

Author name: Anonymous

Date of submission: Saturday, 22 March 2014

Submission:

To Whom it May Concern

Armidale Dumaresq Council, have not, in my opinion made a genuine attempt to consult with ratepayers concerning their application for a special rate variation:

-the process commenced in peak holiday season when many were away

-any meetings were not advertised then often cancelled...council said through lack of interest, ratepayers said they were not informed. I myself went to one meeting of the Business Chamber at 7.30 am where there were about 14 in attendance. When I asked businesses later, none had been informed of this meeting and all said they would have come had they known.

-the online survey was worded so that if you agreed that services were good the council could argue they need a Special Rate Variation to keep them thus and if you said they were bad they could say they need a Special Rate Variation to bring them into order. As an information or opinion gathering tool it was a farce.

-when a public meeting eventually occurred after a time schedule change only 3 days ahead of the event, the public who did go were vehemently opposed to a the Special Rate Variation and annoyed at how little the council had been telling them, their poor publicity and their inability to answer questions put to them regarding council financial mismanagement

-many voiced and illustrated specific concerns of misspending and were given no explanation

-council attempted to split the meeting into workshop groups but the public wanted to hear the concerns of other speakers especially as the opportunity to air them was months overdue.

-the mood of the public to the council was hostile and outraged because Councils attitude has been one of secrecy and evading direct questions put to them.

-the council have published figures and graphs whilst defending their application, many of which have been either false or quoted differently in various parts of their correspondence. This was picked up by the public and did little for the council's credibility.

-the dramatic split of opinion which flared in council itself and resulted in Shane Burns early departure did nothing to help the matters at hand and merely illustrated that the council was dysfunctional and divided.

In summary I would say the public have very little confidence in the council, would like some professional appraisal of their fiscal management put in place BEFORE they are given more money, were unimpressed by councils devious handling of the supposed consultative process and felt that council had been inadequate in addressing any of the concerns put to them. Council need to be made accountable for poor management of ratepayer funds, needless waste, internal personal conflict and the fact that they have not properly listened to, let alone addressed the concerns of the Armidale Dumaresq ratepayers in their supposed "consultative process". The public are unimpressed and do not want to see this council granted a Special Rate Variation .I support this viewpoint.

Yours Faithfully,

██████████