



Blacktown
City Council

Building a better community

The Blacktown local government area is one of the fastest-growing cities in Australia. Thousands of new families are choosing to live here, bringing energy and opportunity, but also placing greater demand on our roads, drains, parks, and shared community spaces. Even if you're not one of the many people using a shared community space - library, pool, or arts centre, the reality is that most of what Council provides – safe roads, working stormwater systems, clean parks, sporting fields and playgrounds, well-kept footpaths – benefits the whole community, every day.

To keep up with this growth, and to prevent our services from falling behind, Council is proposing a Special Rate Variation – an increase above the standard annual rate peg rise. We're proposing this to:

- ensure our new or enhanced NSW Government-funded facilities - pools, libraries, can operate effectively without reducing funding for core services you rely on



- help limit the asset maintenance and renewal backlog of works needing to be done so our roads, footpaths, drains, parks, sports fields and playgrounds remain safe and reliable
- invest to improve efficiency and local jobs by funding 2 new public administration centres that will help deliver better services, customer experience and support the economy.

It's a proposal that ensures the costs to meet the needs of a growing city are shared by all and the benefits are felt across the entire community.

Please read on about the details of Council's proposed Special Rate Variation and how you can provide feedback.



Why do we need a Special Rate Variation?

Our population is predicted to grow from 450,000 to more than 600,000 in the next 20 years, the same as the population of Tasmania.

The income we receive from our growth is not enough to fund our ongoing, or future costs, to ensure current levels of service, adequately maintain current assets, operate and maintain new community shared spaces as well as upgrade and invest in new public administration centres so Council maintains and can increase service levels for a growing city.

What is the proposed Special Rate Variation?

Council is proposing to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent Special Rate Variation in the 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 years to provide additional rates income to meet the needs of our growing city.

A Special Rate Variation allows a council to increase its general rates income above the rate peg as set by IPART.

Council is proposing to apply its Special Rate Variation differently over residential and business rating categories which will be a permanent increase in Council's total income.

What is a rate peg?

Each year IPART determines the percentage amount that all councils are allowed to increase rates by, called the 'rate peg.'

Historically, the rate peg has not been enough to cover the actual costs to maintain service levels and assets...

How the Special Rate Variation income will be used?

At the end of year 3 of the proposed Special Rate Variation, \$90.5 million per year in additional Council income will have been permanently raised.

Council will use \$41.5 million, being the assumed rate peg amount, of this income to continue current service and maintenance levels, covering rising costs from inflation and provide limited capacity for new projects or service improvements.

From the proposed Special Rate Variation, \$28.15 million per year will be used for the operation and maintenance of enhanced and or new community shared space projects...





Artist's impression Seven Hills Library and Community Hub.

\$49.0 million of this income will be used by Council for 3 important purposes as follows:

1. \$28.15 million per year for the operation and maintenance of enhanced and or new community shared space projects delivered under the NSW Government's Western Sydney Infrastructure grants program including Blacktown and Mount Druitt swim centres, extending the Mount Druitt Library and Community Hub, building the Seven Hills Library and Community Hub, an expanded Mount Druitt PCYC, a new First Nations Cultural Hub, and a new, larger Leo Kelly Blacktown Arts Centre
2. \$10 million per year for additional asset maintenance and renewal of roads, stormwater systems, clean parks, sporting fields, playgrounds, and footpaths to address the current \$108 million backlog
3. \$10.9 million per year contribution towards the overall funding strategy for 2 new public administration centres located at Rooty Hill and Blacktown city centre that will deliver better services, customer experience and support the economy.

How is Council currently managing its assets?

Blacktown City Council manages \$7.1 billion worth of community assets – from roads and footpaths to parks, pools, libraries and community centres. We know these facilities are important to everyday life, so we take their maintenance seriously.

When Council last had a Special Rate Variation, total community assets were \$3.87 billion.

Over the past decade, Council has invested \$265 million in renewing community assets, keeping the backlog of works needing to be done to \$108 million from \$80 million, despite the significant growth in total assets.

Over the past decade, Council has invested \$265 million in renewing community assets...

By strategically planning, ensuring we prioritise asset renewal funding, keeping a close eye on costs, and reporting regularly to the community, we are making sure our city's assets are safe, reliable, and serving our community.

However, with future population growth we are going to need to do more in the years to come.

Our population is predicted to grow from 450,000 to more than 600,000 in the next 20 years, the same as the population of Tasmania...

A Special Rate Variation responds to financial challenges.

Council is facing challenges that are placing increased pressure on our finances, including:

- increasing costs to service our rapid population growth, community demand for more and better services and maintain existing as well as new roads, footpaths, stormwater systems, parks, pools and sports fields
- historically, the rate peg amount has not been enough to cover the actual costs to maintain service levels and assets
- limitations on developer contributions by the State mean Council has - \$731m of unfunded community facilities for the North West Growth Area
- replacement of ageing assets and increased usage and maintenance of our existing assets
- unavoidable cost increases for energy, fuel, information technology, cybersecurity, safety and insurance and superannuation
- cost shifting by the NSW and Australian governments, which increases our costs annually by \$32 million
- the continued decrease in our annual Australian government grant funding which has continued to decrease in real terms for almost 10 years.

The additional income from a Special Rate Variation will allow Council to deliver the services our community expects, adequately maintain assets, build new infrastructure, as well as operate and maintain new and upgraded community shared spaces.



What will happen without a Special Rate Variation?

Council will increase rates by the determined rate peg. While we have already made savings and efficiency improvements - and will continue to do so - these alone are not enough to meet future demands.

If our total income does not increase:

- We will not be able to operate and maintain the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants program, shared spaces without reducing other other services.
- Roads, buildings, and community spaces will wear out faster, as we will not be able to maintain them properly within our current budget.
- Services to residents and businesses will take longer to deliver, as the same staff, equipment and resources will need to support more people.
- New community projects such as parks, footpaths and road improvements will be delayed or reduced, as budgets will not stretch as far against rising costs.
- Community facilities like libraries and swimming pools will need to rely more heavily on user fees to keep offering the same hours and programs.
- Council will need to reconsider its public administration centres strategy.

Council remains committed to operating efficiently and delivering value for money. However, without additional income, we will face increasing challenges in maintaining the level of services and facilities our community expects and deserves.



How will the Special Rate Variation proposal work for residential properties?

We are proposing a permanent increase to your rates as follows:

- in 2026/27 budget year, an increase of 15%
- in 2027/28 budget year, the assumed rate peg will apply
- in 2028/29 budget year, the assumed rate peg will apply.

For more than 70% of residents paying minimum rates you'll pay an extra \$2.19 per week above the assumed rate of \$1.10, a total of \$3.29 a week, or \$171 a year in 2026/27.

The table below shows the average increase for residential properties.

	Base year 2025/26	Year 1 2026/27	Year 2 2027/28	Year 3 2028/29	Cumulative increase
Average residential rate under the assumed rate peg	\$1,233	\$1,295	\$1,359	\$1,427	\$194
Annual increase rate peg (%)		5%	5%	5%	15.8%
Annual increase rate peg with an SRV		\$1,418	\$1,489	\$1,564**	\$331
Annual increase with an SRV (%)		15%	5%	5%	26.8%
Cumulative impact of SRV above base year levels		\$185	\$256	\$331	
Difference between SRV and rate peg only scenarios		\$123	\$130	\$137	

- **A permanent SRV means that after 3 years the rate peg percentage would continue compounding on the rate levels after the SRV.
- Without a SRV, the maximum rate peg determined by IPART can be applied in 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29.
- The examples used do not include the domestic waste charge and environmental stormwater management charge.



How will the Special Rate Variation proposal work for business – general properties?

We are proposing a permanent increase to your rates as follows:

- in 2026/27 budget year, an increase of 15% on all business – general properties
- in 2027/28 budget year, an increase of 8.5% for business – general properties
- in 2028/29 budget year, the assumed rate peg will apply.

The table below shows the average increase for business properties.

	Base year 2025/26	Year 1 2026/27	Year 2 2027/28	Year 3 2028/29	Cumulative increase
Average business-general rate under the assumed rate peg	\$6,951	\$7,299	\$7,663	\$8,047	\$1,096
Annual increase rate peg (%)		5%	5%	5%	15.8%
Annual increase rate peg with an SRV		\$7,994	\$8,674	\$9,107**	\$2,156
Annual increase with SRV (%)		15%	8.5%	5%	31.0%
Cumulative impact of SRV above base year levels		\$1,043	\$1,723	\$2,156	
Difference between SRV and rate peg only scenarios		\$695	\$1,011	\$1,060	

- **A permanent SRV means that after 3 years the rate peg percentage would continue compounding on the rate levels after the SRV.
- Without a SRV, the maximum rate peg determined by IPART can be applied in 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29.
- The examples used do not include the domestic waste charge and environmental stormwater management charge.



Business – subcategories are properties in specific areas which are mainly industrial, commercial, business park, and town centre. All other business properties are classed as business – general...

How will the Special Rate Variation proposal work for business - subcategory properties?

We are proposing a 3-year permanent increase in your rates as follows:

- in 2026/27 budget year, an increase of 21.3% on all business – subcategory properties
- in 2027/28 budget year, an increase of 17.7% for business – subcategory properties
- in 2028/29 budget year, an increase of 17.1% for business – subcategory properties.

The table below shows the average increase for business properties.

	Base year 2025/26	Year 1 2026/27	Year 2 2027/28	Year 3 2028/29	Cumulative increase
Average business-subcategory rate under the assumed rate peg	\$13,082	\$13,736	\$14,423	\$15,144	\$2,062
Annual increase rate peg (%)		5%	5%	5%	15.8%
Annual increase rate peg with an SRV		\$15,760	\$18,551	\$21,720**	\$8,638
Annual increase with SRV (%)		21.3%	17.7%	17.1%	66.0%
Cumulative impact of SRV above base year levels		\$2,678	\$5,469	\$8,638	
Difference between SRV and rate peg only scenarios		\$2,024	\$4,128	\$6,576	

- **A permanent SRV means that after 3 years the rate peg percentage would continue compounding on the rate levels after the SRV.
- Without a SRV, the maximum rate peg determined by IPART can be applied in 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29.
- The examples used do not include the domestic waste charge and environmental stormwater management charge.

The proposed cumulative increase to overall Council rates (including residential, farmland, business general and business – subcategory properties) is 37.39%, including assumed rate peg increases over the 3-year period.



Pensioner rebates

We currently offer the \$250 pensioner rebate on rates as mandated by the NSW Government for all councils, plus an additional \$200 rebate funded by Council for pensioners who have resided in Blacktown City for over 5 years.

This additional rebate is unique to and will be retained by Blacktown City Council.

Help with financial hardship

Council will also continue its hardship policy, which sets out how we can assist ratepayers who are having trouble in paying rates on time. This policy is available on Council's website.



How Blacktown City Council's average 2023/24 residential rates compare to other councils

Council	Average residential rates
Wollondilly	\$2,005.55
Woollahra*	\$1,692.78
Northern Beaches	\$1,617.36
Burwood*	\$1,603.02
Hawkesbury	\$1,589.77
Randwick*	\$1,549.69
Ku-ring-gai	\$1,538.92
Penrith*	\$1,489.60
Sutherland*	\$1,481.94
Camden	\$1,406.55
Hornsby*	\$1,383.73
Campbelltown	\$1,378.93
Lane Cove	\$1,315.16
Georges River*	\$1,303.87
Inner West*	\$1,281.98
Liverpool	\$1,261.01
Canterbury-Bankstown*	\$1,255.56
Canada Bay*	\$1,166.37
Bayside*	\$1,177.82
Ryde	\$1,145.54
The Hills	\$1,136.69
Blacktown City Council	\$1,099.93
Parramatta	\$1,048.31
Cumberland*	\$1,004.26
North Sydney	\$985.80
Fairfield	\$941.29

Figures are from the Office of Local Government's comparative data. 2024/25 results are not published yet, as councils are finalising audited financial statements.

* Indicates have had a Special Rate Variation or minimum rate approval.

For more information, including assistance for non-English speakers, visit blacktown.nsw.gov.au/SRV or scan the QR code.

You can also see how the proposed increase will affect your rates using the rates calculator.



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