

Analysis of Capacity to Pay Ku-ring-gai Council

SEPTEMBER 2025



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Executive summary

Background

Ku-ring-gai Council ('Council') is currently considering an application for a special variation ('SV') to rates, and Council has released four rate rise options to the community (which includes option 1 of the rate peg only). These options are designed to help Council address the funding gap to renew and upgrade essential local infrastructure in line with community expectations.

The options it is considering, which all include a rate peg of 3% in 2026/27, are:

- Option 1 (base case - do nothing) consists of a rate peg increase only, at 3% by 2026/27.
- Option 2 (renew infrastructure) proposes a permanent one-year 22% increase in 2026/27.
- Option 3 (renew and enhance infrastructure) proposes a permanent one-year 29% increase in 2026/27.
- Option 4 (renew, enhance and expand infrastructure) proposes a permanent one-year 33% increase in 2026/27.

This report provides an analysis of a wide range of socio-economic factors and other data and evaluates the general financial capacity of ratepayers to pay the proposed rate changes. It also considers the financial vulnerability and exposure of different community groups within the local government area (LGA), as well as current industry trends and business indicators.

It analyses both LGA-wide data along with resident-specific data from three geographic groupings within the Ku-ring-gai LGA. These groupings have been selected because they have aligned geographic and socio-economic characteristics - utilising data from the Ku-ring-gai Council .id community profile¹.

The groupings are Central, East and North-West. A breakdown of the suburbs included within each grouping is detailed on page 4 of this report.

About the Ku-ring-gai LGA

Ku-ring-gai Council encompasses approximately 128,362 residents (estimated resident population 2024) and a total land area of about 85 square kilometres. The Ku-ring-gai local government area is located on Sydney's Upper North Shore and is known for its leafy residential streets, heritage architecture and proximity to natural bushland, including parts of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. The region benefits from elevated terrain and fertile soils, contributing to its lush environment and high-quality domestic gardens. Major transport routes including the Pacific Highway and North Shore railway line provide strong connectivity to the Sydney CBD and surrounding areas.

The LGA is mainly residential with comparably small pockets of business and industry when considered against other neighbouring and similar councils. The LGA has a high socio-economic status, with Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) scores indicating very low levels of disadvantage and high levels of advantage. Housing tenure is predominantly owner-occupied, with 77% of homes either fully owned or mortgaged, significantly above the Greater Sydney average (59%). The area also boasts high household incomes, with 48% of households in the highest income quartile.

¹Informed Decisions (.id), August 2025. Ku-ring-gai Council – Community Profile, Social Atlas, Economic Profile. (Sourced from: <https://profile.id.com.au/ku-ring-gai>)

Overall, the Ku-ring-gai LGA is an affluent and well-connected community, however, there are pockets of vulnerability, particularly among lone-person and one-parent households, which may be more sensitive to changes in council rates. The area's high levels of home ownership and income are indicators of a strong capacity to absorb potential rate increases, although careful consideration should be given to supporting vulnerable groups.

To assist in undertaking detailed analysis, the LGA was divided into three area groupings. By doing this, it was possible to obtain a fine-grain picture of capacity to pay, while still ensuring that datasets were sufficient to support this. The following map outlines the area groupings utilised.

Figure 1 Map of Ku-ring-gai LGA groupings





Ratepayer impacts

Analysis summary for residential ratepayers

There are a range of LGA-wide data sources which indicate a capacity to pay the SV options, including that the Ku-ring-gai LGA has:

- Among Australia's highest levels of advantage and lowest levels of disadvantage, when using the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) score.
- A lower proportion of vulnerable households, pensioners and people requiring core assistance, compared to Greater Sydney.
- A lower percentage of income spent on rates (according to 2021 Census income data) and a higher proportion of full home ownership, compared to Greater Sydney.
- An improvement in household savings from 2018/19 to 2023/24, compared to a reduction in savings across Australia during the same period.
- A higher proportion of households in the highest equivalised income brackets, compared to Greater Sydney. Equivalised income analysis helps compare the economic resources of households between different geographic areas.
- At the end of 2024/25, just three ratepayers were subject to Council's Assistance, Concession and Recovery Policy.

However, there are also several data sources which indicate potential limitations on capacity to pay, including:

- A proportion of households paying mortgages, and overall levels of mortgage stress, which are higher than Greater Sydney.
- A lower proportion of working age individuals compared to Sydney.
- An average rate which, if any of the SV options are implemented in 2026/27, will move from the eight highest among Sydney metropolitan and metropolitan fringe councils, to either the third or fourth highest.
- A percentage of outstanding rates which has increased in each year since 2022/23 and, in 2024/25, sits above the benchmark level of 5%

These LGA-wide results, where possible, have been analysed at the grouping level and (if data is available) at the suburb level.

Residential ratepayers in the East grouping (including the suburbs of East Killara, East Lindfield, Roseville, Roseville Chase, St Ives and St Ives Chase) would be paying, depending on the SV option, between \$362 and \$572 more over one year than they would have under the normal rate peg increase.

The Central grouping (Gordon, Killara, Lindfield, Pymble) and North-West grouping (North Turramurra, North Wahroonga, South Turramurra, Turramurra, Wahroonga, Warrawee, West Pymble) would be paying between \$300 and \$502 more.

This report finds there are strong overall capacity to pay indicators within both the Central and North-West groupings, and moderate capacity within the East grouping.



The finding in relation to the East grouping notes that this grouping, like the rest of the LGA, has relatively high levels of advantage. However, it also notes that this grouping will be paying the highest potential SV increase and – compared to the other groupings – has slightly higher levels of rental and mortgage stress and a lower proportion of working age individuals. In the East grouping, the suburb of East Killara has been highlighted as it has the LGA's highest proportion of households in mortgage stress (affecting 106 or 31% of households) combined with slightly lower levels of equivalised income.

In addition, the LGA, grouping and suburb-level data which shows potential capacity to pay limitations illustrates that the implementation of an appropriate hardship policy remains an important consideration in the implementation of any rate increase. Council's hardship policy is titled Assistance, Concession and Recovery Policy.

Analysis summary for business ratepayers

On average, business ratepayers across the LGA will receive an increase between \$531 and \$2,713, over one year, depending on the SV option selected. The East grouping will see the highest average increase in rates of between \$1,718 and \$2,713, however this grouping contains only 221 (or 19%) of the LGA's business ratepayers. Central contains 51% of the LGA's business ratepayers and this grouping will see the lowest increase in averages rates (between \$531 and \$838 over one year, dependent on the SV option). The North-West grouping, which has the second highest number of business ratepayers and will see an average increase in rates of between \$1,046 and \$1,651 (depending on the SV option).

Before the proposed rate increases, Ku-ring-gai has average business rates well below the average of comparable councils. Even with the largest SV increase, Ku-ring-gai will move only slightly above the overall average rate for all councils. When reviewed in tandem with the low proportion of business ratepayers, positive industry indicators, as well as low levels of outstanding business rates, it is considered that for business ratepayers there are good indicators of capacity to pay across all groupings.



Introduction

This report provides an analysis and evaluation of relative wealth and financial capacity; it looks at the financial vulnerability and exposure of different community groups within the LGA.

Key considerations include:

- regions of social disadvantage
- particularly vulnerable groups of individuals
- patterns of household expenditure
- industries or businesses that may be more or less vulnerable to rating changes.

These findings will then be compared to proposed changes in rates to identify whether there are any groups or individuals that are being particularly impacted and/or marginalised.

Data for this review was obtained from the following sources:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 and 2021 Census Data – Data by Regions.
- Australian Bureau Statistics Selected Living Cost Indexes for June 2025.
- Reserve Bank of Australia Statement by the Monetary Policy Board in August 2025.
- Ku-ring-gai Council rating database.
- Ku-ring-gai Council's Your Say website – 'Rate Options'.
- NSW Office of Local Government Time Series data for 2023/24.
- Profile ID – Ku-ring-gai Council Community/Social/Economic Profiles.

We acknowledge that there is a notable gap between the date of the majority of the socio-economic data available for analysis (which is generally drawn from the 2021 Census) and the present date; however, due to the limited specific data available at an LGA and locality level, this is an accepted issue. The next Census is due to take place in 2026.

Background

For the purposes of the report, Ku-ring-gai Council has been divided into three groupings for this analysis. Council is looking to ensure that equity is maintained between areas, as each grouping has slightly differing economic and socio-economic profiles. A summary of the groupings and the suburbs that they encompass has been provided in the following table and figure.

Table 1 Ku-ring-gai Council grouping breakdown

Grouping	Usual resident population (2021)	Suburb
Central	42,127	Gordon, Killara, Lindfield, Pymble
East	37,909	East Killara, East Lindfield, Roseville - Roseville Chase, St Ives, St Ives Chase
North-West	44,033	North Turramurra, North Wahroonga, South Turramurra, Turramurra, Wahroonga, Warrawee, West Pymble
Ku-ring-gai Council area	124,076	

Figure 2 Ku-ring-gai Council area grouping map





Methodology

Our methodology in examining the relative wealth between the different groupings focuses on the following:

- **Areas of social disadvantage**

We will first investigate the different characteristics and make up of each area to determine whether there are any particular areas of social disadvantage. This will include an investigation into:

- the age structure of each region
- the typical make up of each household
- household income, including the effect of dependents
- SEIFA rankings.

- **Particularly vulnerable groups of individuals**

We will then investigate whether there are any particular groups within each area that, despite the overall wealth of the area, would be particularly vulnerable and affected by a change in rates. These include:

- persons who have or need core assistance
- individuals who are currently unemployed
- households currently under housing stress
- pensioners.

- **Patterns in household expenditure**

We will then examine trends in household expenditure and discuss what impacts they may have on an individual's ability to pay.

- **Industry**

We will then compare employment by industry type, as well as value added by industry sector and the key productive sectors.

We will then compare these findings to the proposed rating changes, to determine whether there are any particular groups or individuals that would be significantly impacted. Our analysis will also compare with the average rates of other Group 3 and neighbouring councils, in addition to outstanding rates ratios and other factors that can help indicate whether the Ku-ring-gai Council community has a potential willingness to pay increased rates.



Areas of social advantage and disadvantage

Each grouping has differing demographic characteristics, and we first want to identify ‘who are the people’ that make up each area, ‘what do they do’ and ‘how do they live’.

Socio-economic index

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is an economic tool developed by the ABS to rank areas in Australia according to their relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. It takes into consideration a broad range of variables such as income, education, employment, occupation, housing, etc and is standardised such that the average Australian represents a score of 1,000.

In our research we explored two of the indexes published by the ABS:

- **Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD)**

This index ranks areas from most disadvantaged to least disadvantaged, i.e., a lower score will have a greater proportion of relatively disadvantaged people in the area.

From this score however you cannot conclude whether a high-ranking area will have a large portion of relatively advantaged people, just that it has a low proportion of disadvantage.

- **Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD)**

This index considers variables of both advantage and disadvantage and, as such, scores and ranks areas from most disadvantaged to most advantage.

The ABS has also published the variables which have the most impact on both indices, these include:

- IRSD variables of disadvantage:
 - low equivalised household incomes
 - households with children and unemployed parents
 - percentage of occupied private dwellings paying rent less than \$250 per week (excluding \$0 per week)
 - percentage of people aged 15 years and over whose highest level of education is Year 11 or lower (Includes Certificate I and II)
 - percentage of employed people classified as labourers.
- IRSAD variables of advantage only (disadvantage similar to IRSD):
 - high equivalised household incomes
 - percentage of households making high mortgage repayments
 - percentage of employed people classified as professionals and/or managers
 - percentage of occupied private dwellings with four or more bedrooms.

A regional summary of SEIFA scores, including national percentiles (based on equivalent percentiles for localities and suburbs across Australia to allow effective comparison), is provided in the following table.

Please note that the SEIFA indexes are two data sources which indicate overall socio-economic advantage and disadvantage, and therefore general capacity to pay. However, they do not capture all data sources considered or indicate the reasons for disadvantage or advantage and should be read alongside the other data analysis in this report.



Table 2 Regional SEIFA scores and percentiles

Area	SEIFA IRSD	Percentile	SEIFA IRSAD	Percentile
Ku-ring-gai Council area	1,108	98	1,165	100
Willoughby City	1,075	88	1,142	99
NSROC Region	1,085	92	1,137	99
Northern Sydney	1,086	93	1,133	99
Hornsby Shire	1,082	91	1,116	97
City of Ryde	1,055	76	1,099	95
Greater Sydney benchmark	1,010	48	1,045	82
NSW benchmark	1,000	42	1,016	67
Australian benchmark	1,001	42	1,003	60

Ku-ring-gai Council's IRSD score of 1,108 is well above the benchmark for Greater Sydney and NSW, and slightly above the average for the NSROC Region. The ranking places the LGA in the 98th percentile, meaning approximately 2% of Australian suburbs/localities have a SEIFA IRSD ranking higher than this area (less disadvantaged), while 97% are lower (more disadvantaged). This indicates very low levels of disadvantage within the LGA overall.

IRSAD includes levels of both advantage and disadvantage. Ku-ring-gai Council's score of 1,165 places the LGA into the 100th percentile. This means that the LGA overall is in the top 1% of all Australian suburbs when considering levels of advantage in tandem with proportion of disadvantage. This is slightly above the NSROC ranking of 99th and notably above the Greater Sydney benchmark of 82nd. A higher IRSAD score compared to IRSD score is indicative of greater opportunities within the LGA, e.g., higher equivalised incomes, higher education levels, greater employment opportunities within the area or more skilled jobs.

A grouping-level summary is provided in the table below.

Table 3 Grouping-level SEIFA scores and percentiles

Area	SEIFA IRSD	Percentile	SEIFA IRSAD	Percentile
East	1,113	99	1,169	100
North-West	1,117	99	1,168	100
Central	1,097	95	1,159	100

Analysis at the grouping level demonstrates low levels of inequity between different parts of the LGA, with all groupings sitting within the top 5% for IRSD rankings and the top 1% for IRSAD. This highlights the significant levels of advantage within each grouping and across the LGA generally.

This picture continues when looking at individual suburbs, whilst Gordon does see more disadvantage than other suburbs, sitting in the 90th percentile for IRSD, this is still well above the average for Greater Sydney and many neighbouring councils. There may be a number of reasons for the lower IRSD score for Gordon, however from our analysis it appears it may be due to lower levels of fully owned homes and lower levels of households in the highest equivalised income bracket. All suburbs sit within the 99th or 100th percentile for IRSAD scores, indicating extremely high levels of advantage across all suburbs within the LGA.

Table 4 Suburb SEIFA rankings

Suburb	SEIFA IRSD	Percentile	SEIFA IRSAD	Percentile
Pymble	1,114	99	1,179	100
Warrawee	1,119	99	1,178	100
Roseville - Roseville Chase	1,115	99	1,176	100
East Lindfield	1,115	99	1,174	100
South Turramurra	1,125	100	1,173	100
North Wahroonga	1,114	99	1,173	100
West Pymble	1,122	100	1,172	100
St Ives Chase	1,121	100	1,172	100
Wahroonga	1,115	99	1,169	100
Turramurra	1,109	98	1,166	100
East Killara	1,107	98	1,162	100
St Ives	1,107	98	1,161	100
Lindfield	1,100	97	1,160	100
Killara	1,094	95	1,153	100
North Turramurra	1,113	99	1,147	99
Gordon	1,079	90	1,142	99

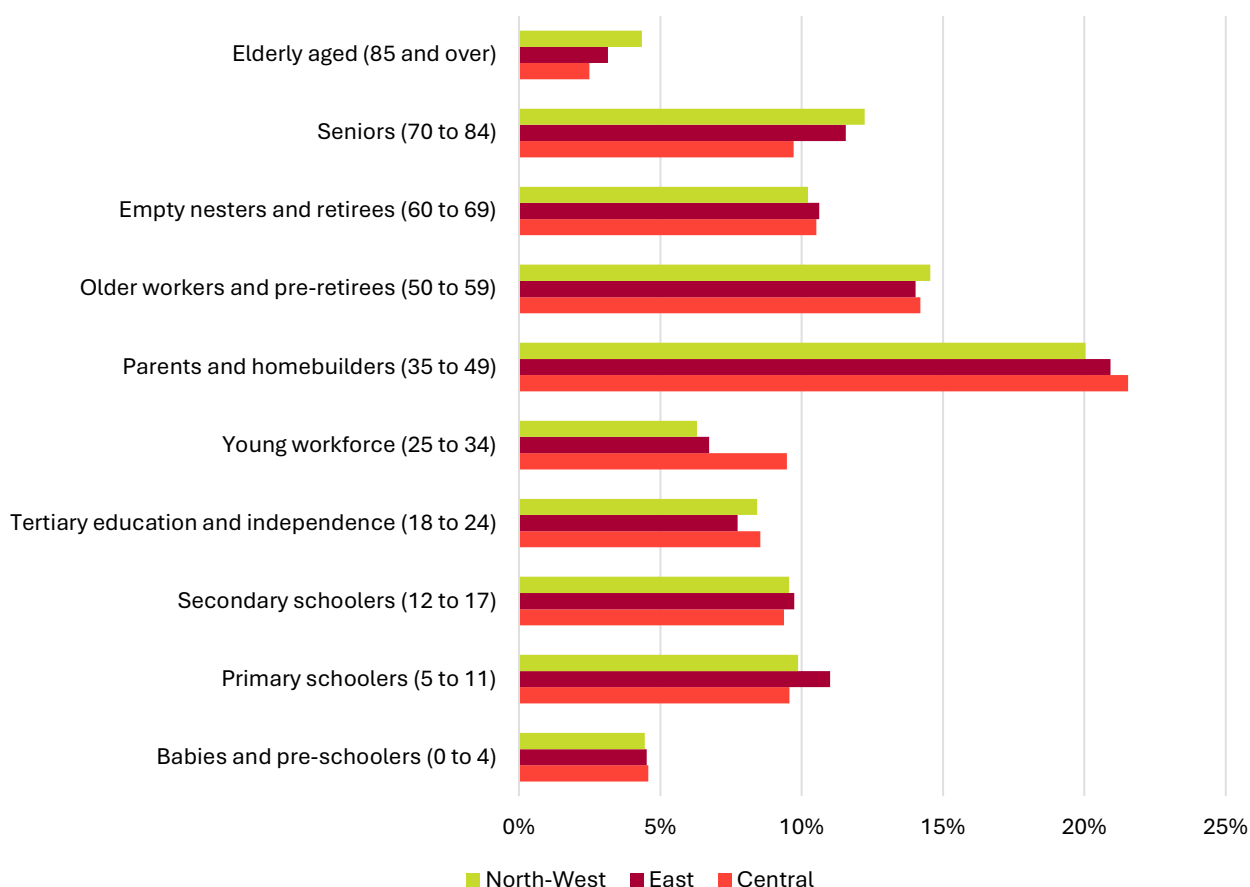
Socio-economic index summary finding

Compared to the rest of Australia, Ku-ring-gai has among the highest possible levels of overall socio-economic advantage, and lowest levels of disadvantage, which are strong indicators of a capacity to pay. Gordon has the highest level of disadvantage in the LGA, however this still has a very low level of disadvantage when compared to other Australian suburbs, with 89% of suburbs seeing higher levels of disadvantage.

Service age groups

Age profiles are used to understand the demand for aged-based services as well as the income earning status of the population. Data has been broken into groups that are reflective of typical life stages. This provides insight into the number of dependents, size of the workforce and number of retirees in each grouping.

Figure 3 Service age groups



Ku-ring-gai Council at an overall level has a greater proportion of dependents (24%) and retirees (25%) than the NSROC (21% and 25%) and Greater Sydney (22% and 20%) averages. There is a notable difference between the LGA's proportion of working age (51%) and the Greater Sydney average (58%). The proportion of individuals in the 18-24 age range (8%), however, is in line with the averages for NSROC (8%) and Greater Sydney (9%). It is the young workforce (25 to 34) causing the difference in working age comparisons, with Ku-ring-gai at 8% compared to 13% and 16% for NSROC and Greater Sydney respectively.

Combining these results in terms of the following categories (dependents, workforce, and retirees) and ranking them in terms of proportion of population (with one representing the largest proportion) generates the following results.



Table 5 Service age rankings

Rank	Central	East	North-West
Dependents	3	1	2
Working age	1	2	3
Retirees	3	2	1
Total population	42,137	37,913	44,041

Generally higher levels of working-age population can indicate increased earning potential and suggest more certainty in relation to ongoing income and can therefore be considered to be a high-level indicator of capacity to pay. As this analysis is based on age-range only, however, it does not account for the proportion of retirees who may be continuing to work and/or individuals under-18 who may have already commenced part- or full-time work.

Looking into specific groupings, we observe the following:

- Central has a notable higher proportion of working age at 54% and the lowest proportion of both dependents and retirees, at 24% and 23% respectively.
- East has a slightly higher proportion of dependents at 25% and the joint lowest proportion of working age at 49%.
- North-West has the highest proportion of retirees at 27% and the joint lowest working age, at 49%.

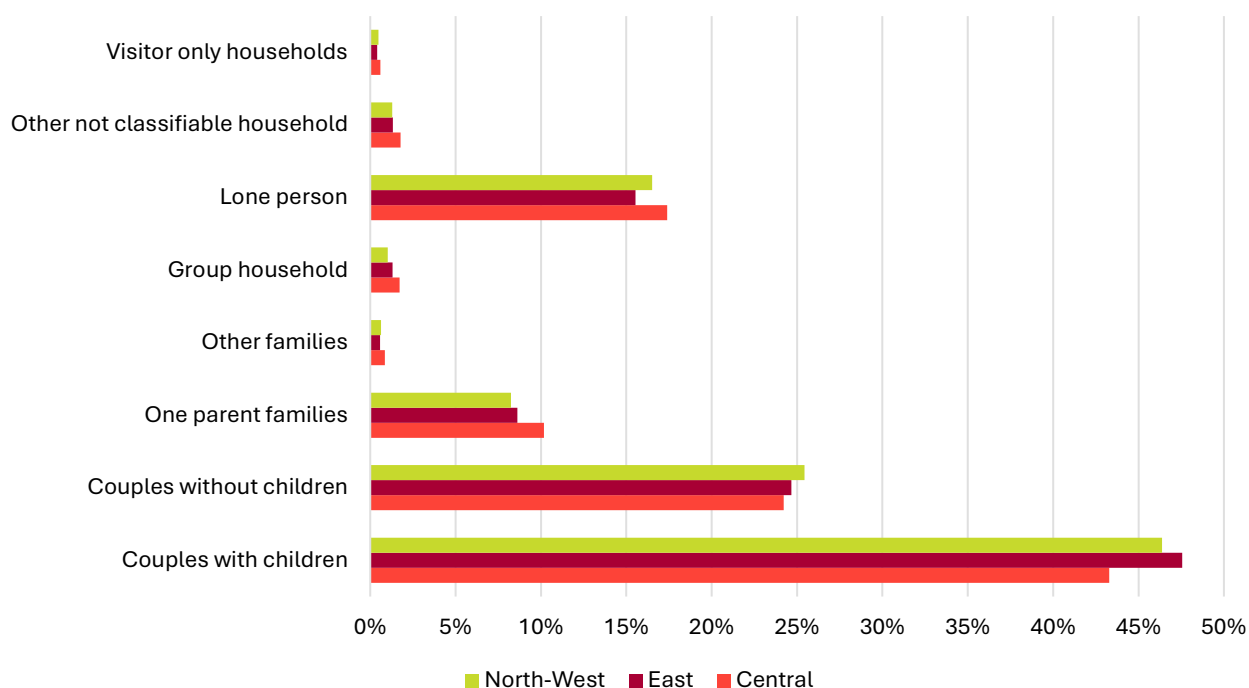
Service age group summary finding

Compared to the Greater Sydney average, Ku-ring-gai has a lower proportion of working age individuals, which is an indicator of a potentially reduced capacity to pay, although this does differ across groupings, with Central having an improved indicator compared to East and North-West.

Household types

Alongside the age structure of each region, it is important to determine the typical trends in the make-up of households. This provides a more complete picture of the people, families, and communities in each area. A summary of household type is provided in the following figure.

Figure 4 Household composition



The proportion of couples with children within the LGA (46%) is substantially higher than both the averages for the NRSOC Region and Greater Sydney (36% and 34% respectively); whilst the proportion of couples without children is in line with that of the NSROC Region (both 25%) and slightly above the Greater Sydney average (23%). The percentage of one parent families in the LGA (9%) is marginally above the average for the NSROC Region (8%) and slightly below the average for Greater Sydney (10%). The LGA has a notably lower proportion of lone person households (17%) when compared to both NSROC Region and Greater Sydney (24% and 22% respectively).

The 'lone person' and 'one parent family' households are considered to be more vulnerable to the impacts of rate increases due to a reduced/singular income stream. Combining these categories together into an 'at risk' group shows that across the LGA as a whole, the at-risk group makes up 26% of the population, which is notably lower than the NSROC and Greater Sydney averages (32% and 33%). When looking at the 'at risk' group across each grouping, Central sees a slightly higher proportion (28%) and East a slightly lower proportion (24%).

There are a number of suburbs with an increased proportion of vulnerable households, which puts them more in line with Greater Sydney averages, these are Gordon and Killara (both 30% and within the Central grouping) and North Turramurra (33% and within the North-West grouping). North Turramurra's vulnerable household outcome is due to its relatively high proportion of lone person households (27%), as distinct to its relatively low proportion of one-parent households (5%).

Generally, there are similarities between the groupings, with the main difference being in the proportion of couples with children, which is highest in the East grouping (48%) and lowest within the Central grouping (43%), although all are notably above the comparison averages for NSROC and Greater Sydney.

Household type summary finding

Compared to the Greater Sydney average, Ku-ring-gai has a relatively lower number of vulnerable households, which is an indicator of capacity to pay, although some suburbs (namely Gordon and North Turramurra) have numbers of vulnerable households in line with the Greater Sydney average.

Housing tenure

Analysis of housing tenure levels within the LGA allows us to identify which areas would be most impacted by changes in council rates, i.e., the direct impact of a change in rates will be felt by homeowners, whereas renters may experience an indirect increase/decrease depending on their lease agreement/decisions of their landlord. Furthermore, individuals in social housing are unlikely to be impacted by a change in rates.

Table 6 Housing tenure

Housing tenure (2021)	Central	East	North-West	Ku-ring-gai Council area	Greater Sydney
Fully owned	36.3%	41.5%	41.4%	39.6%	26.7%
Mortgage	32.8%	38.1%	39.1%	36.6%	31.9%
Renting - Total	26.8%	16.9%	14.6%	19.6%	34.7%
<i>Renting - Social housing</i>	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	0.3%	4.1%
<i>Renting - Private</i>	26.5%	16.7%	14.0%	19.2%	30.4%
<i>Renting - Not stated</i>	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Other tenure type	1.5%	1.6%	2.9%	2.0%	1.7%
Not stated	2.5%	1.9%	2.1%	2.2%	26.7%
Total households	14,993	12,792	14,876	42,679	

The Ku-ring-gai LGA resident ratepayer (fully owned and mortgaged) average of 76% (when rounded to nearest 1 percent) is significantly above the NSROC and Greater Sydney averages of 62% and 59% respectively. This is particularly driven by the high proportion of fully owned homes (40%), compared to Greater Sydney (27%). It is considered that households with fully owned homes have lower non-discretionary outgoings compared to renters and households paying mortgages and therefore likely an increased capacity to absorb rating increases.

The overall proportion of renters within the LGA is notably below the comparison averages – at 20% compared to Greater Sydney’s average of 35%. This is driven by the low proportions in both the East and North-West groupings, at 17% and 15% respectively. It is important to note that whilst renters are not directly impacted by an increase in rates, these increases can be passed on by landlords or accommodation providers.

Home ownership levels do vary across the LGA, with Central seeing a lower proportion of fully owned homes at 36% compared to 41% for both the East and North-West groupings. This may be reflective of the slightly higher proportion of one parent families compared to other groupings. Central also sees a lower proportion of households with a mortgage compared to the other two groupings, at 33% compared to 39% for North-West.



When looking at a suburb level, North Turramurra (North-West grouping) sees a majority of its households fully owning their homes, at 54%. The suburbs with the lowest level of fully owned homes, Gordon (Central grouping), still sees 32% which is still above the Greater Sydney and NRSOC averages. South Turramurra (North-West) sees the highest proportion of households with a mortgage, at 49%, which is significantly higher than the NSROC and Greater Sydney averages. North Turramurra (North-West) sees the lowest proportion of households with a mortgage, at 27% followed by Gordon (Central) with 30%.

There are very low levels of social housing within the Ku-ring-gai LGA, with all groupings (and all suburbs) seeing a less than 1% proportion of households living in social housing. Residents in social housing do not pay rates and therefore are not impacted by the proposed SV.

Housing tenure summary finding

Generally, when compared to the Greater Sydney average, Ku-ring-gai has a very high proportion of fully owned homes, particularly in the East and North-West groupings, which is an indicator of capacity to pay. The LGA overall does, however, also have a higher overall proportion of households with a mortgage, which are more susceptible to rating increases and can be an indicator for lower capacity.

Equivalised household income

Equivalised household income can be viewed as an indicator of the economic resources available to a standardised household. It is calculated by dividing total household income by an equivalence factor. The factor is calculated in the following way:

- first adult = 1
- each additional adult + child over 15 = + 0.5
- each child under 15 = + 0.3.

Dividing by the equivalence factor, household income becomes comparable to that of a lone individual, thereby making households with dependents and multiple occupants comparable to those without. By factoring in dependents into household incomes, we are provided with a better indicator of the resources available to a household.

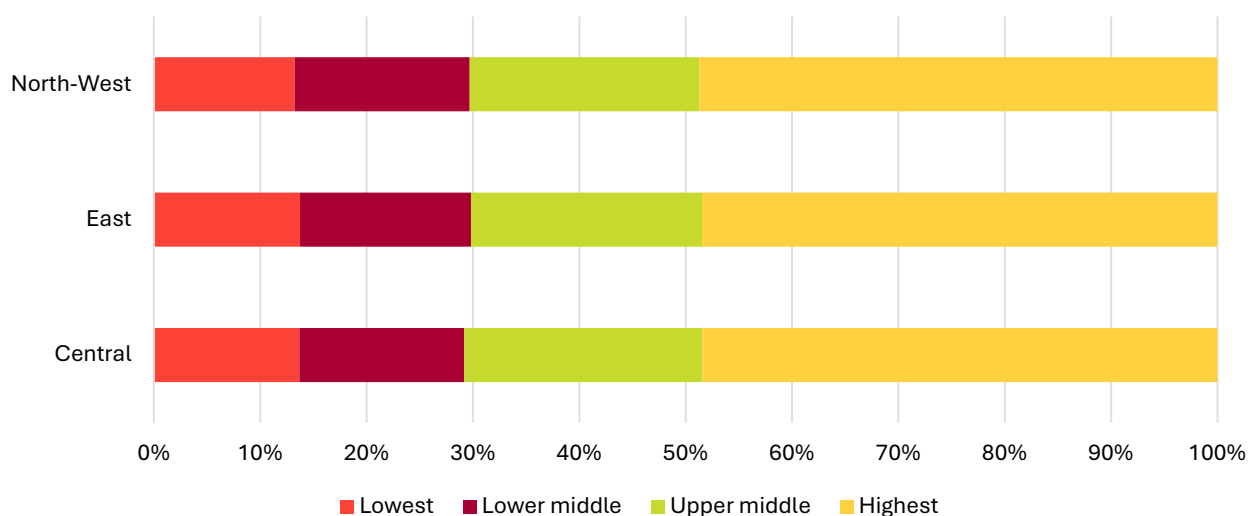
As this is a relative comparison, data has been presented in quartiles; regions of disadvantage will have a higher proportion of households in the bottom two quartiles than those of greater wealth and advantage. These quartiles were determined by reviewing the distribution of household incomes within NSW and then dividing them into four equal groups or quartiles.

The data has been presented in ranges for the following equivalised weekly income levels for 2021:

- Lowest: \$0 - \$603 – this range is representative of the bottom 25% of all equivalised household incomes in NSW.
- Medium lowest: \$604 - \$1,096 – this range is representative of the bottom 25% - 50% of all equivalised household incomes in NSW.
- Medium highest: \$1,097 - \$1,770 – this range is representative of the top 25% - 50% of all equivalised household incomes in NSW.
- Highest: \$1,771 and over – this range is representative of the top 25% of all equivalised household incomes in NSW.

Figure 4 summarises the equivalised household income ranges for each area.

Figure 5 Equivalised household income



The LGA as a whole has much higher proportions in the highest income quartile, at 48% compared to 30% for Greater Sydney and 44% for NSROC. All profile areas within the LGA also have the highest proportion of their households in the highest quartile, at either 48% (Central and East) or 49% (North-West). The LGA also has lower proportions in the lowest quartile, at 14% compared to 22% for Greater Sydney (this is in line with the NSROC average of 15%). Across the groupings these proportions are also very similar at 14% (Central and East) or 13% (North-West) in the lowest income quartile.

Table 7 Comparison of equivalised household income

Equivalised income quartiles (2021)	Central	East	North-West	Ku-ring-gai Council area	NSROC Region	Greater Sydney	NSW
Lowest two quartiles	29.2%	29.8%	29.7%	29.6%	32.5%	44.6%	50.0%
Middle two quartiles	37.9%	37.8%	38.0%	37.9%	40.6%	48.3%	50.0%
Highest two quartiles	70.8%	70.1%	70.2%	70.4%	67.5%	55.4%	50.0%

When the quartiles are grouped, as per the table above, it shows that the LGA has a notably high proportion of households within the highest two income quartiles, at 70% compared to the Greater Sydney average of 55%. There also does not appear to be much difference between the groupings, with Central having a 1% larger proportion in the highest two quartiles. This is caused by a very slightly higher proportion in the upper middle income quartile.

When looking at a suburb level there is some slight disparity, with Pymble (Central) and Roseville-Roseville Chase (East) seeing the joint highest proportion in the highest income quartile, at 54%, compared to North Turramurra (North-West) which sees the lowest at 39%. All suburbs, however, do have significantly higher proportions in the highest quartile than the Greater Sydney average and all have their greatest proportion of households in the highest quartile.

Equivalised income summary finding

Overall, the LGA has very high proportions in the highest equivalised income quartile, with all groupings sitting well above the Greater Sydney average and also all having much lower proportions in the lowest income quartile. This is a strong indicator of capacity to pay across the LGA and within each grouping and suburb individually.

Vulnerable groups or individuals

This section of the report considers whether there are any spatial patterns of individuals or groups who either need additional community services or are more sensitive to a change in rates.

Workforce status

The levels of full or part-time employment and unemployment are indicative of the strength of the local economy and social characteristics of the population.

Table 8 Community workforce status

Workforce status (2021)	Central	East	North-West	Ku-ring-gai Council area
Employed	95.5%	95.8%	96.0%	95.8%
Employed full-time	58.2%	57.2%	57.2%	57.5%
Employed part-time	29.2%	30.2%	30.7%	30.0%
Employed, away from work	8.2%	8.4%	8.1%	8.2%
Unemployed (unemployment rate)	4.5%	4.2%	4.0%	4.2%
Looking for full-time work	2.4%	2.2%	2.2%	2.2%
Looking for part-time work	2.1%	2.0%	1.8%	2.0%
Total labour force	21,285	18,277	21,604	61,155

Note: Pensioners, overseas visitors and other non-participants are not included in the total labour force.

In 2021, unemployment within the LGA (4%) was in line with the NSROC average (4%) and marginally below the Greater Sydney average (5%). Figures are similar across the groupings, with Central seeing a slightly higher proportion of the workforce in full-time employment and North-West a slightly higher proportion in part-time employment.

Whilst the March 2025 unemployment rates aren't available at locality level, the smoothed unemployment rate is published for Statistical Area Level 2s (SA2) and for LGAs². This provides some further insight in relation to areas of potential financial vulnerability, with the Ku-ring-gai LGA overall showing a 3.5% unemployment rate in March 2025. This suggests a slight decrease from the 2021 Census data. At an SA2 level, Wahroonga (West)-Waitara sees the highest unemployment rate, at 6.2%, indicating that there is a potential pocket of vulnerability within the North-West grouping.

Workforce status summary finding

Overall, across the LGA, unemployment rates do not indicate a potentially reduced capacity or that there is an increased need for concern in relation to this section of the workforce, as figures instead provide positive indicators which are slightly below the Greater Sydney average.

² Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. March 2025. 'Small Area Labour Markets'. Sourced from: <https://www.dewr.gov.au/employment-research/small-area-labour-markets>.



Pensioners

A distinction is made between retirees, and eligible pensioners. To be classified as a pensioner for the purposes of receiving rates rebates, ratepayers must be receiving Centrelink payments such as the age pension or have partial capacity to work such as having a disability, being a carer or being a low-income parent. These individuals have reduced income streams and can be vulnerable to financial shocks and price rises. The following table shows the number of assessments receiving pensioner rebates compared to the total number of assessments for that area.

Table 9 Number of pensioner assessments

Number of pensioner assessments (2025)	Total assessments	Pensioner assessments	Pensioner assessments %
Central	16,829	711	4.2%
East	13,686	889	6.5%
North-West	15,681	974	6.2%
Ku-ring-gai Council total	46,196	2,574	5.6%

The groupings with the largest proportion of pensioners are East and North-West, both with 6%. Central has the lowest proportion and number of pensioner rebates, at 4% or 711 individuals, which is lower than the LGA average of 6%.

The Group 3 (larger metropolitan) council average proportion of residential pensioners for 2023/24 is 10%³, with a range from 21% to 4%, therefore Ku-ring-gai (also 6% in 2023/24) sits below average for proportion of pensioners when compared to other similar councils, with only two comparable councils having lower proportions of residential pensioners. Ku-ring-gai's proportion of pensioner assessments has also continually reduced since 2020/21 from 6.7% to 5.6% in 2024/25.

Eligible pensioners have access to mandatory rebates (up to a maximum of \$250 per year) on their rates. In addition to the statutory pensioner rebate, Council also offers a voluntary rebate of 8.5% of rates to all eligible pensioners on their general rates. All pensioners receiving the statutory rebate also receive the voluntary rebate. This offers further assistance to a potentially more vulnerable portion of the community.

Pensioner summary finding

It is not considered that the LGA shows indicators of reduced capacity in relation to pensioner assessments, as Ku-ring-gai sits below average of comparable councils and the proportion of assessments is reducing year on year.

³ Office of Local Government, 'Time Series Data 2023-2024'. Retrieved from: <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/about-councils/comparative-council-information/your-council-report/>.



Core assistance

Table 11 highlights the areas within the LGA that have higher concentrations of people who need assistance in their day-to-day lives with self-care, body movements or communication – because of a disability, long-term health condition or old age. Individuals requiring assistance may have a higher financial vulnerability to rating increases and therefore it is important for Council to consider this as part of any potential rating restructure.

Table 10 Number of people requiring core assistance

Assistance required (2021)	Number	Percentage
Central	1,368	3%
East	1,372	3%
North-West	2,095	5%
Ku-ring-gai Council area	4,834	4%
Greater Sydney	270,665	5%
NSROC Region	25,321	4%
NSW	464,712	6%
Australia	1,464,421	6%

We observe that those needing assistance are concentrated in the North-West grouping (5% or 2,095 individuals), with a lower proportion of individuals requiring assistance in both Central and East. Overall, the LGA is sitting slightly below the average for Greater Sydney (5%) and in line with the NSROC average (4%).

This suggests that there is not an increased sensitivity to changing rates within the LGA when compared to other areas, however Council should still ensure its Assistance, Concession and Recovery Policy assists those who may be experiencing financial vulnerability due to day-to-day assistance requirements.

Core assistance summary finding

Overall, the Ku-ring-gai LGA's concentration of people who require assistance in their day-to-day lives is generally below the overall Sydney average. This suggests a reduced vulnerability to increasing rates and is an indicator of capacity to pay. Council's highest concentration of people requiring assistance is in the North-West grouping, and this needs to be considered in the implementation of a potential rate increase.

Housing stress

The National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling (NATSEM) defines households experiencing 'housing stress' as those that satisfy both of the following criteria:

- equivalised household income is within the lowest 40% of the state's income distribution
- housing costs (i.e. mortgage and/or rent repayments) are greater than 30% of household income.

Households facing housing stress are highly likely to be under significant financial stress and vulnerable to sudden increases in council rates.

Mortgage stress

To consider the likelihood of mortgage stress, we have collated the proportion of households where mortgage costs exceed 30% of income and reviewed this alongside the proportion of households in the lowest two equivalised income quartiles. Where both proportions are high, this indicates that there may be mortgage stress within the grouping.

Table 11 Households where mortgage costs exceed 30% of income

Households with mortgage costs >30% of income (2021)	Number of households with a mortgage	Number of households with mortgage costs >30% income	Percentage	Proportion of households in lowest two equivalised income quartiles
Central	4,922	1,223	25%	29%
East	4,866	1,158	24%	30%
North-West	5,799	1,133	20%	30%
Ku-ring-gai Council area	15,594	3,516	23%	30%
Greater Sydney	608,735	120,485	20%	45%
NSROC Region	74,004	14,887	20%	33%
NSW	942,804	163,060	17%	50%

Overall, 3,516 (23%) households in the Ku-ring-gai LGA have mortgage costs exceeding 30% of their household income, which is above Greater Sydney and NSROC averages. There are, however, a lower proportion of households (30% compared to Greater Sydney's 45%) in the lowest two equivalised income brackets which would help to mitigate this impact.

Central has the highest proportion of households with mortgages exceeding 30% of income, of all groupings at 25% (1,223 households) followed by East at 24% (1,158 households). Both groupings also have similarly lower proportions in the lowest two income quartiles, which again is likely to assist in mitigating potential impact of rating increases.

When looking at a suburb level, East Killara (East) has the highest proportion of households with mortgage greater than 30% of income, at 31% (or 106 households), and also has 35% in the lowest two income quartiles, therefore there is likely the potential for increased mortgage stress within this suburb relative to other Ku-ring-gai suburbs.

When looking at the comparison between median house prices within the Ku-ring-gai LGA at the date of the 2021 Census (August 2021), compared to November 2024⁴, there has been an increase, with the median for August 2025 at \$3.3 million, compared to \$3.1 million for August 2021. The price of a unit has remained relatively similar at \$1.6 million as at August 2025 compared to \$1.7 million in 2021. This suggests that mortgage affordability has likely reduced somewhat since 2021 and whilst the Reserve Bank of Australia has reduced the cash rate in recent quarters⁵, there is the potential for increased proportion of mortgage stress across the LGA.

Mortgage stress summary finding

The Ku-ring-gai LGA has levels of mortgage stress which are above the Sydney average, which is an indicator of potentially reduced capacity to pay. East Killara has the highest proportion of households with mortgage amounts greater than 30% of income.

However, these levels of mortgage stress are offset by the LGA's comparatively strong levels of equivalised income, which suggest that the LGA's households may have a greater capacity to respond to this stress than the rest of Sydney.

Rental stress

To consider the likelihood of rental stress, we have collated the proportion of households where rental costs exceed 30% of income and reviewed this alongside the proportion of households in the lowest two equivalised income quartiles. Where both proportions are high, this indicates that there may be rental stress within the grouping.

Although renters are not usually immediately directly affected by an increase to council rates, there is generally considered to be a flow-on effect whereby landlords can pass on rate increases to the tenant via an increase in rental payments. It is therefore important to also consider rental stress and any areas within the LGA where this may be higher.

Table 12 Households where rental costs exceed 30% of income

Households with rental costs >30% of income (2021)	Number of households renting	Number of households with rental costs >30% income	Percentage	Proportion of households in lowest two equivalised income quartiles
Central	3,964	1,413	36%	29%
East	2,134	765	36%	30%
North-West	2,160	737	34%	30%
Ku-ring-gai Council area	8,275	2,913	35%	30%
Greater Sydney	657,317	231,957	35%	45%
NSROC Region	78,747	25,780	33%	33%
NSW	944,585	335,404	36%	50%

Across the LGA, 2,913 (35%) households have rental costs exceeding 30% of their household income, which is in line with the Greater Sydney average (35%) and slightly above the NSROC average (33%). Again, this is mitigated somewhat by the lower proportions of households in the lowest two income quartiles, at 30%, compared to 45% for Greater Sydney and 33% for NSROC.

⁴ Aussie. August 2025. 'Property - Ku-ring-gai Council'. Sourced from: <https://www.aussie.com.au/property/nsw/ku-ring-gai-council/>.

⁵ Reserve Bank of Australia. August 2025. 'Statement by the Monetary Policy Board: Monetary Policy Decision'. Sourced from: <https://www.rba.gov.au/media-releases/2025/mr-25-22.html>.



Central and East have the highest proportions of households with rental costs exceeding 30% income, with both at 36% (1,413 and 765 households respectively). East also has a fractionally higher proportion of households in the lowest two equivalised income quartiles, therefore there may be potential for some rental stress within these groupings.

North Turramurra (North-West) and East Killara (East) are the suburbs with the largest proportions of households with rental costs greater than 30% of income, with 46% and 41% respectively. North Turramurra also has 41% of households in the lowest two income quartiles, therefore there is likely increased risk of rental stress within both of these suburbs.

The median weekly rent has seen a 4% increase for houses within the Ku-ring-gai LGA in the last 12 months and a 10% increase for units in the past 12 months. This suggests that rental stress is likely to have increased further, particularly for those living within medium to high density housing.

Rental stress summary finding

Council's levels of rental stress are in line with the overall Sydney average, which is neither an indicator for or against capacity to pay, although rental stress is slightly higher in the Central and East groupings.

As with mortgage stress, Council's comparatively strong equivalised income situation is likely to mitigate against overall rental stress.

Outstanding rates

When looking at outstanding residential rates for the 2024/25 financial year only (as at 30 June 2025), there does not appear to be one grouping that has a notably increased proportion of rates overdue – either in number of ratepayers or overall amount of outstanding rates. Each grouping sits at either 1 or 2% of amount of rates outstanding, owed by between 6-7% of its ratepayers. This indicates that there is generally capacity across the LGA and there is not one grouping experiencing disproportionate levels of outstanding rates.

It is however worthwhile noting that the grouping of North-West does have a higher total amount of residential rates outstanding overall (40% of the LGA's total outstanding rates debt for all financial years), when previous years' rates notices are also included.

Table 13 Outstanding residential rates for 2024/25

Outstanding rates for 2024/25 – as at 30 June 2025	Total amount (\$) of residential rates notices issued for 2024/25	Number of residential rate notices overdue (as a proportion of total number of rates notices issued)	Amount of residential rates outstanding (as a proportion of dollar amount of rates notices issued)
Central	\$26,419,947	6%	2%
East	\$21,961,517	7%	1%
North-West	\$24,346,558	7%	2%
Ku-ring-gai Council area	\$72,728,023	7%	1%

Outstanding rates summary finding

Levels of outstanding residential rates for 2024/25 are relatively consistent across all geographic groupings in the LGA, which is an indicator there is not one particular area of the LGA experiencing disproportionate capacity to pay issues.

Trends in cost of living

The cost of living can best be described as the cost of maintaining a certain standard of living. Identifying trends in future costs, particularly with regards to discretionary and non-discretionary income. The following table presents the average changes in typical household expenditure in the Ku-ring-gai LGA, between 2018/19 and 2023/24.

Table 14 Five-year comparison of cost of living in Ku-ring-gai LGA⁶

Household expenditure (totals)	2023/24		2018/19		Change between 2023/24 and 2018/19		
	\$ per household	% of expenditure	\$ per household	% of expenditure	\$ per household	% of expend.	% change
Food	\$21,134	9%	\$20,904	9%	\$230	0%	1%
Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	\$7,656	3%	\$10,072	4%	-\$2,416	-1%	-24%
Clothing and footwear	\$8,916	4%	\$7,660	3%	\$1,257	1%	16%
Furnishings and equipment	\$10,098	4.5%	\$9,905	4.3%	\$194	0%	2%
Health	\$13,534	6%	\$12,266	5%	\$1,268	1%	10%
Transport	\$19,092	9%	\$27,677	12%	-\$8,585	-4%	-31%
Communications	\$4,131	2%	\$3,624	2%	\$508	0%	14%
Recreation and culture	\$22,746	10%	\$22,913	10%	-\$167	0%	-1%
Education	\$9,046	4%	\$8,653	4%	\$394	0%	5%
Hotels, cafes and restaurants	\$20,836	9%	\$20,253	9%	\$583	1%	3%
Miscellaneous goods and services	\$29,366	13%	\$31,997	14%	-\$2,631	-1%	-8%
Housing	\$50,897	23%	\$47,631	21%	\$3,265	2%	7%
Utilities	\$6,269	3%	\$6,995	3%	-\$726	0%	-10%
Total expenditure	\$223,721	100%	\$230,548	100%	-\$6,827	0%	-3%
Non-discretionary	\$123,973	55%	\$126,757	55%	-\$2,784	0%	-2%
Discretionary	\$99,748	45%	\$103,793	45%	-\$4,045	0%	-4%
Net amount placed into a bank account or other saving entity	\$60,890	21%	\$60,122	21%	\$768	1%	1%
Total disposable income	\$284,611	0%	\$290,670	0%	-\$6,059	0%	-2%

*Non-discretionary spending includes the following categories: food, clothing and footwear, health, transport, communications, housing, and utilities.

⁶ National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR), 2025. Compiled and presented in economy.id by. Data based on 2020–21 price base for all years. NIEIR ID data is inflation adjusted each year to allow direct comparison and annual data releases adjust previous years' figures to a new base year.



Table 15 shows that, over the five-year period, total disposable income within the Ku-ring-gai LGA has reduced by an average of \$6,059 (2%), with a total expenditure decrease of \$6,827. Net savings have increased slightly by \$768. Discretionary spending has reduced by 4% (\$4,045), with non-discretionary spending also decreasing by 2% (\$2,784). Reductions in both transport costs and utilities are the driving force behind the reduction in non-discretionary spending, with housing having seen an increase (\$3,625) compared to costs five years prior.

This differs with the Australian benchmark, as provided in the comparison table below, which shows a much lower reduction in transport costs (-2% compared to -31% for Ku-ring-gai), with the Australian benchmark having seen a lower increase in housing costs (1%) compared to Ku-ring-gai (7%). Ku-ring-gai has seen an overall reduction in total expenditure over the past five years (3% reduction), whereas the Australian benchmark has seen an increase (0.4% increase). Ku-ring-gai has seen an increase in net savings (1%) whereas the Australian benchmark has seen a large decrease (-14%). This suggests that the Ku-ring-gai community is experiencing cost of living pressures in a different way to the Australian benchmark, with expenditure reducing by a greater proportion and an increased proportion of income able to be invested into savings. This indicates that Ku-ring-gai may be seeing a slightly lesser impact overall in relation to the cost of living.

Table 15 Comparison of Ku-ring-gai change in expenditure with Australian averages (between 2018/19 to 2023/24)

Household expenditure (totals)	Change between 2018/19 - 2023/24			
	Ku-ring-gai Council		Australian average	
Food	\$230	1%	-\$180	-1%
Alcoholic beverages and tobacco	-\$2,416	-24%	-\$1,706	-29%
Clothing and footwear	\$1,257	16%	\$813	20%
Furnishings and equipment	\$194	2%	\$86	1%
Health	\$1,268	10%	\$774	9%
Transport	-\$8,585	-31%	-\$377	-2%
Communications	\$508	14%	\$331	15%
Recreation and culture	-\$167	-1%	\$1,016	8%
Education	\$394	5%	\$140	3%
Hotels, cafes and restaurants	\$583	3%	\$744	8%
Miscellaneous goods and services	-\$2,631	-8%	-\$936	-5%
Housing	\$3,265	7%	\$184	1%
Utilities	-\$726	-10%	-\$411	-9%
Total expenditure	-\$6,827	-3%	\$475	0%
Net amount placed into a bank account or other saving entity	\$768	1%	-\$3,122	-14%
Total disposable income	-\$6,059	-2%	-\$2,647	-2%



When looking at the Australian Bureau of Statistics's Selected Living Cost Indexes (LCI)⁷ ⁸ for Australia for June 2025, the Aged Pensioner LCI has seen a 2.7% increase from 12 months prior, with the Employee LCI having seen a 2.6% increase and the Self-funded Retiree LCI having seen a 1.7% increase. The Reserve Bank of Australia also lowered the cash rate to 3.6% in August 2025, the third cut of 2025, which is trending towards the 2-3% target⁹ and should therefore see lower interest rates for mortgages.

Noting that Council likely has a higher proportion of self-funded retirees, due to high proportions of individuals over 50 but comparatively lower proportions of pensioners, this would indicate that a larger proportion of the population would have seen a lower LCI increase. When this is taken in line with reduced non-discretionary spending and the Ku-ring-gai LGA's higher proportions in the upper income quartiles and high levels of fully owned homes, this would suggest that the current cost of living impacts are able to be absorbed and that generally there is capacity within the LGA. Council should continue to ensure that financially vulnerable ratepayers, including pensioners, do not become marginalised, including through the promotion of Council's Assistance, Concession and Recovery Policy for those that may require it.

Cost of living summary finding

Compared to the rest of Australia, from 2018/19 to 2023/24, Ku-ring-gai has seen a greater percentage decrease in overall expenditure but a greater percentage increase in savings. This indicates that expenditure is being replaced by savings, which is a potential indicator of capacity to pay.

In addition, Council's relatively high proportion of self-funded retirees (as distinct to pensioners) have experienced comparatively lower cost of living increases over the last 12 months, which - when considered alongside the overall cost of living data across the LGA - would assist this group in absorbing a rate increase, subject to appropriate implementation of the Assistance, Concession and Recovery Policy.

⁷ Australian Bureau Statistics. June 2025. 'Selected Living Cost Indexes, Australia'. Sourced from: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/selected-living-cost-indexes-australia/jun-2025>.

⁸ The Selected Cost of Living Indexes measure the price change of goods and services and the effect of living expenses for selected household types.

⁹ Reserve Bank of Australia. 'Statement by the Monetary Policy Board: Monetary Policy Decision'.



Industry

In 2024, the main industries in order of employment for resident workers in Ku-ring-gai (as percentage FTE employed) were Health Care and Social Assistance (23.5%), Education and Training (17.4%) and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (15.6%). Overall, there are differences to the Greater Sydney averages, which show a greater reliance on Manufacturing, Construction and Financial and Insurance Services compared to the Ku-ring-gai LGA. The Ku-ring-gai LGA's top three industries by employment account for 56.5% of all employment within the LGA, which compares with 34.6% for those same three industries for the Greater Sydney average. The vast majority of employment within the Education and Training sector in Ku-ring-gai sits within the Preschool and School Education (14.3%) compared to 4.7% for Greater Sydney.

There hasn't been a significant change in industry employment proportions over ten years within the LGA, with the three top employing industries solidifying their proportion. Wholesale trade has seen the largest drop in actual FTE, at 397 less jobs in 2023/24 than 2013/14. Overall, there are 3,704 more jobs (as FTE) for workers living in the LGA in 2023/24 than ten years previously.

It is noted that 70.4% of Ku-ring-gai Council's resident workers work outside of the LGA - mainly in City of Sydney (25.7%), Willoughby (8.2%), North Sydney (6.1%) and Ryde (6.1%) LGAs. 2.9% of resident workers have no fixed place of work.

Figure 6 Resident workers

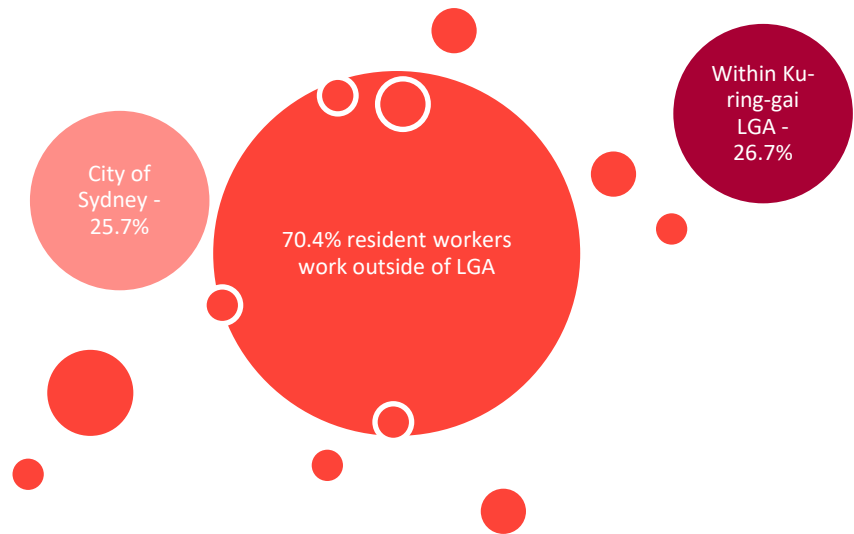


Table 16 Value added by industry sector¹⁰

Ku-ring-gai Council area	2023/24			2013/14			Change 2013/14 - 2023/24
Industry	\$M	%	Greater Sydney	\$M	%	Greater Sydney	
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	10.10	0.2	0.3	3.30	0.1	0.3	6.90
Mining	6.00	0.1	0.4	2.00	0.0	0.5	3.90
Manufacturing	165.10	2.9	6.8	143.10	3.0	8.5	22.00
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	30.20	0.5	1.7	28.20	0.6	2.3	2.00
Construction	639.80	11.2	8.0	727.30	15.5	8.3	-87.50
Wholesale Trade	172.10	3.0	5.7	241.30	5.1	5.9	-69.20
Retail Trade	308.70	5.4	4.7	249.40	5.3	5.2	59.30
Accommodation and Food Services	178.20	3.1	2.7	126.30	2.7	2.9	51.80
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	213.90	3.7	6.5	108.00	2.3	7.1	105.90
Information Media and Telecommunications	145.40	2.5	5.0	76.30	1.6	3.4	69.10
Financial and Insurance Services	471.50	8.3	14.8	350.10	7.4	15.9	121.50
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	427.70	7.5	4.4	355.50	7.6	4.3	72.20
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	943.70	16.5	13.0	637.20	13.6	10.4	306.50
Administrative and Support Services	213.20	3.7	5.2	188.00	4.0	4.9	25.20
Public Administration and Safety	119.60	2.1	5.1	124.80	2.7	5.0	-5.20
Education and Training	611.60	10.7	5.4	514.70	11.0	5.7	96.90
Health Care and Social Assistance	933.90	16.4	7.7	683.60	14.5	6.4	250.30
Arts and Recreation Services	39.20	0.7	0.9	42.10	0.9	1.0	-2.90
Other Services	77.80	1.4	1.5	97.80	2.1	2.0	-20.00
Total industries	5,707.70	100.0	100.0	4,699	100	100	1,008.60

When looking at value added by industry sectors; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (16.5% or \$943.7 million), Health Care and Social Assistance (16.4% or \$933.9 million) and Construction (11.2% or \$639.8 million) provide the greatest proportion within the LGA.

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (\$306.5 million) has seen the greatest value add increase since 2013/14, followed by Health Care and Social Assistance (\$250.3 million). Construction (\$87.5 million decrease) and Wholesale Trade (\$69.2 million decrease) have seen the largest reductions in value added across the same period.

The overall value added by industries for the Ku-ring-gai LGA has increased by over \$1 billion since 2013/14, which, when combined with the increase in full-time equivalent jobs of 3,704, highlights the level of increasing opportunity and advantage for workers in the area.

¹⁰ National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR). 2025. Compiled and presented in economy.id by.id (informed decisions).



The Gross Regional Product (GRP) for the Ku-ring-gai LGA as a whole for 2024 was \$8.73 billion, an increase of \$1.44 billion (20%) since 2014, this is mainly driven by an increasing local industry GRP.

Outstanding rates - business

When looking at outstanding business rates for 2024/25 (as at 30 June 2025), the Central grouping does have a slightly higher proportion of number of rates notices overdue, at 10%, compared to 6% for North-West. However, when looking at the amount outstanding, as a proportion of rates notices issued, this is very low, at 1%. North-West meanwhile has a slightly higher proportionate amount outstanding (2%), indicating that whilst it has low numbers of debtors, these debtors owe larger amounts. It can still be considered, that the overall 1-2% amount of business rates outstanding (as a proportion of the dollar value of rates) is a very low proportion of the overall rate yield and therefore generally there is capacity across the LGA in relation to business ratepayers.

This is slightly increased when outstanding rates from previous years are included, with Central seeing the highest amount of business rates outstanding, at 60% of the total \$235,208 overdue from all years' business rates notices. This does suggest however that there is not a notable issue for Council in relation to the collection of business rates, therefore indicating that there is capacity to pay generally within the business category.

Table 17 Outstanding business rates for 2024/25

Outstanding rates for 2024/25 – as at 30 June 2025	Total amount (\$) of business rates notices issued for 2024/25	Number of business rate notices overdue (as a proportion of total number of rates notices issued)	Amount of business rates outstanding (as a proportion of dollar amount of rates notices issued)
Central	\$3,333,934	10%	1%
East	\$1,289,358	7%	0%
North-West	\$1,668,078	6%	2%
Ku-ring-gai Council area	\$6,291,369	8%	1%

Outstanding business rates summary finding

The overall 1-2% amount of business rates outstanding (as a proportion of the dollar value of rates) is a very low proportion of the overall rate yield and therefore this suggests that generally there is capacity across the LGA in relation to business ratepayers.



Grouping summary

Our analysis shows that Ku-ring-gai Council is an extremely advantaged LGA, with high levels of household income, fully owned homes and high SEIFA rankings. Whilst there are a number of similarities between the groupings, there are still nuances that create some potential vulnerabilities alongside the high levels of advantage seen, particularly when considering individual suburbs.

Table 18 Key features by grouping

Grouping	Key features
Central IRSD: 1,097 IRSAD: 1,159	• IRSD and IRSAD scores well above the NSW and Greater Sydney averages and above the NSROC averages. IRSD score is lowest of the three groupings but still sees comparatively very low levels of disadvantage. • Highest proportion of working age (54%), although this is lower than NSROC and Greater Sydney averages. • Lowest proportions of dependents and retirees (24% and 23% respectively). • Highest proportion of one-parent families, in line with Greater Sydney average and above NSROC averages. • Slightly higher proportion of 'at risk' households (lone person and one-parent families) than other groupings, at 28% - although this is lower than NSROC and Greater Sydney averages. • Lowest proportion of couples with children (43%), although this is still notably higher than the NSROC average. • Higher proportion of private renters compared to other groupings, although still below NSROC and Greater Sydney averages. • Lower proportion of resident ratepayers (fully owned and mortgaged), at 69%, when compared to other groupings – although still notably above NSROC and Greater Sydney averages, particularly for fully owned homes. • High proportion of households in the highest equivalised income bracket (48%), well above Greater Sydney average. • Low level of households in the lowest equivalised income bracket (14%), well below Greater Sydney average. • Lowest proportion of pensioner assessments (4%) of all groupings. • Slightly higher potential for mortgage and rental stress within this grouping.
East IRSD: 1,113 IRSAD: 1,169	• IRSD and IRSAD scores well above the NSW and Greater Sydney averages and above the NSROC averages. • Joint lowest proportion of working age, well below NSROC and Greater Sydney averages. • Highest proportion of dependents (25%), above NSROC and Greater Sydney averages. • Slightly lower proportion of 'at risk' households (24%) and highest proportion of couples with children (48%). • Very high proportions of resident ratepayers (80%), particularly driven by high levels of fully owned homes (41%). • High proportion of households in the highest equivalised income bracket (48%), well above the Greater Sydney average. • Low level of households in the lowest equivalised income bracket (14%), well below the Greater Sydney average. • Slightly higher potential for mortgage and rental stress within this grouping.



Grouping	Key features
North-West IRSD: 1,117 IRSAD: 1,165	• IRSD and IRSAD scores well above the NSW and Greater Sydney averages and above the NSROC averages. • Joint lowest proportion of working age, well below NSROC and Greater Sydney averages. • Highest proportion of retirees (27%) and those aged over 50 (41%), both notably above comparison averages. • Lowest proportion of one-parent families in this grouping (8%), in line with NSROC average. • Very low proportion of private renters (14%) compared to NSROC average. • Very high proportion of resident ratepayers (80%), particularly driven by high levels of fully owned homes (41%). • Highest proportion of households in the highest equivalised income bracket (49%), well above Greater Sydney and NSROC averages. • Lowest levels in the lowest equivalised income bracket (13%), well below the Greater Sydney average. • Highest proportion of individuals requiring assistance (5%), in line with the Greater Sydney average.

Suburb breakdown

As part of our analysis, we also considered the socio-economic data by suburb, where required, to assess whether there may be pockets or suburbs that present indicators of reduced capacity. We noted that East Killara (within the East grouping) has the highest proportion of households with a mortgage greater than 30% of income, at 31% (or 106 households), and also has 35% in the lowest two income quartiles. Therefore, there is likely the potential for increased mortgage stress relative to other Ku-ring-gai suburbs and this is an indicator for reduced capacity within this suburb. This was the only suburb about which we could draw a likely indicator in relation to lower capacity, with all other suburbs either showing indicators of good or strong capacity or some slightly mixed indicators



Proposed rating changes

Ku-ring-gai Council has four options with respect to rates. These options, which are all permanent and all include a rate peg of 3% in 2026/27, are:

- Option 1 (base case - do nothing) consists of rate peg increases only, resulting in a cumulative increase of 3% by 2026/27.
- Option 2 (renew infrastructure) proposes a permanent one-year 22% increase in 2026/27.
- Option 3 (renew and enhance infrastructure) proposes a permanent one-year 29% increase in 2026/27.
- Option 4 (renew, enhance and expand infrastructure) proposes a permanent one-year 33% increase in 2026/27.

We have reviewed average rates by grouping and rate category. We compare the average rates for each scenario against the “do nothing” scenario (option 1 – rates to increase as normal, with rate peg only applied and no SV). The table below summarises the four scenarios and our analysis of each scenario follows.

Table 19 SV options

Option	2026/27
Option 1 is a cumulative increase of 3% at the end of 2026/27	rate peg (3%)
Option 2 is a cumulative increase of 22% at the end of 2026/27	22%
Option 3 is a cumulative increase of 29% at the end of 2026/27	29%
Option 4 is a cumulative increase of 33% at the end of 2026/27	33%

Residential rates – impact analysis by scenario

Table 20 Option 2 residential average rates impact analysis

Residential - average rates	2025/26 average rate by grouping (\$)	2026/27 Option 1 - do nothing (\$)	2026/27 Option 2 average (\$)	Total increase (above rate peg) over 1 year (\$)	Weekly increase above rate peg (\$)
Central	1,580	1,627	1,928	300	5.77
East	1,907	1,964	2,327	362	6.97
North-West	1,673	1,723	2,041	318	6.11

The impact of increases in rates will be unequal across the LGA due to the wide variance in land value from area to area. Those in the higher land value areas of East (average to increase to \$2,327, an increase of \$6.97 per week by the end of 2026/27 when compared to option 1 ‘do nothing’) as well as North-West (average to increase to \$2,041, an increase of \$6.11 per week by the end of 2026/27) are expected to see larger increases in average rates compared to the lower land value area of Central (average to increase to \$1,928, an increase of \$300 across the one-year SV period).

Table 21 Option 3 residential average rates impact analysis

Residential - average rates	2025/26 average rate by grouping (\$)	2026/27 Option 1 - do nothing (\$)	2026/27 Option 3 average (\$)	Total increase (above rate peg) over 1 year (\$)	Weekly increase above rate peg (\$)
Central	1,580	1,627	2,038	411	7.90
East	1,907	1,964	2,460	496	9.54
North-West	1,673	1,723	2,158	435	8.37

As with option 2, residential ratepayers in the higher land value areas of East and North-West (averages to increase by \$496 and \$435 respectively, when compared to option 1 - do nothing, over one year) are expected to see larger increases in average rates, under option 3, compared to the lower land value areas of Central (total average increase of \$411 or \$7.90 per week).

Table 22 Option 4 residential average rates impact analysis

Residential - average rates	2025/26 average rate by grouping (\$)	2026/27 Option 1 - do nothing (\$)	2026/27 Option 4 average (\$)	Total increase (above rate peg) over 1 year (\$)	Weekly increase above rate peg (\$)
Central	1,580	1,627	2,101	474	9.12
East	1,907	1,964	2,536	572	11.00
North-West	1,673	1,723	2,225	502	9.65

Under option 4, as with both options above, there will be unequal increases, with residential ratepayers in the lower land value area of Central (average to increase to \$2,101, an increase of \$474 by the end of 2026/27) expected to see lower increases in average rates compared to the higher land value areas of East (average to increase to \$2,536, an increase of \$572) and North-West (average to increase to \$2,225, an increase of \$502 by the end of the SV period).

Business rates – impact analysis by scenario

Table 23 Option 2 business average rates impact analysis

Business - average rates	2025/26 average rate by grouping (\$)	2026/27 Option 1 - do nothing (\$)	2026/27 Option 2 average (\$)	Total increase (above rate peg) over 1 year (\$)	Weekly increase above rate peg (\$)
Central	2,794	2,878	3,409	531	10.21
East	9,042	9,313	11,031	1,718	33.04
North-West	5,504	5,669	6,715	1,046	20.11

As with the residential rating category, the impact of increases in business rates will also be unequal across the LGA due to the wide variance in land value from area to area. Those in the higher land value area of East will see a notably higher average increase to \$9,313 (an increase of \$33.04 per week by the end of 2026/27), although noting that this grouping has the lowest number of business ratepayers at 221 therefore the impact will be smaller. Whereas the Central grouping will see a much lower average increase (to \$3,409, an increase of \$10.21 per week). It is important to note that Central contains the majority of the LGA's business ratepayers (51% or 596) and therefore this indicates that a high proportion of business ratepayers will see lower average rate increases.



Table 24 Option 3 business average rates impact analysis

Business - average rates	2025/26 average rate by grouping (\$)	2026/27 Option 1 - do nothing (\$)	2026/27 Option 3 average (\$)	Total increase (above rate peg) over 1 year (\$)	Weekly increase above rate peg (\$)
Central	2,794	2,878	3,604	726	13.97
East	9,042	9,313	11,664	2,351	45.21
North-West	5,504	5,669	7,100	1,431	27.52

As with option 2, business ratepayers in the higher land value area of East (average to increase by \$2,351, when compared to option 1 - do nothing, over one year) is expected to see larger increases in average rates, under option 3, compared to the lower land value areas of Central (average increase \$726 or \$13.97 per week) and North-West (average increase of \$1,431 or \$27.52 per week for one year). North-West has the second highest number of business ratepayers (347 businesses) and will have the median average business rate increase of the three groupings.

Table 25 Option 4 business average rates impact analysis

Business - average rates	2025/26 average rate by grouping (\$)	2026/27 Option 1 - do nothing (\$)	2026/27 Option 4 average (\$)	Total increase (above rate peg) over 1 year (\$)	Weekly increase above rate peg (\$)
Central	2,794	2,878	3,716	838	16.12
East	9,042	9,313	12,026	2,713	52.17
North-West	5,504	5,669	7,320	1,651	31.75

Under option 4, as with both options above, business ratepayers in the lower land value area of Central (average to increase to \$3,716, an increase of \$838 over one year to the end of 2026/27) is expected to see lower increases in average rates compared to the higher land value area of East (average to increase to \$12,026, an increase of \$2,713). It is important to note that the grouping of East contains only 19% of the LGA's business ratepayers, compared to 51% within the Central grouping.

Other rating considerations

Table 26 identifies the estimated average rate in 2026/27 for each LGA within an Office of Local Government's (OLG) metropolitan or metropolitan fringe grouping¹¹ and therefore comparable to Ku-ring-gai. This uses the OLG's time series data for 2023/24 and multiplies the average rates by the rate peg (and any approved special rate variations) to calculate the estimated rates for 2026/27.

Table 26 Estimated 2026/27 average residential rates for metropolitan and metropolitan fringe

LGA	Estimated 2026/27 average residential rate (\$)	Residential rank	Estimated 2026/27 average business rate (\$)	Business rank
Bayside	1,349	23	5,620	20
Blacktown	1,285	27	12,779	3
Burwood	1,862	5	8,762	9
Camden	1,685	10	7,339	17
Campbelltown	1,578	14	8,553	11
Canada Bay	1,345	24	4,271	24
Canterbury-Bankstown	1,453	19	8,645	10
Central Coast	1,507	16	4,148	28
Cumberland	1,163	30	9,114	8
Fairfield	1,057	32	9,772	7
Georges River	1,489	17	4,150	27
Hawkesbury	1,778	7	3,278	31
Hornsby	1,671	12	4,188	26
Hunters Hill	2,560	1	1,751	33
Inner West	1,436	21	7,503	16
Ku-ring-gai (base case - option 1)	1,772	8	5,953	19
<i>Ku-ring-gai (option 2)</i>	<i>2,098</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>7,052</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Ku-ring-gai (option 3)</i>	<i>2,219</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>7,456</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Ku-ring-gai (option 4)</i>	<i>2,228</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>7,687</i>	<i>16</i>
Lane Cove	1,476	18	5,492	21
Liverpool	1,446	20	7,757	15
Mosman	1,812	6	4,059	29
North Sydney	1,109	31	7,106	18
Northern Beaches	2,124	3	5,315	22
Parramatta	1,205	29	14,673	2
Penrith	1,671	13	10,675	6

¹¹ Excluding Blue Mountains City Council as data is not currently publicly available.



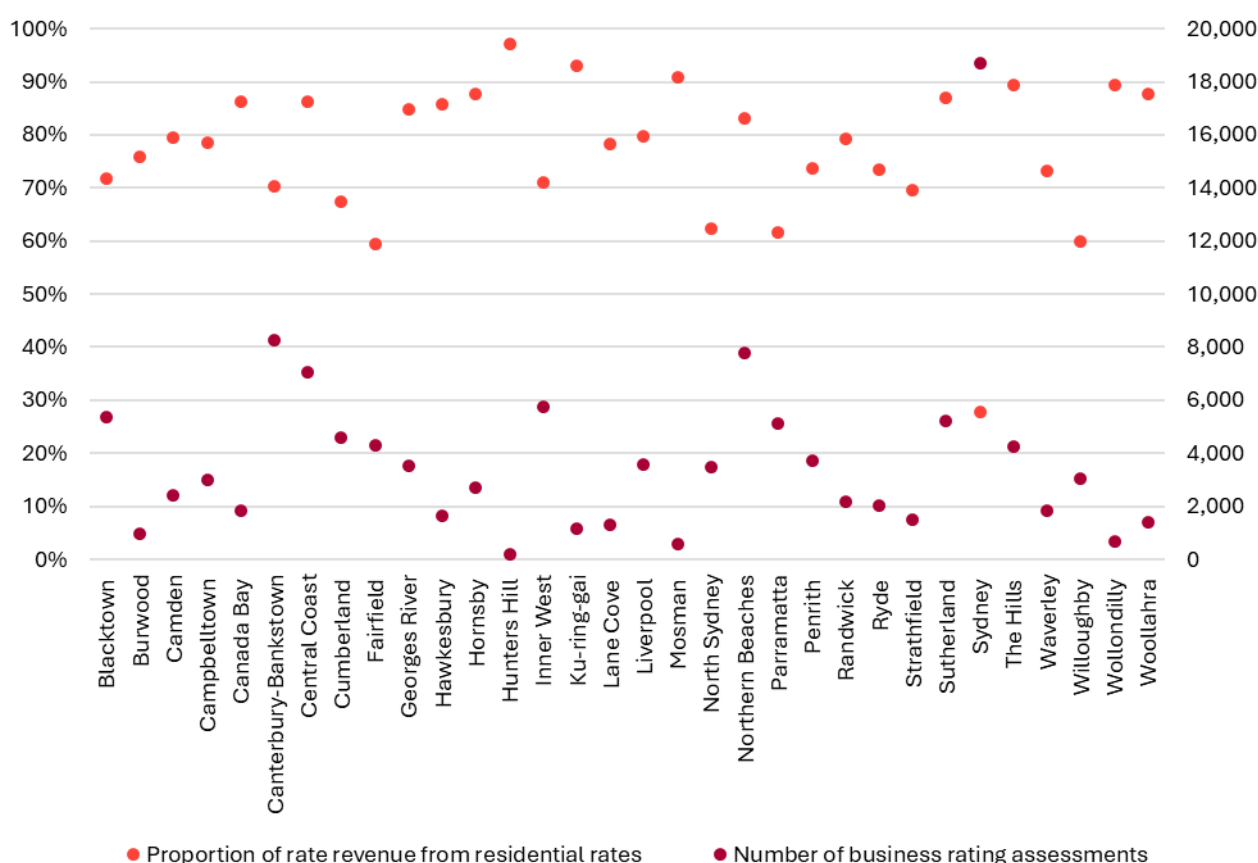
LGA	Estimated 2026/27 average residential rate (\$)	Residential rank	Estimated 2026/27 average business rate (\$)	Business rank
Randwick	1,736	9	10,707	5
Ryde	1,323	25	12,676	4
Strathfield	1,567	15	7,962	14
Sutherland	1,680	11	4,223	25
Sydney	925	33	14,690	1
The Hills	1,305	26	2,584	32
Waverley	1,365	22	8,147	12
Willoughby	1,244	28	8,124	13
Wollondilly	2,260	2	3,688	30
Woollahra	1,951	4	4,890	23

When comparing these rates, Ku-ring-gai sits above average for comparison councils (average \$1,551) when the rate peg only is applied and ranks third to fourth dependent on which of the three SV options are applied. For business rates, Ku-ring-gai sits well below average (average \$7,230) when the rate peg only is applied and moves to between 16th and 19th, dependent on the SV option. This indicates that both Council's residential rates will remain somewhat comparable, if towards the higher end of comparison councils, whilst business rates will continue to remain at about the average level of comparison councils.



Noting that most Sydney metropolitan and fringe councils draw the majority (if not all) of their rating revenue from business and residential ratepayers, it is important to consider how the number of business ratepayers affects the amount of overall rating revenue. Of all metropolitan and metropolitan fringe councils, Ku-ring-gai has the fifth lowest number of business ratepayers, at 1,154 in 2023/24 compared to the average of 3,761 ratepayers¹². This therefore requires Ku-ring-gai to draw a greater portion of its rates revenue from residential ratepayers, with 92% of its rating revenue coming from residential rates in 2023/24, as shown in the graph below. This is the second highest proportion of all comparison councils, however, still results in Ku-ring-gai having a below average total revenue from residential rates.

Figure 7 Comparison of number of business rates with proportion of rates revenue from residential rates for metropolitan and metropolitan fringe councils

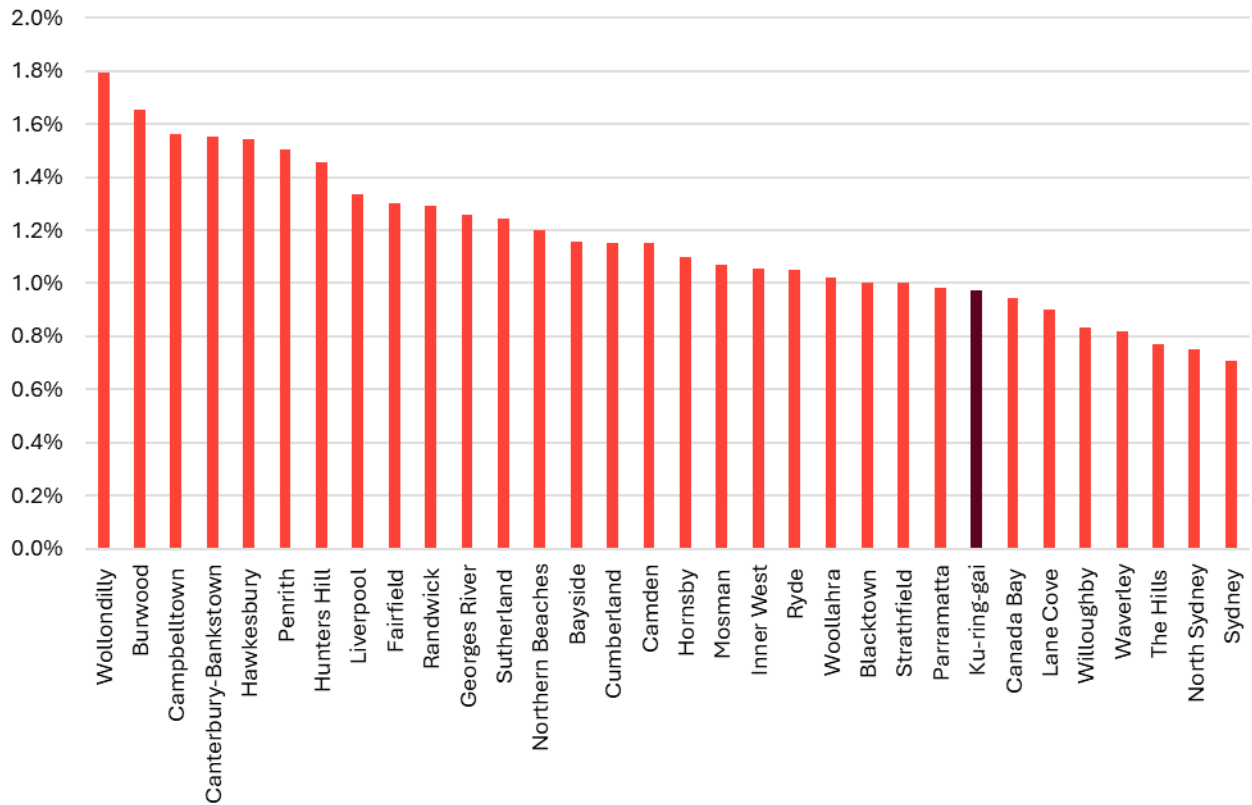


¹² Office of Local Government, 'Time Series Data 2023-2024'.



As per the figure below, when average weekly residential rates for 2023/24¹³ are compared with the median weekly household income¹⁴ to create a residential rate to income ratio, Ku-ring-gai sits towards the lower end of all metropolitan and metropolitan fringe councils. This indicates that on average Ku-ring-gai's residential rates are comparatively affordable for its community, with a lower ratio indicating increased affordability. The average across all comparison councils is 1.2%, with Ku-ring-gai sitting below this at 1.0%.

Figure 8 Weekly residential rate to median weekly household income ratio

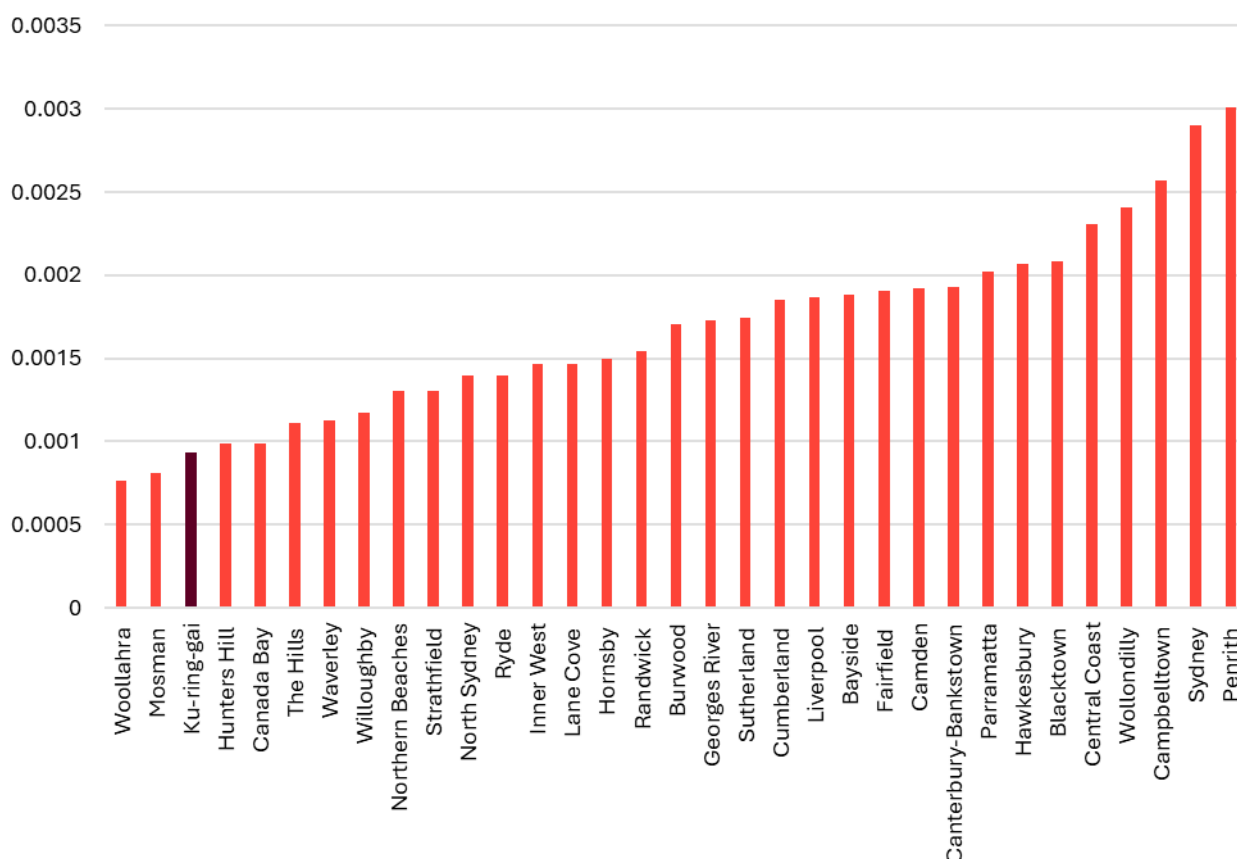


¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census data for median weekly household income by Local Government Area.

In addition, when looking at rates charged per dollar of land value (for 2023/24), as per the figure below, Ku-ring-gai ranks among the lowest of all metropolitan and metropolitan fringe councils¹⁵, with a ratio of 0.00093. The average of all comparison councils is 0.0017. This, when combined with the average rate comparisons, suggests that land values are higher within the Ku-ring-gai LGA which is factoring into the higher average rates overall.

Figure 9 Proportion of rates revenue to land value for metropolitan and metropolitan fringe councils



Ku-ring-gai also has a low number of ratepayers utilising Council's Assistance, Concession and Recovery Policy, with an increase in 2023/24 and then a decrease again in 2024/25. The total debt owed (as at 30 June each year) by ratepayers on the Assistance, Concession and Recovery Policy however has notably increased from 2023/24 to 2024/25, therefore Council should continue to monitor this ratio to ensure that vulnerable ratepayers are not marginalised. It is important to note that the 2024/25 figure does include legacy debt from previous year(s) which has not been resolved.

Table 27 Number of ratepayers on the Assistance, Concession and Recovery Policy and amount of rates overdue

Financial year	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Number of ratepayers on Assistance, Concession and Recovery Policy	5	2	1	6	3
Total debt owed at 30 June	12,628	4,558	4,069	12,664	40,553

¹⁵ Ibid.

Table 28 shows outstanding rates and annual charges ratios over the past four reporting years for metropolitan and metropolitan fringe councils¹⁶. The NSW benchmark for metropolitan and fringe councils is 5.0% and 2023/24 was the first year that Ku-ring-gai had exceeded this benchmark in the previous four years. The average of all councils is 5.4%, an increase of 0.4% since 2022/23, and Ku-ring-gai sits very marginally below this, suggesting that increasing outstanding rate proportions are affecting councils more widely. It is important to note, however that Ku-ring-gai's percentage for 2024/25 is 5.7%, which is a further increase from 5.2% in 2023/24.

Table 28 Actual outstanding rates and charges for metropolitan and metropolitan fringe councils

Rates and annual charges outstanding (%)	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Bayside	6.9%	7.2%	7.4%	8.3%
Blacktown	5.4%	5.0%	4.8%	5.1%
Burwood	7.3%	6.2%	5.6%	4.5%
Camden	6.9%	6.6%	7.0%	6.3%
Campbelltown	5.3%	4.7%	4.6%	4.6%
Canada Bay	4.0%	4.1%	3.9%	4.4%
Canterbury-Bankstown	5.8%	6.4%	6.2%	6.3%
Central Coast	7.1%	3.2%	2.1%	2.8%
Cumberland	6.4%	6.0%	5.6%	6.4%
Fairfield	4.1%	4.2%	4.5%	4.0%
Georges River	4.4%	4.4%	4.3%	4.5%
Hawkesbury	11.2%	11.2%	8.8%	8.4%
Hornsby	2.4%	2.6%	2.3%	2.3%
Hunters Hill	6.2%	4.8%	5.9%	4.7%
Inner West	7.5%	8.6%	7.9%	8.5%
Ku-ring-gai	5.2%	4.5%	4.3%	3.6%
Lane Cove	4.8%	4.3%	4.6%	4.7%
Liverpool	8.5%	7.5%	6.8%	6.2%
Mosman	3.2%	3.6%	2.8%	3.3%
North Sydney	3.7%	2.8%	2.9%	2.8%
Northern Beaches	3.8%	3.6%	3.6%	3.9%
Parramatta	9.7%	7.2%	9.7%	8.6%
Penrith	4.8%	5.0%	5.2%	4.7%

¹⁶ Ibid.



Rates and annual charges outstanding (%)	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Randwick	2.6%	2.9%	4.5%	3.8%
Ryde	3.3%	3.3%	5.0%	4.6%
Strathfield	6.3%	4.8%	4.4%	5.2%
Sutherland	4.7%	4.7%	4.4%	4.7%
Sydney	2.2%	2.0%	2.0%	2.2%
The Hills	6.4%	5.5%	5.1%	4.7%
Waverley	6.3%	4.4%	4.8%	4.2%
Willoughby	2.7%	2.5%	2.6%	2.2%
Wollondilly	6.4%	5.9%	6.5%	6.2%
Woollahra	4.2%	5.2%	4.5%	4.2%

Ku-ring-gai's number of rates notices overdue has also increased over the past five years, from 6.7% in 2020/21 to 9.3% in 2024/25. This indicates that whilst the dollar amount of rates and charges that are outstanding has increased, it is due to a greater number of ratepayers rather than increasing amounts of rates for the same ratepayers.

Conclusion

Our analysis highlights that the Ku-ring-gai LGA has a high socio-economic status, with SEIFA scores indicating very low levels of disadvantage and high levels of advantage. All groupings have IRSAD scores in the 100th percentile and IRSD scores within the top 5% of all Australian localities. Across the LGA, housing tenure is predominantly owner-occupied, with 76% of homes either fully owned or mortgaged, significantly above the Greater Sydney average. The area also boasts high household incomes, with 48% of households in the highest income quartile. Overall, the Ku-ring-gai LGA is an affluent and well-connected community, however, there are pockets of vulnerability in some suburbs, particularly East Killara which has indicators of lower capacity than other suburbs due to increased likelihood of mortgage stress combined with slightly lower levels of equivalised income.

The Central grouping is characterised by its high proportion of working-age individuals and the lowest proportions of dependents and retirees compared to the other groupings. This area also has the highest proportion of one-parent families and a slightly higher proportion of 'at risk' households. Despite having the lowest proportion of fully owned homes, the Central grouping still maintains a high level of home ownership. The high proportion of households in the highest income quartile indicates a strong financial capacity, although there is a higher potential for mortgage and rental stress within this grouping. Residential ratepayers within this area would have some of the lowest average weekly increases across all options when compared to option 1 (being the normal increases under rate peg). For option 2 (a cumulative increase of 22% by 2026/27) the average increase would be \$300 over one year, for option 3 (a cumulative increase of 29% by 2026/27) it would be \$411 and option 4 (a cumulative increase of 33% by 2026/27) it would be \$474. Given these factors, the Central grouping is showing likely indicators of strong capacity to absorb the proposed rating increases, but careful consideration should be given to supporting vulnerable households.

The East grouping stands out with the highest proportion of dependents and the joint lowest proportion of working-age individuals. This area also has the highest proportion of couples with children and very high proportions of resident ratepayers, driven by high levels of fully owned homes. The East grouping has a high proportion of households in the highest income quartile but also faces a slightly higher potential for mortgage and rental stress. The socio-economic indexes for this grouping are well above the NSW and Greater Sydney averages, indicating a high level of advantage. The East grouping will see the highest average impact on residential ratepayers, with an additional \$362 over one year under option 2, \$496 under option 3 and \$572 under option 4, when compared to normal increases under the rate peg. It is considered that the East grouping is likely to have indicators of a moderate capacity to absorb the proposed rating increases, although there may be an additional opportunity to provide support for households experiencing mortgage and/or rental stress, such as within East Killara, as part of the Assistance, Concession and Recovery Policy, to alleviate some of this impact.



The North-West grouping has the highest proportion of retirees and those aged over 50, which is notably above comparison averages. This area also has the lowest proportion of one-parent families and a very low proportion of private renters. The North-West grouping has very high proportions of resident ratepayers, particularly driven by high levels of fully owned homes. With the highest proportion of households in the highest income quartile and the lowest levels in the lowest income quartile, this grouping demonstrates significant financial capacity. However, it also has the highest proportion of individuals requiring assistance, which aligns with the Greater Sydney average. The grouping will see the medium average increase of the three groupings (\$318 under option 2, \$435 under option 3 and \$502 over one year under option 4). Overall, the North-West grouping is illustrating indicators of strong capacity to absorb the proposed rating increases, but attention should be given to supporting individuals requiring assistance and suburbs where there may be increased vulnerability due to higher levels of lone-person households.

At an overall level, Ku-ring-gai Council's estimated average residential rate is towards the higher end when SV options are applied, when compared with other metropolitan and metropolitan fringe councils, and business rates will sit very slightly above average when compared to these councils. Ku-ring-gai, however, has a below average total revenue from residential rates, even when acknowledging its low levels of business ratepayers which require an increased rating revenue to be drawn from residential ratepayers. Ku-ring-gai also ranks the amongst the lowest of comparable councils, for rates charged per dollar of land value, and sits towards the lower end when looking at the ratio of weekly residential rates to weekly household income, suggesting it has higher levels of affordability. When considered with the significant advantage generally seen across the LGA and the positive indications from our industry analysis, as well as low levels of outstanding residential and business rates, it is considered that these are indicators of capacity to pay the proposed rate increases more widely across the LGA. This is particularly when accompanied by Council's Assistance, Concession and Recovery Policy and voluntary pensioner rebates that assist in mitigating the impact on some of the more vulnerable members of the community.



Document Status

Job #	Version	Written	Reviewed	Approved	Report Date
7879	1 - Draft	M. Drummond	G. Smith	J. McKenzie	1 September 2025
	2 - Draft	M. Drummond	M. Gibbs	M. Gibbs	16 September 2025
	3	M. Drummond	J. McKenzie	J. McKenzie	25 September 2025

