

Local Government Team  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW  
PO Box Q290  
QVB Post Office NSW 1230

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Submission on Gundagai Shire Council application to increase Rates.**

I am opposed to the granting of a temporary 16.6% increase in Gundagai Shire Council rates for the next 10 years to fund an upgrade of Sheridan Street, Gundagai for the following reasons:

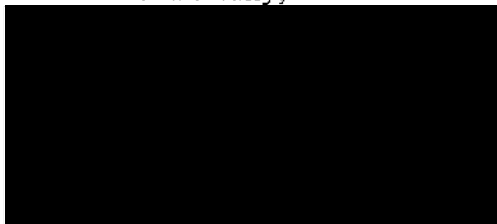
1. The survey put out by Gundagai Shire Council showed a large proportion of the community opposed the proposal and an even larger proportion have given up on the Council by not participating in the survey. But somehow with creative statistics the Council has reached a conclusion that a vast majority of rate payers are in favour of this proposal.
2. This rate increase will impact greatly on the many retirees, unemployed and struggling farmers in the Shire.
3. The Council has increased rates steadily over the last decade without providing any new facilities or services to the community. In fact most facilities have been allowed to deteriorate with no maintenance up keep. Other Shires have managed to provide new sporting facilities such as indoor swimming centres etc.
4. There is no street cleaning, companion animal act enforcement, very poor road maintenance and a volunteer working bee even had to clean over grown bushland and weeds on Council property along West Street, Gundagai a few years ago with no council workers in sight. The only regular service provided is waste collection weekly and recycling fortnightly.
5. The Council is over staffed, both indoor and outdoor, with many outdoor staff driving around town in new Council vehicles, performing no meaningful work, using up fuel that comes out of Council finances. The Council should be re-structured, getting rid of all the dead wood, thus making savings to boost Council finances. Further the Tourist Information Centre which has run at a loss for many years should be closed and services provided by other means, thus making savings for other Council projects. Or better still, Gundagai should merge with Tumut Council to improve efficiencies .

6. The upgrade of Sheridan Street, Gundagai only benefits the shop keepers in that street not all the ratepayers. I point out that 4 Councillors have businesses in Sheridan, Street so are they doing a favour to themselves and their business mates by asking all the community to subsidise their businesses.
7. The argument used by Councillors is the main street needs an upgrade to attract more tourists and visitors thus improving the economic benefit to the community. Gundagai is not a mass tourist destination and tourism will never support the community economically, so this will be a white elephant that the ratepayers are asked to finance. It may make a small contribution but that is all. In the past the Council did not support and encourage a Vizi mill, airport or truck stop in the area which would have brought jobs and new residents into the area and increased Council finances.
8. The Council should apply for grants from various government bodies to finance this upgrade of the main street instead of gauging it from the ratepayers. However, they are so incompetent that they can't even apply for grants to the relevant authorities on time.

Finally, many ratepayers have given up on this Council as it does not consult with or is not accountable to the community. Decisions are driven by the majority business people on the Council who think the community is irrelevant to their schemes. The above reasons are why I and many others in this community oppose this large rate increase for the next 10 years.

I wish to remain anonymous as this is a very small community, but do consent to my submissions being published on the IPART website.

Yours faithfully,



Concerned ratepayer