

# Communications and Engagement Plan Rate rise

Phase 3



Continuing the conversation with our community about the preferred rate increase options to strike a balance between the needs of our community and Council's funded future.



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# A commitment to long term financial sustainability

In June this year, Council adopted the Our Funded Future Communication and Engagement Plan to commence the conversation with the community about Council's financial position and explore a number of non-rate increase and rate increase options. The plan outlined a series of engagement phases:

- **Phase 0** – informed the community on Council's financial situation and the current and short term mitigation strategies that have been implemented to date.
- **Phase 1** – explored non rate income and rate income options with the community that creates a financially sustainable Council.
- **Phase 2** – publically exhibit the options within the Integrated Planning & Reporting documents and further discuss the community's views on the narrowed down preferred options.
- **Phase 3** – inform the community on Council's chosen rate rise option for an application to IPART, the next steps of community engagement and IPART's determination.

With phases 0, 1 and 2 complete, we are now ready to progress to Phase 3 and inform the community of the rate rise option Council intends to submit for an application to IPART and the next steps of community engagement.

As Council's rate rise percentage was amended from what was initially drafted into the Integrated Planning and Reporting documents to reflect community feedback, Council will now focus its efforts on ensuring the community is informed and aware of this amendment and the impact it will have on its community if approved.

Engagement outcomes from Phase 0 and 1 can be viewed in the Our Funded Future Community Engagement Report. Engagement outcomes from Phase 2 can be viewed in the Rate Rise Options Engagement Report – Phase 2



## Objectives



Create **community awareness** of next steps for community engagement with IPART



Inform the **community** about the rate increase option Council intends to include in an application to IPART




Inform the **community** of IPART's determination

# Engagement approach

## Engagement level

The engagement level for Phase 3: Rate rise options is 'Inform'. This will use only Communication methods.

Engagement level	Phase 3
<b>Level 1 – Inform</b> Provide stakeholders with information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	
<b>Level 2 – Consult</b> Obtain stakeholder feedback on the project to aid decision making.	
<b>Level 3 – Involve</b> Work with stakeholders throughout the project, ensuring issues and concerns are understood and incorporated in decision making.	
<b>Level 4 – Collaborate</b> Partner with stakeholders throughout the project to develop alternatives and identify the preferred solution.	

## Engagement methods

Phase	Engagement methods
<b>Phase 3</b> <b>Intent &amp; Apply</b>	<b>Communications</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media release</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Direct email</li> <li>• Council website page</li> <li>• On hold messaging</li> <li>• Interactive online rating calculator</li> <li>• Officer call paths for direct calls to Customer Experience</li> </ul>

# Success criteria



The community is aware of the rate rise application percentage and determination



The community is aware of next steps for community engagement with IPART

# Stakeholders

Key:

- **High interest, high influence** — immediate and direct, tailored approach
- **High interest, low influence** — immediate, tailored approach
- **Low interest, high influence** — tailored approach
- **Low interest, low influence** — general approach

Name and contact	Interest	Influence
<b>External</b>		
Rate payers and residents	High	High
General community	High	High
Special interest groups	High	Medium
Independent Planning & Reporting Tribunal (IPART)	High	High
Media	High	Low



# Key milestones

Milestone	Date
Media Release	9 November 2022
Submit Intent to Apply	25 November 2022
Submit Application	3 February 2022
IPART Community Consultation	February – March 2023
Determination	May 2023

## Key Messages

- Council has resolved to apply to IPART for a special rate variation of 9.5% for three years, with a cumulative impact of 31.29%.
- If approved, the Special Rate Variation will commence in the 2023-2024 financial year and will be a permanent increase that will be retained within the rate base.
- Council has listened to and considered the feedback from the community agreeing to apply for a lower rate increase than originally proposed.
- Council's website, rates calculator and Integrated Planning and Reporting documents have been updated to reflect the new rate rise amount.
- Council will now submit an intent to apply to IPART before 25 November 2022 and a detailed application addressing the criteria by 3 February 2023.
- Council's application will be made available to the community on both Council's and IPART's websites, with IPART calling for submissions in February through to early March 2023.
- If approved, Council has committed to including additional affordability measures to assist both pensioners and non-pensioners in our current Hardship Policy.

## Action Plan

### Phase 3

Activity	Date
Media release – Council to submit application for rate rise	10 November
Website – application percentage updates	10 November
Rates Calculator – application percentage updates	10 November
Social Post – announce application percentage and resolution	10 November
Integrated Planning & Reporting plans updated on the website	14 November
Direct Email Closing the Loop - special interest groups	18 November
E-newsletters - Closing the Loop	7 December
Social Post – announce council submitted the application	3 February
Website – application uploaded	3 February
Media release - IPART determination	May 2023
Social Post – IPART determination	May 2023
Rate Notice – SRV and hardship information	July 2023



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