



26th October 2022

Special Rate Variation

Thank you for the opportunity to give feedback on the Special Rate Variation. The aim of Friends of Berowra Valley (FoBV) is to protect the natural landscape, heritage and biodiversity of Berowra Valley while making the valley more accessible to the community.

FoBV support the increase with the proviso that the natural resources section (water and natural areas) gets a substantial and fixed percentage of rates to give them certainty in funding.

We acknowledge that council has a big responsibility managing over 15,000 hectares of natural areas. Council should consider the natural environment as a possible way to offset social isolation and help the community appreciate the amazing bushland that they share with Australia's unique fauna which is increasingly under pressure.

Council could consider something similar to the Hills Shire Community Environment Centre. Community groups use it as a hub to engage with and educate the community on their amazing bushland. A lack of understanding and appreciation of the local flora and fauna in the general community can lead to divisive issues. Westleigh Park is an example of failing to care for the bushland and failing to follow environmental legislation. Council has the responsibility to be a leader in this area and not buckle under political pressure to do the wrong thing.

We support bushfire mitigation where Asset Protection Zones are based on science and risk management and will be managed by RFS standards executed by bush regenerators.

FoBV supports council's plans to increase accessibility and appreciation of the environment for all residents.