

MEDIA RELEASE



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COUNCIL RESOLVES TO 2009/12 DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN, INCORPORATING A SPECIAL RATE VARIATION APPLICATION

Moree Plains Shire Council yesterday resolved to adopt a Management Plan for 2009/2012 which includes provision for a special rate variation for 2009/2010 financial year of 9.73 % with the increase to be applied to the farmland rating sector.

Council has lodged an application for the increase under section 508(2) of the Local Government Act 1993 and that application is currently being processed by Officers of the Department of Local Government who will in turn make comments and recommendations in relation to the application and then refer the application to the Minister for Local Government, Hon Barbara Perry MP, for final determination.

Acting General Manager, Murray Erbs said "Advice as to the outcome of Councils application should be known within the next few weeks. If the application for a special variation is unsuccessful the increase in rates will be restricted to the 3.5% in line with the Ministerial approved increase for 2009/2010."

Mayor of More Plains Shire Council Katrina Humphries said "whilst Council acknowledged that the proposed increase did not receive universal support through the extensive consultation process conducted by Council, there is an underlying acceptance within the community that something has to be done to provide additional funds to maintain the road network. Council has had to make a hard decision on an important issue and I am confident that the decision is the right one if the road network is to be maintained and that it will give Moree Plains Shire Council a great deal more credibility when it continues to seek additional funding from the other tiers of Government".

Mayor Humphries said, "That Council also gave a commitment that it will undertake a comprehensive review of its entire operation to ensure that any areas of potential efficiency improvements are identified and where necessary changes implemented".

Mayor Humphries allayed any fears that the funds could be channeled into non road related expenditure and confirmed that all additional funds raised via the proposed rate increase will be allocated to the rural road network. Measures will be put into place to ensure that the current level of spending on the road next work is, as a minimum, maintained at the current level and indexed annually to reflect the increase in road construction costs.

END

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Approved

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