



Ref: CM/010321

1st March 2021

Dr Paul Paterson
Chair
Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal
localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Paterson

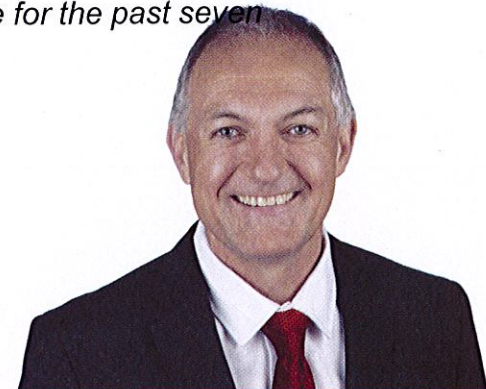
Central Coast Council application for Special Rate Variation

I write on behalf of Central Coast Ratepayers in regards to Central Coast Councils Special Rate variation application and ask that you consider carefully all of the circumstances.

I state strongly that the current financial position of Central Coast Council is not the fault of ratepayers and they should not be penalised through excessive rate rises.

I ask you to consider the following points:

- *This application should be considered in light of the fact that for many ratepayers on the Central Coast the SRV will occur in conjunction with rate harmonisation because of the merger of Wyong and Gosford Councils. In some cases the combined rate rise will not be ten or fifteen per cent but in some cases up to 47 per cent any SRV should be considered as an impact which includes harmonisation.*
- *Ratepayers of the former Wyong shire Council had already been subjected to an SRV which has seen them paying considerably more for the past seven years.*



- *I have serious concerns that this SRV is partially being applied for because Council believes it lost \$39 million dollars of income due to IPARTS decision on water charges on the Central Coast. I strongly believe Central Coast Council should make application to increase water rates separately rather than trying to claw this loss income back through a rate rise. The water, sewerage operation and general operations of the Council should be viewed separately as it is in other Council areas where Sydney and Hunter Water operates. Currently Council includes the water and sewerage operations in its general accounting which I believe has led to some of the financial issues.*

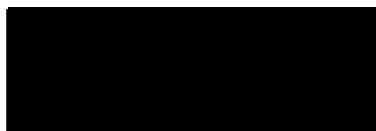
The Central Coast has one of the lowest mean incomes in the country with many residents on fixed incomes. With the Councils submission for a Special Rate Variation on top of rate harmonisation it will mean for ratepayers a substantial financial shock.

Average Income Central Coast	
Median weekly household income	\$1,242
Median monthly mortgage repayments	\$1,733
Median weekly rent	\$350

It has to understand that any significant rate rise will impact on the renters market which is already experiencing great stress.

I ask IPART in their determination to strongly consider the financial impact of a 10 or 15% Special Rate Variation in the context of the points I have raised and considering a much lower increase if any outside rate harmonisation.

Yours sincerely



DAVID HARRIS MP
Member for Wyong
Shadow Minister for Central Coast
Shadow Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty
Shadow Minister for Regional Transport