

**Community Engagement Report – Rates:
Objects and Reasons for 2025/2026**



Contents

Overview3

Engagement Period and Tools3

Summary of Engagement3

Appendix A: Engage Responses.....4

Appendix B: Direct Email Submissions7

Overview

In accordance with Section 6.36 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, the City of Kalamunda invited public submissions on the proposed differential rating model and associated Objects and Reasons for the 2025/2026 financial year. The engagement was conducted via the City's online engagement platform, Engage Kalamunda, and direct written submissions.

Engagement Period and Tools

The consultation period ran from 30 May to 20 June 2025. Feedback was collected via an online form on Engage Kalamunda and through email correspondence.

To meet legislative requirements, the City publicised the proposed differential rates notice through four channels:

- The Civic Administration Centre and all library notice boards
- The City of Kalamunda website
- Echo Newspaper (print media)
- The City's social media page

Summary of Engagement

A total of 10 submissions were received via the Engage platform and 11 written submissions were received by email.

Of the online form respondents:

- 9 did not support the proposal
- 1 provided comment only

The overall sentiment across both channels was predominantly opposed to the proposed 5% rate increase.

Concerns cited included cost-of-living pressures, lack of CPI alignment, and calls for increased transparency and internal cost restraint.

The feedback collected is being presented for Council's consideration.

This report does not make any recommendations but serves to summarise and reflect community views as provided during the statutory engagement period.

Appendix A: Engage Responses

Respondent	Submitted	Position	Comment	Role	Age Group
Respondent 1	Jun 16, 2025, 01:52 PM	Do not support	The increase you propose is more than twice the CPI rate which is 2.4%. A 5% seems excessive as a large majority of people are already experiencing financial stress. I am not getting any increase in my salary in the next 12 months!	Resident; Ratepayer	46-55
Respondent 2	Jun 16, 2025, 08:59 AM	Do not support	Given current cost-of-living pressures, I'm concerned that the 5% rate increase is too high. Many households are already struggling with rising expenses, which adds to the burden. A smaller increase in line with CPI would be more reasonable. Council should focus on reducing internal costs and prioritising essential services before passing on further costs to ratepayers. Please reconsider the scale of this increase.	Resident	36-45
Respondent 3	Jun 16, 2025, 07:28 AM	Do not support	This ongoing pattern of above-inflation increases cannot continue unchecked. The expectation that ratepayers should absorb these costs is unsustainable more can and should be done to tighten spending within the City's operations. We need smarter financial management, prioritisation of essential works, and better value for money. The budget documents have acknowledged the concerns, yet the same rate increase has been proposed again. community feedback is not being considered.	Resident; Ratepayer	26-35
Respondent 4	Jun 15, 2025, 08:14 PM	Do not support	Due to the current cost of living crisis I do not support the increase. City Of Kalamunda can find other ways to reduce costs in order to meet appropriate budgets.		36-45

Community Engagement Report – Rates: Objects and Reasons for 2025/2026

Respondent 5	Jun 15, 2025, 12:53 PM	Do not support	Cost of living is currently too high to justify a 5% rise. Other forms of revenue need to be explored that are not at the expense of the rate payers.	Resident; Ratepayer	36-45
Respondent 6	May 30, 2025, 10:24 PM	Do not support	Your rates are the most expensive out of all the other councils in Perth. With the cost of living pressure bad enough. The rates seem to only get more and more expensive. We get hardly anything in return. You say you need to maintain infrastructure etc, yet any work I have seen is overdone and could have been done cheaper, quicker and easier. Over the cost of living pressures the City of Swan never raised their rates yet Kalamunda did. Maybe stop spending money on wants and invest it in needs.		26-35
Respondent 7	May 30, 2025, 08:13 PM	Do not support	No more rate increase for Wattle Grove residents please. We are paying higher rates compared to other suburbs that have more amenities and good maintenance.	Resident	36-45
Respondent 8	May 30, 2025, 07:21 PM	Do not support	We asked to have the bins changed back due to the general waste being too small and not being picked up enough. Nobody listened. How can community problems that are already negatively affecting the community not be what's at the upmost priority? Rate increase with no obvious or lasting impact on the community. No way. Negotiate trade rates with existing city service providers don't let the community get the unnecessary hit.	Resident; Ratepayer	

Community Engagement Report – Rates: Objects and Reasons for 2025/2026

Respondent 9	May 30, 2025, 03:59 PM	Do not support	Seriously, in a cost of living crisis? I wonder if this will be part of the fraud case for our mayor ... this city is in shambles. I used to be proud to live in this city. Not any more. I don't know what value we get from the city anymore other than picking up our bins ... and even that can't be done properly. You don't listen, so I guess we will see another rate rise ...		26-35
Respondent 10	May 30, 2025, 01:36 PM	Comment only	I'm baffled how our 3x2 on septic, on a smaller block is always charged way higher rates than absolutely everyone in the shire we know that have 4x2, larger blocks and some have pools & big sheds too. I think it should be calculated on the number of bedrooms, small block sizes should pay less, those on septic pay less too.		36-45

*Note: Two submissions via the Engage portal did not include an address and could not be substantiated as local ratepayers or residents.

Appendix B: Direct Email Submissions – Names and contact details have been redacted

Respondent 1

Anthony Vuleta
Chief Executive Officer
City of Kalamunda
2 Railway Road, Kalamunda WA 6076 and
Councillors, City of Kalamunda

Dear Mr Vuleta and Councillors,

I write as an informed and concerned ratepayer to object to the proposed 5 percent increase in general rates for 2025/26. While I understand the need to fund essential services, this rise is both excessive and ill-timed:

1. Disproportionate to Inflation

- At roughly 2.4 percent, CPI is less than half the proposed hike. Asking residents to absorb more than double inflation places undue strain on household budgets already stretched by high rents, groceries and utilities.

2. Unsupportive of Cost-of-Living Pressures

- Many seniors, young families and low-income earners rely on fixed incomes or social security payments that are only rising in line with CPI. A 5 percent jump will push vulnerable households further into hardship.

3. Robust Fiscal Position

- The City's latest financial statements show healthy reserves and a low debt-servicing ratio. These reserves exist precisely to smooth out peaks in capital spending allowing for a more moderate, CPI-aligned increase of 2.5 percent without compromising services.

4. Viable Alternatives to a Sweep-Up Rate Rise

Before imposing another blanket increase, the City should:

- Defer or stage non-urgent capital works such as pavilion upgrades until cost pressures ease.

- Apply value-engineering to major projects to trim unnecessary spending.
- Pursue targeted user-fees for premium facilities and seek additional grants or partnerships. Publish transparent scenario analyses comparing a 5 percent rise with CPI-linked alternatives.

Adopting a restrained, CPI-linked approach demonstrates genuine empathy for ratepayers and prudent financial management. I therefore urge you to withdraw the 5 percent proposal, revisit the budget with tighter expenditure controls, and present a plan that balances service commitments with the community's capacity to pay. | look forward to your considered response.

Yours sincerely,

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS REDACTED

Respondent 2

Dear Anthony Vuleta, CEO City of Kalamunda,

I object to the increase of rates for the CoK 2025/26 as people can't afford this increase in this time of a 'cost of living crisis'.

It would be wonderful if everyone could get an increase in income if they were not managing their budget to maintain their living needs. I feel it is the same for the CoK to be able to work out a way to not increase rates to fund their works.

After all, a child could solve this problem by saying an increase in rates is the answer. However, the amount of money paid to the executive staff of the CoK whose expertise in their respective employment to deal with financial difficulties should be able to solve this shortfall in other ways.

The ratepayers should not be cashcows for the inadequacies of the management of the CoK.

Yours faithfully,

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS REDACTED

Respondent 3

Anyone wishing to make a submission, feel free to use this

Dear CEO and Councillors,

I am writing as a resident and ratepayer of the City of Kalamunda to object to the proposed 5% increase in general rates for the 2025/2026 financial year.

A 5% rate rise is excessive and poorly timed. With inflation currently around 2.5%, this increase is double the CPI and will significantly impact residents who are already struggling with the rising cost of living. I urge Council to show greater sensitivity to community pressures and adopt a more measured approach.

While I understand that the City relies on rates to fund essential services, this ongoing pattern of above-inflation increases cannot continue unchecked. The expectation that ratepayers should absorb these costs year after year is unsustainable, especially when household budgets are already stretched.

There is a growing sense in the community that more can and should be done to tighten spending within the City's operations. Residents are not asking for a reduction in services but we are asking for smarter financial management, prioritisation of essential works, and better value for money.

The City must also be transparent about what is driving these increases. Many residents support long-term planning and investment, but not at the expense of financial stability or without meaningful consultation. Ratepayers need to see clear, justified outcomes for the money being collected.

The budget documents and previous council discussions have acknowledged the community's concerns, yet the same rate increase has been proposed again. This suggests that community feedback is not being adequately considered.

I urge Council to revisit the proposed 5% increase and instead align any adjustment more closely with inflation, reflecting what households themselves are expected to manage.

Thank you for considering my submission.
NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS REDACTED

Respondent 4

Dear CEO and Councillors,

I am writing as a resident and ratepayer of the City of Kalamunda to object to the proposed 5% increase in general rates for the 2025/2026 financial year.

A 5% rate rise is excessive and poorly timed. With inflation currently around 2.5%, this increase is double the CPI and will significantly impact residents who are already struggling with the rising cost of living. I urge Council to show greater sensitivity to community pressures and adopt a more measured approach.

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Respondent 5

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The budget documents and previous council discussions have acknowledged the community's concerns, yet the same rate increase has been proposed again. This suggests that community feedback is not being adequately considered.

I urge Council to revisit the proposed 5% increase and instead align any adjustment more closely with inflation, reflecting what households themselves are expected to manage.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Sincerely,

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS REDACTED

Respondent 6

Dear City of Kalamunda Rates Team,

I am writing as a concerned ratepayer to formally request, on behalf of our community, further justification and transparency regarding the proposed 2025/2026 rate increase.

In accordance with Sections 6.33 and 6.36 of the *Local Government Act 1995*, and the City's stated intention to continue levying differential rates in the upcoming financial year, I note that the objective is to address a shortfall in income required to deliver essential services and maintain infrastructure, following consideration of non-rate income sources.

While I acknowledge the City's rationale as outlined in the public FAQ (<https://engage.kalamunda.wa.gov.au/rates-2025-26>), several aspects of the proposed rate increase require greater transparency for community confidence and understanding. Specifically, the City cites the following cost pressures:

- A doubling of traffic management costs
- Increases of 20-50% in pruning, reticulation and general maintenance services
- Asset renewal cost increases from \$7.6 million to \$15 million annually
- Bench-marking showing the minimum rate is up to 17% below that of comparable councils

These general figures are noted but broader statements alone are not sufficient to justify an increase that will significantly affect local households.

Accordingly, I respectfully request the following:

1. An itemised breakdown of increased costs across key service areas, including actual figures and year-on-year comparisons.
2. Clarification of how the proposed increase will affect service delivery and what direct benefits the community can expect.
3. A summary of internal cost-saving or efficiency measures undertaken by the City prior to proposing this increase.
4. Details of the bench-marking methodology, including which councils were used for comparison and how the 17% variance in minimum rates was calculated.
5. Transparency around the allocation of rate revenue, specifically how funds will be distributed across maintenance, capital works, debt servicing and discretionary community programs.

While I recognise the importance of managing the City's \$1 billion asset base and seizing co-funding opportunities, these objectives must be balanced with responsible fiscal planning and open consultation with ratepayers.

Without the information requested above, it is difficult for the community to assess whether the proposed increase is justified, proportionate or in our long-term interest.

I ask that a detailed, publicly available report addressing these matters be provided before any final decision is made regarding the 2025/2026 rates.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Kind regards,

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS REDACTED

Respondent 7

To the management at the City Of Kalamunda.

My name is [REDACTED], and I own my house at [REDACTED]. Kalamunda, and rural land [REDACTED]. Pickering Brook.

The cost of living is well documented, with so many families struggling for food bills, and yet you are totally oblivious to the hardship experienced by so many families.

Inflation is 2.4 %, yet residential rates are projected at 5% which is well over double above inflation, and commercial at 7% is 168 % above inflation.

How can you justify such massive increases?

You as administrators, seem to have no concept in to taking into account the basis of how to construct a budget, based on the real world.

A consistency of your budgets is that increases seem to be well above inflation rates, and why is this so?

To me it indicates that Management have demonstrated almost unbelievable incompetence in the composition of budgets.

But then us rate payers are at your mercy, because the city has a monopoly, and therefore can do as they please, which disgusts me, as it is a blunt abuse power.

While studying Marketing one of my lectures commented the difference between wants and needs.

I need a car, I want a BMW, reality is that I can only afford a Kia.

You as a city should look at this basic principal. You as a city should do preliminary budgets based on estimated turnover, equal or less the inflation rate, then work out your total expenditure.

I am happy to help set up such a draft budget free of charge.

Yours faithfully

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS REDACTED

Respondent 8

Dear Admin,

I AM QUITE INTERESTED TO KNOW THE ACTUAL % PROPOSED RATE INCREASE FOR THE COMING YEAR IE MAX, AVE OR MEDIAN %? PRESENTATION OF DIFFERENTIAL RATE DATA IS MEANINGLESS TO MOST PEOPLE, UNLESS THEY HAVE MAINTAINED A COPY OF THE LAST YR DATA AND MAY BE AN ACCOUNTANT. LOOKING FORWARD TO THE RESPONSE ASAP.

GRACIAS, MERCI

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS REDACTED

Respondent 9

To the Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Kalamunda
2 Railway Road Kalamunda WA 6076

I am writing to formally object to the proposed 5% rate increase that is scheduled for discussion at the upcoming council meeting. As a resident of the Shire of Kalamunda, I feel that this increase would place an unnecessary and disproportionate financial burden on the community, especially given the current economic climate.

Many households, including my own, are already struggling with the rising costs of living. This includes the increasing prices of goods and services, utilities, and housing. A rate increase of this magnitude would only exacerbate these financial pressures.

In addition to the proposed rate hike, I would like to express my concern about the recent changes to the waste collection services. Specifically, we have already experienced a reduction in the frequency of general waste bin collection from weekly to fortnightly, as well as a decrease in bin size. If the size of the bin is to remain reduced, I believe it is essential for the service to be reinstated as a weekly collection. Alternatively, if the service cannot be returned to weekly, I would strongly urge the Shire to increase the bin size back to the original capacity, as the current arrangement is insufficient for many households.

Given these recent service changes, it would be unfair to further burden residents with a rate increase without a corresponding improvement or reinstatement of services that many rely on. I believe it is crucial that the Shire focuses on providing a high level of service for the rates already paid by residents, rather than imposing an additional financial burden on the community. I respectfully request that my objection to this rate increase be taken into account, and that the Shire review its waste collection policies to ensure they are meeting the needs of residents. A fair and balanced approach is essential to maintaining a strong relationship between the Shire and its community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours faithfully

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS REDACTED

Respondent 10

To CoK Council & Councillors! We Ratepayers cannot sustain anymore Rates increases Especially a whopping 5%!!!! That we understand is planned for proposal by you all.

The City needs to review cost control and stop looking at Ratepayers as their cash cow, the economy is slowing down and we all cannot sustain more & more increases like this!

The interest and earnings from the CoK investment accounts over the last few years of super high interest rates should've produced enough revenue to avoid gouging Ratepayers further.

Please review your spending and stop this proposed action now.

Regards,

Concerned Ratepayer

Respondent 11

To Whom it may concern,

We are writing to strongly object to the upcoming proposal of yet another rate increase!!

The City needs to find other avenues of cash flow instead of relying on ratepayers. Each financial year, the city makes over \$20million - Why should our rates increase when the City already makes such a huge profit?

In this economy, home owners are struggling enough as it is, and if rates go up, our wages will not and it is not fair.

Please don't ask us to fork out even more each year when we are already trying our hardest to make ends meet.

Regards

NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS REDACTED