

IPART's Draft Report on Contribution Plan No. 24 for Schofields released for comment

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is seeking comment on its recommendations to reduce the amount Blacktown City Council can charge developers in the Schofields Precinct.

Council proposed developers pay between \$54,577 and \$131,464 for each residential lot or dwelling, to cover the costs of providing local infrastructure for new residential development in the precinct.

IPART is proposing the amount be lowered to be between \$48,996 and \$102,525. This is primarily the result of applying a higher expected population estimate, removing some land and works for stormwater management to be consistent with the strategy proposed by the *North West Growth Centre Stormwater Management Strategy Review*, and reducing the council's estimated cost of land acquisition.

The draft recommendations would reduce total costs in the plan by \$27.2 million, or 10.4%, and are detailed in IPART's Draft Report on the assessment of Blacktown City Council's *Contributions Plan No. 24 for Schofields Precinct - CP 24 (2018)*.

Chair of IPART's Local Government Committee, Deborah Cope, said this is the second time the plan has been reviewed, with the first review completed by IPART in 2014.

"In the short term, most land and works in the plan are essential to meet the local infrastructure needs generated by new development in the precinct," Ms Cope said.

"However, we found that the expected population in the precinct is higher than the council has assumed when revising the plan. In addition, the council did not consider the impact of some major planning proposals for the precinct, and some of its estimates for works costs require updating."

IPART is recommending a comprehensive review of the costs and timing of infrastructure delivery in the plan within 18 months, to allow the council to refine its forecast infrastructure needs and costs for the precinct.

"Regular reviews of the plan would help to ensure that contributions collected under the plan match as closely as possible the reasonable cost to the council of providing essential local infrastructure for new development in the Schofields Precinct," Ms Cope said.

Submissions can be made until 5 July 2019. The full Draft Report and information about making a submission can be found at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au. IPART will consider all submissions received by the due date, before providing a final report to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.