



**Shelley Hancock**  
Minister for Local Government

## MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 16 March 2021

### FAIRER RATING REFORMS INTRODUCED TO PARLIAMENT

Today the NSW Government introduced legislation to ensure a fairer and more flexible rating system for councils and ratepayers. The Bill also provides councils the option to make superannuation payments to the State's 1,300 councillors.

Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said the *Local Government Amendment (Rating) Bill 2021* would implement the Government's response to IPART's review of the rating system and a range of other changes.

"The package of reforms addressed in this Bill will ensure our rating system continues to be fair and equitable for both councils and ratepayers across the State," Mrs Hancock said.

"Importantly, the Bill provides the option for 17 newly formed councils to harmonise their rates over the next four years, protecting ratepayers from excessive and sudden rate rises.

"The Bill also delivers on the NSW Government's commitment to align rating income with population growth as part of the annual rate peg, enabling councils to provide better infrastructure and services to growing communities."

Mrs Hancock said the optional payment of superannuation to councillors would address a long-standing inequity and encourage greater participation in local government.

"By providing superannuation payments to councillors, we will address a key financial concern for women who are considering running for council.

"We know that councillor remuneration is a significant factor in encouraging more people – particularly women and younger people – to serve on their local council; which is why we have worked with the sector to ensure these needs are met.

"The introduction of the *Local Government Amendment (Rating) Bill 2021* follows extensive consultation with the Local Government sector and the broader community, and delivers key reforms to strengthen local councils," Mrs Hancock said.

The reform package includes:

- Allowing 17 councils created in 2016 to gradually harmonise rates over up to four years to help protect ratepayers from excessive and sudden rate rises;
- Allowing councils to levy special rates above the rate peg for infrastructure jointly funded with other levels of government, without IPART approval;
- Allowing councils to create more flexible residential, business and farmland rating subcategories to enable them to set fairer rates that better reflect access to services and infrastructure;
- Giving councils the option to make superannuation payments for councillors from July 2022;
- Maximising voter participation in council elections by allowing the timeframe for receipt of postal votes to be extended; and
- Extending the term of chairpersons of the State's 10 country councils to two years, in line with council-elected mayors.

**MEDIA: Jane Boag | 0419 417 514**