



Approved for release by Chief Executive Officer, Alex Waldron

Issued: 25 October, 2023

MEDIA RELEASE

Consideration of Special Rates Variation

At the Extraordinary Meeting of Council in July 2023, Council resolved to engage the services of a consultant to prepare a Financial Sustainability Review, Long Term Financial Plan gap analysis and Asset Management Strategy gap analysis on Council business operations to support a Special Rate Variation application.

Letters summarising the outcome, key findings and 2 special rate variation options have been prepared and will be issued to ratepayers this week. Further information is also available on Council's website: www.upperlachlan.nsw.gov.au/council/special-rate-variation

A Special Rate Variation is only one of many steps in the analysis required of Council business unit operations. Council will be looking at productivity improvements, reducing expenses, reviewing asset utilisation and asset maintenance backlog.

Improving the Council's long-term financial sustainability is vital in order to continue to deliver the existing services and infrastructure. Council has had operational budget deficit results in the past two years and this is projected to continue in the Long Term Financial Plan.

Upper Lachlan Shire Council has not previously applied for a special variation. A snapshot of special rate variation determinations shows that only 42 councils of 128 total councils in NSW have not applied for a special variation since 2011. Eighty-six Councils (or 67% of all Councils) across the state have implemented a special rates increase in their LGAs. Council has taken this decision with reluctance, and largely out of necessity resulting from a very small rate base, low population with a large geographical area to service.

Council's Mayor Pam Kensit has stated *"It's important that the Upper Lachlan community ensure they are informed and have their say, so we encourage people to attend the engagement sessions set to take place across the Shire from the 1 November 2023. If you are unable to attend one of these sessions, an online presentation will also be available on our website."*

Further information and a list of places and times is also available by visiting our website and Facebook page.

In November 2023, Council will be undertaking a series of community meetings where residents can speak to Council to better understand what this will mean to them. Council strongly encourages residents to attend one of the sessions. Dates, times and locations for the sessions are below, and also set out on Council's website.



Town/Village	Meeting Date	Time	Meeting Venue
Bigga	Wednesday, 1 November 2023	9-11am	Bigga Memorial Hall
Tuena	Wednesday, 1 November 2023	1-3pm	Tuena Hall
Taralga	Thursday, 2 November 2023	9-11am	Taralga War Memorial Hall
Crookwell	Thursday, 2 November 2023	12-2pm	Emily Chalker Building
Gunning	Thursday, 2 November 2023	3-5pm	Gunning Shire Hall
Collector	Friday, 3 November 2023	10am-12pm	Collector Oval Pavilion

Council welcomes community feedback and you may make a submission at Council's website or by email addressed to Council Chief Executive Officer council@upperlachlan.nsw.gov.au or by post to PO Box 42, GUNNING NSW 2581.

ENDS

For media enquiries please contact Upper Lachlan Shire Council
council@upperlachlan.nsw.gov.au.