Individual Submissions and Proposed Council Response on Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2023-2033

Submission #	Verbatim Submission	Proposed Council Response
Individual Submission 1	5% increase in wage bill seems excessive, while CPI is high all organizations and business need to manage employee expectations and wants Vs business outcomes...a business that is not making money should be managing their expenses better. I do not support the special rate variation, this is also excessive, manage your spending and stop passing on your costs to households that are also struggling to make ends meet in these difficult financial times	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. There are numerous processes and decision points for Council to undertake, including a significant engagement program, prior to making a decision to submit a SRV to IPART in February 2024. The increased employee cost forecast in the LTFP are a result of the Local Government Award (currently under consultation) which sets employee wage growth at. The Award is negotiated by the peak body Local Government NSW and this is outside of Council's control. It is expected that employee wage growth will be 4.5% (2023/24); 3.5% and a bonus up to $1000 (2024/25) and 3% and a bonus up to $1000 (2025/26). In addition, between now and 2025/26, there is a mandated annual increase of 0.5% per annum in statutory superannuation which is moving from 10.5% to 12%. The Executive Summary, and Section 5 of the LTFP articulate Council's achievements in containing and reducing costs despite very high inflation. Council is committed to continuing to examine ways to increase efficiencies and reduce costs. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 2	Rates variations is a particularly tone deaf idea in these days of lean times It smells of feather bedding As above special rate variations could be avoided by simple zero based budgeting and cost cutting measures	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. There are numerous processes and decision points for Council to undertake, including a significant engagement program, prior to making a decision to submit a SRV to IPART in February 2024. There are five criteria that are assessed by IPART including the impact on affected ratepayers being reasonable, having regard to both the current rate levels, existing ratepayer base and the proposed purpose of the variation.

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		The Executive Summary, and Section 5 of the LTFP articulates Council's achievements in containing and reducing costs despite very high inflation. Council will continue to examine ways to increase efficiencies and reduce costs. Council already undertakes zero based budgeting. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 3	Don't support increase in fees, plan ahead and deal with issues before they are a big problem. Be proactive and THINK	Noted. Fees and Charges are part of the Operational Plan 2023/24 and are part of a planning ahead process. Council is committed to raising revenue in a fair and equitable manner to enable it to meet the community's needs. In determining how its fees and charges have been set, we have considered the full costs of providing the particular goods and services. Our fee structure uses the pricing principles of user pays principle (full cost recovery), subsidised pricing based upon public benefit (partial cost recovery), market pricing (charged where the market has a preparedness to pay), and legislative pricing standard (fee imposed by legislation). The majority of increases in fees and charges is to accommodate inflation. Some fees and charges may not increase due to the type of service being provided or statutory limitations. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 4	Before any extra revenue stream is proposed it would be beneficial for the council to clearly state what these 'significant community projects' are. There are a number of council assets that could be sold or used (e.g., there are vacant properties that are never used, rented or hired). Sell these	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. There are numerous processes and decision points for Council to undertake, including a significant engagement program, prior to making a decision to submit a SRV to IPART in February 2024. Council regularly reviews and tests its portfolio of property and other assets to determine if there is opportunity to sell non-core assets, noting assets are required to

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	first. A 15-20% variation is not warranted and was not part of the council policy at the last election. The waste in this council is the worst it has ever been. Roads get 'repaired' that aren't in need, yet others are neglected. Park equipment and fencing are often broken, yet you build new things, or waste money on upgrading things that don't need it. Sanders Park is an example - the proposal is an absolute waste of money. This proposal has made me furious.	deliver services. However, selling assets does not address the underlying issue of costs growing at a higher rate than revenue and does not provide a long term solution. The Executive Summary, and Section 5 of the LTFP articulates Council's achievements in containing and reducing costs despite very high inflation. Council will continue to examine ways to increase efficiencies and reduce costs. Council has a detailed asset management approach which identifies projects based on asset life, utilisation and functionality. As outlined in Section 9 of the LTFP, Council will spend $305.4m on infrastructure assets over the next 10 years, including $217.3m on renewals of existing assets and $88.1m on new assets. Council also carries out scheduled maintenance on its assets, however if there is an immediate risk please contact Council. The works at Saunders Park stemmed from asset planning which highlighted that that the works were required to address safety and age of the assets, being 15 years old. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 5	The $250 reduction for eligible pensioners for combined rates and domestic waste management charge should be increased to $250 + 3.7% in line with Council's proposed 2023/24 increase to these charges and thereafter a % increase in line with Council's future proposed Long Term Financial Plan. ALSO the $158 reduction for qualifying self-funded retirees for the Domestic Waste Management Charge should be increased by 10% in line with Council's proposed	Noted. Pensioner discounts are mandated by the State Government. Council does not have any legal way to discount rates further. Discounts currently offered to those who meet the eligibility: • Eligible pensioners receive a statutory reduction of 50% of the combined rates and domestic waste management charge to a maximum of $250. • Pensioners and qualifying self-funded retirees receive a $158 reduction in the domestic waste service charge. This is over and above what other councils offer and represents an increase of $28 (21.5%) on the $130 discount offered in 2022/23. No change to Plan.

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	2023/24 increase to these charges and thereafter a % increase in line with Council's future proposed Long Term Financial Plan.	
Individual Submission 6	How is the $27.6 mio being spent on the Willoughby Leisure Centre justified?	Noted. This project is funded and underway. WLC is funded by grants, developer contributions and internal reserves built by Council through prudent financial management over the years. This project has been planned for many years to address an ageing asset and is required to cater for an increasing population and demand for services for multiple age groups and cultural backgrounds. A business case has been approved by the Office of Local Government as part of their requirement for capital review of major projects. Demolition has occurred and the future facility will be significantly enhanced. Details can be found here: https://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au/willoughby-leisure-centre-pool-upgrade No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 7	Forward forecasts and the projected financials of the Long Term Plan need to be openly published to enable rate payers to understand where their future rates will be spent	Noted. This information can be found in the LTFP, which is public. Sections 3 and 4 of the LTFP provide detail on the assumptions and escalations used, sections 6 and 8 provide detailed Profit and Loss, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow projections for each of the LTFP scenarios. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 8	Against the 20% special rate variation	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. There are numerous processes and decision points for Council to undertake, including a significant engagement program, prior to making a decision to submit a SRV to IPART in February 2024.

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		No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 9	I'm against ANY increase in rates	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. The State Government enables an annual increase in rates. There are numerous processes and decision points for Council to undertake, including a significant engagement program, prior to making a decision to submit a SRV to IPART in February 2024. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 10	Disapprove SRV, as council already have increased revenue from new/additional rate payers from all the newly built high density apartments. Councils should seek to manage the budget better rather than seeking more money from the rate payers.	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. There are numerous processes and decision points for Council to undertake, including a significant engagement program, prior to making a decision to submit a SRV to IPART in February 2024. An increase in the rate base from newly built high density apartments does not offset increase in costs arising from the increased population. Any developer contributions received from new developments are quarantined to build new assets for the increasing population and these assets will need to be maintained into the future. The Executive Summary, and Section 5 of the LTFP articulate Council's achievements in containing and reducing costs despite very high inflation. Council will continue to examine ways to increase efficiencies and reduce costs. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 11	I have read the plan and regret that costs are to increase at a time when living expenses are rising all the time. However I do	Noted. No change to Plan.

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	understand that Council's costs are also higher and to keep our suburb at the level of quality which we expect, our contribution is unfortunately necessary.	
Individual Submission 12	Rate increases are too high	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. The state government enables an annual increase in rates. There are numerous processes and decision points for Council to undertake, including a significant engagement program, prior to making a decision to submit a SRV to IPART in February 2024. There are five criteria that are assessed by IPART including the impact on affected ratepayers being reasonable, having regard to both the current rate levels, existing ratepayer base and the proposed purpose of the variation. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 13	I find it difficult to believe that Council requires a 20% rate variation. There is high development of residential homes proceeding that would deliver fees and charges to Council. Council would be enforcing revenue from residents already suffering from cost of living. I do not support this and see it as an excuse due to insufficient long term planning that should have been performed many years ago to not have this issue. I do not support increase in fees and charges for domestic waste as Council has already increased	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. There are numerous processes and decision points for Council to undertake, including a significant engagement program, prior to making a decision to submit a SRV to IPART in February 2024. An increase in the rate base from newly built high density apartments does not offset increase in costs arising from the increased population. Any developer contributions received from new developments are quarantined to build new assets for the increasing population and these assets will need to be maintained into the future. The Executive Summary, and Section 5 of the LTFP articulate Council's achievements in containing and reducing costs despite very high inflation. Council will continue to examine ways to increase efficiencies and reduce costs. Council has made prudent financial decisions over many years to enable Council to manage the increasing costs, covering the impact of COVID on our revenue and

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	these fees and the vegetation bins are now rarely cleared on time, waiting up to 4 days to clear bins. Thankyou	continued delivery of assets and services. The Long Term Financial Plan is reviewed annually. Long term planning was undertaken but could no foresee the impacts of a pandemic upon revenue and inflation. The increase in the Domestic Waste Management Charge is required due to: • Increased waste management volumes possibly resulting from increased working from home; • Inflation at over 7% (annualised CPI peaked in December 2022 at 7.8% and in March 2023 was at 7%) which will increase the price of the current collection and disposal contracts; • Fund the up-front investment and ongoing incremental costs associated with the requirements of the State Government's Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041, which includes mandating the separation of food and garden organics for households and selected businesses (which is forecast to increase waste management costs by between 8% and 16%). If your bins have been missed, please contact our Customer Service Centre. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 14	I do not support any rate increases or special rate creations. Council is yielding considering amounts of interest income on its cash investments which more than offset any proposed revenues from the rate payers. Council is better off re-zoning E4/C4 land to R2 and profiting from increased land values than increasing or creating new rates.	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. The State Government enables an annual increase in rates. There are numerous processes and decision points for Council to undertake, including a significant engagement program, prior to making a decision to submit a SRV to IPART in February 2024. Interest represents only 5.6% of Council's operational revenue and in many cases the interest earned must be quarantined and applied to reserves held for specific purposes. Interest returns have declined in recent years due to lower interest rates. While yields are slowly increasing, increases in costs are far exceeding increases in interest and other revenue streams.

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		Council does not gain any extra rating revenue through increased land values. Council rates are fixed at a maximum permissible level and only the allocation of rates changes as land values change. The rating methodology is determined by the State Government. Please see our website for more information on how rates are determined. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 15	I oppose spending 3 million on refurbishing the council's office- I have been to them and they are fine. If the council members looks for fancy workplaces maybe they can apply to private sector. There is 0 value to community in this. Also privatization of community assets like day care and youth services is wrong - selling the community to make profit to spend on nicer offices and personal assistants is borderline corruption	Noted. This project is funded and underway. Victor Street asset renewal and refurbishment is funded by internal reserves built by Council through prudent financial management over the years. Refurbishment of the Victor Street administration office and it has been 20 years since this was built. It is necessary to undertake essential improvements to the asset, ensure effective and efficient use of space in the modern post-COVID work environment, provide a professional and comfortable environment for staff, and better assist collaboration, innovation and problem-solving. The project may also provide a new revenue opportunity through leasing some floor space. The site services more than 200 staff. In March 2022, Council resolved to find an alternative provider of long day care child care services at Devonshire and sought to achieve funding of the upgrade to the Centre through investment by the provider. The building and land assets will be retained by Council. Youth services has not been a subject of Council discussion for privatization, nor have there been an increase in personal assistants. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 16	I've been a member, off and on, of the Willoughby Leisure Centre for more than 15 years. And	Noted.

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	almost entirely using the gym. I've asked several times before for the gym to be air-conditioned as, even with the fans, I find the temperature of the room hinders my exercise in summer. I see no mentioning of air-con in the Operational Plan and ask, for surely a relatively modest amount, that you air-condition the gym.	The gym has recently undergone an upgrade of the fans to provide a more comfortable environment. While there is no funding available in the *Operational Plan 2023/24* for air conditioning of the health club, the request can be considered as part of a budget bid prioritisation process for 2024/25. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 17	Would like to see more approvals for social housing and higher building density projects to alleviate housing crisis. Improved public transport options as well.	Noted. The State and Council's planning controls determine density and social housing requirements and public transport is a State Government matter. Council has an Affordable Housing Policy/Strategy which is seen as a better practice model. Affordable housing refers to rental housing offered at rent of up to 30% of household income targeting key and essential workers. Council owns 37 affordable housing units and is progressing Abbott Road Affordable Housing Project to build 12 new dwellings for essential workers at a cost of $8.7m. The new draft Local Environment Plan requires increased affordable housing associated with new developments. Council will continue to explore opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing in collaboration with the State Government, developers and community housing providers. Planning for the growth of Chatswood is underway to provide a higher density in response to the need for more jobs and housing, through the draft *Local Environment Plan*, currently awaiting approval from the State Government. Growth is to be focused around existing services and facilities such as the Chatswood CBD and local centres. Public transport is managed by the State Government. Council regularly meets with State agencies and transport providers to advocate for transport solutions and funding for projects in the area. Council has an Integrated Transport Strategy which promotes the use of public transport and identifies various active transport projects to improve connectivity and accessibility for all residents.

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		No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 18	I am in favour of it having seen a summary of the issues from the local west ward progress association	Noted. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 19	With the huge increase in rates planned, obviously the Council's 2023-24 Plan spending is not in line with its income and I would suggest the spending is cut back to come into line with the income without increasing rates to this extent, i.e. balance the budget.	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. The Executive Summary, and Section 5 of the LTFP articulate Council's achievements in containing and reducing costs despite very high inflation. Council is committed to continuing to examine ways to increase efficiencies and reduce costs. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 20	I understand why the system has charged rates according to the size of your land but surely it should be charged by usage. You can have one person in a house and five people in a unit. The people in the small unit will more likely use Willoughby facilities more than the person in the house. Or you can have a neighbour with six people in the one house vs one person in a house and both get charged the same sewerage or garbage fees but the six people produce more waste. Those with children are more likely to use certain facilities, elderly other facilities	Noted. The methodology for calculating rates is a mandated by the State Government. Council has no option but to charge rates based on land values. Local Government has lobbied State Government for many years to change the methodology for calculating rates but this has not been successful. Fees and Charges are outlined within the *Operational Plan 2023/24*. In determining how its fees and charges have been set, we have considered the full costs of providing the particular goods and services. Our fee structure uses the pricing principles of user pays principle (full cost recover), subsidised based upon public benefit pricing (partial cost recovery), market pricing (charged where the market has a preparedness to pay), and legislative pricing standard (fee imposed by legislation). The majority of increases in fees and charges is to accommodate inflation. Some fees and charges may not increase due to the type of service being provided or statutory limitations.

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	and some use no facilities. Surely, fees should be based on how many people live in the premises rather than the size of the premises. They use more of the services. Stop offering free services and charge a small fee for them. Pay as you use. The alternative would be to simply charge everyone the same rates regardless of unit vs house.	
	I have found dealing with Council is often stressful and leads to endless unreturned calls/emails, which in itself causes more work for your administrative personnel. I have found unnecessary double-handling of tasks that adds 'wasted' time and costs to items. Streamlining tasks to remove this 'waste' would mean savings.	As outlined in the draft Operational Plan, Council is commencing implementation of its Customer Experience Strategy in 2023/24 to drive improvement in our delivery of customer experience including reducing double handling and improve responsiveness to customer service requests.
	I was under the assumption that the Naremburn and other town centre upgrades were funded from the government so I am not sure why they are listed as project items that Willoughby Council needs to fund for. If this is not the case then the % that is funded should be shown vs how much	Naremburn local centre streetscape is being funded through Council reserves and developer contributions. Hampden Road Artarmon, streetscape upgrade is being funded through developer contributions and a government capital grant. Provision of details of funding sources for projects will be considered in the preparation of future Operational Plans.

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	rate payers are paying for the projects to show the true cost. Cut back on the fairs - make them every 2-3 years rather than yearly and alternate between the suburbs. If it is not in Chatswood this year they can visit the one in Roseville, etc. I do not know of anyone who attends these fairs. People tend to avoid them as they dislike crowds.	Council's event programs attract significant visitors and income into the local government area, particularly when located in the Chatswood CBD. Council receives significant grant funding and sponsorship income which limits Council's contribution and events such as Lunar New Year has shown to result in an additional $10.2m in visitor discretionary spend and $5.7m on dining which supports the local economy. StreetFair part of the Emerge Festival is an annual local community celebration attracting 20,000 visitors with 53% of attendees from the local government area. The festival showcases local community organisations with 1075 parade participants, 482 performers and 13 stallholders. The majority of performers are young children and performing at Streetfair is a major highlight. Due to a Multicultural NSW grant, Council is exploring an additional fair location beyond Chatswood in 2023. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 21	The third highest capital project is asset renewal of Victor Street. How much accountability and breakdown is provided to the public regarding how the 10m is being spent to upgrade offices. How can there be no money for Devonshire Child care centre??	This project is funded and underway. Victor Street asset renewal and refurbishment is funded by internal reserves built by Council through prudent financial management over a number of years. No refurbishment has occurred for 20 years. Refurbishment of the Victor Street administration office is necessary to undertake essential improvements to the asset, ensure effective and efficient use of space in the modern post-COVID work environment, provide a professional and comfortable environment for staff, and better assist collaboration, innovation and problem-solving. The project may also provide a new revenue opportunity through lease of floor space. The site services more than 200 staff. In March 2022, Council resolved to find an alternative provider of long day care child care services at Devonshire and sought to achieve funding of the upgrade to the

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		Centre through investment by the provider. Therefore, no Council funds were set aside for the centre. No change to Plan.
Individual Submission 22	Firstly, I take issue with the framing of the external economic environment as unprecedented. It is not. It is the willingness, not just of Council, but of all levels of government, during a period of record low interest rates, to live beyond their means, that is truly unprecedented. And this is the entirely predictable result. Council now finds itself having to fund deficit spending, where payments as a percentage of receipts, are advancing at unmanageable levels. The solution is not to demand payment from sources that lack elasticity, but to cut spending, to cut it dramatically, and for whatever period of time is necessary to repair the balance sheet. I appreciate that an effort has already been made in this direction, but far more needs to be done, particularly in the area of future project spending. Under performing assets must be sold, every aspect of expenditure must be considered. In my experience when terms such as 'insolvency'	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. There are numerous processes and decision points for Council to undertake, including a significant engagement program, prior to making a decision to submit a SRV to IPART in February 2024. There are five criteria that are assessed by IPART including the impact on affected ratepayers being reasonable, having regard to both the current rate levels, existing ratepayer base and the proposed purpose of the variation. The Executive Summary, and Section 5 of the LTFP articulate Council's achievements in containing and reducing costs despite very high inflation. Council will continue to examine ways to increase efficiencies and reduce costs. Council regularly reviews and tests its portfolio of property and other assets to determine if there is opportunity to sell surplus, non-core assets, noting assets are required to deliver services. However, selling assets does not address the underlying issue of costs growing at a higher rate than revenue and does not provide a long term solution. Council is audited annually and this includes an assessment of Council's capacity as a going concern. Council has been able to weather the impacts of COVID and high inflation. The LTFP indicates that Council needs to make decisions to increase revenue, reduce or cease services to ensure our financial sustainability into the future. No change to Plan.

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	are used, as they have been in Council cummunication, it is often already too late. Perhaps it is time for external auditors to be given an oversight role, and assist Council at this crucial time. I have lived in the municipality for close to sixty years, and have always supported Council. However, the proposal to apply for an increase in the rate variation cap of between 15% to 20% above the current limit, is beyond the pale. I, as do many residents I have spoken with, feel that if this were to happen, Council should instead approach the State to be merged, that would be a higly disappointing outcome for everyone, Council and residents alike. I do hope you consider these words, and thank-you for the opportunity.	
Individual Submission 23	My concerns relate to the 15-20% PERMANENT SRV SCENARIO. Council officers should be aware that many Australian citizens have been suffering financial hardship over the last few years with no end in sight. This means that our income and spending has been drastically reduced and as retirees my wife and I have been affected significantly. The result is	Noted. No decision has been made to submit a SRV at this stage. There are numerous processes and decision points for Council to undertake, including a significant engagement program, prior to making a decision to submit a SRV to IPART in February 2024. There are five criteria that are assessed by IPART including the impact on affected ratepayers being reasonable, having regard to both the current rate levels, existing ratepayer base and the proposed purpose of the variation. The Executive Summary, and Section 5 of the LTFP articulate Council's achievements in containing and reducing costs despite very high inflation. Council will continue to examine ways to increase efficiencies and reduce costs.

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	that we have had to "tighten our belts" and do away with some if the niceties of life and concentrate on the necessities only. It is time that Council learned to do the same and reduce its expenditure on what most would regard as frivolous items and concentrate on spending only those funds that it has available - i.e. if some things have to go then so be it! It is the height of callousness to expect the ratepayers to support expenditure on items that most of us do not use. Please read "David Copperfield" and then you will understand that if you spend more than you earn then you will go broke! Be sensible and STOP SPENDING MORE THAN YOU EARN and stop asking us to make up for your poor budgeting process.	No change to Plan.