

**Sent:** Friday, 27 February 2015 3:14 PM  
**To:** Local Government Mailbox  
**Subject:** Coffs Harbour City Council - ratepayer submission

Re: OBJECTION TO COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL RATE VARIATION APPLICATION

Attention: The Local Government Team

Dear Team,

As Coffs Harbour ratepayers for the best part of 35 years, we wish to submit this email as a protest against the decision by Coffs Harbour City Council on 12 February 2015 to reapply for a 16.5% cumulative permanent rate increase over the next 2 years, over and above the already approved 7.9%.

In its second attempt at getting these rises approved Council believes it can appease ratepayers and IPART by freezing water and sewerage rates for 2 years.....and giving 5,500 rural ratepayers – which includes a lot of rural residential ratepayers - a \$15 discount on their septic system inspection fees.

Under Council's latest scheme these 5,500 rural ratepayers - owners of properties with no Council sewerage service, most of whom collect their own water – get to pay the full extra rate rises of about 8% a year, while the residential ratepayers with full services get to pay “no more than 3.9% a year” extra.

In round figures that's 4% or around \$80 a year extra for the average rural ratepayer compared with a residential ratepayer. The \$15 sewerage inspection discount offered as a “sweetener” to rural ratepayers is a joke.....with inspections required either once every 2 or 5 years depending on classification, this equates to either \$7.50 or \$3.00 a year discount.

Mayor Knight blames Council's financial situation on amongst other things “Cost Shifting” .....but what this proposal amounts to is nothing more than just that – Cost Shifting the full burden of the extra rate rises onto the rural and rural residential ratepayers.

Council's original application saw a lengthy “community consultation” process including 3 different surveys which returned results ranging from 71.4% to 88% of respondents opposed to the rate increases.....but this resounding NO vote fell on deaf ears.

On 29 January Council was presented with a 1,450 signature petition from concerned ratepayers objecting to the proposal and calling on Council to abandon its plans.....this petition too appears to have fallen on deaf ears.

For Council to now turn around and reveal their latest scheme via the local newspaper just one day before the Council meeting to vote on the proposal, without any prior consultation with ratepayers, and in particular rural and rural residential ratepayers, is a farce.

We call on IPART to totally reject Council's latest bid to increase rates, and send it back to the drawing board.

We would appreciate your acknowledgement of this email, thank you.

Kind regards,