



FOCUS ON FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY WITH BUDGET ADOPTED

Dubbo Regional Council (DRC) met on Thursday 22 June 2023 to consider the 2023/2024 budget, delivery and operational plan. DRC adopted the budget with some changes based on submissions from the community.

“Council undertook a comprehensive community engagement program to encourage the community to have their say about what Council’s priorities are for the next 12 months. The new Your Say platform was a new addition to this process and provided more digestible information on the budget and the ability to ask questions to make a more informed submission,” Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council, Mathew Dickerson said.

Council received 67 submissions during the community consultation period for the 2023/2024 budget and operational plan. The submissions covered 197 topics such as airport fees and charges, environmental issues and essential services, with some submissions covering multiple topics. Recommendations to amend the airport fees and ground

preparation fees for two local sporting clubs were adopted at the June Ordinary Council meeting.

Long-term financial sustainability continues to be a key challenge for Council with an increased demand for services beyond what has traditionally provided to the community, cost shifting from other levels of government and ageing infrastructure.

In May, Council was notified of an additional increase to the Emergency Services Levy by the NSW Government of \$616,666 and an additional increase to the Local Government NSW Wages by \$1.9M, both of which were unknown increases and well above the already budgeted amount for these respective items.

“This is an extra \$2.5M on what Council had proposed for the 2023/2024 budget, placing added pressure on our ability to maintain current service levels for our community.”

“Council had proposed a financially disciplined budget with a focus on long-term financial sustainability but the unexpected increases of the Emergency Services Levy and the Local Government NSW award have provided new challenges to overcome,” Cllr Dickerson said.

Council adopted at the June Ordinary Council meeting to undertake community engagement and education program regarding Council's financial position and the potential for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

“We want the community to understand Council's financial situation and that current service levels cannot be maintained into the future with the current budget.”

“The community engagement program will look at different options for a special rate variation which may include having no SRV and decreasing services or having a SRV increase and maintaining what we current provide to the community. We encourage the community to be a part of this process and have their say when the time comes,” Clr Dickerson said.

The community engagement and education program on the SRV will be undertaken in the coming months.

The adopted 2023/2024 Budget, Delivery and Operational Plan and associated document will be published on www.dubbo.nsw.gov.au.

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