



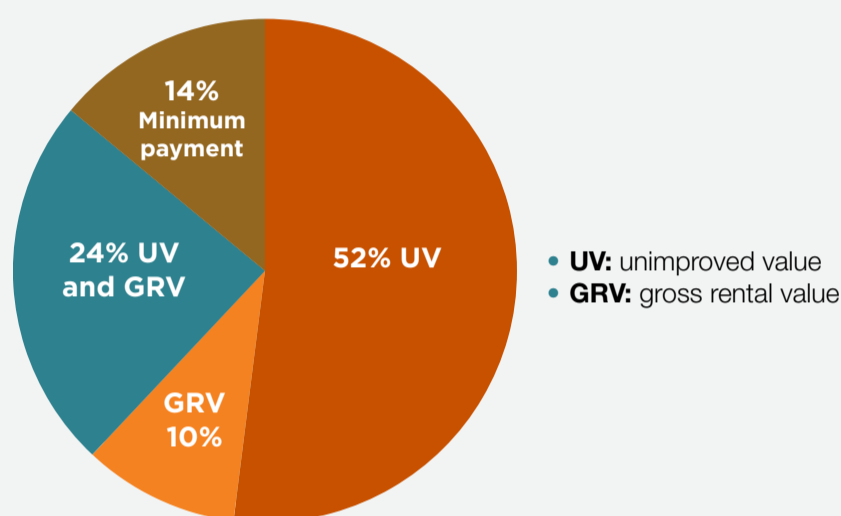
Differential rate and minimum payment applications 2023: Statistical analysis

Of the 29 differential rate and minimum payment applications received this year:

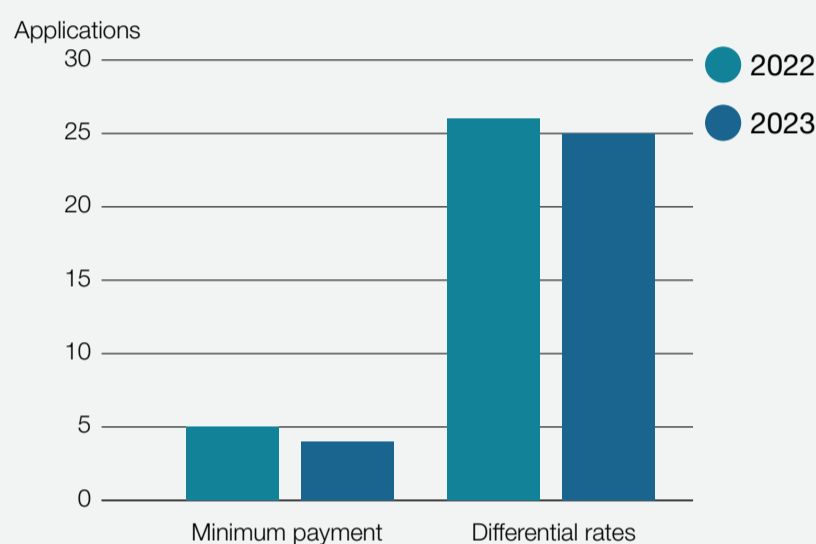
- 27 applications were for differential rates and 2 were for minimum payment.
- 2 applications were for both minimum payment and differential rates approvals.
- 93% of local governments that submitted an application in 2023 also applied last year.
- 31% submitted online applications, indicating that the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries (DLGSC) may need to review the online submission process.

This year, DLGSC received 2 fewer applications compared to 2022.

Types of applications received



2022-2023 comparison

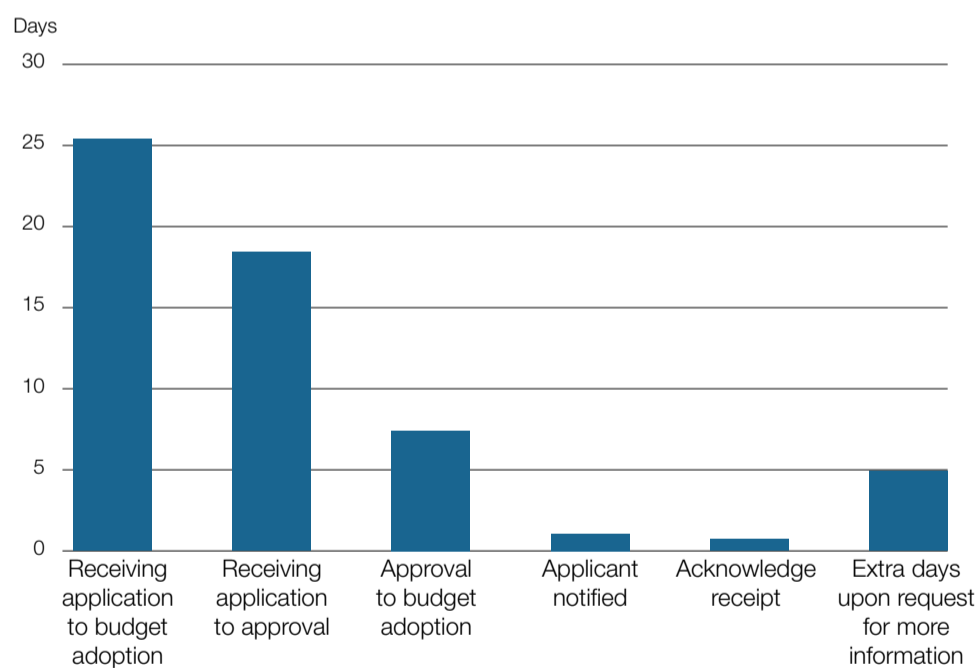


DLGSC advises local governments to allow **21 days** for their complete application to be processed.

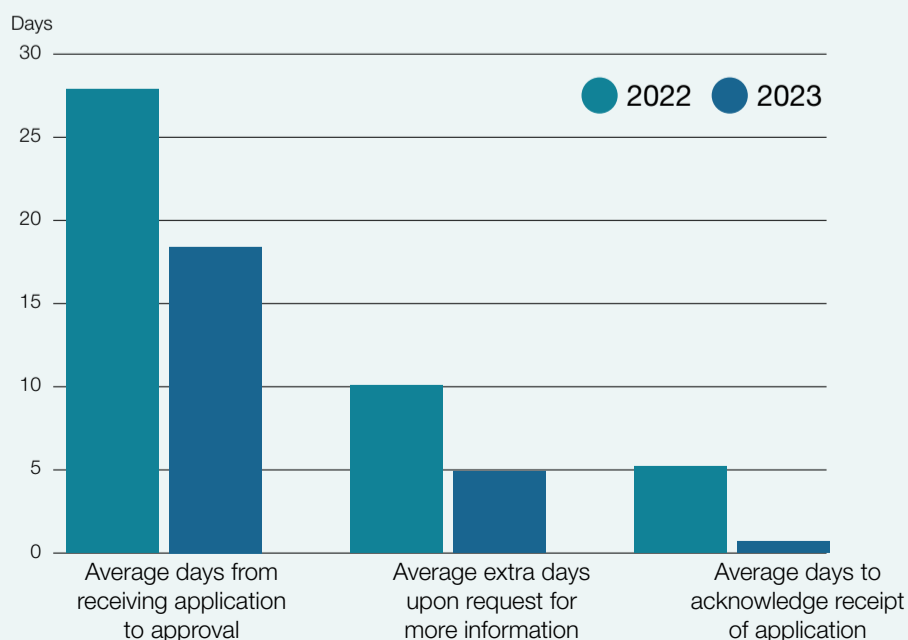
On average:

- Local governments submitted their application **25 days** prior to their budget adoption date.
- Local governments received their letter of approval **18 days** after submitting their application (3 days faster than the 21-day performance indicator).
- Approval was received **7 days** prior to the given budget adoption date.
- Local governments were advised of their application outcome within **1 day** of approval.
- Receipt of application was acknowledged within **1 day** of lodgment.
- An incomplete application took an extra **5 days** to process, an improvement of 5 days compared with 2022 processing timeframes.

Average days to action



Comparison of processing times



In comparison to last year, DLGSC achieved an average reduction of:

9 days from application submitted to date of approval.

5 days to complete an application following request for extra information.

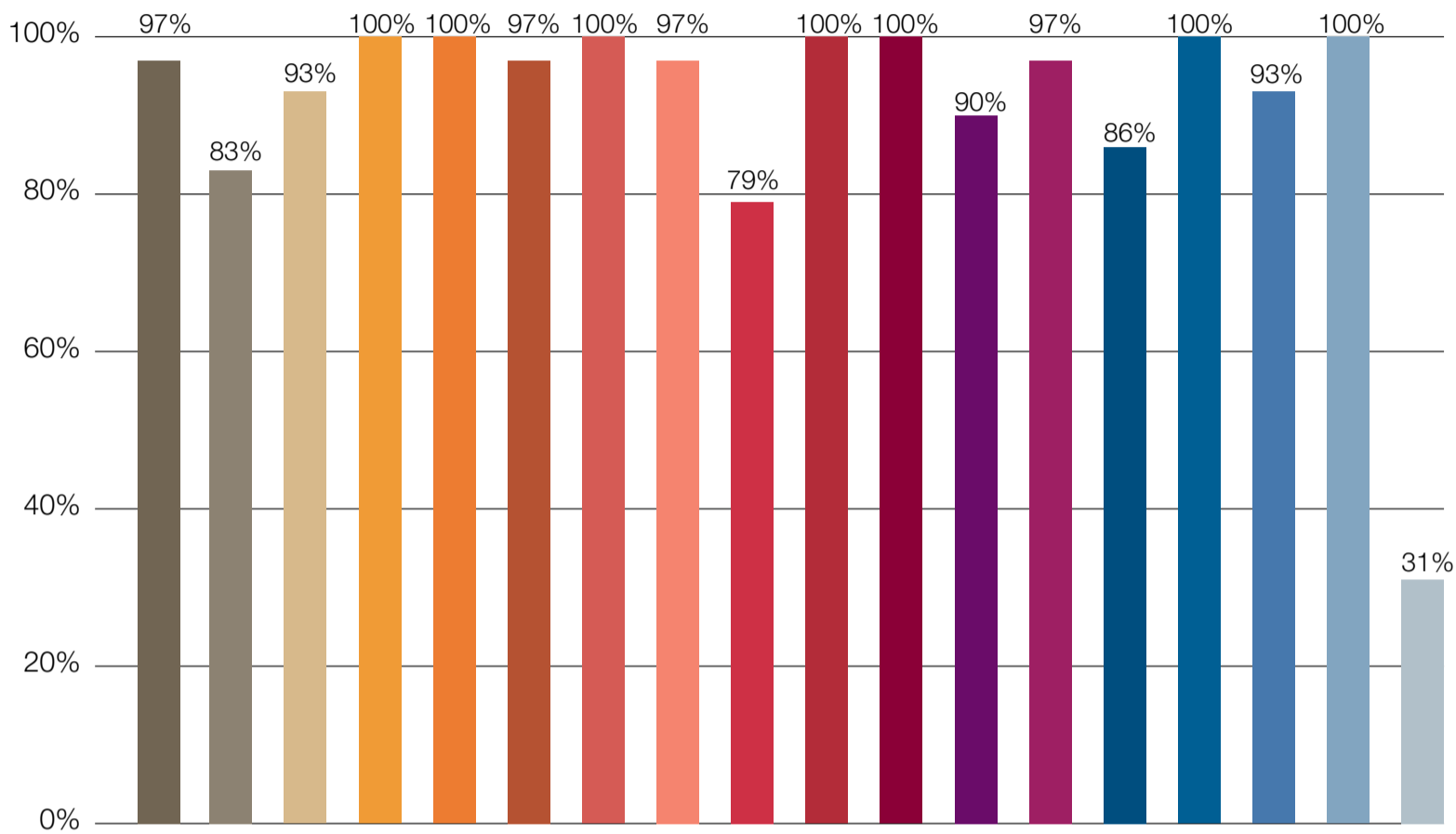
4 days to acknowledge receipt of an application.

Supporting documentation

Differential rating and minimum payment applications require supporting documentation to be submitted addressing each of the matters identified under the key values of objectivity, fairness and equity, consistency, and transparency.

DLGSC assessed each application, and their submissions to evaluate areas for improvement.

Documents submitted in 2023



- Provided current rate information table
- Provided previous year's rate information table
- Provided copy of draft budget
- Minutes reflect council reviewed and considered budget efficiency measures
- Objects and reasons compliant
- Objects and reasons for each category
- Objects and reasons adopted by council
- Copies of letters to ratepayers
- Attachments to letters included
- Compliant with 21 day submission period
- Copies of submissions
- Copies of response to submission
- Minutes reflect deviation from rating strategy
- Advertising complaint
- Public notice contains where to find objects and reasons
- Council minutes reviewed submission
- Council minutes reflect council resolved to make applications
- Provided all forms of public notice

The following supporting information was insufficient or missing from the applications received:



Evidence of public notice as required in the Minister's Policy for Giving notice local governments provided evidence of public notice in compliance with the Minister's Policy for Giving Notice.

79% of local governments provided all attachments sent to ratepayers in categories with 30 or less ratepayers.

83% of local governments provided a copy of their previous year's rating information table.

Giving public notice

Prior to 2023, local governments typically provided one source of public notice.

This year, DLGSC updated its policy to align with Regulation 3A(2) of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996 and Section 6.36(b) (ii) of the *Local Government Act 1995*. As of November 2021, the Act provides that notice should be published on the official website of the local government and in at least three of the prescribed ways:

- a district newspaper
- a WA newspaper
- one or more district newsletters
- by email, text or similar electronic means
- on a local government's social media account
- notice boards at local government offices and each local government library in the district.

Each method used must allow 21 days for submissions, not including the day of publication.

Previously:

DLGSC policies required local governments to give public notice in a newspaper in general circulation throughout the district; and exhibited to the public on a notice board at the local government's office and at every local government library in the district.

The policy was not updated on DLGSC's website until 9 August 2023, after the majority of applications for the year had been received.

The number of local governments that did not submit all forms of public notice has been excluded from this year's reporting for this reason.

In 2024, local governments will be expected to comply with the policy and provide evidence of all forms of public notice.

Rate information table

Many local governments submitted rate information tables that did not provide sufficient detail to meet requirements.

A [rate information table template](#) was published on the DLGSC website for local governments to input the information required for assessment:

The spreadsheet template includes the current and next financial years.

The updated template was not published on the DLGSC website until 30 June 2023.

Attachments to ratepayer letters

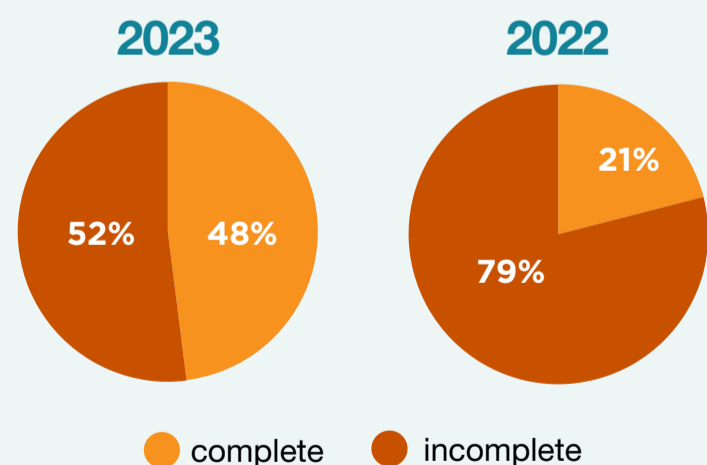
Where a rating category has 30 or less ratepayers, the local government is required to consult with the ratepayer in writing. The letter to ratepayers should include:

- The terms of the rating policy for differential rates.
- The local government's objects and reasons for proposing to impose the differential rate.
- The differential general rate that will apply to the ratepayer's property.
- The differential general rate that applied in the previous year for comparison.
- An invitation to ratepayers to make a submission regarding the proposal within a 21 day submission period.

Applications received in 2023

DLGSC observed an overall improvement in the delivery of applications in 2023 compared with last year.

Complete applications



48% of applications were submitted with all attachments included.

52% of applications needed further documentation to be submitted.

Areas of improvement compared to last year include:

65% fewer local governments needed to provide additional information for their application.

36% more local governments provided a current rate information table.

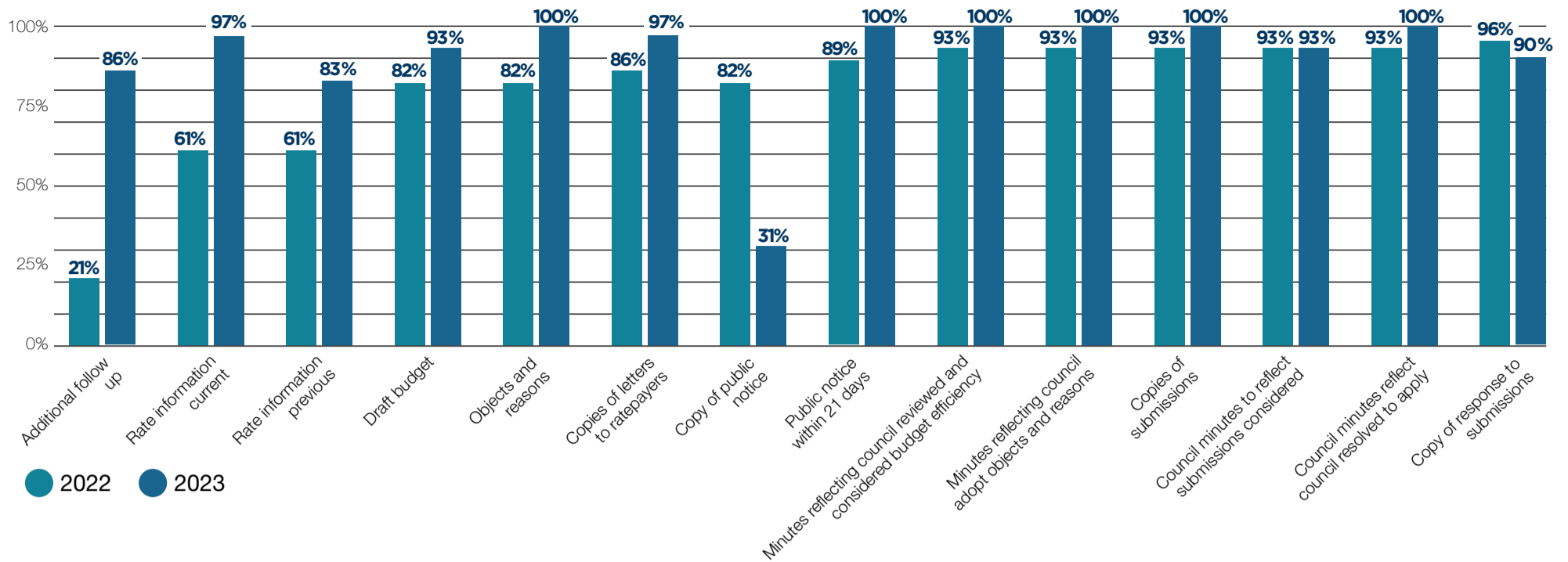
22% more local governments provided a rate information table for the previous year.

Areas requiring further improvement compared to last year:

50% fewer local governments provided all copies of public notices.

7% fewer local governments provided copies of their responses to submissions.

Supporting documents received



Focus areas 2024

DLGSC's strategic priorities will be to ensure that applications:

- are lodged online
- contain complete information
- are processed as quickly as possible once all relevant information has been submitted.

As a result of our data analysis, our focus areas in preparation for 2024 will be:

- Improve the online portal for lodging applications.
- Ask local governments to provide a date that approval is required prior to budget adoption date or remind them to consider this when making the application and allowing DLGSC 21 days to process.
- Raise awareness of public notice policy.
- Raise awareness that submissions and responses to submissions need to be acknowledged by council.
- Promote rating information table template on DLGSC website.

DLGSC is targeting these focus areas with the local government sector by:

- Presenting lessons learned and an overview of the application process at Local Government Professionals Western Australia (LG Professionals) webinars.
- Liaising with LG Professionals and WA Local Government Association (WALGA).
- Publishing infographics on our website and sharing them with the local government sector.
- Circulating an online survey to seek feedback from applicants and other relevant stakeholders.
- Sending direct emails to rates officers using our email database.

Local governments can send questions about differential rates and minimum payment applications to DLGSC at legislation@dlgsc.wa.gov.au.