



## LATE AGENDA

Council Meeting

Tuesday 21 June 2022

AGENDA	PAGE
<b>General Manager's Report (Items Requiring Decision)</b>	
GM42/22 Request for Donation - Singleton Tidy Towns Committee .....	2
<b>Corporate and Commercial Services Report (Items for Information)</b>	
DCCS28/22 Integrated Planning and Reporting Documentation - Post Exhibition Update.....	6
DCCS29/22 Additional Special Rate Variation Approval.....	14

Jason Linnane  
**GENERAL MANAGER**

**GM42/22. Request for Donation - Singleton Tidy Towns Committee**  
**Author:** Coordinator Governance

**FILE:** 19/00106

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider a request for a donation from the Singleton Tidy Towns Committee. The donation is requested to assist with costs in attending the Australian Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards to be held in Hastings Victoria from 29 to 31 July 2022.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council provide a one-off donation of \$3,000 to the Singleton Tidy Town Committee toward the cost of members attendance at the Australian Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards to be held in Hastings Victoria from 29 to 31 July 2022.

## Report

The Singleton Tidy Towns Committee has written to Council to request financial assistance to cover costs associated with attending the National Tidy Towns Presentation in Hastings Victoria from 29 to 31 July 2022. As Singleton was the NSW State winner, members of the Committee have been invited to attend. A copy of the request is shown as **Attachment 1**.

The Singleton Tidy Towns Committee is a community group with limited funds. The Committee has advised that they hope for six people to attend the presentation at a cost of approximately \$1,000 per attendee. Costs include registration, flights, car hire and accommodation.

Information on the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards can be viewed on their website at <https://www.sustainablecommunities.com.au/about/>.

Council's Donation Policy (POL/6016) states that '*Council is committed to building strong and resilient communities across the Singleton Local Government Area (LGA) and maximising social wellbeing for all residents. Council acknowledges the contributions made by not-for-profit organisations in the LGA and where possible commits limited funds to help these organisations achieve their objectives in accordance with Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.*'

Under Council's Donation Policy, organisations or individuals are eligible for one grant per financial year.

The General Manager has completed an initial assessment against the eligibility criteria, funding objectives and available budget and the request is referred to Council for consideration.

## Community Strategic Plan

### Our Environment

- 1.5 Facilitate and support programs and activities which promote inclusion and celebrate diversity.

### Delivery Program/Operational Plan

- 1.5.2 In partnership with the community facilitate events that celebrate and enhance Singleton's liveability, wellbeing and prosperity.

### Council Policy/Legislation

POL/6016 Donations Policy.

### Financial Implications

Provision is made in the 2021/2022 budget for donations. To date this year there have been no other ad hoc donation requests received. A donation to the value of \$3,000 can be accommodated within the 2021/2022 operating budget.

### Consultation/Social Implications

The request has been considered by the General Manager and has been assessed as meeting the requirements of the Donations Policy. It is now submitted to Council for consideration.

### Environmental Consideration

Nil.

### Risk Implications

Risk	Risk Ranking	Proposed Treatments	Proposed Risk Ranking	Within Existing Resources?
There is a risk that not providing financial assistance may lead to reputational damage and perceived lack of support for community groups within the LGA.	Low	Adopt the recommendation	Low	Yes
There is a risk that Council is not considering ad hoc requests as detailed in its adopted policy which may lead to reputational damage.	Low	Adopt the recommendation	Low	Yes

**Options**

The following options are available to Council:

1. Provide a one-off donation of \$3,000 to the Singleton Tidy Town Committee toward the cost of members attendance at the Australian Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards to be held in Hastings Victoria from 29 to 31 July 2022.
2. Provide a one-off donation of another amount to the Singleton Tidy Town Committee toward the cost of members attendance at the Australian Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards to be held in Hastings Victoria from 29 to 31 July 2022.
3. Not provide a one-off donation to the Singleton Tidy Town Committee toward the cost of members attendance at the Australian Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards to be held in Hastings Victoria from 29 to 31 July 2022.

Option one is recommended.

**Conclusions**

The request from the Singleton Tidy Towns Committee for financial assistance for members to be able to attend the Australian Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards is worthy of consideration by Council. This is a wonderful achievement for the Committee which recognises their efforts in promoting the Singleton community.

**Attachments**

**AT-1** [↓](#) Request for Donation - Singleton Tidy Towns



## SINGLETON TIDY TOWNS COMMITTEE

*Singleton: Heart of the Hunter, Jewel of the State and Spirit of the Nation*

*Awarded NSW State Tidy Towns Winner 2006,  
National Tidy Towns Highly Commended 2006  
National Tidy Towns Spirit of Australia Award 2006*

General Manager

15<sup>th</sup> June 2022

Jason Linnane

Singleton Council

Dear Jason,

As you are aware Singleton Tidy Towns works hard to promote our Community, Council and Business' endeavours and sustainable practices. As NSW State winners we have been invited to attend the National Presentation in Hastings Victoria on the weekend of 29-31<sup>st</sup> July.

You are probably well aware that our Committee runs on a shoe string, the KISS principal and by the good graces of sponsors at the time of any events or projects we run.

We hope our participation at Hastings will add further value to promoting our natural and built environment, our heritage, lifestyle and our community, council and commercial partnerships. We are never comfortable asking for a hand-out, but we ask for your consideration for financial assistance to get us there. We had hope to take six people and the cost runs to near a \$1000.00 per person with Registration, Flights, Car Hire and Accommodation..

We are well aware that we will be asking for Council's assistance in November for the State presentation and understand if asking for assistance now is too much and appreciate the consideration but any assistance would be gratefully received and please be assured any funds not utilised will be returned to Council.

Regards

*Lyn MacBain*

Lyn MacBain

***"OUR ENDEAVOUR TO KEEP SINGLETON DISTRICT CLEAN FOREVER"***  
Singleton Tidy Towns Committee c/- 51 William St., Singleton NSW 2330

**Chairperson**

Lyn MacBain 0265722235 lynmacbain@bigpond.com

**Secretary**

Jack Fleming 0265733462

**DCCS28/22. Integrated Planning and Reporting Documentation - Post Exhibition Update** FILE: 21/00620  
Author: Manager Corporate Services

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with further clarity regarding changes to the Integrated Planning and Reporting draft documentation, post the public exhibition period.

## FOR INFORMATION

The Office of Local Government's (OLG) Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Guidelines detail the mandatory planning and reporting obligations under the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government General Regulation 2021* for Councils.

The key component of the IP&R Framework are:

- Community Strategic Plan (10 years +)
- Resourcing Strategy consisting of:
  - Long Term Financial Plan (10 years+)
  - Workforce Management Plan (4 years)
  - Asset Management Planning
- Delivery Program (4 years)
- Operational Plan including 2022/2023 budget (1 year)

In accordance with Section 402, 402A, 403, 404 and 405 of *the Local Government Act 1993*, Council must review its Community Strategic Plan and associated documents (above) before June 30 in the year following an ordinary election. They must also place the documents on public exhibition for a period of no less than 28 days. Comments from the community must be accepted and considered by Council prior to final adoption.

Councils' engagement process has been extremely thorough. It is in accordance with the Council adopted (21 May 2021) Community Engagement Strategy. It is standard practice for Council to consider feedback provided by the community through the public exhibition period and adopt the plans without or without change. There is no requirement for Council to re-exhibit the IP&R documents following consideration of public comments.

The IPR documents were endorsed for public exhibition by Council at its April 2022 meeting. As a result of the exhibition period Council received 10 public submissions on the draft documents. A briefing was provided to Council on 24 May 2022 regarding the feedback which resulted in no material change (only editing) to any of the CSP, Delivery Plan, Operational Plan (not budget), Asset Management Plan or Workforce Management Plan documents that were placed on exhibition.

The recent public exhibition period also provided Council with the opportunity to ensure the 2022/2023 operating budget and Long-Term Financial Plan best reflected current market conditions, new opportunities and changes that have been imposed that have flow on impacts to Council's projected financial position prior to formal adoption by Council. It is normal practice for all Councils to continually monitor, review, adjust and report any

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*Corporate and Commercial Services Report (Items for Information) - DCCS28/22*

changes to Councils financial position via the quarterly budget review process. The same process applies to the development of the initial budget for the financial year.

Council was briefed 14 June 2022 regarding the proposed 2022/2023 budget and the amended Long Term Financial Plan. Changes that are proposed post the public exhibition of the plans are detailed in Attachment 1. Headline facts include:

- No reductions in service levels to the community
- No changes to projects
- No changes to what was proposed for rates/water/sewer/waste charges.
- An increase of 1.4% in expenditure (to increase levels of service and formalise staffing levels in Development and Environment and to account for an advised increase in the Emergency Services Levy)
- 0.09% increase in income

To continue our approach to engagement, Council will be advising the community via social media and a news release on the proposed budget prior to the Council meeting and will follow up post the Council meeting.

**Attachments**

**AT-1** [↓](#) Integrated Planning & Reporting - Summary of Changes

IPR document	Change	Rationale	Impact assessment
Community Strategic Plan	Nil	N/A	Nil
Delivery Plan	Nil	N/A	Nil
Operational plan-	Total Operating budget had an overall increase of \$864,000 in expenditure and \$12,000 in income	<p>The expenditure increase is 1.4% of total expenditure and relates to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An increase in level of service in the Development and Environment Business Unit as a result of the significant growth in development applications, our improvement program and continued pressure with a range of state significant developments. The majority of these extra costs have already been recognised and approved in current budgets as part of prior quarterly budget reviews which have been endorsed by Council. These additional costs are offset via grants, growth in fees and charges, additional investment returns and reductions in contractor costs.</li> <li>2. Increase in the State Governments Emergency Service Levy which was advised to us post exhibition of the Operational Plan.</li> </ol> <p>There has been no reduction in services and no projects changed. The changes will improve community outcomes.</p> <p>Further details are provided below in points a) to g)</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Overall expenditure changed by \$864,000 which equates to 1.4% of total expenditure</p> <p>Overall income changed by \$12,000 which equates to 0.019% of total income</p>



Operational plan - a)	Borrowing costs increased \$20,000 – Sewer Loan for capital works	Council staff have investigated the opportunity to use loan funds at relatively low borrowing rates to fund certain capital works projects. The Sewer team have identified that the project to replace the Rising Main – SPS to STP and the STP Chemical Dosing System can be funded by loan funds thereby incurring borrowing costs as detailed.	Low  Overall expenditure increased by \$20,000 Which equates to 0.02% of total expenditure
Operational plan - b)	Other expenses increased \$168,746 – Emergency Services Levy Contribution	Council was advised on the 29 April 2022 (after the date of public exhibition) by the NSW Office of State Revenue that the Emergency Services Levy Contribution would be \$168,746 higher than what was budgeted.  We will work with LGNSW and other Councils to seek State Government reimbursement of these additional costs as per prior years.	Low  Overall expenditure changed by \$168,746 Which equates to 0.19% of total expenditure
Operational plan - c)	Employee costs increased \$700,000 – Development and Environment improvement plan	As per above, increase in level of service to the community which is much needed, aligns with our vision to be the best and will be very well received by our customers. We have experienced significant growth in development applications and continued pressure with a range of state significant developments. Better resourcing this area is essential.  A majority of these extra costs have already been recognised and included in current budgets as part of prior quarterly budget reviews which have been endorsed by Council.	Low  Overall expenditure changed by \$700,000 Which equates to 0.78% of total expenditure

		These additional costs are offset via grants, growth in fees and charges, additional investment returns and reductions in contractor costs. Net impact is minimal.	
Operational plan - d)	Interest Revenue increased \$682,000 – increase in interest rates on investments	<p>The global economy continues to experience rapid change and this has been exacerbated in recent months. There is massive variability in financial markets and this does affect our results. We believe this is a conservative estimate and we will provide oversight as part of quarterly review process.</p> <p>It should be noted that this is a very positive change that enables increased levels of service to the community.</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Overall income changed by \$682,000 Which equates to 0.98% of total income</p>
Operational plan - e)	Financial Assistance Grant decrease \$1,000,000	<p>This is an unavoidable change due to recent Federal Government decision in May (post the operational plan going on exhibition) to pay Council 75% of the 2022/23 allocation.</p> <p>It means we were paid an extra 25% (approx. \$1m) in the current year rather than in 2023. It has no effect other than accounting treatment. Council still receives the monies and they are available for use.</p> <p>We will continue to work with LGNSW and other Councils to seek Federal Government support to manage the process from their end to try and reduce ongoing confusion</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Overall income changed by \$1,000,000 Which equates to 1.43% of total income</p>
Operational plan - f)	Grants & Contributions for capital purposes increased \$3,500,000 -	Relates wholly to projects that have been previously approved by Council but delayed due to weather, COVID, contractor availability and supply issues. Therefore, there is no extra costs just a timing change.	<p>Low</p> <p>Overall expenditure changed by \$3,500,000 which</p>

		These have been adjusted in prior quarterly budget reviews and amending the 2023 budget now is good practice to reduce carry overs and is a process improvement on previous years.	equates to 3.89% of total expenditure
Operational plan – g)	Capital Budget increased by \$9,100,000	Relates wholly to projects that have been previously approved by Council but delayed due to weather, COVID, contractor availability and supply issues. Therefore, there is no extra costs just timing change.  These have been adjusted in prior quarterly budget reviews and amending 2023 budget now is good practice to reduce carry overs and is a process improvement on previous years	Low  Capital expenditure changed by \$9,100,000 which equates to 10.1% of total expenditure
Operational plan - fees and charges	Children Services – <i>Failure to Notify Absence</i> - \$20.50	The new fee will be applied to families who have booked a space for the afternoon session for Out of School Care and do not advise that the child will not be attending that session. The rationale for the charge is to encourage families to notify staff that their child will not be attending. Currently the failure to notify non-attendance places additional workload on staff who are required to determine the location of child with a booking. This entails calls to family, school or bus company to determine the child’s whereabouts and safety, while also taking the staff member away from supervising children at the facility.	Low  Will only apply to parents who do not advise of child absences
	Onsite Sewage Management & Regulation – <i>Approval to Operate</i> - \$125.00	To make the Onsite Sewage Management & Regulation set of fees consistent with the Onsite Septic Management set of fees.	Nil  Already being applied, making the section in the F&C Schedule consistent

		with the Septic section
Environment & Public Health Approvals – <i>Beauty Salons</i> - \$328.00	Additional fee consistent with other public health approval inspections for Hair Dressers, Skin Penetration Premises etc.	Low  Only applicable to Public Health inspections for Beauty Salons
Fire Safety – <i>Fire Safety Inspections</i> - \$328.00	New service provision whereby Council officers are able to carry out Fire Safety Inspections.	Low  Service that Council is able to provide now and only applies to those who choose
Art & Culture Centre – <i>Workshop Room Hire</i> - \$25.00 per hour	Fee identified as required by the Arts & Culture Community Committee after reviewing fees on exhibition.	Low  Only applicable to those wishing to hire Workshop Rooms in the facility
Art & Cultural Centre – Reduced commission payable on sales from 40% to 30%	Reduction suggested by Arts & Culture Community Committee after reviewing fees on exhibition.	Low  Only applicable to sales of art works

	Lake St Clair Camping Fees - 3 night minimum stay reduced to a 2 night minimum stay for peak periods other than between 25 December to 1 January and public holiday periods which will stay as 3 nights minimum	Suggested by Management Contractor after reviewing fees on exhibition to increase visitation to the facility during peak times. Positive outcome for customers.	Low  Will encourage additional visitation given the reduced number of nights required to stay during peak periods
	Venue Hire Charges – Fee for Service – After Hours Supervision	Based on increasing hire of Library and Youth Venue function/meeting rooms and the requirement to have staff available for supervision and lockup after normal operating hours times.	Low  Recovers costs of having to pay staff penalty rates for after hours supervision
Asset Management Plan	Minor grammar and typos only	N/A	Nil
Workforce strategy	Minor grammar and typos only	N/A	Nil
Long term financial plan	Minor grammar and typos only	N/A	Nil

**DCCS29/22. Additional Special Rate Variation Approval**  
**Author:** Manager Corporate Services

**FILE:** 21/00620

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to advise Council that the Additional Special Rate Variation (ASRV) application made by Council to IPART for a 2.00% rates increase has been assessed and approved.

### FOR INFORMATION

All NSW councils are subject to rate pegging which sets the maximum allowable increase on rates each year, as determined by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). In December 2021 IPART announced the rate peg for the 2022/23 financial year for Singleton Council was 0.70 percent, which was significantly lower than the 2.00 percent Council was anticipating and had used in the preparation of the Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP). Approximately, 35 percent of Council's revenue comes from general rates. A decrease from 2.00 percent to 0.70 percent equates to \$307,000 lost revenue per year than was previously forecast (in the 2021/22 LTFP) for 2022/23. The estimated impact across the next 10 years is \$3.4 million in lost rates revenue. This decision would have had a negative impact on Council's ability to meet its service delivery obligations as detailed in the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program for coming years.

Following on from the IPART announcement in December 2021, IPART then advised that they would accept and process an additional round of 2022/23 ASV applications from councils via Council circular 22-07.

The one off 2022/23 ASV was a mechanism to allow councils that received a rate peg of less than 2.50% to apply for the difference between the rate peg they have been advised and the lessor of a maximum rate peg of 2.50% or what was in their 2021/22 LTFP (2.00% for Singleton) for the 2022/23 financial year. The application can be a once off or permanent increase. A permanent increase would only be a one-off increase of 2.00%, but the revenue gained from this would be retained in the rate base as is the rest of Council's rate revenue, whereas a once off would be removed from the rate base in 2023/24. Council's application is recommended to be permanent.

IPART stated that councils requesting an ASV would need to demonstrate that:

- Council has financial need such that, in the absence of a special variation, council would not have sufficient funds to meet its obligations as determined in its 2021-22 LTFP as and when they fall due in 2022/23 and
- Where councils are applying for a permanent special variation, in addition to the above criterion, the council has demonstrable financial need for the special variation to be retained in its rate base on an ongoing and
- Council's 2021-22 IP&R documentation budgeted for an income increase above the percentage specified for the council for 2022-23 under section 506 of the Act and
- Council has resolved to apply for the special variation under section 508(2) of the Act and that the resolution clearly states:
  - a) whether the resolution is for a temporary or permanent special variation under section 508(2) of the Act and

*Corporate and Commercial Services Report (Items for Information) - DCCS29/22*

- b) the additional income that council will receive if the special variation is approved and
- c) why the special variation is required; and that council has considered the impact on ratepayers and the community in 2022/23 and, if permanent, in future years if the special variation is approved and considers that it is reasonable.

Council resolved on the 19 April 2022 (41/22) and again on 17 May 2022 (77/22) to apply to IPART for the ASRV for 2022/23 of 2.00% total rates increase in accordance with Council's endorsed Long Term Financial Plan.

IPART had undertaken to advise Councils by 21 June 2022 of their decision and released a media release on the 20 June 2022 advising that eighty-six Councils in NSW including Singleton Council have had their ASRV applications approved. This media release has been attached as **Attachment 1**.

As can be seen, Singleton's 2.00% rate peg approval is at the lower end of the amounts approved for the eighty-six Councils and verifies that the original decision by IPART to apply a 0.70% increase to Singleton was made in error. This increase will have a small impact on Singleton ratepayers as per the table below which shows the annual increase between the initial IPART advise of 0.70% and the revised approval of 2.00% for the average ratepayer in each of Councils rating categories:

Category	0.7% as per initial IPART	2% as per LTFP	Difference pa
Residential Urban	\$1,163	\$1,178	\$15
Residential Rural	\$1,641	\$1,662	\$21
Residential Village Broke	\$775	\$785	\$10
Residential Jerrys Plains	\$775	\$785	\$10
Residential Ordinary	\$1,186	\$1,201	\$15
Business Singleton	\$3,165	\$3,206	\$41
Business Mount Thorley	\$4,008	\$4,059	\$51
Business Village Broke	\$1,376	\$1,394	\$18
Business Jerrys Plains	\$1,376	\$1,394	\$18
Business Ordinary	\$1,519	\$1,539	\$20
Farmland Ordinary	\$2,438	\$2,469	\$31
Mining	\$245,990	\$249,166	\$3,176

Overall, this decision by IPART will allow Council to deliver on the community outcomes as detailed in the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program as planned for based on the endorsed LTFP rate peg amount of 2.00%

### Attachments

**AT-1** [↓](#) IPART Media Release - NSW Council's Increase Rates

# Media Release

20 June 2022

## NSW councils increase rates

IPART has approved applications by eighty-six NSW councils to increase their rates above the level of the annual rate peg.

The modest increases were approved following an additional special variation process.

"The latest rate peg was determined in the low inflation environment at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Since then, high inflation and global uncertainty increased councils' costs. Some councils have demonstrated that without additional funds they will not be able to deliver the projects they have already consulted on and included in their budgets," says Tribunal member Deborah Cope.

The modest increases for councils are between 1.6% and 2.5% including the rate peg (table below).

Each year we calculate a rate peg which sets how much councils can increase the revenue they collect from rates.

This year the rate peg was set at a minimum of 0.7%, with some further increases allowed in councils with growing populations. The rate peg was lower than many councils expected. The additional special variation process gave councils an opportunity to increase this figure.

"We were careful to balance the need of councils to maintain the services and investment they had already committed to against the need to keep rates affordable for the community," said Ms Cope.

Applications were assessed against guidelines provided by the Office of Local Government. The guidelines require councils to show that they had budgeted for higher income than that provided by the rate peg and that they need the additional money to deliver on the projects they have already planned and included in their budgets.

IPART is reviewing the rate peg methodology to deal with volatility in economic conditions. The review will also look at the timing of the calculations in a fast-changing economic climate.

"Our review will be looking at how to deal with this challenge in the future," said Ms Cope

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