

FAQ's

What is an SRV, and why is the council considering it?

A Special Rate Variation (SRV) is an increase in council rates beyond the standard cap set by the NSW Government. Councils apply for an SRV when their existing revenue (mainly from rates, fees, and state and federal government grants) is not enough to support essential services, maintain infrastructure, meet growing community needs and cover cost shifting measures by the NSW Government. Councils are responsible for delivering a growing amount of core community services such as road maintenance, waste management, public facilities, parks and recreational spaces, libraries, animal management and community programs. An SRV is considered when existing revenue is not sufficient to meet these additional costs.

I have been paying my rates, why is more money needed?

While we receive funding from rates, government grants, and service fees, these do not keep up with rising costs, growing community needs, and cost shifting from the NSW Government. Over time, councils, including ours, have taken on increased responsibilities previously managed by the NSW Government. These include infrastructure and environmental programs, governance responsibilities, and expanded community services—all without additional funding to support the increase in services.

Just like households and businesses, the cost of delivering essential services continues to rise. Expenses such as insurance, utilities, fuel, and materials have significantly increased, adding further pressure to our budget. At the same time, cost shifting from the NSW Government means we are required to do more with limited resources. Cost shifting measures like these place significant pressure on the day-to-day operations and financial sustainability of our Shire. Smaller councils like ours are particularly hard hit due to our small rate-paying population, meaning we have fewer resources to absorb these rising costs. Despite these challenges, our community has told us that it is important to remain a strong, independent, and financially sustainable local government area (LGA) that is not at risk of amalgamation.

What alternatives to an SRV has the council considered?

Council has explored other options such as cost reductions, efficiency improvements, and applying for additional grant funding. However, these measures alone will not cover the funding gap.

Will pensioners, low-income households, or businesses get any concessions?

Eligible pensioners will continue to receive rebates under existing NSW Government concession schemes. Council has also prepared a hardship policy to provide assistance to affected ratepayers.

How does the council currently manage its finances, and why does it need more funding?

Council operates within a strict budget, but rising costs, increased service demands, and aging infrastructure have created financial challenges. Councils' financial performance is audited by the NSW audit office annually and financial reports are made available to the public. The additional funding will help maintain service levels and prevent reductions in key areas like our community services initiatives and routine maintenance.

Has the council explored cost-cutting or efficiency improvements before increasing rates?

Yes. Council has implemented efficiency measures, reduced non-essential spending, and prioritised essential services. However, the financial gap remains too significant to address without additional revenue. Councils' financial performance is audited by the NSW audit office annually and financial reports are made available to the public.

Will there be public meetings or opportunities for feedback?

Yes, Council will conduct public meetings, online surveys, and written submissions to gather community feedback. Dates and locations will be available on councils website and social media.

What happens if the community strongly opposes the SRV?

If significant opposition arises, Council will reassess the proposal and consider alternatives. However, this will impact our ability to provide you essential services and funding for important projects.

Who makes the final decision, and when will it be announced?

Council will review community feedback before making a final decision. If the SRV is approved by Council, it will then be submitted to the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for assessment. In making their decision, IPART will consider Council's financial position, community consultation outcomes, and the need for additional revenue to maintain essential services and infrastructure.

For more information and to have your say, visit www.uralla.nsw.gov.au/SRV or follow us on Facebook for updates.

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