

North Sydney Council
Community Survey
2025

Please tick responses as required.

Q1a. What suburb do you live in?

Response	Answers
☐	Cammeray
☐	Cremorne
☐	Cremorne Point
☐	Crows Nest
☐	Kirribilli
☐	Kurraba Point
☐	Lavender Bay
☐	McMahons Point
☐	Milsons Point
☐	Neutral Bay
☐	North Sydney
☐	St Leonards
☐	Waverton
☐	Wollstonecraft
☐	Other (please specify)

Q1b. What do you think are the highest priority issues facing North Sydney Council and its residents?

Open response

Q1c. Overall, for the last 12 months, how satisfied are you with the performance of Council, not just on one or two issues, but across all responsibility areas?

Response	Answers
☐	Very satisfied
☐	Satisfied
☐	Somewhat satisfied
☐	Not very satisfied
☐	Not at all satisfied

Q1d. How important do you believe it is for Council to implement plans and programs that will maintain/renew local infrastructure in the local area?

Response	Answers
☐	Very important
☐	Important
☐	Somewhat important
☐	Not very important
☐	Not at all important

Q1e. Do you, or your household, pay Council rates to North Sydney Council for any of the following?

Response	Answers
☐	Residential
☐	Business
☐	Neither of these

Concept statement

North Sydney Council delivers a wide range of services to the community. These include maintaining roads, parks and playgrounds, libraries, cultural programs, environmental initiatives, transport and traffic management, and strategic planning for the future of the area.

Through recent community engagement, Council have heard a strong message: residents value these services and want current service levels maintained, with improvements in some areas.

Over the past few years, Council has made significant productivity improvements and reduced operating costs. However, these efficiencies alone are not enough to close the growing gap between funding and the cost of maintaining essential community assets.

Council's income is regulated by the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), which limits how much rates can increase each year. This limit, known as the rate peg, is set at 4% for the 2026–27 financial year – and is estimated to be 3% in subsequent years.

A 4% increase will not be sufficient to maintain services at their current level, nor to properly renew ageing infrastructure. Without additional revenue or reductions in services, Council's financial position will become unsustainable.

At present, Council has identified \$157 million worth of infrastructure, such as roads, footpaths, drainage, and community buildings, that are already in poor or very poor condition. Without action, these assets will continue to decline and future costs will escalate.

To address this funding gap, councils can apply to IPART for a Special Rate Variation (SRV), which allows rates to rise above the rate peg.

Earlier this year North Sydney Council applied for an SRV, but it was unsuccessful. Council has now addressed the recommendations made by the regulating body as part of that process and is considering re-applying for a permanent SRV, applied progressively over the next three years.

Council will be presenting three options for community consideration, each with different implications for service levels, asset renewal, and long-term sustainability.

Council acknowledges that any rate increase may place financial pressure on some residents. Council offers support through its Hardship Policy and can offer alternative payment arrangements to assist ratepayers.

The following pages will look at the options in more detail...

Please note that the % increases and dollar values shown in the following options are subject to rounding effects – If you would like to know about your rates specifically, please contact Council.

Option 1: Rate Peg Only

This option would continue the status quo with rates only increasing by the assumed rate peg amount of 4% in 2026-27, and an estimated 3% in each of the following two years. Each year, the average residential ratepayer currently paying \$1,076 per year would pay between \$34 and \$43 more than the previous year in general rates.

After 3 years, this would amount to an average annual charge of \$1,187 by 2028/2029.

Under this option the impact would be:

- Services would need to be reduced in key areas, including areas such as parks maintenance, or community services
- Infrastructure would continue to deteriorate
- Infrastructure at most risk, such as stormwater and building assets, could be subject to failure
- A lack of investment in new infrastructure would place further pressure on existing assets as the population grows
- Corporate systems would continue to have limited productivity and decision-making

Q2a. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 1?

Response	Answers
☐	Very supportive
☐	Supportive
☐	Somewhat supportive
☐	Not very supportive
☐	Not at all supportive



Option 2: Special Rate Variation – Three year spread

This proposed SRV option would be introduced over 3 years:

- In year one (2026/27) rating revenue would rise by 20%, which includes the 4% rate peg. This means the average residential ratepayer currently paying \$1,076 per annum would pay \$1,295 in Year 1, an increase of \$219
- In year two (2027/28) rating revenue would rise by an additional 10%, which includes the estimated 3% rate peg. This means the average residential ratepayer would pay \$1,422 in Year 2, a further increase of \$127
- In year three (2027/28) rating revenue would rise by an additional 6%, which includes the estimated 3% rate peg. This means the average residential ratepayer would pay \$1,506 in Year 3, a further increase of \$84

In subsequent years, the annual rate rise would return to the rate peg amount, which is estimated at 3%.

The SRV will generate additional income, of which 80% including an average of \$11 million per year over the next three years will be allocated to infrastructure renewals and critical backlogs. New corporate systems would be implemented over a four-year period to reduce risk, improve productivity, reporting, and decision-making.

A small increase in operational funding would ensure adequate maintenance of parks and gardens including new open space at Berry's Bay. This option would also ensure continued improvement of Development Applications times.

With this additional funding:

- Council can continue to provide services at existing service levels
- Infrastructure in poor or very poor condition are forecast to reduce from 14% to 10% over the next ten years
- Critical backlogs will be prioritised
- Corporate systems will be implemented including infrastructure management systems to reduce risk, improve productivity, decision-making and customer service

Q2b. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 2?

Response	Answers
☐	Very supportive
☐	Supportive
☐	Somewhat supportive
☐	Not very supportive
☐	Not at all supportive

Option 3: Special Rate Variation – Three year spread

This proposed SRV option would also be introduced over 3 years:

- In year one (2026/27) rating revenue would rise by 23%, which includes the 4% rate peg. This means the average residential ratepayer currently paying \$1,076 per annum would pay \$1,327 in Year 1, an increase of \$251
- In year two (2027/28) rating revenue would rise by an additional 15%, which includes the estimated 3% rate peg. This means the average residential ratepayer would pay \$1,520 in Year 2, a further increase of \$193
- In year three (2027/28) rating revenue would rise by an additional 9%, which includes the estimated 3% rate peg. This means the average residential ratepayer would pay \$1,654 in Year 3, a further increase of \$134

In subsequent years, the annual rate rise would return to the rate peg amount, which is estimated at 3%.

With this additional funding, Council will provide the services and infrastructure mentioned for the previous option, plus...

- Increased commitment to addressing infrastructure in poor or very poor condition with backlogs forecast to reduce from 14% to 7% over the next ten years
- Critical backlogs will be prioritised
- A small number of new or upgraded infrastructure projects would be supported including:
 - Upgrades to maximise the use of existing open space such as improved drainage, bushland walking paths, multi-purposing etc.
 - Accessibility improvements to infrastructure
 - Support towards traffic management and active transport initiatives
 - Stormwater harvesting and reuse
- Council can provide some response to current community pressures as well as preparing for increasing population through small scale initiatives such as:
 - A holistic review of parking within the council area
 - Developing of master plans for key sites such as those close to Metro or on foreshore locations
 - Small programs that support accessibility, inclusion, and cohesion
 - Strategic planning projects responding to concerns such as affordable housing

To achieve the desired outcomes of Option 3 - by the end of Year 3, this option will cost an additional \$148 over Option 2...

Q2c. How supportive are you of Council proceeding with Option 3?

Response	Answers
☐	Very supportive
☐	Supportive
☐	Somewhat supportive
☐	Not very supportive
☐	Not at all supportive

Q3a. Please rank the 3 options in order of preference:

	1 st preference	2 nd preference	3 rd preference
Option 1 – Rate peg only	☐	☐	☐
Option 2 – (SRV)	☐	☐	☐
Option 3 – (SRV)	☐	☐	☐

Q3b. What is your reason for choosing that option as your highest preference?

Open response

Q4a. Prior to this call, were you aware that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?

Response	Answers	Survey Instruction
☐	Yes	
☐	No	Skip to Q5a
☐	Not sure	Skip to Q5a

Q4b. How were you informed that Council was exploring community sentiment towards a Special Rate Variation?

Response	Answers
☐	Letter from the Mayor (mailout)
☐	North Sydney News (mailout)
☐	Council enews
☐	Posters/Noticeboards
☐	Council website
☐	Newspaper advertisement
☐	Social media
☐	Information stall/event
☐	Word of mouth i.e. Family, friends Neighbours, etc.
☐	Other (please specify)



Concept statement

Council rates are levied based on unimproved land value. A 'minimum rate' is the lowest amount charged to any household. This typically applies to high-rise apartments where multiple units sit on one block of land, whereas standalone houses and townhouses usually pay more.

North Sydney's minimum rate is \$743 per annum—the third lowest in Metropolitan Sydney. Neighbouring councils charge: Lane Cove (\$1,073), Willoughby (\$1,051), and Northern Beaches (\$1,233).

Q5a. Council rates are primarily used to provide services to all those in the community. Those paying the minimum rate in North Sydney currently pay 45% of the average rate paid by all other residents, despite having access to the same services. Do you think that is fair and equitable?

Response	Answers
☐	Yes
☐	No
☐	Don't know

Q5b. How supportive would you be of Council increasing the minimum rate to better balance the contribution made by all ratepayers?

Response	Answers
☐	Very supportive
☐	Supportive
☐	Somewhat supportive
☐	Not very supportive
☐	Not at all supportive



Management of Public Assets

- Q6. Council holds several investment properties to ensure adequate land for future community needs as the population grows, and for income producing and capital growth purposes.**

Thinking about Council's investment property portfolio. Council would like to understand, in principle, how you believe these assets should be managed.

For the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. The scale is from 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly agree	
	1	2	3	4	5		
Council's investment properties should be kept wherever possible to protect long-term community value	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Council's investment properties should only be sold if the proceeds are reinvested to benefit both current and future generations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Council's investment properties should only be sold if the community receives equal or greater long-term benefit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Council should not sell any of its investment properties without open and transparent community consultation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Decisions about selling investment properties must balance current community needs with the interests of future generations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Council should deal with the current and any future financial issues by selling investment properties now, rather than increasing rates or fees	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		

Demographic & Profiling Questions

- D1. Please select your age group:**

Response	Answers
☐	18-34
☐	35-49
☐	50-64
☐	65+

- D2a. Which of the following best describes the dwelling where you are currently living?**

Response	Answers
☐	I/We own/are currently buying this property
☐	I/We currently rent this property

D2b. Do you live in a:

Response	Answers
☐	Free standing house
☐	Duplex/semi detached
☐	Villa/townhouse
☐	Unit/Apartment 2-3 Storeys
☐	Unit/Apartment 4-6 storeys
☐	Unit/Apartment 7+ storeys
☐	Granny flat
☐	Other (please specify)

D3. How long have you lived in the North Sydney local area?

Response	Answers
☐	Less than 2 years
☐	2 – 5 years
☐	6 – 10 years
☐	11 – 20 years
☐	More than 20 years

D4a. What is your identified gender?

Response	Answers
☐	Female
☐	Male
☐	Non binary/gender fluid
☐	Different identity

D5. Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

Response	Answers
☐	Yes
☐	No

D6. Do you or anyone in your household identify as living with disability?

Response	Answers
☐	Yes
☐	No

D7. What is your highest level of education?

Response	Answers
☐	Postgraduate degree
☐	Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate
☐	Bachelor Degree
☐	Advanced Diploma and Diploma
☐	TAFE certificate
☐	Secondary school