ahead regardless of our wishes

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Sort of

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The community has voted 80% plus against the rate rise and they wont listen to us

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Im a pensioner and am struggling to pay the current rates

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

No consideration

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No plan

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No information to ratepayers



Author name: M. Smith

Date of submission: Friday, 10 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The council is not trusted by the community (in excess of the normal dissatisfaction that any council has to deal with). It has a reputation for being untruthful to ratepayers. I understand (and agree with) that there is a community feeling that the council should be put into administration. I do not know if this is justifiably based on incompetence, or if the NSW government requirements for councils to raise funds are inappropriate for a rural council.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. What little justification was provided was vague and was conclusions rather than evidence to support them.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council identified 3 alternatives with the Special Variations one patently the council's preferred option.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Council communicated a 53% increase in rates. I did not see any dollar amounts. I understand that the increase is intended to be an increase in the base rates and that any future rates variations will be developed from this base rate.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Community engagement appears to have been in the form of flyers and on social media.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

As I understand it community feedback overwhelmingly rejected the proposed special variation. The council decided to go ahead with it, on my understanding having made that decision before community feedback was complete.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Given the current economic circumstances of most ratepayers and the general economic climate, the proposed special variation is unreasonable.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I am not aware of the council having given this consideration.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Have not seen it.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Don't know. I understand that some documents have been made available this week.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I am not aware of this.



Author name: P. Hilzinger

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The Snowy Monaro Regional Council has received scathing reports from the AEC and other relevant bodies as to its incapacity to manage council finances. This council is at the bottom of the list of badly run councils, and they think the more money they get, the more money they can spend. They seem to forget it's not their money, it's the ratepayers' money they keep wasting!

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The council has not provided any documentation in regards to its financial spending or any audit of its past spending as it had promised it would. Council has a culture of coverup and of not being transparent and honest in its dealings with ratepayers and citizens. Council has not provided any justification whatsoever for its massive proposed rate rise of 53% which will devastate many people in this inflationary time.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes. With a similar secondary high rate rise proposal.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. Even after 86% of ratepayers have categorically answered that they don't want any form of rate rise as a result of the council's online survey. And even at a very well attended public meeting with council whereby the ratepayers demanded that council come clean with an audit to show justification and other reasons for the proposed rate rise, council has totally ignored the ratepayers concerns and voted to apply for the exorbitant 53% rise.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has ignored the feedback and concerns of how badly the ratepayers will suffer financially, and how it will lower the already devastated standard of living with such a high rate rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable to apply such a drastic rate rise.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council has not shown any consideration at all of the effect of such a rate rise.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council has not outlined any form of addressing hardship of such a rate rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not as far as I am aware.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has never explained any justification for its ongoing and greatly increasing yearly budget blowouts, and has never produced a genuine cost containment plan. Council has continually failed to demonstrate how to set priorities on council projects and how to maintain a responsible financial plan to prevent, or curb cost over expenditure.



Author name: R. Fitzthum

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Council has been secretive and uncooperative with regards to the community's call for an external audit of its spending and actions of the last 5 years. Council has used Restricted funds as Unrestricted funds without approval and has registered the spending as a negative amount against the Unrestricted funds instead of proper accounting. Council has failed to provide responsible governance.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The council has decided to go against the wishes of 86% of the community

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The impact on ratepayers is unreasonable, in light of the current economic environment. many residents in the region have already been forced to leave the area, or go and live in a caravan park because of the impact of Snowy 2.0. This was before the 9 interest rate hikes and increase in cost of living and energy bills. if this SRV is granted, there will be defaults in mortgage payments and Council rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

The Council has not taken the community's capacity, or willingness into account.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The Council has not outlined how it intends to address hardship caused by the SRV. Council has not even considered this possibility.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I can't confirm or deny this

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

The Council has been far from transparent about its plans for the SRV income and does not have any cost containment strategies.



Author name: T. Clarke

Date of submission: Monday, 20 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Since the expanded regional council was formed the area of Jindabyne, Berridale, Delgaty and Adaminaby the old Snowy River Shire has seen a decrease in services, neglect of infrastructure and yet Jindabyne and Berridale will see the most substantial rate rise. We also have the most housing stress due to seasonal workers and tourism. Knowledge of each area in this regional council rests with 11 councillors, travel time can be three hours or more to each area. Putting up rates will be eaten up by management costs of this unmanageable regional council. Socially this rise will see many leave the district, businesses unable to find staff, stress on policing and a rise in homeless. In the long term just raising rate will not solve the problem of this regional council.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The cumulative increase was not fully explained. I feel this rise was not explained fully in dollars.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I feel they have not taken into account the communities comments and opinions on the rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed rise of land values in areas Jindabyne and Berridale will compound the %53 rates rise proposed by this council to a level that will make it unaffordable for many low income earners, pensioners and the seasonal workers needed to support this areas tourist industry. This in turn will see a rise in social problems that will inevitably cost the government much more.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I don't think any consideration was given to this communities capacity to pay. they would look at development much of which is driven by those living out of our area and who see Jindabyne and Berridale as rental potential and holiday homes. With this considered it is people with money to spare not those who earn their living here, bring up children and support the tourist industry that have driven up prices.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No the council has no special plans for this rate rise. There is very little social housing in Jindabyne, five houses to my knowledge. No refuges for domestic violence or youth support and not enough aged in place services. These I know are State supported, grants need to applied for by council, part of the councils neglect of Jindabyne. Distribution of rates are not explained or equitable.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

There has not been enough transparency.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Jindabyne and Berridale, The old Snowy River shire which was incorporated into this large regional shire of Snowy Monaro has seen efficiency measures and productivity drop. Cost containment blowout and services decrease. The area is too diverse and covers far too great an area to be efficient under one regional council.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 10 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

This application is ill-conceived with insufficient explanation or information being available to the community. Council has deliberately advertised its intention to apply for a SRV at a time when the residents are on holidays the Snowy Mountains being predominantly a winter tourist destination. The Christmas holidays are most likely to receive the least objections.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No I don't believe they have

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Our local council held a meeting in regards to the rate increase to get our community opinion and they completely disregarded the vote of 83% of the rates payers objecting the increase. The local council then proceeded with the application for a 53% rate increase anyway

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

A proposed rate variation of 53% would likely affect a significant number of homeowners who would be unable to meet their mortgage payments with the significant rise in interest rates, in addition to the cost of power and gas. Moreover, the variation would drive rental fees up so that the end result would be a significant rise in homelessness, possibly domestic violence and more importantly the crime rate. Ratepayers in Snowy Monaro pay some of the highest prices in the state for power and gas.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The residents of Snowy Monaro Regional Council LGA voted most emphatically against the rate rise with 80% voting against the proposed rise. Council ignored the overwhelming vote of the community and voted to apply to IPART for the SRV

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No amount of planning can compensate people when they lose their home, particularly the elderly and young families. The high cost of living, high rentals, high power and gas charges and now an absolutely outrageous SRV is going to have a significant effect on the social fabric of our community.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not yet to my knowledge.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has not explained to the community where cost savings will be made or how the additional rates will be spent.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 10 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Am aware that most regional amalgamated councils such as this one have become further in debt since amalgamation, but expecting ratepayers to fill the gaps caused by geographical and staffing costs is unsustainable. In several cases prior to amalgamation some regional councils were financially very strong, for example Tumbarumba.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Received proposed increase in percentage terms but not the total increase in dollar terms for average ratepayer by rating category.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, most of it done through social media, not aware of any ratepayers receiving a letter about proposed increases.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council voted to ignore the feedback from their online survey which resulted in 86% result of NO to proposed increase.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

As a ratepayer who has already received a 78% increase in Council's decision to rate rural residential properties as residential, the proposed increase makes it too difficult and am looking to relocate to a regional area with a Council that can be trusted to work with its community. I am not alone in this.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Have no knowledge of how Council decided to ignore the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Huh! Can't comment on this as have not received any communication from Council about it.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not aware of these/

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Can't comment on this, have found Council's financial documents a bit obfuscating.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 11 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

REQUEST HAS BEEN MADE FOR THE COUNCIL TO INFORM THE RATEPAYERS WHAT THE FUNDS HAVE BEEN SPENT ON SINCE THE MERGER, BUT THIS HAS NOT BEEN FORTH COMING.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

YES BUT IT HAS BEEN IGNORED

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

NO

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

NO

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

THE COUNCIL HAS IGNORED THE SURVEY THAT THE COUNCIL REQUESTED THE COMMUNITY TO FILL IN

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

TO INCREASE THE RATES BY 53% WHEN ELECTRICITY/GAS - PETROL - FOOD - INTEREST RATES ALL INCREASING, HOW ARE RATEPAYERS SUPPOSE TO SURVIVE.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. THE COUNCIL ARE NOT CONSIDERING THE COMMUNITY, THEY ARE NOT LISTENING TO THE RATEPAYERS, ESPECIALLY THE AGED PENSIONERS.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

IF THEY HAVE OUTLINED HOW THEY ARE GOING TO ADDRESS THE HARDSHIP, THEY HAVE NOT INFORMED THE COMMUNITY.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

YES BUT THE RATEPAYERS WERE NOT ALLOWED TO COMMENT

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

COUNCIL HAS NOT INFORMED THE RATEPAYERS, CLOSED MEETINGS ARE THE NORM



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 11 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

To me, the council has not made clear just what the increased rates will be spent on, or how they are going to report to the community where the increased rates have been spent. My understanding is that a large percentage is proposed to be spent on road maintenance, but the council has just secured a \$4.8 million grant to this end, so it would seem that the increase is no longer necessary.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

From what I understand, 86% of ratepayers rejected the proposed special variation, but a majority of the council voted in favour. This is contrary to what the majority wants, so how is it why did they bother consulting at all?

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

If a large majority of ratepayers reject the proposed special variation, then it is unreasonable for the council to ignore this opinion.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

If a large majority of ratepayers reject the proposed special variation, then this is an indication of the community's incapacity and unwillingness to pay. The council does not seem to take this into consideration.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I have not heard of any intention to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. There may be a plan, but I have heard nothing about it.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I am assuming that these relevant IP&R documents have been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation. If they had not, it would be a pointless exercise, would it not?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

The council may have explained and quantified the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies that the council has realised in past years, and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period, but, if they have done so, they have done it in such a way that I have not been able to understand it at all.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I completely understand the need for rates to rise, but at the rate that has been suggested is ridiculous. Council members are more concerned with their own pockets as at any chance they have they take a rise. The misuse funds, for example spending under \$3000 for 2 nights in Canberra for some meet and greet which is under 2 hours away. If funds are as bad as they say. Do a zoom meeting. Go to a less luxurious hotel. The councillors are only looking to keep up with the Jones's putting in amenities that would be nice, but not needed. Why spend the money just because. Council are knowingly wasting rate payers money, these particular people were voted in to give rate payers answers about mismanaged funds, but will not give any answers to the questions we originally had. Now they are making the residents even angrier and have broken all trust they had

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Yes, their 'needs'

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes 3 options which all lead to the same thing

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has turned their nose up, disregarding concern for locals. They have continued to steam roll ahead with the 'inevitable' rise and are basically just attempting to give us notice. The choices that were provided to vote on were basically a raise with less maintenance. A rate rise of 53% over 5 years or a 53% rate rise straight up. This isn't a choice, this isn't hearing the community

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The snowy Monaro is an ageing area. With many younger working families on minimum wage. Yes there is a gap of snowy workers and future gen. But a 53% rate rise will be out of reach for many residents, which will force people into bankruptcy. House owners that rent their properties can pass on the costs, but when the average house cost 400 per week before the rate rise, many will need to find other accommodations in other areas.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council are just going through the process without any compassion for the community, it's not just the community is unwilling, it's that is unaffordable. If the council came up with more affordable approach

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No, I have not heard of any plans to assist in any hardship

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

They will not look into past costs as there are inconsistencies, any all that have been hired to look into have all been fired



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

They have described the need for an increase but it is not backed up by numbers. The purpose is clear.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

There has been no alternatives to rate rises. Put a toll at the entrance to Snowy Monaro for visitors during the ski season to help with roads.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The increases have been communicated poorly. It does not explain whether the increase is for 1 year only or it is a permanent rise.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

I am only aware of mail and email.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council's response is very quiet

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I feel the rate rise is at the worst possible time for those with mortgages or on the pension

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

There has been no mention of the community's capacity.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I have not seen the council's proposal re hardship

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I do not live in the Snowy Monaro and my only contact is through mail or email & websites

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

The council's plan / strategy is very vague or generalised. There are no tables of proposed expenditure to justify the rise. I understand the need for increases, most people do. We just need the justification to be laid out in numbers and not just words.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Don't know

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not that I am aware of

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No, not at all, all I received notice that there was a proposed special variation, no value in percentage terms and no amount of increase in dollar terms

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No not at all

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Th economy is quite bad and interest rates are rising, this increase in rates is going to cause a lot of hard ship

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I don't think they have engaged at all. I have 2 properties and have not received any notifications

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I don't think they will address this issue

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Don't know

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Council needs to become an efficient business rather than wasting money. The average person does NOT have a bottomless pit of money to give away to the council. Surely for Jindabyne to be a healthy welcoming diverse community there should be a mix of people of all economic means able to live in Jindabyne. This huge rate rise will mean even more long term rental properties will be sold or go to short-term rental as this would be the only way for owners to recoup sufficient funds to pay the next massive rate rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

no

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

terrible

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This is a huge financial impact on us. Our property is a permanently rented at a conservative figure however there is no possibility that we can increase our rents by 50%. This will make it more difficult to pay our mortgage payments and may need to consider selling the property. there is already a massive shortage of long term rental properties in Jindabyne. Increasing rates substantially AGAIN (ours increased over \$500 a year just 2 years ago) will mean everyday folk like us will have to sell up and then more long-term rentals will disappear.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has not considered that landlords like us will be going financially backwards and have little option but to sell therefore meaning less long term rentals available. Jindabyne will have more and more empty apartments and houses for 8 months of every year as rich Sydneyites use Jindabyne as their holiday base. This will take away from the community as it becomes even more transient.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council offers NO assistance to property owners like us who have tenanted their property. Just huge rate rises year after year. When the 3 council's amalgated a few years ago, rate payers were told we wouldn't receive significant rate rises beyond the expected levels but this has already occurred once with over \$500 increase in one year. Will council just keep having exorbitant rate rises?

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

unsure

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council should stop employing expensive contractors and use in-house staff who have the skills and knowledge.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Not much outside of "Increasing Costs" No mention of seeking efficiencies or seeking of State Government assistance in dealing with the burden of local roads with a sparse population and high seasonal tourist travel.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes, but there was an obvious bias in the information provided towards the 53% option

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, Online forum discussion on this matter has been deliberately stifled by the disabling of comments on council posts. All information has been presented with a clear bias and indication that the 53% option was the only possible way forward

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council's response has been very much "Our way or the highway"

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Not reasonable at all. Snowy Monaro residents are being impacted by property value inflation from proximity to Canberra and the Snowfields without seeing any of the income growth. This makes the Council's proposed 53% rate hike completely unaffordable for many residents and will directly contribute to financial hardship and homelessness.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

No consideration of the residents ability to pay these rate increases, as stated income across Snowy Monaro has stayed relatively stable but is not even matching inflation even before this proposed rates increase.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

There has been no communication on this.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Unsure

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

There has been no mention of cost savings alongside the 53% rate rise increase



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

In spite of benefiting from virtually no council services, I would be ok with a significant rate increase IF council took steps to demonstrate: - A desire to identify and pursue responsible efficiencies - A desire to increase revenue through attracting wealthy commuters to the area - A desire to keep good faith with the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Council has not taken any steps - indeed, appears to have actively avoided steps - to show that its operations are efficient, effective, needed, and that other sources of revenue have been/will be pursued. An efficiency review is required to establish the need for additional revenue, as opposed to a reduction in spending. One council member is eminently qualified to undertake such a review, and has offered his services for this purpose, but I understand he has been prevented from doing so by the majority of council members. Additionally, council has taken decisions which run counter to attracting additional rate payers into the region, thus increasing revenue and decreasing the cost of services per ratepayer. The northern part of the council area is well within the Canberra commuter belt, but current minimum land sizes prevent the creation of lifestyle blocks small enough to be managed by those with full-time employment off the land. This is a wealthy potential rate-payer base that the council is actively discouraging from moving to the region through these minimum land sizes. As a rural rate payer who gets very little for my rates (no water, no sewage, no street lights, no road repair, significant travel to access library or pool or any other services, no roadside rubbish collection and additional payments both in person and in rates to access the rubbish collection depot) - I consider that council has not adequately demonstrated its competence in managing its current finances.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes - a slightly lower rate increase, or a program of service reductions. No consideration appears to have been given to review efficiencies or increase revenue through other avenues.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Not really - virtually all of the information I have heard about this has come from the community, not council.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

My understanding is that the community voted overwhelmingly against the rise, but council has decided to pursue it regardless.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This is generally considered to be a low socio-economic region. As mentioned above, council has actively taken steps which, deliberately or otherwise, serve to discourage wealthier residents from nearby Canberra from being able to move to the northern parts of the region, in the commuter belt from around Bredbo and Canberra, through minimum rural block sizes preventing the creation of lifestyle and hobby blocks.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. I understand council has acted against the results of the community survey on this matter.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Insufficient when taken alongside other cost of living pressures being experienced in the current economic climate.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes, I understand they have been.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

As mentioned above, in my view, the council has not demonstrated its competence in this area, and appears to be actively blocking an efficiency review of current spending.







Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

No matter what the community says or wants, Council will go ahead with their intentions regardless.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council is ignoring community input.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This increase is very unreasonable for our community. They are not addressing unnecessary spending.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council is ignoring community objection. Council refuses to explain their reckless spending. They refuse to have a full audit of of fear it will expose inept spending.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council's plan to address hardship to rate payers is unsatisfactory.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council have been very vague on their intentions.