



---

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

09 June 2023

### **Council rate rise to invest in the future**

Huon Valley Council agreed to a 12 per cent general rate increase at its Special Meeting of Council this week (Wednesday 7 June 2023).

Council recognises this is a large increase, particularly at a time of cost-of-living and housing price pressures, however it will enable us to better deliver a full range of programs that help all members of the community.

It also puts us on a more sustainable financial footing going forward.

This increase equates to an extra \$3 to \$4 per week for the average residential ratepayer who receives the full suite of services.

The 2023/24 budget:

- addresses climate change challenges, emergency management and response capabilities;
- continues investment in roads and traffic management;
- will bring older facilities up to appropriate standards, and
- harnesses information technology tools to modernise Council processes and improve efficiencies.

To meet customer expectations, better respond to natural disasters and meet safety regulations, the budget funds extra staff in Planning, Climate Change, Emergency Management and more employee hours at waste transfer stations.

“In response to community feedback last year Council invested more in roads maintenance, strategy development and communication,” said Huon Valley Mayor Sally Doyle.



"As a result, over the last financial year, there has been a significant reduction in complaints and service requests for our roads."

"There has also been significant engagement with the community on the Huon Valley Community Vision and future direction of the region. The 2023/24 budget is a continuation of this investment."

Over the years Huon Valley Council has chosen to keep rates low, but the services provided to the community have expanded in response to ratepayer needs and to meet our regulatory responsibilities.

Until now, the average rates in the Huon Valley have been the fifth lowest, or 25th of the 29 councils in Tasmania.

"As Councillors, we acknowledge the increase in rates and fees may cause financial hardship for those more vulnerable and understand it is a difficult time for many in the community," said Cr Doyle.

"I'd like to remind the community that Council has a Financial Hardship and Payment Assistance Policy that can help community members who are genuinely experiencing difficulty paying rates and fees."

The Policy provides various options for relief including flexible payment arrangements, payment deferrals, waiver of penalty and interest, and remissions.

The 'Pensioner Rates Remission' also enables ratepayers who hold certain low-income cards to claim a discount of up to a third of their rates, paid for by the State Government.

Please contact Council at the earliest opportunity if you are experiencing difficulty paying your rates or fees.

In coming months, Council will also be asking our communities which services they value most, to better understand their priorities going forward.

*\*see next page for Budget highlights*

**For more information: Mayor Sally Doyle (03) 6264 0300**

**Communications & Media Coordinator**  
Huon Valley Council  
[communications@huonvalley.tas.gov.au](mailto:communications@huonvalley.tas.gov.au)



## **Budget highlights**

- \$1.5 million investment to go towards relining the Huonville and Port Huon swimming pools to improve safety and amenity of the facilities for the community;
- \$580,000 for stormwater improvements at Channel Highway between Smith Street and Thorp Street, with further funding for other stormwater upgrades;
- \$500,000 towards the upgrade of the Dover Medical Centre (including \$300,000 from reserves) to support expansion of services and retain and attract doctors and staff in the area;
- \$302,000 in continued investment of strategic planning for land use and the Local Provision Scheme support;
- \$221,000 to better resource and improve the customer experience for customers of development applications;
- \$220,000 for the construction of the Shipwrights Point jetty replacement;
- \$141,000 to be invested in leading our response on climate change - and the climate change emergency declared on 25 January 2023 - and emergency management, noting the rising number of climate-related events being experienced;
- \$101,000 for extra resources to assist with building compliance, acknowledging the increased construction activity across the Huon Valley;
- \$100,000 for a strategic rating review that will consider how the rate revenue is shared across the community;
- An increased allocation to roads maintenance of \$100,000 for traffic management measures for the safety of staff and the public;
- \$85,000 for the Huonville foreshore playground replacement;
- A 50% discount on planning fees for applicants who have been approved to receive a first homeowner's grant.



The full meeting agenda, supporting documents and video recording of the special meeting at Council can be found on our website's [Meetings, Agenda and Minutes](#) page (*scroll down to Past Meetings and select the June meeting*).