

## Attachment 3

Summary of community submissions received  
between 27 November 2018 – 11 January 2019

## Summary of Submissions received ‘Against’ the proposed Special Rate Variation

Summary of community submission	Officer Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Special Rate Variation</li> <li>• I am opposed to any increase, special or otherwise. Particularly I do not see why rates should normally increase at a rate greater than the CPI.</li> <li>• I do not support the rate variation as presented.</li> <li>• Raising rates appears to be completely out of touch with people’s expectations and is an anathema to promoting Lithgow as a go ahead town. The only thing this will encourage people to do is leave.</li> <li>• I am strongly against this proposal and wish to register my displeasure with this suggestion.</li> <li>• As a rate payer, I am voting NO to the rate rise special variance.</li> <li>• I wish to register my object to the proposed Rate Increase for 2019/20.</li> <li>• We strongly oppose any variation in our rates, they are already expensive.</li> <li>• I am not in favour of any rate increase. The property I have in the Capertee Valley is uneconomical farmland and is used for passive recreational purposes only.</li> <li>• Read your info re: this subject and would OBJECT to such a proposal. If the Council has failed to adequately provide for ageing infrastructure then why should current rate payers cop the increase?</li> <li>• I am emailing you to register that my vote is for Scenario 1 (SRV expires + Rates peg).</li> <li>• NO! There should be no revision of rates upwards.</li> <li>• Council should be lowering rates in the area as in the last 15 years no improvement near my property have been made and rates are too high.</li> <li>• I object to any increase in my rates as I receive no benefits from Council.</li> <li>• Don't agree with council increasing our rates ,for the simple reason Council has enough funds to waste now</li> <li>• I wish to write today to advise I totally disagree with the proposed rate rise in the LGA.</li> <li>• I am a Lithgow rate payer and I object to the proposed rate increase.</li> <li>• My submission is against the implementation of the special rate variation proposed by Council.</li> <li>• I have examined the plan and I wish to object strongly to the additional increase of rates above the peg tare for the Lithgow LGA. The reasons for objection to the rate increased are based around the LCC allocation and undertaking of works funded by the Lithgow LGA.</li> <li>• In regard to the proposed special rate variation – I hope that it can be avoided.</li> </ul>	<p>The submissions are noted.</p> <p>As it stands, Council’s infrastructure assets are depreciating at a rate faster than they can be renewed, while providing the other services expected by the community such as libraries, events attraction etc. The proposed SRV is specifically target at increasing Council’s ability to renew infrastructure while maintaining these other types of services.</p> <p>All works are scheduled according to their priority. Priority is assessed by condition, road hierarchy, traffic counts, tourist routes and heavy vehicle routes. Community submissions are requested on a yearly basis (in April/May), for consideration for inclusion in the draft Operational Plan, subject to the above priorities being thoroughly considered.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lithgow is almost one of the highest rated municipalities in NSW which seems out of all kilter to the infrastructure provided and the culture of the town.</li> <li>• The Lithgow City Council rates are already excessively high and amongst the highest in the state of NSW. Any further increase will put the rates into a bracket where we cannot afford to pay and will be forced to sell up and move to a different location with a more reasonable rate system.</li> <li>• We have higher rates than Bathurst <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ our water costs more than Bathurst</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Average residential rates in NSW vary from \$104 p.a. to \$1,743 p.a. (Office of Local Government Time Series Data 2016/17). The average residential rate for Lithgow LGA for 2017/18 was \$697 p.a. (excluding domestic waste, water and sewer charges). The average residential rate for Bathurst Regional Council for the 2016/17 year was \$992 p.a. (Office of Local Government Time Series Data 2016/17 <a href="https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/my-local-council/yourcouncil-website">https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/my-local-council/yourcouncil-website</a>).</p> <p>When new infrastructure is designed, all efforts are made to incorporate the culture of Lithgow and its heritage. However, times change and so must the focus of Lithgow when considering the design of new</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Our services are less</li> <li>○ Our water is often of lesser quality than Bathurst.</li> </ul>	<p>infrastructure. There is a much greater focus on community events and the spaces required to facilitate such events. Vandalism is also an issue that requires design consideration. Lastly, standards are vastly different to those in years past which requires infrastructure be designed in accordance with disability access guidelines and traffic / parking restrictions. All of the above considerations must be included in the design process in addition to Lithgow's heritage in order to ensure cultural fit as well as an operational fit.</p>
<p>On a comparative basis MID Western Regional Council has not sought a rate variation and has remained within the rate cap as set by Government. MWRC has a much larger area and only slightly more population and more roads. That council has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive in obtaining revenue streams from other than rates</li> <li>• Has included revision of fees and charges</li> <li>• Investment resulting in substantial rental from a shopping centre complex</li> <li>• Tendering for RMS and other VPA works</li> </ul>	<p>All Councils are required and/or expected to provide a range of services to their communities, however, it is very difficult to directly compare rates between Councils as different Councils can have vastly different rating and revenue bases.</p> <p>The average residential rate for Mid-Western Regional Council for the 2016/17 year was \$822 p.a. (Office of Local Government Time Series Data 2016/17 <a href="https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/my-local-council/yourcouncil-website">https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/my-local-council/yourcouncil-website</a> ).</p> <p>The average residential rate for Lithgow LGA for 2017/18 was \$697 p.a. (excluding domestic waste, water and sewer charges).</p> <p>Lithgow Council initiated a thorough annual review of fees and charges from the 2018/19 year to ensure that the complete costs of providing services are recovered, where appropriate.</p> <p>In the past, Council has trialled working with the RMS on the maintenance of RMS-maintained assets. There is a significant administrative cost and burden on Council resources however. At this time, It is believed that Council's focus must be on improving the condition of its own assets versus those of other authorities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As Pensioners we can barely afford to pay the current council rates of \$2256 every year. With the projected increased we will be struggling to pay the required increases.</li> <li>• There is a high level of economic disadvantage in the Lithgow community.</li> <li>• Lithgow City and the LGA are deemed to be a very high disadvantage socio economic region per the SIEFA index of socio economic disadvantage. It is unreasonable to increase rates beyond the rate peg as it significantly impacts on those with low incomes who are barely making ends meet.</li> <li>• The last 12 months have been particularly hard financially for residents on rural blocks due to cost of water cartage and a high increase in cost of fodder.</li> <li>• I am a farmer and have experienced the worst drought in 43 years. I will have little income for over twelve months. I have NO capacity to pay any increase in rates.</li> </ul>	<p>Lithgow Council recognises that ratepayers in the Lithgow local government area may, at times, experience difficulty paying rates and annual charges, irrespective of their income. Council has a Hardship Policy (<a href="http://council.lithgow.com/download/9458/">http://council.lithgow.com/download/9458/</a>) in place to assist and support to community members who are experiencing financial stress and are unable pay their rates and charges on time.</p> <p>In considering the community's capacity to pay a Special Rate Variation, Council has thoroughly researched its community's level of socio-economic disadvantage, its rating structure compared with neighbouring Councils, ratepayer income levels and changes in land values.</p> <p>Council has recognised its relative socio-economic disadvantage by limiting the proposal to retain the current 4.77% SRV plus an additional Special Rate Variation of 4.23% increase (plus rate peg) thereby seeking only a one-off, single year increase of 9% which does not expire.</p>
<p>If assets are regularly maintained and upgraded, - why are they deteriorating?</p>	<p>Maintenance does not extend the lifespan of an asset. Put simply, maintenance works (patching, potholing, crack sealing) helps an asset reach the typical end of its useable life. Without intervention, an asset will degrade far quicker than expected. Even with regular maintenance, assets will always require renewal.</p> <p>Council currently spends around \$19 million on the maintenance and renewal of community assets each year; however, we have a funding gap and need to invest an additional \$1.1 million per year. This additional investment will ensure that the number of assets in poor condition does not continue to grow.</p>
<p>Estimate – council received \$20,000,000 - \$30,000,000 per annum – should be sufficient to support work needed to be done.</p>	<p>Council's revenue from ordinary rates was \$12.19M in 2017/18 and total revenue was \$46.6M. Funds are fully allocated to provide services to the community, including renewal and maintenance of assets.</p>

<p>We agree we should encourage and support business improvement initiatives but, why should we have to pay for them?</p>	<p>The aims of business improvement initiatives are to reduce long-term costs and / increase revenue. Quite often, business improvement initiatives required an upfront investment to achieve long-term cost savings. An example is LED street lighting which has an upfront cost of \$405K but will save an ongoing \$90K p.a. in energy costs.</p>
<p>No mention of state or federal grants applied for by LCC to upgrade assets such as roads, pavements, etc.</p>	<p>In 2017/18, Lithgow Council received \$3.43M of capital grants, including \$1.015M for transport projects. Council thoroughly assesses the potential for success in all grant programs it is notified of. This calendar year engineers have been working towards the application of funds for Fixing Country Roads Round 3 requesting contributory funding at a value of almost \$2mil.</p>
<p>Laughable at the least raising the rates a bit like the banks fees for no service.</p>	<p>The submission is noted.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No details of the planned use of the extra funds sought.</li> <li>• This letter seeks to indicate a wish list of non-specific areas of expenditure that you could fly a jumbo jet through.</li> </ul> <p>You do not specify which assets are at risk nor indicate the budget for any maintenance or renewal which should be outlined at least for the major items.</p>	<p>The projected total SRV income (from maintaining the current SRV plus adding the new SRV) is estimated at \$1.178 million for the 2019/20 year.</p> <p>It is proposed to spend the SRV income on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* \$725,000 on Transport (sealed roads, unsealed roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridges and road drainage)</li> <li>* \$100,000 on stormwater drainage</li> <li>* \$250,000 on buildings</li> </ul> <p>The proposed 2019/20 Transport, Stormwater Drainage and Buildings Program available for downloading on <a href="http://www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com/srv/">http://www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com/srv/</a> Hard copies of the program were also made available at the Council Administration Centre and Lithgow, Wallerawang and Portland Libraries.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenarios are poorly structure and given to be not able to be verified.</li> <li>• Second case has a pea and thimble trick in it as you carefully ignore adding the 2.7% to the combined 9% to indicate the true increase of potentially 11.7%.</li> </ul>	<p>The SRV scenarios are drawn from Council's Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP). The scenarios are developed through detailed modelling based on a variety of assumptions outlined in the LTFP.</p>
<p>Your rates calculator is meaningless for other than the specific cases shown.</p>	<p>The rates calculator uses the valuation of your property that is set by the Valuer General. Any ratepayer can enter their rates category, land valuation and locality (from the rates notice) to calculate the impact of the scenarios on their individual rates.</p>
<p>Council also has the responsibility to outline in detail the effect of not getting approval.</p>	<p>The only alternative to an SRV application is to make further cuts to services to deliver a balanced operating result (before capital), consistent with 'Fit for the Future' requirements.</p>
<p>Volume of data is too much for a ratepayer to read through and interpret. Should have summarised the position covering all relevant documents and made it clear.</p>	<p>Fact sheets have been added to the 'Lithgow Have Your Say' website - <a href="http://www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com/fact-sheets/">http://www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com/fact-sheets/</a></p>
<p>The Scenario 2 worst case is a nightmare – in 2019/20, a householder could pay rates which are 11.7% higher than today. And they could well be paying this high rate each year thereafter. There is no sunset clause mentioned. Even if the current SRV is jettisoned but the new permanent SRV is accepted, the rate increase (with the rate peg) is still 6.9% per year (more than double the inflation rate). But the intent by Council is to have two SRVS plus the rate peg – a gigantic rate increase relative to CPI (Each year) – where's the value in all of this – this is not explained fully.</p>	<p>The actual increase on 2018/19 rates would be the additional SRV of 4.23% plus the rate peg of 2.7%. The proposed SRV is a one-off increase that will remain permanently in the rate base. Only the rate peg will be added in future years.</p>

How will households/business be impacted in subsequent years?	The proposed SRV is a one-off increase that will remain permanently in the rate base. Only the rate peg will be added in future years.
What is the reason for raising rates beyond the cap for Lithgow only?	The proposed Special Rate Variation is an important step to help maintain and manage our current assets to ensure that we deliver services in line with community expectations and remain financially sustainable into the future.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where were the checks and balances when this was happening?</li> <li>Has there been benchmarking against other similar sized councils?</li> <li>Has there been a justification for the return on investment undertaken?</li> <li>Do these balances exist now?</li> </ul>	The Council reports its results on key performance measures in its annual financial statements. The performance measures are set by the NSW Office of Local Government and include performance benchmarks. The SRV will enable Council to meet all performance measure benchmarks over the term of the Long Term Financial Plan.
I don't believe that the entire rate rise will go to these projects anyway.	<p>Where a special variation is approved, the Council is issued with an Instrument of Approval, which sets out the conditions of that approval, including minimum annual reporting requirements.</p> <p>Council would include expenditure plans in its annual Operational Plan. In addition, Council's Annual Report would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the projects or activities funded from the variation,</li> <li>details of any changes to the projects or activities funded from the variation compared with the council's initial proposal (any such changes must be consistent with the terms of the Instrument of Approval), and</li> <li>The outcomes achieved as a result of the projects or activities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I regard the current land valuation as being excessive. My rates are high enough as is.</li> <li>Council also needs to calculate rates by property prices correctly instead of random prices that do not reflect current land prices.</li> </ul>	Land valuations are set by the NSW Valuer General.
Council needs to focus on finding more efficient ways to provide better services at less cost like everyone else in private enterprise has to rather than just reaching further into rate payers' pockets.	Council has been implementing a Fit for the Future Improvement Plan which includes implementation of a range of initiatives to generate operational efficiencies.
I do agree that roads and basic infrastructure are the top priority, but believe that the money needs to come from elsewhere.	The submission is noted.
Three submissions referred to the wording "one-off, permanent increase" stating it was confusing and very hard to comprehend as a concept.	The proposed SRV is a one-off increase that will remain permanently in the rate base.
The current economic situation of LCC combined with the deteriorating state of assets has evolved over a long period of systemic neglect and poor management.	<p>With regard to their current condition, cause is irrelevant. What matters for the future is to ensure that Council has the ability and resources to best manage assets and achieve the level of infrastructure renewal expected by the needs of the Lithgow community.</p> <p>Council has been implementing a Performance Improvement Plan to position Council for a sustainable future by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewing and developing Council's Long Term Financial Plan to incorporate a Fit for the Future Improvement Plan and strategies.</li> <li>Reviewing Council's Asset Management Plan and Financial Statements Assets Special Schedule 7.</li> <li>Preparing a Financial Management Maturity Assessment to understand Council's Financial Management Maturity Status and developing an Improvement Plan with specific priority actions. 32 of 37 actions have now been implemented.</li> </ul>

<p>It is abhorrent that the community is given only 2 options to choose from...The action you wish to take with the SRV is too little too late and I believe it will not provide enough funding to achieve the desired result.</p> <p>How did Council reach the decision to request the rate variation? What information, investigation and evidence was this decision based on? Is this information going to be provided to the public?</p>	<p>The 2017-2027 Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) identified the need for a new permanent SRV to commence upon the expiry of the existing SRV on 1 July 2019 (2017 LTFP Scenario 3). The 2019-2029 LTFP Scenario 3 reiterated the need for a continuing SRV.</p> <p>The LTFP SRV scenario also includes significant, additional, asset renewal expenditure over ten years to ensure that the asset benchmarks are met or trending toward meeting the ratios during the term of the LTFP.</p>
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## Summary of submissions received – General Complaints

Summary of community submission	Officer Response
<p>Council workers do not appear to be fully engaged – when we pass one or two are often standing around watching.</p>	<p>This is a common public perception in every local government area. Often, tasks are being performed wherein it is more efficient for staff to wait on-site versus leave and come back.</p> <p>For example, should we receive notification of a water main burst, staff attend the site and isolate the network. A backhoe arrives and uncovers the site while staff wait 5 – 10 minutes. Once uncovered, staff patch the failure while the backhoe waits. Once complete, the backhoe refills the hole while staff wait. Then the backhoe leaves while staff asphalt patch the road surface. In such a scenario, it would be to the detriment of efficiency if staff were to leave and return on numerous occasions rather than wait and complete the works as soon as possible.</p>
<p>Pavement Sweeper is often parked outside the Tatts Hotel – How long does it take to do this job and what is operator doing when not on the machine.</p>	<p>All avenues to improve efficiency are currently being investigated. As part of the CBD Revitalisation, improvements in the management of Council's footpath cleaning program are in progress, identifying better machines to complete this work and more efficient scheduling of employee labour in this area.</p>
<p>Pigeon Mess – at the Tatts and lane beside Barratt &amp; Smith</p>	<p>Council is currently encouraging private shop owners to improve their storefront facades to remove the ability for pigeons to roost in this area.</p> <p>An education campaign is also currently taking place to inform the community of the issues with feeding and encouraging pigeons in the CBD area</p>
<p>Plane Trees in George Coates Avenue are dangerous – need pruning.</p>	<p>The submission is noted.</p>
<p>Pavement opposite Lean &amp; Bennett has lifted and is a trip hazard.</p>	<p>Council has noted this issue and incorporated the required renewal works into the draft operational Plan for 2019/20, subject to Council consideration and approval. The draft 2019/20 Operational Plan will be on exhibition for public comment in May on <a href="http://www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com">www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com</a></p>
<p>Debris from falling twigs on footpath between Lean &amp; Bennett and Dunns Corner.</p>	<p>The submission is noted.</p>
<p>People do not mow the kerbside outside their properties.</p>	<p>A media release was published on 16 January to educate the community on their responsibility in respect to this matter.</p>

<p>Main Street Pavers outside banks – bricks not restored to their original condition when work done underneath.</p>	<p>NBN restorations have not yet commenced in Main Street, Lithgow. Council engineers are in contact with NBNCo to arrange this work which will commence once the physical NBN infrastructure installation is complete. This will occur in late-February / early-March.</p>
<p>So far this year, Council has diverted money away from the Capertee-Glen Davis Road sealing and has failed to keep up with the deterioration of the existing section. That is about the only place I see results for my rates and there have been none. I remind Council that we were promised that this road would be fully sealed by 2000 – over 18 years ago now!</p>	<p>There has been no reduction in the scope of the resealing of Glen Alice Road as part of the 2018/19 Operational Plan. As agreed and resolved by Council, 2.5km will be resealed by the end of February 2019. From 2019/20, Council has previously resolved to allocate \$350,000 per year to seal the remaining 7.51km of unsealed road between Capertee and Rylstone progressively at a rate of 2.5km per year.</p>
<p>Jamieson Street, Portland – unusable back lane not touched in 20 years.</p> <p>Jamieson Street itself – a disgrace after the last fix up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created problems with power lines being taken out frequently</li> <li>• Stormwater entering properties</li> <li>• Loose gravel on sides causing window damage during mowing by owners because council staff are seldom seen.</li> </ul>	<p>Noted – resident was against the sealing of an asset that was a significant drain on Council resources as a result of ongoing maintenance.</p>
<p>Baaners Lane and tributary streets – The erosion is so deep in spots I believe it would cause a vehicle that ran off the side of the bitumen to potentially roll over.</p> <p>So for me to support the proposal on rates, I would need some commitment that Little Hartley residents are more than simply “\$1,500 a year each to support Lithgow”. We have poor roads too, no gutters and erosion problems.</p>	<p>Noted – register in Council’s Customer Request System for repair.</p>
<p>Council needs to accept responsibility for specific budget and delivery of projects not some amorphous bucket of niceties. For example the resurfacing of Cox’s River Road, Kanimbla Drive and Megalong Place at Kanimbla (as well as other roads in the area).</p>	<p>Coxs River Road and Kanimbla Drive have both been resurfaced at significant cost in the last 5 years. All works are scheduled according to their priority. Priority is assessed by condition, road hierarchy, traffic counts, tourist routes and heavy vehicle routes.</p> <p>Community submissions are requested on a yearly basis, for consideration for inclusion in the draft Operational Plan, subject to the above priorities being thoroughly considered. The draft 2019/20 Operational Plan will be on exhibition and open for public submissions in May on <a href="http://www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com">www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com</a></p>
<p>The Council doesn’t want to care for a gravel road that they have been doing so for fifty years that goes to the back of my property (McDonalds Hole Road).</p>	<p>Council maintains 800 lineal metres of McDonalds Hole Road, Round Swamp. Some sections are outside the Lithgow LGA boundary and are not subject to Council maintenance. When requests are received, the condition of the road asset is assessed and programmed into Council’s maintenance schedule in accordance with its priority with regard to all other Council road assets within the region.</p>
<p>My Access road to my house is far from being good (Vulcan Road, Running Stream) so they need to show us how giving more funds is going to improve anything.</p>	<p>Vulcan Road, Running Stream was previously a Crown Road that was not under the care and control of Lithgow City Council. Council is currently in the process of transferring ownership from the Crown to Council in order to continue maintaining this asset.</p>

<p>In relation to maintenance of assets I cannot agree to providing council with more revenue to carry out maintenance works which begin to show signs of failure not long after completion. I also have to question the logic behind the allocation processes, planning, cost, quality of end product and timeframes which it takes to complete the works.</p>	<p>All works are scheduled according to their priority. Priority is assessed by condition, road hierarchy, traffic counts, tourist routes and heavy vehicle routes. Community submissions are requested on a yearly basis, for consideration for inclusion in the draft Operational Plan, subject to the above priorities being thoroughly considered. The draft 2019/20 Operational Plan will be on exhibition and open for public submissions in May on <a href="http://www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com">www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com</a></p> <p>With regard to timeframes, Council must schedule work in line with the limited resources at its disposal. In many instances, it must spend many weeks preparing a number of assets for sealing and rely on contracted labour to complete this work. This does introduce lead times however this is unavoidable as all contractors have their own priorities and workloads also.</p>
<p>Has the LCC questioned and carried out investigations as to why the assets are deteriorating at a rate that requires the rate payers of the LGA to provide additional revenue to maintain and renew assets. In relation to the road network there is no denying that traffic volumes have increased which have attributed to the increased rate of deterioration for the network.</p> <p>This is the same for every council in NSW and Australia, but they are not asking for additional funds to maintain their networks. So why are you?</p>	<p>Councils in NSW are subject to rate pegging. This means the NSW Government only allows councils to increase rates by a set percentage every year which constrains Councils' ability to generate revenue.</p> <p>Council assets deteriorate at varying rates dependent on their use and construction type. If assets are not renewed in a timely manner we are faced with increased maintenance expenditure and the service level we provide to the community can also decrease. Council currently has annual budgets for the renewal of assets but unfortunately the rate of renewal is proving to be insufficient to allow Council to maintain or improve current standards. The additional revenue from the special rate variation will help us to maintain current standards and improve those standards over time.</p> <p>Council maintains a road network of approximately 1,000km which varies in condition, rate of decay and proposed lifespan. Council has recently reviewed the baseline information upon which it values and depreciates its assets to better align these assumptions with best practice engineering guidelines. From these values, it has been determined that Council is unable to provide the current level of service with its current income, while sustaining the other services that Council is rightly obligated to provide. Hence, the two options are to increase income or reduce the level of service.</p>
<p>I also have concerns regarding the maintenance decisions made by LCC which have resulted in mismanagement and wasting of Council funds through recent and wasting of council funds through recent and past completed works in the LGA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For example 1 – Hot Mix Asphaltting of Methven Street, Lithgow. It was not that long ago that these works were carried out, yet the pavement is already showing sign of distress and failure.</li> <li>• Wallerawang Main Street is showing signs of significant pavement distress in a number of locations.</li> </ul> <p>The examples above are a contradiction to the statement “Increasing the funding for these assets will allow council to renew those that are currently in a poor condition. It will also ensure that the number of assets in poor condition will not continue to grow” and are proof that the planning decisions, processes and work methods by council need to be questioned as the supposed renewal works are creating more areas for future maintenance with very little value for money to the LGA. So the questions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does Council believe that this was an appropriate use of public money?</li> <li>• Does council believe that the LGA would be happy spending a significant amount of revenue on a repair to be back there in two years' time to carry out maintenance work?</li> </ul>	<p>Firstly, both assets have been assessed and no outward signs of significant failure warranting intervention are noted.</p> <p>Secondly, it is common and expected that defects will occur a number of years after roads are sealed, within reason. Council's maintenance responsibility is required to ensure that roads reach the end of their useable life. It is not feasible or cost effective to design a road such that there are no maintenance requirements for the 20+ year lifespan.</p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does Council believe that the community would agree that the LGA have got value for money with these repairs?</li> <li>• Is council content with the performance of these pavement repairs?</li> <li>• Can council see a trend here?</li> </ul>	
<p>I also question how council plan and identify areas that require maintenance works and logic behind the decisions for the treatment for the areas that have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Example 1 – How did the Council maintenance planners reach the determination that Elizabeth Street Wallerawang required a full pavement Treatment and reseal? Elizabeth Street services around 20 houses, yet Burnett Street which services Elizabeth Street and also cater s for Mountain View Estate (50+ homes) only receives and intersection pavement repair and an overly reseal.</li> </ul>	<p>Upon assessment, Burnett Street presented an aged seal and highly compacted pavement with minimal defects. From this, it was determined to be more cost effective to reseal rather than arrange for a complete pavement reconstruction. However, Elizabeth Street was not only presenting surface seal defects but also significant pavement defects resulting in consistently deep and hazardous failures. Hence, the decision was made to perform more intensive repairs to Elizabeth Street, to better ensure asset longevity.</p>
<p>I have to question how Council has determined and reached a decision that in the draft 2019/20 Operational Plan First Street, Lithgow is scheduled to have hot mix asphalt reseal at a cost of \$140,000.</p>	<p>Community request and engineering assessment. First Street from West Street to East Street is rated at condition 4 in Council’s asset management system.</p>
<p>Concerns are expressed regarding the process (including trafficked granular surface) and timeframe for works to be completed at the intersection of Henrietta Street and Burnett Street, Wallerawang and Rydal/Wallerawang Road. The following questions are asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did it take so long to complete the intersection work at Henrietta Street? Every time you drive past there was nothing happening – no work. There were a lot of inefficiencies observed.</li> <li>• Why does LCC wait so long to complete the sealing of granular pavements? What is the reason/purpose for this?</li> <li>• With granular pavement is use of stabilisation agents considered as a treatment option for patching works? If not why?</li> <li>• What was the cost of having a water cart operate for 5 weeks including weekend and public holidays to wet the pavement?</li> <li>• Does council consider having the water cart operating for 5 weeks and efficient use of finances and resources?</li> <li>• What checks, testing and inspection were carried out prior to sealing these works?</li> </ul>	<p>With regard to timeframes, Council must schedule work in line with the limited resources at its disposal. In many instances, it must spend many weeks preparing a number of assets for sealing and rely on contracted labour to complete this work. This does introduce lead times however this is unavoidable as all contractors have their own priorities and workloads also. With 31 resealing projects in Council’s operational plan, it would be inappropriate financially and unreasonable from a scheduling perspective to expect Council’s sealing contractor to come from Sydney each time a surface is prepared. As such, this is done in batches to reduce cost.</p> <p>Where there is the potential for failure, stabilisation is considered. Council spent over \$70,000 in 2018/19 on stabilised pavement reseals where such additional cost is warranted.</p> <p>During warm, dry periods, unsealed roads in residential areas can create excessive dust if residents use excessive speed and do not drive considerably. Sporadically, Council does what it can to assist with this issue by wetting the pavement and reducing dust, if only temporarily. Council receives significant appreciation from residents for this work.</p>
<p>Lilleys Lane (which is partly in Mid Western Council with about 400m in Lithgow LGA has not been graded by Council in 30 or more years.</p>	<p>Having checked Council’s GIS data and asset database, it has been confirmed that Lilleys Road falls entirely within the Mid Western LGA.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cook Street Plaza – A new towns square – This is a concrete slab – is this what our rates pay for? If so, it is a travesty.</li> <li>• We only have to look back at the Main St and how that went absolutely discussed with that waste of rate payers funds. Then on top of that the business's that it put out of business. I would like to highlight the CBD revitalisation as a glaring example. I believe that this was supposed to fulfil one of the objectives in the CSP 2030 – to attract business and tourism. I think it is obvious that this is a complete fail and has in fact had the polar opposite effect. Businesses have suffered and many closed down leaving the CBD even less appealing than before the ‘revitalisation’.</li> </ul>	<p>This submission has been noted.</p> <p>Council acknowledges the inconvenience caused during this work to residents and businesses. The work undertaken at Cook Street Plaza and the Eskbank Street Intersection is Stage 1 of a multi-stage project details of which are available online at <a href="http://www.revitalisation.lithgow.com/">http://www.revitalisation.lithgow.com/</a>.</p> <p>In 2018, Council convened a volunteer working party made up of interested members of the community to research the factors underlying the decline in retail based on global, local and regional trends. The working party found a number of underlying factors with digital technology; generational change and consumer preference being common themes. A report detailing possible solutions to assist current and future retail growth in Lithgow was prepared and presented to Council. The recommendations from this report are being implemented by Council’s Economic Development and Tourism Department.</p>

LCC has wasted at least \$5m in the past 5 years – eg CBD Revitalisation Project and sacking of previous General Manager.	This submission has been noted.
When you first drive into Lithgow it looks like a slum – why not plant rows of blossom trees similar to Leura at each entrance...make things more attractive!	As it stands, there is significant cost associated with the maintenance of the grassed centre median as it requires lane closures of the Great Western Highway. At this time, Council does not have the resources to create additional maintenance requirements in this area.
The pubs here are painted black and grey and look about as inviting as a slaughterhouse – why not declare the area national trust and paint the Main Street in heritage colours?	Maintenance of shopfronts is the responsibility of the building owner. Council offers free heritage advice to owners.
The existing roads and footpaths infrastructure is disgusting...The infrastructure has been left to run down over a substantial period of time.	Council acknowledges that there is a maintenance backlog which requires immediate action. That is the overall purpose of the SRV – improved asset and infrastructure renewal.
Many businesses find it cheaper and easier to set up in Bathurst rather than Lithgow.	The submission is noted.
I am 83 and a pensioner who is already <b>forced</b> to pay for a Garbage Service I cannot use.	<p>Council is required by law to charge residential ratepayers a Domestic Waste Management Charge to pay for the removal of waste from residential properties to maintain a clean local environment. The Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) requires councils to levy a charge to fund the domestic waste management service. Under the Act, Council 'must make and levy an annual charge for the provision of domestic waste management services for each parcel of rateable land for which the service is available' (s496(1)).</p> <p>Council's Waste and Recycling Coordinator has visited the respondent on 14/1/19 to investigate the matter. The Waste &amp; recycling service occurs at front of property and the house is located &lt;1000m from collection point and therefore exemption not applicable under Council policy 11.1. However, in this case he has looked at ways to assist the respondent with locating her bins and made suggestions as to how this may be made easier.</p>
<p>I request Council publish on their website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The total value of salary, bonuses, benefits, superannuation, expense reimbursement and any other compensation paid to the five highest paid executives on the Council payroll.</li> <li>• The total value of all payments to councillors be it for expenses, home office costs, internet and phone, motor vehicle use, travel and any other items.</li> <li>• The total value of all costs incurred at Council meetings for catering, beverages and any other costs.</li> <li>• The total value of all payments by council to external consultants and advisers in any field, be they lawyers, accountants, engineers, marketing firms or any other external service provider.</li> </ul>	<p>Council's reporting is undertaken within the guidelines of the Local Government Act 1993. This information is published in Council's Annual Report and also in the Combined Delivery Program 2017-2021 and Operational Plan 2018/19. These documents are available for viewing on Council's website <a href="http://council.lithgow.com/ipr/">http://council.lithgow.com/ipr/</a></p>
Take a cut from the payments to Councillors.	Under the NSW Local Government Act, The NSW Local Government Remuneration Tribunal decides each year what councillors' annual fees will be, in accordance with the Act.
<p>LCC staff and Councillors need to be made accountable for all financial expenditure and for it to be transparent and available for the community to see.</p> <p>There is a general lack of confidence in LCC by the community in general and a sense that mismanagement financially by LCC is a major contributor to the current situation – concerns include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of transparency with all Council expenditure including Councillor Expenditures.</li> </ul>	<p>Council's financial performance is regularly reported to the community – in Quarterly Budget Reviews and the Annual Financial Statements, all of which are available on Council's website. <a href="http://council.lithgow.com/ipr/">http://council.lithgow.com/ipr/</a></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Former General Managers suing LCC or receiving big payouts when they leave their position.</li> </ul>	
Our children have to move away for work or education.	<p>The submission is noted.</p> <p>We are doing all in our scope and power to employ young people with additional apprenticeships and traineeships. Education facilities have improved in Lithgow (eg WSU and TAFE)</p>
LCC has mismanaged the LEP which has stopped investment in the area.	The submission is noted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I wasn't aware of the proposed increase until 7 December 2018 and given that council was closed from 21 December to 7 January and people (rate payers) were also on a Christmas break, I don't think that we have been given enough time to make an informed decision.</li> <li>The period of consultation over December – January is not the best time for community consultation regarding this issue with holiday closures of LCC, IPART and with general community holidays.</li> <li>This idea was not mentioned when you stood for election, and to bring it on over the holiday period when a lot of people are very busy or holiday is a sneaky way to go.</li> </ul>	The timeframes for SRV applications are set by the NSW Office of Local Government. Council is required to submit an SRV application by 11 February 2019.
Out of date Councillors creating division in the town by supporting coal mining and neglecting the environment and health issues association with the production of coal powered energy.	The submission is noted.
While saying more money is needed, council appears to be keen to hire (at ? cost) consultants, researchers of outside firms instead of using available staff or unemployed Lithgow citizens or Lithgow companies. One would think that a letter to rate payers and local area publicity would have negated the need (especially when money is short) to hire outside assistance to communicate to rate payers. Outsourcing might be trendy but it is costly	<p>The submission is noted.</p> <p>We hire people with the skills and expertise to undertake a particular project. With respect to contractors and consultants, local companies with the skills to fulfil the contract are able tender for work as advertised.</p>

## Summary of submissions received 'In Favour Of' the Proposed Special Rate Variation

Summary of community submission	Officer Response
I agree totally with option 2... The proposal options clearly highlight that only one has any merit in ensuring the assets of roads drainage & buildings meet the immediate needs of the community and those persons that transition the LGA on daily business or pleasure.	The submission is noted.
<p>I can see the issues outlined in your letter and understand that at times there is only so much than can be done given available resources. Hence, in completing the survey I was "mildly supportive".</p> <p>Perhaps cynical, if the SRV application is successful, my concerns are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too much of it will go to Council "managing itself"</li> <li>We will see no change in service provision or road quality in Little Hartley</li> <li>Living here will simply cost more for no visible benefit.</li> </ul> <p>A commitment from the Council on those matters will ease concerns and strengthen my support.</p>	<p>The SRV funds will be allocated to asset maintenance and specific asset renewal projects. A small amount will be used for specific business improvement projects.</p> <p>Plans for the use of SRV will be included in Council's annual Operational Plan. Council will also include in each annual report (for at least 10 years) the outcomes achieved as a result of the projects or activities.</p>

## Summary of submissions received which offer an alternative to the Proposed Special Rate Variation

Summary of community submission	Officer Response
Option 2, is the viable option, but I recommend that the rates for the mining sector is established at the current rate SRV of 4.77% plus a new SRV of 10.23%, as well as the rate peg of 2.7%.	The submission is noted. The proposed SRV will apply to all rating categories, including mining.
<p>I believe Council should have included 4 options not just; they being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Base case (do nothing other than the rate peg increase (to me this is unsustainable at 2.7%)</li> <li>• Base case with ongoing improvements – Council can ‘survive’ along with taking ongoing business measures.</li> <li>• Base case with one SRV – say 7% increase – Council can operate successfully.</li> <li>• Base case with 2 SRVS – say, an 11.7% increase – Council has enough funds to enable rates to reduce or not increase in the long term.</li> </ul>	The submission is noted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the community expects its Council to be proactive and profitable, this does not mean that Council has to ‘do everything’. Council can’t do everything and it shouldn’t – any non-core activities should be spun off or ceased.</li> <li>• Alternate approaches need to be explored.</li> </ul>	Council’s Performance Improvement Plan (currently being implemented) includes a service review program, with a minimum of three service reviews per year.
<p>I don’t believe the 11.7% rate increase is justified; I am happy to consider say a 7% increase as a short term measure (say 4 years) but that Council focus on taking costs out of running the organisation. It is clear that 50% of the costs of running Council activities related to salaries and overheads plus purchases/materials. I would like to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better procurement practices.</li> <li>• A short-term freeze on salaries rather than a 2% plus annual rise.</li> <li>• Cut salaries in senior management....jut a teeny bit. No fringe benefits.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Procurement Practices</u></b></p> <p>Council has procedures in place that require staff to seek a number of quotes from suppliers, with the number of quotes dependent on the value of the goods / service. Council also uses a large number of supply contracts, including those developed internally, through regional organisations, the Office of Local Government and the NSW Government to achieve cost savings. Council is also required by legislation to invite open tenders for purchases above \$150,000 (except where exempt in Section 55 of the Local Government Act 1993).</p> <p><b><u>Council wages</u></b></p> <p>We can’t lawfully freeze wages. We are bound by the NSW Industrial Relations Act, the Fairwork Act, Common Law contracts of employment, and the NSW Local Government (State) Award.</p>
There has been a fortune spent on the salaries in Lithgow Council – Paying someone \$160k as a town planner.	This reference to \$160,000 possibly relates to a temporary casual appointment. The author has extrapolated a full-time salary based on an hourly rate being paid to secure a qualified Planner because Council has been unable to recruit suitably qualified staff despite advertising multiple times.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why not instead reduce staff and salaries and invest the money wisely to attract more industry to Lithgow?</li> <li>• If you cannot balance the budget, then cut services, starting with wages at the top!</li> </ul>	<p>Reductions in staff and/or the recruitment of unqualified staff will result in fewer/substandard services and potential civil liability claims, financial penalties, &amp; legal action against Council.</p> <p>Alternatively we could contract out more services and pay commercial contract rates that would be an order of magnitude higher than salaries.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council needs to look at its long term future. Options such as take-over by another council, forced merger and/or totally dissolving the Lithgow city Council regional need to be explored and implemented.</li> <li>• I wish we amalgamated [with Bathurst] when we had the chance so we could have some real leadership and direction in this town.</li> <li>• I was against amalgamation or administration however Lithgow needs to go down one of these roads.</li> </ul>	<p>The submissions are noted.</p>
<p>I do find it manipulative that there is no "Scenario 3 – Maintain the current SRV + 2.7%...and look closely at where expenditure can be saved.</p>	<p>Council has an ongoing program of business improvement, including review of fees &amp; charges and cost constraint. Council has used a 'zero based' approach to budgeting from the 2018/19 year.</p>
<p>Consider different charges for property owners running heavy vehicle businesses from their property; B Doubles and Earthmoving – not small rigid - cause large potholes to open and driveway entrance are usually potholed and broken. These vehicles do the majority of road damage, perhaps they should pay proportionately.</p>	<p>The submission is noted.</p> <p>Noted, however If you commence charging people for damage to roads, arguments arise regarding the frequency of truck movements, truck weights and design of access roads, all of which effect the relative level of damage done to Council assets.</p>
<p>The two options presented in the survey were limited. It would have been interesting to know the community's thoughts on reduced spending on Halloween and Lithglow etc. Perhaps the community would have accepted less pending in Libraries and town revitalisation? These are things that I enjoy and are excellent but don't see as a priority. Perhaps the Council could charge more for camping at Wallerawang and other services.</p> <p>I for one would be very sorry if there had to be any cuts to the Library Services for example.</p>	<p>Council is currently conducting services reviews which will help to determine affordable levels of service.</p>
<p>Make some significant cutbacks from within the operations of LCC. No Halloween, no Lithglow and more internal cut backs where possible – put things on hold for 2 or 3 years and then review the state of play.</p>	<p>The submission is noted.</p>
<p>Council should first conduct a review of its procedures, processes, planning and decision making to identify the inefficiencies within the organisation in order to improve the productivity of the organisation and improve the use and efficiency of the rate payers' money.</p>	<p>Council has been implementing a Performance Improvement Plan which includes review of key procedures, processes, planning and decision making to improve efficiency. Council is also implementing technological solutions, including an Asset Management System and online facility booking software.</p>
<p>There is a 3<sup>rd</sup> approach that could be considered by your managers – same rate + normal increase + more efficient use of funds, resources &amp; human resources + minimal waste of same = better services.</p>	<p>Council developed a 'base case with improvements' Long Term Financial Plan scenario based on identified improvement opportunities. This scenario did not include a Special Rate Variation. With the improvements proposed, Council would be able to meet the balanced operating result benchmark but does not have sufficient funds for asset renewal nor to clear the infrastructure backlog. This means that Council is not Fit for the Future in this scenario.</p>
<p>I believe that there should be a redistribution of rates among the rating categories so farmers experience NO increase in rate, not even the rate cap for 2019/20. This model should be prepared and considered by Council before any decision is made.</p>	<p>The submission is noted.</p>
<p>A rate rise above the cap should only be contemplated once the following issues have been researched and/or implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive in obtaining revenue streams from other than rates</li> <li>• Has included revision of fees and charges</li> <li>• Investment resulting in substantial rental from a shopping centre complex</li> </ul>	<p>Lithgow Council initiated a thorough annual review of fees and charges from the 2018/19 year to ensure that the complete costs of providing services are recovered, where appropriate. Fees and Charges are reviewed annually and also as part of the Service Review process.</p> <p>In the past, Council has trialled working with the RMS on the maintenance of RMS-maintained assets. There is a significant administrative cost and burden on Council resources however. At this time, It is believed that</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tendering for RMS and other VPA works</li> <li>• a revision of Council policies re: road maintenance, no further sealing till backlog of assets brought up to scratch</li> <li>• Possibility of town improvement rate for stormwater drainage and buildings.</li> </ul>	<p>Council's focus must be on improving the condition of its own assets versus those of other authorities.</p> <p>This is occurring currently. With the exception of assets that have been identified as placing a particular drain on Council's maintenance resources as a result of their inherent nature, renewal projects are being prioritised in order to improve asset renewal ratios.</p>
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