

Media release

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SPECIAL RATE VARIATION APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FROM 13 COUNCILS

Thirteen councils across NSW have applied to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to increase their general revenue above the rate peg in 2018-19.

IPART has set the rate peg for 2018-19 at 2.3%. Councils requiring additional revenue are able to apply to IPART for either single year or successive annual percentage increases above the rate peg. These special variations can be permanent or temporary, and IPART assesses applications against guidelines published by the Office of Local Government.

The councils that applied are:

Council	% total increase including the rate peg and purpose
Ballina	15.54% cumulative increase over two years, retained permanently in the rate base, to fund renewal of core infrastructure and improvements to the health of waterways.
Balranald	94.87% cumulative increase over seven years, retained permanently in the rate base, to improve financial sustainability, reduce the infrastructure backlog, fund infrastructure renewals and maintain existing services.
Bellingen	19.10% cumulative increase over three years, retained permanently in the rate base, to fund transport infrastructure renewals.
Clarence Valley	25.97% cumulative increase over three years, retained permanently in the rate base, to improve financial sustainability and fund asset maintenance and renewals.
Hawkesbury	31.29% cumulative increase over three years, retained permanently in the rate base, to improve financial sustainability, reduce the infrastructure backlog and fund infrastructure maintenance and renewals.
Kiama	18.54% cumulative increase over three years, retained permanently in the rate base, to improve financial sustainability and fund infrastructure maintenance and renewals.
Kempsey	6.50% single year increase, retained temporarily in the rate base for 10 years, to fund projects that protect and enhance the natural environment.
Lismore	2.71% single year increase, retained temporarily in the rate base for five years, to fund a city centre revitalisation program and 'Lismore Business Promotion Program' marketing activities.
Muswellbrook	14.73% single year increase, retained permanently in the rate base, to fund new infrastructure investment, infrastructure maintenance and renewals.
Randwick	19.85% cumulative increase over three years, retained permanently in the rate base, to fund new community facilities and projects, anti-terrorism expenditure and maintain existing services.
Shoalhaven	29.10% cumulative increase over three years, retained permanently in the rate base, to improve financial sustainability, reduce the infrastructure backlog and fund infrastructure maintenance and renewals.

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More information is available at ipart.nsw.gov.au

Upper Hunter	20.12% cumulative increase over three years, retained permanently in the rate base, to improve financial sustainability, reduce the infrastructure backlog, fund new infrastructure investment, infrastructure maintenance and renewals.
Willoughby	3.06% single year increase, retained temporarily in the rate base for four years, to fund an upgrade of the Northbridge Plaza Car Park.

IPART Chair Dr Peter Boxall said IPART will determine all applications by mid-May and councils would be able to apply successful special variations for the 2018-19 year.

“We will assess each application against the criteria established by the Office of Local Government with councils required to demonstrate the need for and the purpose of the additional revenue, evidence of community consultation and an assessment of the impact on affected ratepayers,” Dr Boxall said.

“As councils must engage with the community when assessing options for a special variation, we expect councils will have already sought and considered the community’s views on the special variation.”

“Community members wishing to make submissions directly to IPART can do so until four weeks after receipt of the application, and we will consider these submissions as part of our determination.”

Details about each council’s proposal should be available on their websites, in local media or from councils directly.

Full details about the assessment criteria for special variations, the detailed proposals submitted by each council and how to lodge a submission can be found at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au.

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