

# Media Release

1 December 2020

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## LOCAL COUNCILS NOTIFY INTENTION TO INCREASE RATES

Eight NSW councils have notified the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) of their intention to apply for a special variation to increase their income from rates above the rate peg in 2021-22.

A further two councils have notified IPART that they intend to increase their minimum rates for 2021-22.

The metropolitan councils intending to apply for special variations to increase their income from rates above the rate peg are Canterbury Bankstown Council, Central Coast Council and Georges River Council.

The regional and rural councils are Armidale Regional Council, Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council, Federation Council, Liverpool Plains Shire Council and Tweed Shire Council.

The councils intending to apply for minimum rate increases without increasing their overall income from rates above the rate peg are City of Parramatta and Inner West Council.

“In assessing applications IPART will be mindful of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, bushfires and drought on both ratepayers and councils,” said Tribunal member Deborah Cope.

Special variations allow councils to increase their general income by more than the rate peg to fund infrastructure and additional services, or to improve their financial sustainability.

Under the rate peg, all NSW councils are eligible to increase their general income from rates by up to 2.0% in 2021-22. Councils seeking a larger increase must consult with their communities and request IPART’s approval for a special variation. As part of their community consultation, councils should explain how they are reducing their costs so the increase is the minimum necessary.

IPART will begin assessing the applications against criteria set out in the Office of Local Government’s guidelines from February 2021.

“The criteria include demonstrating the need for any additional income, evidence of adequate community consultation and an assessment of the reasonableness of the increase,” said Ms Cope.

Ratepayers and other stakeholders can have their say by contacting their council or lodging a submission to IPART.

Councils were asked to notify IPART by 27 November 2020. They have until 8 February 2021 to consult with their communities and submit their applications.

Details about each council's proposal should be available from the council.

Full details about the 2021-22 special variation and minimum rate increase process, including how to make a submission to IPART, can be found on IPART's [website](#).

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