

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Delivery Program & Budget Roadshow Sessions

### Message from Federation Council Mayor - Cr Patrick Bourke.

Council is very pleased to present to the community this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document to provide responses to all questions submitted via our online registration form for the Delivery Program and Budget Roadshow Sessions as part of the exhibition of the draft 2022/23 and beyond Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP & R) documents.

As detailed at the sessions, Council's commitment was to collate all questions and provide responses that could be made available to the entire community, including those residents that missed any of our eight Roadshow and Drop-in Sessions. This is another initiative as Council continues to develop new ways of informing and engaging our many communities.

Council considers the following information provides clarity and information to support its financial sustainability journey. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Council through our various communication channels.

We thank the community for their engagement thus far and look forward with anticipation to further engagement as we continue our ongoing journey towards a bright and sustainable future in working to achieve the visions and strategic outcomes sought by the Community in the Community Strategic Plan 2022/32.

Kind Regards - Federation Council Mayor, Cr Patrick Bourke.

#### Question: Why is Council applying for a Special Rate Variation (SRV)?

**Answer:** The NSW Government has established a framework to limit the total general rates that a council may collect from ratepayers. In summary, from year to year, a Council may only increase the total general rates that it collects by a specified percentage, known as the "rate peg". In past years the rate peg has been set by at a figure between 0.7% and 2.5%. When a Council seeks to increase its general rates by an amount greater than the rate peg, it is required to follow an extensive analysis and engagement process and apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for approval. This is called a Special Rate Variation (SRV).

The SRV if approved will provide Council with the greatest ability to maintain the existing 45 services, and increase (over time) existing service levels in key/core service areas such as roads that both the community (road users), Council staff, and the data supports. This SRV will allow Council to respond to increasing community concerns regarding the declining conditions of roads and community infrastructure, by providing increased revenue over time. It will allow Council to respond to risks and be better placed to respond to the increased demands being placed on Council by government, insurers, and other stakeholders. Council's road network has not kept up over many years with the increasing demands being placed on the roads coupled with a systemic lack of funding. The increasing demands include for rural areas, a move to all year-round freight movements, including a vast increase in both the size of heavy vehicles and the amount of traffic movements. Farmers move grain and livestock off farm and bring inputs into the farms in a year-round basis. Some also have contractual commitments to companies to supply grain and hay for example on set days and times of a month. Council considers it needs to work with these producers to ensure the road network can, where realist, continue to be improved to meet the modern-day agricultural businesses. Council also must think of the safety of the roads for all users, and in particular consider roads used by school buses, and parents taking children to meet buses.

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Many of Council's smaller local roads especially were not designed for the modern-day freight task. Whilst new road works are designed and constructed to better meet these demands, the costs of new road works range from \$300 to \$400,000 per kilometre (conservatively). This can include upgraded road formation including drainage (new culverts for example) and sub grades. These costs are similar if delivered by contractors or Council, and in Council's roads works, we typically use a mix of Council plant and staff and contractors. These costs continue to escalate at a far greater rate than Council's rate peg amount, and therefore this does not allow sufficient funding for maintenance and renewals including upgrades.

Council is therefore caught in a declining situation of maintenance not keeping up with deterioration, including in most cases, the original roads not being built to be able to be maintained to meet current demands (expected service levels). Many of the roads are natural surface without any gravel at all on them. Council has unlike some councils, taken a more tolerant approach to risk management and road damage and recognises the immense benefit for our farming community and transport operators especially, by allowing heavy mass vehicles (road trains and b doubles/triples), access to almost all roads in the Council area. This is also strongly supported by the NSW State Government who are always seeking to support increased productivity and hence profitability of the industry sectors like agriculture. Council unlike some other Councils, has also deliberately avoided fining users for damaging roads in wet weather. This approach as we all know though comes at a cost. Many of these smaller local roads may be able to support these loads in dry times but not in wet conditions. The last three years (2020, 2021 and now 2022) have seen record rainfalls and this has highlighted this problem.

**Question:** How can you justify such a steep increase proposed for farmland rates when we are getting absolutely nothing in terms of rural roads maintenance for the already high rates we are presently paying. 13% of ratepayers paying 41.5% of total rates currently collected. This is an unfair proportion which will only get worse with the proposed SRV's.

**Answer:** Council note that although the increase proposed is significant, the increase is driven by data, and will provide an increased capacity for Council to address the asset management demands of existing infrastructure such as rural roads. The proposed increase will support a \$104 million capital works program over ten years, and provide additional funding to address the deteriorating road network.

There have been substantial cost increases in respect to road making material, diesel and other inputs Council and contractors use to renew and upgrade roads, across our extensive road network and this has been responsibly considered by Council. Council does not consider rural ratepayers get 'absolutely nothing' in terms of rural roads maintenance and in the last financial year, \$8 million dollars has been spent on our road network across the Council area. But as I think most know, this funding is not enough. In addition to finding further savings and efficiencies, and seeking additional State and Federal Government grants, Council considers its rate base is comparatively lower to many other similar Councils to support an almost \$500 million dollar asset base of roads and related infrastructure. Council needs a consistent increase in year-on-year funding to meet the demands of road users especially, and for improvements to other service areas identified.

As a side matter, general rates are levied to fund services that provide a public good, particularly those that benefit a community as a whole. This includes roads, footpaths, drainage, parks and gardens. General rates are also used to fund services that a council is wishing to make accessible to low-income or disadvantaged users, such as swimming pools. General rates are not related to the direct provision of a service.

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**Question: Why does Council continue to apply for special rate increases above the NSW governments rate-pegging figure?**

**Answer:** Council must be financially responsible, and to continue to let its assets and services decline, is not a legal or morally acceptable outcome. Council has been actively pursuing additional grant funding to invest in services and assets that it is responsible for. Whilst Council has had a level of success with the funding it has secured, it is only able to apply for projects that are a priority of either State or Commonwealth Governments and Council is therefore dependent on the largesse of other levels of government to fund renewal of its assets and provides services that the community expects.

Council is cognisant of the current economic climate and the likelihood that access to government grant funding will lessen over coming years. Alternative revenue streams are being considered to assist the financial sustainability of Council. Current initiatives include expanding and upgrading the Corowa Saleyards to generate additional revenue, and Council is continuing to seek grant funding to upgrade the Ball Park Caravan Park to generate additional occupancy revenue. In future years this is expected to reduce financial pressure on Council and indirectly, ratepayers. To provide an adequate and predictable level of revenue to fund asset renewal and services, general rates form the baseline. Grant funding and other revenue streams will then be able to supplement rates when secured or realised. NSW Councils have since the mid 1970's been under a rate pegging regime, whereby the annual allowable increases have not been reflective of true cost escalations. Whilst the rate pegging has been a harsh yet proven lever to ensure rates remain affordable, and councils do not hike up rates at any opportunity, it is not an effective process unless Councils take the Special Rate Variation process as and when needed. Council rates remain comparatively very low across the state averages, including of like Councils. Council cannot continue to let the community suffer by underfunding its assets.

If Council was to maintain its service levels and current level of investment in infrastructure as expected and in many cases such as roads, required, by the community, this would result in Council being unable to fund its operations by 2027 if no SRV increases were applied and successful. This was not recommended as being financially responsible and the community more broadly have not expressed a view that they are wanting Council to cease or drastically reduce any of its services or service levels. It has more been a case of the opposite.

**Question: Why would you apply for a permanent increase - are you planning to not be able to make ends meet in the future?**

**Answer:** Council has undertaken comprehensive modelling to better understand its asset management needs, particularly to maintain, operate and renew existing infrastructure assets, such as roads, bridges, footpaths and community buildings. To enable this without reducing service levels, additional funding is required to enable Council to provide infrastructure assets and deliver services as expected by the community.

The permanent rate increase is required to maintain, operate and renew existing infrastructure assets at a level that is acceptable to the community. The SRV increase that Council unanimously supported at its June 2022 meeting was as follows: 2.5% for 2022/23, followed by an SRV for four years from 2023/24 to 2026/27 being 19%, 17%, 14% & 10%. These percentage increases are inclusive of the rate peg. For example in 23/24, if IPART for all Councils endorse a maximum allowable increase to general rates of 2%, Councils SRV amount would be effectively 17%, and the 2% would be added to ensure 19% additional revenue is received.

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**Question:** How many submissions have you received and what are the concerns most rate payers have?

**Answer:** Council received 79 submissions from the public during the exhibition process. All submissions were forwarded to Councillors in their entirety with only the names redacted for privacy reasons.

In summary the key themes raised in the submissions were:

- Ability of ratepayers, particularly pensioners, to afford increased rates;
- Condition of rural roads and need for service reviews of all Council services;
- Certainty that increased rural rates will be committed to increased investment in rural roads;
- Accountability and transparency;
- Productivity improvements and cost containment strategies;
- Lack of responsiveness to communications;
- Clear plan for future infrastructure renewal and investment;
- Quantum of general rate increase;
- Focus on core services such as roads, waste, water and sewerage;
- Better planning for new projects including whole of life costing;
- An expectation that service reviews and efficiency and productivity measures should have all been done prior to any proposed rate increases being quantified/sought; and
- Clearer communication and a stronger engagement prior to this stage of the Special Rate Variation (SRV) proposal.

Many submissions also contained feedback on specific matters. Responses are currently being provided to each community member who requested a response on the online submission form or submitted a written submission.

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**Question:** The size of the increases are unsustainable rural rate payers will be slugged the hardest. Rural rates must be quarantined and used in rural areas.

**Answer:** It is acknowledged that the planned SRVs if approved will impose significant increase to rates to all ratepayer categories. The level of increase applied to rural ratepayers is consistent with that proposed to be applied to residential and business ratepayers. Many of the rural ratepayer submissions wished to seek certainty that increased funds received through an SRV will be committed to increased investment in rural roads. To a certain extent, this can be achieved through the SRV application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), whereby Council must nominate the purpose of the SRV, being to:

- a. Improve the council's underlying financial position for the General Fund;
- b. Fund specific projects or programs of expenditure; or
- c. Achieve both outcomes.

It is intended that the work of the Rates Advisory Committee and the Roads Advisory Committee will provide guidance for Council, on a program of expenditure on roads that can be committed to for the duration of the SRV. No specific split of where the additional SRV revenue will be directed to in terms of Council's services and input from the Rates and Roads committees will be critical in this regard, as will Council's existing information such as customer requests and asset condition assessments. A decision on the final application including if it is to be a general SRV or tied to specific service areas, a, b. or c. above, is expected to be made by Council in late 2022 prior to the SRV application being submitted. Council will ensure this is communicated as this is progressed and another advantage of the Rates and Roads advisory committee, is to have the community members assist Council in spreading this information.

**Question:** What will be the allocated dollar figure for the maintenance and repairs on rural roads? Can this figure be guaranteed only to be spent on the rural roads and not dispersed to other projects?

**Answer:** Council does not have a specific allocation identified in the SRV, if successful, that will be directed to roads. As noted above, it is intended that the work of the Rates Advisory Committee and the Roads Advisory Committee will provide guidance for Council, on a program of expenditure on roads that can be committed to for the duration of the SRV and continuing. Both Committees will also receive financial and condition data from Council to support any advice the Committees may present to Council. A decision on this is expected to be made by Council in late 2022 prior to the SRV being submitted. Council will ensure this is communicated as this is progressed. Council's data suggests that the road network needs an additional \$3 to \$4 million per year injected into the network.

**Question:** Please inform me of the arrangements for the previously announce Balldale Road upgrade and the Balldale Water Supply upgrade, are the allocated funds still being applied to these projects?

**Answer:** Yes, the allocated funds are still applied to the Balldale Road Upgrade and Balldale Water Supply upgrade. The Balldale Road Upgrade project received funding from the NSW State Government under the third round of the Fixing Local Roads fund. The Balldale Water Supply project received \$200,000 under a Federal Government Drought Funding program. Both projects are scheduled to be delivered across 22/23.

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**Question: What additional assets are planned to be sold to support the financial viability?**

**Answer:** Council is currently undertaking a review of its asset base to identify if there are any underutilized assets that could be sold. Whilst this type of activity would inject one off funds into Council's unrestricted funds, and remove the assets from our depreciation expenses and remove any ongoing operational costs, it alone would not provide the ongoing revenue that the Council requires to be financially sustainable into the future. Council appreciates though that every little bit helps, and these measures have been done in the past (Council regularly sells land and has in the past sold houses and vacant land – for example in the former Urana Shire), and will continue to receive information on this potential as part of this process and make decisions accordingly if considered acceptable.

**Question: What work is being done to lobby govt and obtain better grants for this council region?**

**Answer:** Council continues to actively lobby our State and Federal members to secure grant funding for our Local Government Area. Federation Council only in July this year met with the NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, Mr Sam Farrow, to discuss further State road funding opportunities, and seek urgent funding for the replacement of the Yarrowonga-Mulwala Bridge. Council also lobbies its Federal Government member and relevant ministers, and attends advocacy forums such as the Roads Conference, Annual LGNSW Conference, the Federal ALGA conference and Country Mayors for example, to continue to ensure Council's priorities are advocated. Council is also aware that community members and groups can also have their own strong voice to Government and assist Council to lobby for increased funding and encourages this approach to continue.

**Question: Is the Sanger St tree replacement a done deal? Why cannot they be maintained the way other cities manage them?**

**Answer:** No, the Sanger Street Corowa Tree Replacement project is not a 'done deal' and will be subject to further engagement taking place with a range of stakeholders in the latter part of 2022. The species of the current trees in Sanger Street, Corowa pose many risks with the dropping of acorns. The species of trees recommended for their replacement will be communicated to the public as further updates become available. Budget has been allocated to this project in the 2022-2023 financial year.

**Question: Changes resulting for the library service/s resulting from the withdrawal of Wagga participation?**

**Answer:** The withdrawal of Wagga Wagga City Council from the Riverina Regional Library (RRL) unfortunately has meant there was a service interruption to the Mobile Service in July 2023, that has recently been resolved thankfully. There are no changes to the service for Federation Council for 22/23 but Council, like all remaining RRL members, will review the service and its costs and consult with the community including library users, as part of this. Council has worked very hard with the remaining RRL to ensure a suitable transition has occurred but all Councils recognise the potential financial impacts need to be considered, particularly for Councils Mobile Library service which in its current form is costly.

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**Question:** How many residents does Council anticipate are at financial risk and likely to have accommodation crisis as a result of a rapid increase in rates?

**Answer:** It is acknowledged that the proposed plans and the associated SRV will impact all ratepayers. As discussed in the community sessions and reported in the plans, general rates in the Federation Council area are currently among the lowest in the NSW. The increased rates proposed from July 2023, if the SRV is approved as proposed, (the planned scenario in the draft Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), will move Federation Council's general rates to be more consistent with average rates for a similar sized council over the 4-year planned increase, if each increase is applied by Council at the % rate approved. This is also assuming none of the other Councils apply and are successful during this period. It is known that many Councils have already applied and some are implementing SRV's, whilst others may do so also in the next 5 years of course.

Council commissioned an independent Capacity to Pay report from Morrison Low. This report provides an analysis and evaluation of relative wealth and financial capacity and looks at the financial vulnerability and exposure of different community groups within the Federation Local Government Area (LGA). In summary it finds that whilst the communities of Corowa and Urana and Surrounds have the highest proportion of 'at risk' households, the proposed SRV is predicted to have a lesser impact on these ratepayers. It also found that the ratepayers most impacted by the general rates increase are those in Mulwala (due to high residential land values relative to other residential land in the Federation LGA) and Corowa Rural Districts (due to the higher value of farmland properties in that area relative to other farmland in the Federation LGA). The report provides the following commentary "overall we observe the lowest level of disadvantage is in the Corowa Rural Districts, compared with the highest level of disadvantage in Urana and Surrounds and the large population centre of Corowa." Council will review and update its Hardship Policy also as part of this process.

**Question:** Why is it necessary to raise rates for farm land holders who often do not see any benefits from the Council's activity. The recent 15% increase in farm rates has not equated to 15% increase in services and infrastructure that farm businesses use.

**Answer:** General rates are levied to fund services that provide a public good, particularly those that benefit a community as a whole. This includes roads, footpaths, drainage, parks and gardens. General rates are also used to fund services that a council is wishing to make accessible to low-income or disadvantaged users, such as swimming pools. General rates are not related to the direct provision of a service. Whilst some farm land holders may consider they do not see any benefit from their rates, road funding has been \$8 million dollars in the last financial year and farming ratepayers also benefit from other services delivered by Council, either directly or indirectly. Supporting children to learn to swim, to read and be curious, to play and explore have broad benefits to our community today and in the future.

Developing the leadership skills of today's youth will enable tomorrow's business operators, employees, professionals, tradespeople, labourers, artists to contribute to a more liveable community. Prioritising the needs of today's disabled community members will provide a more inclusive accessible community for all in the future. Empowering seniors in our community to drive improvements will support all community members as we age. Council has not made any decisions on how it will apply any approved SRV increases, if approved, across the rating categories of farming, residential and business. The LTFP presents the majority of the increased funds being invested in the capital works program and directed to the renewal of existing infrastructure assets.

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The specific priority of the works will be worked through with the Roads Advisory Committee and the Rates Advisory Committee. This information will be communicated as priorities are determined and this will be also continually informed by Councils ongoing Asset Management work. It is important to note that Council has also experienced more than a 15% increase in certain material costs used to maintain our rural network, with further increases expected.

**Question: What is the long-term plan to improve roads in the LGA. Is there a system to identify roads that are important EG access to residential housing, access for grain freight, access for oversize machinery?**

**Answer:** The plan at the highest level for roads, is essentially is Council's Transport Asset Management plan of which the first draft has been recently adopted by Council. This outlines the need to provide more funding to support the asset data and customer requests that outline clearly where the issues lay in Council's road network.

As detailed in previous answer responses, Council has established a Roads Advisory Committee to also include community representatives from across the Council area, along with Councillors and staff. This committee will provide guidance as Council implements improvements to the way it manages roads and associated infrastructure. This Committee has been in place under the former Council and was instrumental in assisting with the preparation of road improvement strategy work and was always intended to include community representatives.

In addition to the Transport Asset Management Plan, to operationalize this plan, Council has several operational documents that detail and provide more information on how Council manages its road network. The work of the Roads Advisory Committee will include providing advice to Council on road hierarchy, maintenance levels and the allocation of funding across certain categories, for example sealed and unsealed roads, regional and local roads, school bus routes and the very good points made in this question, such as access to areas that contain housing, grain freight and oversize machinery. Council considers it critical that this local knowledge provided by the community representatives will greatly assist in decision making including allocation of funding towards priority roads.

**Question: What is the overall cost on the Daysdale "S" bend.**

**Answer:** The Daysdale S Bend budget is \$2.6 million. This budget allocation allows for road reconstruction and floodway upgrade and provides an increased level of service to the former road, including being built to a higher level to enable the road to withstand greater flood levels. This budget also allowed for road works to be undertaken on Daysdale - Walbundrie Road.

**Question: Why is the roadwork at Daysdale taking so long?**

**Answer:** Council note that the roadworks at Daysdale S Bend have taken a considerable amount of time to undertake. This is due to global wide shortages in material required to undertake the roadworks as well as weather challenges, including the December 2021 – January 2022 storm event. The project has been relying on various funding sources to enable Council to pool all of these funds, to 'build back better'. This new design has created a higher-level road and bridge through this area to lessen the amount of times the new road will be inundated with floodwater compared to the previous road as well as an improved intersection and lead in road for the Walbundrie Road. Council is continuing to work through such challenges, as are many of our contractors and suppliers.

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**Question:** What year is the Valuer General giving you the updated land valuations?

**Answer:** The Valuer General's Report on NSW Land Values was released on July 1, 2021. You can find individual reports on the Valuer General's website [www.valuergeneral.nsw.gov.au](http://www.valuergeneral.nsw.gov.au). These updated valuations will form the basis of general rates that are levied from 1 July 2023.

**Question:** How can you raise the rates at this rate when they are set to be at 1.7% and what are we seeing for it?

**Answer:** Council cannot continue to provide the existing services and at their current service levels, under the existing revenue Council receives and with only the original 22/23 increase proposed by IPART of 1.7%. Council was able to apply for 22/23 and were ultimately successful, to increase the rates by what Council had forecast the rate peg increase would be for 22/23, in its adopted 21/22 LTFP.

For Federation Council it was modelling a 2.5% allowable increase for 22/23, and not 1.7%, and therefore sought an additional 0.8% increase. This has been approved by IPART and is now applied for 22/23.

If approved by IPART, from July 2023, Council will commence applying the 19%, 17%, 15% and 10% increases over the following four years. This additional revenue will over time, allow Council to achieve a positive operating result, and invest further into its assets as required. Council is required to responsibly manage its financial sustainability and like many other Councils, from time to time should seek SRV's if service levels are not able to be continued and assets maintained to suitable levels for safety, legal requirements and community expectations under the ordinary rate peg allowances each year. To answer 'what are we seeing for it'. Council will continue to investigate ways of improving how Council communicates its current services it does deliver, and will also, in working with the Rates and Roads Advisory Committees, determine what 'will be seen' in term of what the additional rate income if approved, will be applied to. If Council chooses specific areas to apply the increase to, it then needs to report to the community and IPART, the results of this expenditure on those target areas.

**Question:** What can we expect to gain from the increase?

**Answer:** The Long-Term Financial Plan presents the majority of the increased funds being invested in the capital works program, particularly to fund renewal of its existing infrastructure assets. The specific priority of the works will be worked through with the Roads Advisory Committee and the Rates Advisory Committee. This information will be communicated as priorities are determined and this will be also continually informed by Council's ongoing Asset Management work.

**Question:** Could you reduce staff numbers to gain efficiencies instead of rate rises?

**Answer:** Council is required to review the organisational structure within 12 months of each election. For this current Council this is required to be completed by December 2022.

Whilst organizational efficiency including staff numbers is always a priority of Council, a reduction in staff would result in a reduction in service levels. This would not support the consistent feedback from the community received throughout our financial sustainability journey in that current service levels are to be maintained and, in some cases, residents are seeking increased service levels.

Council does not consider its current staffing numbers to be too high, when taking into account the services that Councils deliver all differ across the Council groupings of like Councils. That said, Council undertakes many service reviews and this consideration of staff versus contractors in some service delivery areas is always considered and at times implemented where efficiencies are projected.

## Question: Rate increase increments to be explained

**Answer:** Under the proposed Special Rate Variation that was endorsed at Council's June 2022 meeting the following annual increases will apply from 2023/24 to 2026/27: 19%, 17%, 14% & 10%. These percentage increases are inclusive of the rate peg. For example in 2023/24, if IPART endorse a maximum allowable increase to general rates of 2%, Council's SRV amount would be effectively 17%, and the 2% would be added to ensure 19% additional revenue is received.

The following table presents the annual increase and the cumulative impact over the four years of the SRV:

SRV increase	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Annual increase (%)	19%	17%	14%	10%
Cumulative increase (%)	19%	39%	59%	75%

## Residential Rates

When the SRV is applied to residential rates, the dollar value increment increases have been broken down into the average yearly and weekly increases as displayed in the following table:

Residential - Average Increase	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Yearly	\$ 17.86	\$ 136.63	\$ 145.47	\$ 140.17	\$ 114.13
Weekly	\$ 0.34	\$ 2.63	\$ 2.80	\$ 2.70	\$ 2.19

In addition, the below graph displays the average residential rates over the four period against average residential rates if there was no SRV:

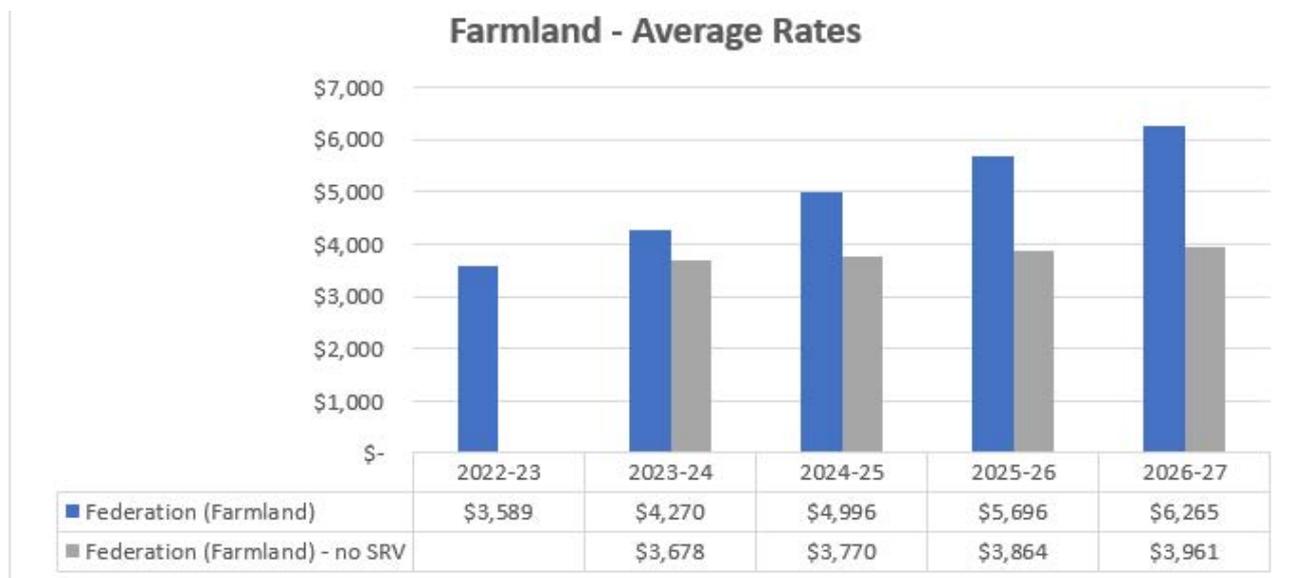


## Farmland Rates

When the SRV is applied to farmland rates, the dollar value increment increases have been broken down into the average yearly and weekly increases as displayed in the following table:

Farmland - Average Increase	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Yearly	\$ 87.67	\$ 681.82	\$ 725.95	\$ 699.48	\$ 569.57
Weekly	\$ 1.69	\$ 13.11	\$ 13.96	\$ 13.45	\$ 10.95

The below graph displays the average farmland rates over the four period against average farmland rates if there was no SRV:

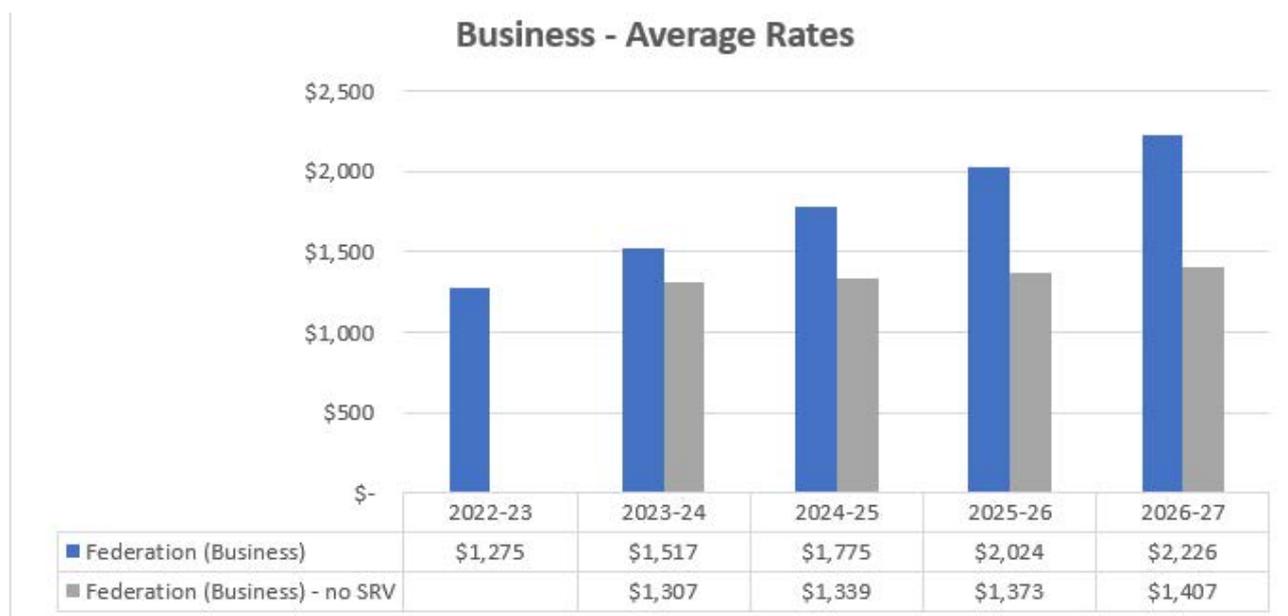


### Business Rates

When the SRV is applied to business rates, the dollar value increment increases have been broken down into the average yearly and weekly increases as displayed in the following table:

<b>Business - Average Increase</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>
<b>Yearly</b>	\$31.40	\$242.24	\$257.92	\$248.51	\$202.36
<b>Weekly</b>	\$0.60	\$4.66	\$4.96	\$4.78	\$3.89

The below graph displays the average business rates over the four period against average business rates if there was no SRV:



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**Question:** Is there a section in the budget for plant and equipment for maintenance of gravel roads and a re-sheeting program?

**Answer:** Yes, Council does have specific sections in its budget for plant and equipment and maintenance for gravel roads, including our re-sheeting program. Further details on works completed or under development in this area are provided in a report to Council each month. The full details of these reports can be found within our Agendas on the Council Meeting page on Council's website. Specific project budgets can also be found in Council's LTFF. Again, Council will look to take advice from the Roads Committee as to how it can more clearly communicate roadworks to residents on these areas.

**Question:** Are any other Councils looking at SRV's or just us?

**Answer:** Yes, Council is aware of many other Councils that have either already approved SRV's in recent years, including some of the 2016 merged Councils, and others are proceeding with SRV applications this year. Residents can learn more about past IPART SRV approvals for Councils via the IPART website.

**Question:** What happens from here? Once Council endorses this?

**Answer:** Council staff will continue their work on collating the required data to form the SRV application to IPART. The draft application and supporting information will be presented to Council at the end of 2022, to seek formal resolution to proceed with lodging the application to IPART in February 2023. It is anticipated that Council would be notified of the decision in May 2023. There will be opportunities for further engagement via the Roads and Rates Advisory Committees as well as through normal Council communication channels, and formal submissions in respect to the application will be managed by IPART once lodged.