

16 May 2023

## Damaging increase in Emergency Services Levy costs

Warrumbungle Shire Council is calling for urgent action from the NSW Government to reverse the highly damaging increase in the Emergency Services Levy (ESL) that has been imposed on all councils without warning for the 2023/24 financial year.

“The ESL is a cost imposed on councils and insurance policy holders to fund the emergency services budget in NSW,” said Warrumbungle Shire Council Mayor, Councillor Ambrose Doolan. “The NSW Government has made a last-minute announcement that it is scrapping the ESL subsidy for councils, which forces councils to wear significantly higher costs than expected and comes after Council has already publicly advertised its annual budget.”

“The levy increase for the State’s 128 councils in 2023/24 amounts to almost \$77 million, or an increase of 53.1% which completely dwarfs the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) baseline rate peg of 3.7%,” explained Cr Doolan.

“At this stage of the year, with annual budgets already prepared and advertised to the public, NSW councils will have no option other than to make cuts to infrastructure and services expenditure.”

“For Warrumbungle Shire Council, the ESL has increased by \$28,778 for the 2023/24 financial year, bringing the total Council contribution to \$794,468. This amounts to 9.15% of the expected increase in rate income for next year,” said Cr Doolan.

“The timing of this development is particularly challenging, not only coming so late in the local government budgeting cycle but also placing extra pressure on council budgets as they struggle from the combined impact of the pandemic, extreme weather events, high inflation and wage increases,” said Cr Doolan.

“Council supports a well-funded emergency services sector and values the critical contribution of emergency services workers and volunteers, many of whom are councillors and staff. However, these services must be supported through an equitable, transparent and sustainable funding model. Council is calling on the NSW Government to restore the ESL subsidy, separate the ESL from the rate peg and enable councils to recover the full cost, and develop a fairer method of funding critically important emergency services,” concluded Cr Doolan.

**Media: Ambrose Doolan | (02) 6849 2000**

PO Box 191  
Coonabarabran NSW 2357  
Phone 02 6849 2000  
Fax 02 6842 1337  
[www.warrumbungle.nsw.gov.au](http://www.warrumbungle.nsw.gov.au)