

From: Cr Vincent De Luca [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 20 March 2014 5:05 PM
To: IPART Mailbox
Subject: Submission Warringah Council rate variation application

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to object to Warringah Council's application for a special rate variation.

Warringah Council had been found by independent review to be one of the most wealthy and financially stable in this state. Council has a high performing investment portfolio with strong returns. Another independent report on competitive analyses also found that Warringah Council spends more on administration than most other Councils in this State.

Resident submissions overwhelmingly opposed an increase. Of written submissions received by Council, only two were in favour of the rise - one a Pony Club which has been the benefactor of Council grants, the other a sporting organisation that is not representative of ratepayers. Hundreds of submissions opposed the increase.

There are resourcing alternatives and cost savings that could be made by Council by reviewing the following excessive expenditure and implementing cuts:

- Warringah Council General Manager, Rik Hart's salary package - \$396,748.56pa and his two Assistant GM's on a total of \$572,953.36 pa.
- Warringah Council employee's benefits and on costs amounted to \$57,607 million last financial year, a significant rise from the previous financial year.
- \$1,715,634 million on its Media and Marketing Unit.
- \$1,657,377 on the purchase of cars for staff's private use – these include a Jaguar, Mercedes CLK, Audi A3, Jeep Laredo and VW Polo.
- \$500,000 on a new Warringah Council website and social media campaign.
- \$318,473.60 on non-statutory advertising in the *Manly Daily* in 2012-13.
- \$56,892 expended on the YES campaign regarding the Special Rate Variation.
- \$50,115 on a outside Ice Rink for 10 days during the summer Christmas period.
- \$27,000 to draw a new "W" stick logo to replace the Council's flannel flower logo and \$2,238 for the party to launch it and \$6,985 on advertising to try and justify the new logo.
- \$22,830 on an Old Tram that has no heritage significance to Warringah or the northern beaches.
- \$15,518.56 on two off-site Councillor weekends.

Advertising by Council of the proposed special rate variation did not properly address the impact of any rises upon the community. It concerns me greatly that Council spent nearly \$57,000 on an advertising campaign promoting why the special rate variation should proceed. The documents represented that the decision was a fete accompli in that it was stated "Your Councillors propose a special rate variation" – at this time no Councillor had voted in favour. The documents also contained various misleading statements that assets and services would have to be cut unless the variation was approved.

The impact on rate-payers, particularly those who are elderly (many of whom reside in Warringah and are asset rich and cash poor), families and every people will be significantly adverse affected by this proposal and it is manifestly unreasonable. All Council has said to address any concerns is it will make it easier on Council's website for people to apply for concessions. The majority in our community do not have the capacity to pay.

I do not believe the proposed Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan shows evidence of realistic assumptions.

Council has failed to ensure productivity improvements and cost containment strategies in past years, and as an elected Councillor of Warringah I strongly believe there are no plans to realise over the special variation period measures to cut unnecessary bureaucratic costs and other wasteful expenditure as outlined earlier.

Yours faithfully

Councillor Vincent De Luca OAM
Warringah Councillor for 'A' Ward

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the councillor.