

Author name: A. Ritter

Date of submission: Monday, 17 March 2025

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Id like to see the business and farming rates down more. Local grassroots economies need more support, and Im sure everyone in the town knows our local businesses need a break. Otherwise we will have nothing but two supermarkets and two service stations left.

Author name: B. Swain

Date of submission: Friday, 21 March 2025

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

To IPART Attention Carmel Donnelly In accordance with Council requirement to consult with the rate payers, I attended a packed meeting at the Town Hall. All personas present including myself objected to the exorbitant rate rise. In support of my objection, I put forward I am 72 years of age requiring my financial income from primary production. Due to my age I am required to employ people to operate the business. I have to manage and operate withing my budget, something the Gunnedah Shire Manager is incapable of without a rate rise of 42%. All rates allocated only covers the Council employees wages, which the General Manager has increased from 160 to 242 personnel, thus giving himself a 4.3% pay rise within the 12 months of taking over the GM position. As a Rural Rate payer, I get absolutely no benefit from my rates already paid.

Author name: D. Dawson

Date of submission: Friday, 21 March 2025

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

To IPART Objection to Gunnedah Shire Council proposed rate rise. As a rural rate payer in the Gunnedah Shire, why am I expected to pay a 42% proposed increase by the General manager Eric GROTH to cover his incompetence. If I ran my rural business as inefficiently as the shire would be bankrupt. Rural productions not a guaranteed steady income. It fluctuates with seasons and markets. The worse seasonal condition is drought. Outgoing costs have to be met. The loss of livestock and, or crops have to be replaced without any income. Floods can wipe out income for a year. The outgoing costs of a replanting operation success relies on that crop not being destroyed by hail or lack of follow up rain. The GM Eric Groth is a urban dweller who received a \$400K PA wage regardless of season conditions. He has no idea of rural business operations. The GM Groth has increased the staff by 33% from 160 to 242 involving 100%of rate monies received consumed by wages. The Gunnedah Mayor has never run a business and has been unemployed for the past 30 years. The mayor and her fellow Councilors prior to election all purported to not support a rate rise, deceiving the residents once elected. Consultation meetings were held at Gunnedah and surrounding villages where all attendees without exception condemned a rate rise. GM Groth has since implied to IPART that the general public has agreed to increase. As a rural producer I cannot increase my commodities by 42% to cover my running costs. I have to work more efficiently and within my budget and allow for unforeseen seasonal failures. I get no benefit from shire rates; rural occupiers have to pay to dispose of rubbish. Any increase is just another financial burden on rural producers, especially during seasonal failures when outgoing monies exceed any income. Rate payers have to endure another two years of incompetence by GM Eric Groth before his contract expires. We would not have to endure an exorbitant rate rise due to his inefficient management. He is not elected, cannot be terminated and may well have a contract renewed to the detriment of rate payers. D Dawson

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 2 March 2025

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

They pushed through a special rates variation a short time ago, maybe 1 year. Why should they want or need another!? Let alone so soon! This decision is abhorrent, we must already pay some of the highest rates in the country and we do not have the population or infrastructure to sustain let alone warrant such a massive rate increase! If this rise is pushed through there will be a lot of homes for sale and residents will leave. This is unnecessary and greedy. Council should seek other ways of raising money rather than hitting the pockets of those trying to live and survive out here. Things are already unaffordable, let alone adding this. Insanity!

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 24 March 2025

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Submission to IPART regarding Gunnedah Shire Council seeking to obtain a Special Rate Variation. I do not believe this SRV as submitted by Gunnedah Shire Council is warranted. The percentage increase sought is far too high and over only two years and if approved will result in severe financial distress for many Gunnedah ratepayers. We are in the midst of a cost of living crisis and this has severely affected the budgets of many and to add further costs onto ratepayers at this time is unduly harsh. Rather than undertake significant cost saving measures such as a staff reduction program and postponing infrastructure programs that are not warranted at this time Gunnedah Shire Council instead has decided that ratepayers should just pay more while Council is not prepared to share any of the financial pain. Spending by Council on projects that have not benefitted the ratepayers has contributed to the Council's poor financial position and now ratepayers are being asked to reward Council with increased rates to fund their mismanagement. Council has spent a significant amount of money on upgrading our airport even though Gunnedah hasn't had a commercial air service for many years. Despite this upgrade the possibility of a commercial air service coming to Gunnedah in the foreseeable future would appear to be very remote. Council has built a Koala Visitation Centre with the assistance of various Government funding plus their funds which sits vacant as Council cannot find an operator to run the centre. Council has upgrades planned for Kitchener Park which involve turning the facility from an oval into a rectangular playing surface with associated expenditure on new fencing etc. Kitchener Oval has served this community in this current configuration for decades allowing dual usage for Rugby League and Cricket. The lighting was upgraded a few years ago to allow for night cricket matches but Council want to spend valuable funds on an upgraded new location which is not needed as existing fence is 1800 and not in need of replacing which council proposes. Not only is that, but the new location they have chosen is in the flood zone. Why spend money to relocate when there is nothing wrong with the existing facility and they currently have multiple users to pay. Council wasted money changing the Koala signs and logo for Gunnedah Shire to a different design and at the same time wanting Gunnedah to have a Koala park. How much money was wasted on that as they had to change all stationery, all signs to Gunnedah staff uniforms and logo on front of the Gunnedah Shire building? Council is a monopoly and has no direct competitor so why was money wasted on a new logo? They want to install new led light advertisement board at the parks which you cannot read and watch where you are supposed to drive and not cause an accident. Council have no idea how to budget. The general manager was given a pay rise for a job well done, how can that be when they are in a financial debt, shouldn't be his job to cost save. Rate payers supply council cars which staff use for personal use and the ratepayers are paying for their fuel which some don't live in Gunnedah and travel to Tamworth on a daily basis to their homes and thus their wages are spent in another town. Why should we supply cars and petrol to staff for personal use, Banks stopped this practice in the 1990s. There are plenty of cost cuts they could employ like council supplied cars and petrol and reduce indoor staff as there is more indoor staff than outdoor staff. Consultants need to be dismissed as they design new projects to replace existing functional facilities. In summary, my submission is firmly against the granting of this SRV, Gunnedah Shire Council needs to seriously undertake cost cutting measures to reign in their spending or they will be back at IPART in a few years seeking another SRV. We are living in a time of increasing costs and most households are undertaking cost saving measures to their everyday living expenses to make ends meet, Gunnedah Shire Council should be doing the same. Regards



Author name: S. Schutz

Date of submission: Saturday, 1 March 2025

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I would like to a pose this as I believe that the council do not manage the assets or money well

Author name: S. Weakley

Date of submission: Monday, 17 March 2025

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I was unable to complete a submission to Council about the proposed Rates (tax) increase before submissions closed so I write to express my opposition to it now with recent elections complete and a new council having decided to continue with this rate variation application. If a 38% increase over two years to enable the current financial course recommended in previous budgets and endorsed by those councils is granted, Council will merely plough on in an obviously wrong direction. If this increase is not granted, there are many different budget measures that could be chosen instead. I wanted to ask the councilors the following questions about the likely impact on the Shire of the proposed increase: - What is the Current rates default level ? number of ratepayers, total \$ in arrears, total spent on debt collectors. This will likely increase dramatically if a 38% rate increase is locked in, especially when ratepayers are struggling financially already. - What will be the effect on the different ratepaying groups in Gunnedah: o Home owners, mostly with large and increasing debt repayments as interest rates rise or hold at current increased levels, will face a dramatic rate increase as well. o Rental property owners may exit the market considering the addition of this increase to the already extreme profit squeeze they are in, and the selling pressure they introduce to the housing market may have unintended consequences. Or they will pass on the increase to Rental tenants, adding to the financial pressures this group already faces. o Rural ratepayers are already the group with the highest rates (based purely on property values, not services received, and this measure only has any relevance to capacity to pay if the property is sold while farm operations continue, it has no bearing on capacity to contribute to the budget of the whole Shire) and the least services (mostly no services). Are there any estimates of the detrimental effect on this group, who provide actual primary income to the district? o Business owners they face a disproportionate rate burden already, and will also suffer the double hit as town spending will be reduced as council confiscates the rate increase (around \$6mill per year plus Rate Peg in every subsequent year) from circulation. What is the estimated effect of removing that local spending total on the town retail sector, since transferring expenditure between categories is the only option for ratepayers? I have read the whole Council submission, but the most important part is the closing statement, which is a threat aimed largely at rural ratepayers. Pay 38% extra, or your roads will just get worse and worse. This council has a lot of form seeking Special Rate Increases, recalling the 2013 application, for similar reasons and "sold" as a "one-off" increase. But here we are again. Not to mention it always takes the maximum "rate peg" variation allowed, giving a real percentage increase every single year in Rates applied across the Shire. In terms of the budget measures called for by council finance staff, my response as a ratepayer is homework returned being unsatisfactory. Do it again, with a focus on pruning expenses, and working within the same restrictions we all have to. This is what every ratepayer already has to do with their own budgets, when electricity, food, fuel and other essentials have increased in price, but incomes have not. Finally, regarding the myth of maintaining needed service levels: Personally, apart from Garbage collection which thankfully is quarantined from the main council budget, I can't think of a service of council that I would miss. Not one. This is not being blinkered, as an earthmoving contractor I have observed first hand how incompetent the Planning Department of Council is. It radically inflates the cost of property development and housing construction at every stage of the process, and introduces lengthy delays as well with largely nonsensical and often contradictory requirements. In my considered opinion, no regulation would be preferable to the current self appointed mess. At least only the unwary would be ripped off, instead of everyone as it is at present. Ratepayers are affected by inflation pressures and cost increases every bit as much as Council is, but without the option of imposing a catastrophic legally enforceable tax increase to enable bloated admin and staff costs to continue without consequence. I ask ipart to reject this application, as many of the requirements for such a large increase have not been met. I do not know how many have been able to lodge submissions, but I know of hundreds of business owners and farmers who feel the same as I do and reject this rate increase as damaging, unjustified, and indeed absurd. Many have lost hope in sensible Council action, and fully expect the Shire Council Administration to continue to parasitise its host, the ratepayers of this Shire, until the host dies.