Table of Submission to levy differential rates

Submitter	Summary of Submission	Response
1 Ocean Beach ICR267110567	In your proposed rate changes, it's say the funds will be directed towards long term viability of assets, upgrades and infrastructure maintenance, it would be nice to see some transparency into where and what funds are allocated in the proposed budget. What developments are being made and into what suburbs or areas are being invested in. Additionally, How is there 0 minimum payments for holiday purposed property? Surely that's incorrect?	The request for greater transparency regarding the allocation of rates revenue is acknowledged. Detailed information regarding capital works projects, service delivery and infrastructure investment is provided through the Annual Budget, Council Plan and Long Term Financial Plan. The query regarding the holiday purposes differential rate category is also noted. The "0" relates to the number of properties within that rating category currently paying the minimum rate. All properties within that category currently pay rates above the minimum payment threshold.

1:59

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SHIRE OF DENMARK
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE BUDGET
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2026

2. RATES

(a) Rating Information

Rate Description	Basis of valuation	Rate in dollar	Number of properties	Rateable value*
				$
(i) General rates				
1. Improved	Gross rental valuation	0.081219	2,461	65,811,549
2. Holiday Purposes	Gross rental valuation	0.158377	110	2,597,400
3. Vacant	Gross rental valuation	0.161626	217	3,040,040
4. Rural	Unimproved valuation	0.003885	415	340,317,000
5. Rural - Add Use - Holiday	Unimproved valuation	0.005051	7	4,628,000
6. Rural - Add Use - Commercial	Unimproved valuation	0.006605	11	9,640,000
Total general rates			3,221	426,033,989
		Minimum $		
(ii) Minimum payment				
1. Improved	Gross rental valuation	1,512	547	7,338,430
2. Holiday Purposes	Gross rental valuation	1,815	0	0
3. Vacant	Gross rental valuation	1,480	190	1,331,140
4. Rural	Unimproved valuation	1,738	237	77,357,215
5. Rural - Add Use - Holiday	Unimproved valuation	2,258	3	1,134,000
6. Rural - Add Use - Commercial	Unimproved valuation	3,301	9	3,855,000
Total minimum payments			986	91,015,885
Total general rates and minimum payments			4,207	517,049,374

Waivers (Refer note 2(f))
Total rates

The Shire did not raise specified area rates for the year ended 30th June 2026.

*Rateable Value at time of adopting budget.

All rateable properties within the district used predominately for non-rural purposes are rated according to their Gross Renta

The general rates detailed for the 2025/26 financial year have been determined by Council on the basis of raising the reven proposed in the budget and the estimated revenue to be received from all sources other than general rates and also consi

The minimum payments have been determined by Council on the basis that all ratepayers must make a reasonable contrib as the provision of community services throughout the Shire.

SHIRE OF DENMARK
NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE BUDGET
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2. RATES (CONTINUED)

(c) Objectives and Reasons for Differential Rating

To provide equity in the rating of properties across the Shire the following rate categories have been determ

Rate Description	Characteristics	Objects
1. Improved	All properties held or used for non-rural purposes, not for holiday purposes, and currently not vacant.	The object of this rate is to apply a improved land that is held or used purposes.
2. Holiday Purposes	All properties held or used for non-rural purposes and for holiday purposes.	The object of a higher rate in the d premium on the improved rate in th category is to provide fairness and different types of residential land u

2 Your Denmark Survey ICR26711133	Most people are struggling so why does the Shire of Denmark keep increasing the rates by 2% above inflation. Part of the reason inflation keeps going up is because of organisations/ persons thinking they can get away with these increase. It must be hard to make everyone happy and do all that is wanted in the community but it would be nice to see the Shire of Denmark restrict their spending - as we have to.	The concerns raised regarding cost of living pressures and the expectation that local government seeks efficiencies before increasing rates is noted. The Shire is aware of the financial pressures facing households and businesses and continues to review expenditure and service delivery requirements as part of the annual budget process. The proposed increase is in accordance with the Long Term Financial Plan to address the identified asset renewal gap and reduce the risk of future financial pressures associated with ageing infrastructure.
3 Shadforth ICR267110569	I am writing to express my strong dissatisfaction with the proposed rate increase. Whilst supposedly acknowledging the financial pressure on ratepayers, in the same breath you are proposing to slap them with a rate increase a full two percentage points higher than CPI! Above CPI increases have become the norm in recent years and this simply cannot be allowed to carry on any longer. You are stifling the local economy by greedily taking an ever-increasing share of funds. Please advise if there is a mechanism whereby ratepayers can request the State Government to appoint administrators to the Shire to put a stop to this ongoing policy of above CPI rate increases.	The objection to ongoing above-CPI rate increases is acknowledged. The proposed increase is consistent with the Long Term Financial Plan and is intended to address the identified asset renewal gap and reduce future financial pressures associated with ageing infrastructure. Concerns about a council's governance or performance may be raised with the relevant State Government department, which determines whether any further action is warranted under the applicable legislative framework.
4 Your Denmark Survey ICR26711133	I wish to formally oppose the proposed rate increase of 2% above CPI. Like everyone else, I understand that roads need maintaining, community facilities need upgrading and infrastructure needs renewing. That's what we pay rates for. I also appreciate that local government is under increasing pressure, with higher costs and greater expectations being placed on councils every year. However, at a time when households and businesses are already struggling with rising insurance premiums, electricity prices, fuel costs, groceries, mortgages, rent, and wages, I do not believe asking ratepayers to contribute above inflation is the right approach.	The objection to the proposed above-CPI rate increase and the concerns regarding cost-of-living pressures are acknowledged. The proposed increase is consistent with the Long Term Financial Plan and is intended to help address the identified asset renewal gap, maintain essential services and reduce the risk of greater financial pressures arising from ageing infrastructure. The feedback regarding organisational efficiency, project delivery, expenditure priorities and transparency is also acknowledged. Year-to-date underspends do not necessarily represent ongoing savings, as they may reflect the timing of invoices, procurement, grant-funded

	The Rating Proposal states that Council acknowledges the cost-of-living pressures facing the community. If that is genuinely recognised, then the first question should be, "What more can Council do before asking the community to pay more?" Every business in Denmark has had to review spending over the past few years. Families have delayed purchases, cut back on discretionary spending, and found ways to do more with less. Local government should be held to exactly the same standard. The proposal talks about asset renewal, infrastructure upgrades and long-term sustainability. They are all important. However, the proposal does not clearly explain which projects are absolutely essential this financial year, which could reasonably be staged over several years, or what efficiency measures have already been implemented before proposing an increase above CPI. Looking at the Shire's own financial reports raises several questions. As at 31 May 2026, the Shire had collected $9.16 million in rates, while employee costs totalled $7.87 million. In simple terms, employee costs are equivalent to approximately 86% of annual rates income. I am not suggesting rates only fund wages, because they clearly do not, but it is a fair question to ask whether every opportunity has been taken to improve organisational efficiency before asking ratepayers to contribute more. The same report also shows: • Rates revenue is virtually on budget, being only $191 below forecast. • Employee costs are currently around $208,000 below budget. • Materials and contracts are approximately $726,000 below budget. • Several major projects are progressing later than planned, including the Hardy Street remediation works, Berridge Park upgrades and Bike Trail construction. That raises a very simple question. If spending is below budget and several major projects are delayed, why is a rate increase above CPI necessary this year?	works or projects continuing across financial years. Financial performance and project delivery are monitored through monthly reporting and the annual budget review, with adjustments made where required. Employee costs are reviewed annually against similar-sized local governments to ensure the Shire remains competitive in attracting and retaining staff while maintaining remuneration levels consistent with industry standards. Employee costs support the delivery of a broad range of services across the district. These include maintaining parks, reserves, roads, drainage, bridges and footpaths; operating facilities such as the library, recreation centre and waste management facility; and providing regulatory and compliance services, including environmental health, ranger services, building and planning. The Shire continues to review services, expenditure and available funding opportunities through its budget and long-term planning processes. Detailed expenditure and project allocations are reported through the Annual Budget, monthly financial reports, Council Plan, Long Term Financial Plan and Strategic Asset Management Plan.

	The proposal also states that more than half of the Shire's operational costs are funded from external sources. If that is the case, then ratepayers deserve a clearer explanation of why an increase above inflation is still required and exactly what this additional revenue will fund. I also question the way the increase has been presented. Describing it as "$2.73 per week" makes it sound almost insignificant. The reality is that it is approximately $142 every year, permanently added to the rating base and forming the starting point for future increases. For many people, another $142 is another insurance bill, another electricity payment or another week's groceries. Like many others, I appreciate that local governments are expected to do more every year. State and Federal Governments continue to place additional responsibilities on councils, while funding often fails to keep pace with those expectations. That is a genuine issue, but I do not believe local ratepayers should automatically become the solution every time there is a funding shortfall. The community also deserves greater transparency. Rather than broad statements about asset renewal, Council should clearly demonstrate: • What operational efficiencies have been implemented over the past three years. • Whether staffing structures have been independently reviewed. • What savings have been achieved. • Which projects are essential this financial year. • Which projects could reasonably be staged. • What additional grant opportunities have been pursued before increasing rates above CPI. One of the strengths of Denmark has always been its people. We are a resilient community. We support local businesses, volunteer organisations and each other. We also understand that difficult financial decisions sometimes need to be made. What we expect is that those decisions are shared fairly.	

	When families are tightening their belts, businesses are absorbing higher costs and community organisations are working harder than ever to keep their doors open, I believe Council should also demonstrate that it has done everything reasonably possible to reduce costs, improve efficiency and prioritise expenditure before asking ratepayers to pay more than inflation. This is not about opposing investment in the community. I fully support maintaining roads, upgrading facilities and planning for the future. It is about ensuring that every available dollar is being spent wisely before asking residents and businesses to contribute more. Finally, I encourage Council to consider the broader economic impact of this proposal. Small businesses across Denmark continue to face increasing operating costs. Many are still dealing with reduced consumer spending as households tighten their budgets. An above CPI rate increase may appear modest in isolation, but when combined with every other increase businesses face throughout the year, it becomes another cost that ultimately flows through the local economy. Keeping any increase to CPI would send a strong message that Council understands the pressures facing its community and is prepared to share that burden. I respectfully ask Council to reconsider the proposed increase and limit any rate increase for 2026/2027 to CPI. I believe that would represent a fair and balanced outcome that recognises both Council's financial responsibilities and the very real financial pressures currently facing the Denmark community.	
5 Your Denmark Survey ICR26711133	I strongly disagree with the proposed rate rises above CPI. Living in the country 15 minutes drive from Denmark we simply don’t see the return on the current level of rates we pay. How on earth can you justify increasing the rates above CPI for people that live in the country?	The concerns regarding differences in service levels between rural and non-rural properties are acknowledged. Although some services are location-specific, rates contribute to services and assets that benefit the wider district, including roads, waste facilities, emergency management, recreation facilities,

	We don't even receive enough rubbish passes to get through the year, let alone allow other services. I understand that you must increase the rates as the cost of running the shire also goes up but a more reasonable increase could be 3% if you in town and receiving services such as rubbish collection and a lessor increase if your in the country and don't even receive rubbish collection.	library, reserves and community infrastructure. The comments regarding the number of waste passes provided to rural properties and the absence of kerbside collection have been noted for consideration in future reviews of waste services and charges. Feedback regarding rural waste services has been noted.
6 Ocean Beach ICR267110643	How will it end, the cycle of rent & housing cost's increasing to driving up rates > This is the basis of rates being determined by gross rental, value set by the WA state government? The Denmark Shire has no public transport/ hospital extremely poor library & recreation centre dangerous roads / bike paths, no footpaths in most suburbs poor storm water or none. Rates in WA need to be amended to what the WA state government supply in way of amenities to a region not how much they can extort with threats of evictions with the local council as its dept collector. Fees & chargers is the basis for all Governments in WA with these charges cost extremely out of line with rate payers earnings.	The concerns regarding housing affordability, property valuations, fees and charges, and the availability of community infrastructure are acknowledged. Gross rental values used for rating purposes are independently determined by Landgate under State legislation, while Council determines the rate in the dollar through the annual budget process. Public transport and hospital services are primarily the responsibility of the State Government. The Shire continues to plan and invest in local roads, paths, drainage, library, recreation and other community infrastructure in accordance with adopted plans, available funding and identified priorities.
7 Nornalup ICR267110732	I would like to voice my objection to the proposed rate increases greater than CPI. As a pensioner, we only get CPI increases which means your proposal will erode the real purchasing power of our pension. Why can't you contain your spending budget within CPI limits, sounds like good government to me especially with the ongoing cost of living crisis, don't contribute to it, lead the way and try to contain it, ease the burden don't add to it!	The concerns regarding the impact of rate increases on pensioners and others on fixed incomes are acknowledged. The Shire recognises that rising living costs can disproportionately affect vulnerable members of the community, and this is an important consideration in Council's annual budget and rate-setting decisions. The proposed increase is consistent with the Long Term Financial Plan and is intended to address the identified asset renewal gap and reduce future financial pressures associated with ageing infrastructure.
8 Hay ICR267110798	As a ratepayer for many years, I thought I might write in as I am very much frustrated by yet again another rate rise. Especially currently where we are all trying to survive the constant increases in everything that is essential and non-essential to live. I find it quite interesting to	The concerns regarding employee costs and council member remuneration are acknowledged. Council member fees and allowances are determined within the framework set by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal

	see that we are spending over $8000000 in wages. Perhaps we need to look at tightening up belts within the shire before putting more hands out. I am noting the increases in Elected member renumerations being over 6% increase and the" all other category" being an increase of over 8%. I would love the information on what the councillors get paid per meeting and how all other entitlements are awarded. Do I need to submit a freedom of information request?? I believe that people are entitled to be awarded fairly for work done but we need to have an understanding of how this works. I am not saying that the amounts are not warranted but I would just like to understand how they are allocated. I would appreciate a reply to these issues, and I do not feel like we need to suffer another rise.	and are publicly disclosed through Council's annual budget and financial reporting. Reimbursements are also reported in accordance with legislative requirements. This information is publicly available and does not require a freedom of information application. The Shire remains committed to transparency and accountability in the use of ratepayer funds. Employee costs are reviewed annually against similar-sized local governments to ensure the Shire remains competitive in attracting and retaining staff while maintaining remuneration levels consistent with industry standards. Employee costs support the delivery of a broad range of services across the district. While not an exhaustive list, these include maintaining parks, reserves, roads, drainage, bridges and footpaths; operating facilities such as the library, recreation centre and waste management facility; and providing regulatory and compliance services in areas including environmental health, ranger services, building and planning.
9 Your Denmark Survey ICR26711133	I don't support the proposed rate rise. Rates have been increased too much already in the last few years and another rise is unsustainable for a lot of people. I get the feeling the community have the impression that our rates go to support tourism to the detriment of other essential works. I'm not sure that's the case. I am aware there are only about 3000 rate payers and costs have continued to increase, but an increase in rates above CPI is really too much. I am concerned that Denmark is now only affordable for the wealthy end of town. I understand real estate values have increased a lot - because of COVID and many city people taking up the opportunity to get out of the city. However, making the town unaffordable for people who aren't wealthy is changing the character of the town - and not in a good way.	The concerns regarding housing affordability, community diversity and the balance between tourism-related expenditure and services for residents are acknowledged. The Shire notes the support for higher differential rates on holiday accommodation properties. Revenue from rates is allocated through the annual budget to services and infrastructure that support the wider community and local economy, rather than being reserved for a particular user group. Council continues to review differential rating arrangements and expenditure priorities to support an equitable contribution to these costs.

	I would like to see a rethink about how money is spent in this town - more on residents and less on tourists. Those who benefit from tourism should contribute more. I realise the council has increased rates for short term rentals. A brave move and much appreciated. (IMO it would improve the council's reputation is this was made known to more rate payers). But I think more could be done to focus on what is important to all Denmark residents, not just those who benefit from tourism. Thanks.	
10 Your Denmark Survey ICR26711133	What is Denmark Shire doing differently that warrants an increase of rates, higher than all other Great Southern Shires?	The request for a comparison with other Great Southern local governments is acknowledged. Direct comparisons can be difficult because each local government has a different asset base, service levels, infrastructure renewal requirements, community expectations, valuation movements and mix of revenue sources. The Shire's proposed increase is based on its own long-term financial requirements, including the identified asset renewal gap, rather than on the rate increases adopted by neighbouring councils.
11 Shadforth ICR267110913	I formally object to the Shire of Denmark's proposed average rate increase of 2% above CPI. With households, farmers and local businesses already under significant cost-of-living pressure, an above-inflation increase requires clear justification. Please explain: • Why the additional revenue is necessary • What savings or efficiencies have been pursued • How the extra funds will be spent • What improved or additional services ratepayers will receive Ratepayers should not be asked to pay above CPI without a clear, measurable benefit to the community. I ask that the Shire reconsider the increase or provide a detailed public breakdown of its necessity and intended outcomes. Please record this as a formal objection.	The request for a clearer explanation of the proposed above-CPI increase is acknowledged. The proposed increase is intended to support the renewal and maintenance of community infrastructure and assets, address the identified asset renewal gap and maintain existing service levels. Expenditure and service delivery requirements are reviewed through the annual budget process, with project priorities, available grants and other funding sources considered before rates are determined. Detailed allocations and planned works are set out in the Annual Budget, Council Plan and Long Term Financial Plan. The submission has been recorded as a formal objection for Council's consideration.

12 Your Denmark Survey ICR26711133	When we moved to Denmark 24 years ago, it was a community full of diversity and affordable housing for everyone. I worry that with the obscene increase in property / housing costs, the absence of rentals and the general cost of living will force low to average income earners out of our community, and we risk Denmark becoming a playground for the rich. Young people who have grown up here are already finding it difficult to afford property. Another rate increase above annual CPI will be hardest felt by the members of our community who are already struggling. Diversity is an important essence of our community that attracted most of us to live here in the first place. I feel that in the last few years some large projects that have run over estimated costs (and timeframes) have swallowed up a lot of our rates that should have been spent on various other things and would like to see a breakdown of estimated projects / needs that justify yet another large rate increase. The points raised in the rates proposal document are all things that are usually covered by our rates and contain very little detail that would justify such a large rate increase. I also note the absence of environmental strategies in the proposal, necessary to protect our beautiful and unique environment for future generations to enjoy.	The concerns regarding housing affordability, community diversity, project expenditure and environmental outcomes are acknowledged. The Shire recognises the importance of protecting the district's environmental values while maintaining essential infrastructure and services. Project priorities and expenditure are detailed in the Annual Budget, Council Plan and Long Term Financial Plan, with project delivery and financial performance monitored through regular reporting. Environmental priorities are identified through the Shire's Sustainability planning and operational documents available from the Shire of Denmark website.