



Alister Henskens SC MP

Member for Wahroonga



9 March 2026

Mr. Andrew Nicholls PSM
Chief Executive Officer
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240
ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Nicolls,

Re: Special Rate Variation Application 2026-27 Ku-ring-gai Council

I write representing many of my constituents in opposing the Special Rate Application submitted by Ku-ring-gai Council to The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal which seeks to increase rates income above the rate peg.

On 21 October 2025, Ku-ring-gai Council voted to pursue a combined rate and Special Rate Variation which will increase rates by 29%.

Two separate Council surveys show overwhelming community opposition to the proposed 29% rate rise:

- An opt-in survey of 4,515 people found only 12% support the increase, and
- A randomly selected survey of 400 residents found only 13% support the increase.
- Across both surveys, 78% of residents preferred a lesser rate rise than the Council proposal.

I have conducted my own opt in survey and received community feedback which displays substantial community opposition to the SRV.

My constituents are concerned about Ku-ring-gai Council's proposed 29% rate rise, at a time when households and businesses continue to face significant cost-of-living pressures. If approved, the 29% increase would see average household rates rise by around \$500 a year and business rates up to \$1,600 a year. This is a blow for residents, particularly those on a fixed income.

I also share a concern that Council is applying for rate increases not to substantially add to new community infrastructure but in order to prop up its past poor financial management. Rather than invest in the new infrastructure needed by the community, Council has a poor history of wasting significant sums on projects which have had poor financial management resulting in cost overruns.

Contact
Alister

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For example, prior to 2019 it was proposed that Council invest in a 4 court Indoor Sports Centre in conjunction with the NSW Department of Education. Discussions eventually concluded upon St Ives High School as the best site of a much-needed indoor sports facility in the Local Government Area. At the time of this investment, there was no public indoor sports facility in the Ku-ring-gai LGA despite considerable increasing demand for indoor sports such as basketball, netball, table tennis and badminton. The agreement between Council and the NSW Education Department involved each party delivering 2 basketball courts and other associated parts of the project.

The Department of Education's Schools Infrastructure department developed an agreed scope and became frustrated with the delays of the Council in developing the project including the signing a head of agreement. Because of the demand for hall space at the school, Schools Infrastructure proceeded to obtain necessary approvals and enter into a construction contract to build 2 multi-use courts, school canteen, 2 modern classrooms, a fitness lab and a seminar room as part of the project and the agreed NSW Government stage was completed in 2021. Council's part of the project included a further 2 courts, a carpark, café, tiered seating and multipurpose room.

In or about 2019 when the Department of Education Infrastructure section entered into a construction contract for its stage of the development, the contract was drafted in such a manner that it could be novated to add the Council as a party and expand the scope of works to include the Council component of the project including an additional two courts and carpark. Council was afforded the opportunity to obtain a speedy development approval under the Education SEPP and low-interest rate funding by the NSW Government through TCorp. This would have not only allowed for a speedy delivery of the Council's part of the project but also the ability to save substantial costs in site establishment, site dismantling and also would have rendered it unnecessary to construct a curtain and retaining wall (in the middle of where the 4 courts would ultimately be constructed as the end of the project). These additional costs would be saved if the Department of Education's part of the project was delivered at the same time as the Council part of the project was constructed. Estimates at the time as to the cost to Council of its part of a novated contract were about \$10m if it chose to take up this opportunity.

Instead, Council elected to not take up this option and to proceed with its agreed part of the project itself. It decided to spend over \$1m more on a conventional DA rather than using the Education SEPP available to it, which effectively precluded it from using the opportunity to operate under a novation to the NSW Government's construction contract. The delay risked Ku-ring-gai Council being able to utilise a \$3.5 million time sensitive grant towards the cost of the Council stage of the project as well as the additional costs noted above. The Council's component of the project was just recently opened five years after the completion of the Education Department's two courts.

If the project not been delayed by Council and gone ahead as suggested by the Department of Education under one construction contract, the final cost to Council would have been about 2/3 less or about \$20m less than Council has now paid. The deferral of investment in this project by Council was at a much greater cost to ratepayers than it needed to be

however, Council is now citing the repayment of the loan on the Centre as one of the reasons for the rate increase. Contemporaneous documents in relation to this matter, can be supplied if required.

Similarly, Council's project at Norman Griffith Oval, West Pymble, which aimed to convert a natural grass field into a synthetic turf sports facility, was first announced in 2016 after council obtained a \$500,000 NSW Government grant and has still not been delivered. The project always has been wholly under the control of the Council. It has faced numerous Council initiated delays and more recently the contractor was terminated mid delivery of the upgrade which experience in construction contracts suggests will greatly add to the cost of the project. The construction is still incomplete about 9 years after being announced. Costs for this project have blown out from around \$3.3 million budgeted in 2021 to \$7m spent to date with a current estimate of \$12.4 - 13.4 million upon completion. The financial overruns and delay in completion show an appalling lack of project management oversight.

In addition to these two projects, there is a long history of poor infrastructure delivery by Council with substantial cost over runs into the many tens of millions of dollars with regards to another two projects involving the North Turramurra Golf Course and West Pymble pool. Rather than demonstrate improvement in infrastructure delivery processes, Council is now seeking a rate increase instead.

About 10 years ago, Council received an unsolicited proposal by Woolworths to develop the Lindfield Village Hub with no cost to Council as Woolworths has done with other councils like Lane Cove. Council rejected this no cost option and instead, decided to do the project itself. Council's failure to finalise the Lindfield Village Hub project after 10 years of planning and around \$11 million invested in the planning phase is another example of Council's inability to properly manage infrastructure projects and ratepayers' funds. Additionally, the delay in progressing the project saw the current State Government announce it would withdraw a grant of \$9.8 million in funding for 135 additional commuter parking space which had been granted by the previous State Government.

The delay in the progression of the Lindfield Village Hub project has also resulted in the Turramurra Hub Masterplan being pushed back with no current timeline in place.

Council's substantial investment in 2012 of \$22.5m to acquire a building at 828 Pacific Highway, Gordon to accommodate the relocation of council staff continues to be an underperforming asset which has never been used for the purpose it was acquired. The building was purchased in 2012 to completely relocate the council staff from its then (and now) staff accommodation due to the alleged occupational safety risks with the now (and then) staff accommodation. Despite the risks of rising damp in 2012 said to justify the acquisition, staff were never all relocated to the new premises at 828 Pacific Highway, and the overwhelming majority of Council staff still work in the administration building that they used at the time of the acquisition in 2012. The building at 828 Pacific Highway remained largely unoccupied from its acquisition around 2012 until after 2015 when Council had to demonstrate it was "Fit for the Future." In or about 2015/2016 Council proceeded to advertise the property (for first time since it lay unoccupied since its acquisition) for long term

rental arrangements with third parties with regards to most of the premises at 828 Pacific Highway. This property which is still owned by Council and leased to third parties has been a significant commercial investment in an asset that is not available or used for community-oriented purposes. It is an asset which could be sold and provide financial resources to the Council instead of the proposed rate increase.

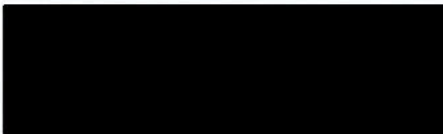
I have sought feedback from my community, and many share my concerns about the proposed rate increase. I share some of their comments below:

- “It is an outrageous proposal, particularly during a continuing cost of living crisis and for many retirees and people on fixed incomes. The council should be looking at ways to reduce costs, including paying senior staff more appropriately (how can some Council staff be paid more than the NSW Premier)?”
- “Absolutely disgraceful. We retired people just can’t afford a large increase in council rates.”
- “Excessive regulation and cumbersome processes build low productivity at high cost into most dealings with Council. Council lacks credibility in seeking a major rate increase until it simplifies regulation and lifts productivity.”
- “As a Pensioner I cannot afford the proposed 29% increase when costs for everything else is climbing.”
- “Very unhappy about proposes 29% rate rise. Cut costs.”
- “At a time when household budgets are being stretched, not least as a result of rapidly rising energy costs, for retirees in particular, a 29% rise in rates is unconscionable. At this time, any rate rise should be carefully considered and specially targeted for comprehensibly researched needs.”
- “I believe the Council has not been diligent with the rate payer’s funds and are expecting the ratepayers to pay for their errors. The ratepayers deserve better treatment, and a rate rise is not the way to justify this. It’s time the Council stopped overspending at the rate payer’s expense.”
- “Ku-ring-gai residents are already struggling with rising mortgage repayments and cost-of-living pressures, and a rate increase would place even more strain on families who are simply trying to keep up. Before asking the community for more money, the Council should address its own spending inefficiencies. The repeated replacement of perfectly functional footpaths is a clear example of unnecessary expenditure that wastes ratepayer funds. Given the current financial pressures on households and the evident waste in recent projects, this proposed rate rise is unreasonable and unjustified. The Council should prioritise responsible spending, not higher rates.”
- “A 29% increase is not acceptable. The Ku-ring-gai Council have not even tried to communicate or substantiate this proposed increase to residents.”
- “It is far too high, I cannot understand why they could not have considered a lower increase of 3% ~ 10%, that would still be expensive for residents but surely they could deal with some of the backlog with a lower increase. New development work should be scrapped or delayed.”

As I speak with residents, I hear that mortgage stress is significant in our area (especially due to rising interest rates on substantial mortgages to buy in this LGA) and pensioners are being stretched by ever increasing prices. I share my constituents concerns that at a time when they are being asked to find savings to cover cost of living increases, Ku-ring-gai Council has not sufficiently investigated ways to better manage its existing infrastructure and further cut its costs. Productivity improvements have not been demonstrated rather than a tax increase. Council's proposal deserves deep exploration and explanation as to why Council should be trusted to manage a substantial increase in revenue from its ratepayers.

I urge IPART to reject Ku-ring-gai Council's rate increase application which does not reflect the feedback from Council's consultation, would reward Council for its historically poor financial management and would be put in place with no real explanation by Council as to why savings could not be found.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Alister Henskens.

Alister Henskens SC MP

Author name: A. Naderi

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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 do not support rate increase above normal inflation rates.

Author name: A. Vowell

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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).

With so many cost of living increases, and more interest rate rises in the future, now is not the time for Ku-ring-gai Council to embark on a bold new infrastructure refurbishment and construction program. The facilities are good, and the community can keep them as is for the next 3-4 years. Council can raise rates and make the improvements in 3-4 years when the community is not as stressed financially as it is now. Raising rates now is not in the best interests of the community. Many people will be taking second/third jobs instead of enjoying new refurbished infrastructure.

Author name: D. Boyce

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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).

Ku-Ring-Gai council has not identified future savings in developing its future budget requirements. It has only identified the need for additional spending and much of this proposed spending is on discretionary items which should not be entertained in the current economic environment. Ku-Ring-Gai council needs to develop a new budget in line with their current budget by identifying significant savings through productivity improvement and elimination of all current and proposed discretionary spending items.

Author name: I. Eitzen

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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).

For pensioners being asked by the NSW Government to remain in their own homes and not become reliant on state assisted housing, this increase in rates, way above CPI, is a kick in the teeth in the current cost of living crisis. To date the council are yet to provide details (beyond the glossy pamphlet received with our recent rates bill), sufficient details explaining why the need for this excessive increase.

Author name: I. Lewis

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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 strongly object to Ku-ring-gai Council's proposed 29% rate increase. This increase is already excessive. However, my most recent rates notice shows an additional \$200 increase that does not appear to be included within the stated 29%. This raises serious concerns about transparency. For many residents, the actual increase will be significantly more than 29%. The community deserves clarity about the true total impact on households. At a time when families are already under sustained cost-of-living pressure, this proposal is unreasonable and unjustified. Furthermore, continued large-scale development approvals are placing unsustainable pressure on our area. Our infrastructure is already strained. We do not have capacity for more roads, schools, parking, or essential services. There is simply no physical space to expand infrastructure to match the pace of development. Increasing rates while simultaneously intensifying development is contradictory and unfair to existing residents. In my submission to IPART, I call for this proposal to be rejected. The Council has not demonstrated that the increase is supported by the community, nor has it adequately shown that all reasonable cost savings and efficiency measures have been fully explored for the coming years. Residents should not be asked to fund financial shortfalls without clear evidence of fiscal discipline, genuine community support, and transparent accounting. I respectfully urge that this proposal be refused.

Author name: J. Duggan

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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 am totally opposed to the increases proposed by Kur ring gai Council. They will increase the pressure on families at a time when they can least afford it. The Council should look much more closely at reducing their proposed spending and, literally, cut your coat according to your cloth. Council cannot merely use words to reflect the struggles of families. Deeds rather than just words.

Author name: K. Condon

Date of submission: Wednesday, 18 February 2026

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 the council to start cost cutting measures instead of a dramatic rate increase. This is going to hurt all rate payers if this huge 29% increase is approved. We are in a cost of living crisis. Most families are living pay to pay and are barely scraping by. I cant imagine this will be backed by the community as everyone I have spoken to is adamantly against this measure. Remember you are suppose to work for us! You are suppose to have our backs and advocate for us.

Author name: K. Kim

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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).

the rate increase is too much. the rate increase is unaffordable. Especially when the existing funds are not all used properly, but wasted a lot on useless things like ripping up existing flowers and planting new flowers at the East Lindfield village car park.

Author name: M. Manville

Date of submission: Thursday, 5 March 2026

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).

It has only been in the last year or so since the last rate increase and as a retiree this proposed increase of such a magnitude will put a larger burden on an already tight household budget. Our council services, as far as I can see, have not differed or improved from year to year, so one could contend that this request for such a large increase by Ku-ring-gai Council is probably not based upon anything else but a lack of fiscal responsibility on their behalf. It behoves them work within their budget as we rate payers have to do with what ever income we have to work with. For Ku-ring-gai Council this is something they would have to plan for and not be profligate with the rates they already collect. I would urge that this request by Ku-ring-gai Council be denied and that the rates be purely subject to the State Valuer General's three yearly valuations.

Author name: M. Tan

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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 oppose to the Council's submission for an increase to the rates. I The proposed increase is extremely high and at a time when cost of living pressures are extreme, council had NOT listened to the electorate residents to look into cost savings elsewhere.

Author name: M. Thornton

Date of submission: Thursday, 5 March 2026

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 wholeheartedly reject Ku-ring-gai Council's rate increases as advertised on the grounds that this substantial rise will place unwanted and undue added stress on my household budget and the budgets of other rate payers. This application for such a rise comes at a time when the cost of living is forefront in everyone's minds and is causing alarming stress and financial burden on all. I urge that restraint be exercised in this matter and that Ku-ring-gai Council be put on notice that cost savings should be explored and priorities set that see their current budgets improved. This council area, with its increasing number of medium density housing is attracting higher than ever rate payments. Surely this increase in the number of rate payers means that this greater income should be sufficient and managed well enough to restrict rate rises at this particular time.

Author name: R. Maritz

Date of submission: Monday, 9 March 2026

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 disagree with the out of touch, with reality rate rise proposed by the council. This increase is being proposed at a time when households and local businesses are already facing significant cost-of-living pressures.

Author name: T. Little

Date of submission: Thursday, 5 March 2026

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 do not support any increasing rates and taxes at any level.

Author name: M. Cross

Date of submission: Saturday, 7 March 2026

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).

Mr. Nicholls, Please find attached my formal submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal regarding Ku-ring-gai Council Special Rate Variation that I oppose due to: 1) The proposal is not supported by the community 2) Ku-ring-gai Council has not found further savings Yours sincerely, Matt Cross MP Member for Davidson Parliament of New South Wales



4 March 2026

Mr. Andrew Nicholls PSM
Chief Executive Officer
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240
ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Nicolls,

Re: Ku-ring-gai Council Special Rate Variation

I write regarding the application by Ku-ring-gai Council to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to increase rates income above the rate peg.

Ku-ring-gai Council is seeking a permanent 29% increase in rates from 1 July 2026 under section 508(2) of the Local Government Act 1993.

If approved, this would mean an average annual increase of:

- **\$499 for households** (approximately \$9.60 per week)
- **\$1,676 for businesses** (approximately \$32.23 per week)

I urge IPART to reject this application for the following reasons.

1. The proposal is not supported by the community

Ku-ring-gai Council undertook community consultation between 21 July 2025 and 1 September 2025, as outlined in the [Rate Increase Options Community Engagement Outcomes Report](#).

Two consultation methods were used:

- **Opt-in survey of 4,515 people**
- **Representative (randomly selected) survey of 400 people**

When considering respondents' highest preference, support for the 29% increase was extremely low.

I note the results based on the highest preferences:

- **Opt-in survey: 12% support**
- **Representative (randomly selected) survey: 13% support**

In addition, I conducted a [community petition](#) that was signed by **1,394 residents and business owners**:

We, the undersigned, call on Ku-ring-gai Council to reject a 29% rate rise at a time when households and businesses are facing extreme cost-of-living pressures.

Consultation by the Council has shown overwhelming opposition by the community to the 29% rate rise.

For privacy reasons, I have not included the names or contact details of the signatories.

The petition included hundreds of personal submissions from residents explaining the real impact this rate rise would have. A selection is provided below:

"Pressure on single parent single income. Rate increase should be gradual and staggered, not one huge increase."

"Not justifiable with the cost of living and cost of housing already so high. Council needs to look for savings and economise like everyone else."

"A proposed rate rise of 29% would pose an unduly harsh and unreasonable burden on retired residents such as myself who have no hope of increasing income to cover this."

"This would put extreme pressure onto our family who are already struggling with the current cost of living challenges, extreme childcare costs and high increases on utilities and insurance premiums. A 29% increase is ridiculous and completely out of touch with the community."

"A rate rise which is 10 times the rate of inflation is totally unacceptable - households and business is having to tighten belts so why shouldn't the Council."

"It would mean that my family and my boys may have to not do their community Saturday sport. There is so much money that was wasted by the council in the past many years already."

"It would mean reduced disposable income in the cost-of-living crisis. Council should investigate and remove inefficiencies and wastes, streamline processes and reduce unnecessary headcount, before hiking rates."

"It will mean significant additional pressure to our budget, also reduced ability to save and spend locally."

“Cannot afford that much of 29% increase and job insecure, salary not increase like this high, also not any improvement in my local infrastructure, where is Lindfield hub? Any update?”

“It is too big a jump and will put additional financial stress on the household. I also don't believe the council will effectively utilise the additional funds. Like all of us they need to prioritise spending effectively and efficiently with a view to future plans. Responsible spending is key.”

These submissions reflect the serious cost-of-living pressures currently facing residents and businesses across Ku-ring-gai.

2) Ku-ring-gai Council has not found further savings

I am concerned that Ku-ring-gai Council has not undertaken sufficient efforts to identify further savings in the coming years, before seeking a one-off permanent rate rise.

This concern is reinforced by the [Council's consultation material](#), which stated that:

“Further scope for cost savings is limited.”

Households and businesses across Ku-ring-gai are already making difficult financial decisions to manage rising costs. Local government should be held to the same standard of financial discipline.

At a time of significant economic pressure, councils should prioritise internal savings before seeking substantial increases from ratepayers.

Conclusion

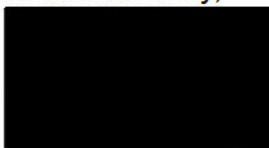
For these reasons, I respectfully urge IPART to reject Ku-ring-gai Council's application for a permanent 29% rate rise.

Approving such an increase would risk sending two troubling signals:

- That the consultation process is ignored, unresponsive and to be blunt, “a sham”.
- That councils can avoid identifying savings and instead pass rising costs directly to households and businesses.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely,



Matt Cross MP
Member for Davidson

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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).

This council rate increase is being proposed at a time when households and local businesses are already facing significant cost-of-living pressures. Personally, my husband and myself as retirees, has already reduced our daily expenses to a minimum to save money. The increase indeed is a big concern to us. As well, Community consultation undertaken by the Council has shown overwhelming opposition to this proposal. Hence, I write to calling for the proposal of rate increase to be rejected.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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).

Please could my objection to the proposed 30% rate rise in Kuringai be noted in the context of a cost of living crisis. I understand that costs increase for the council however this increase is well in excess of inflation.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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).

The council needs to look inward and modify its cost base to contribute to their expenditure need. Several unnecessary areas of expenditure should be trimmed incl enormous salaries. And where are the development levies that were due to be spent on capital improvements?

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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 am totally against the raising of the Council rates by 29% for a number of reasons. They currently waste money on unnecessary things, such as highly expensive entertainment events, specifically for the mayor and councilors, held outside the LGA when they could support local businesses and use the Council Chambers for such events. They have not demonstrated any improvement in their performance or value add to our community. It is shocking it take up to 3 months to get response from emails etc. and more often than not calls are not returned. There has been no supporting information regarding the need for such a large increase. The Council has also given away use of playing fields to other organizations supplying services not specifically for our LGA. I believe if the rent for such amenities were applied the Council would receive additional revenue to offset any need for over inflated rate increases. The Council has stopped the sweeping of gutters along roadways, this added to the lack of pavements is a safety issue as residents cannot walk on the grass covered in leaves and branches as well as the edge of the roadway. If the Council had been working more effectively for its community and were able to demonstrate significant value add initiatives and outcomes then an increase may be considered warranted but even then a 29% is still far too high. Unfortunately the Mayor and her Councilors are seen as not working for the community which is a shame, as many of the previous office holders have been.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

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).

Ku-ring-gai council presented a survey which had 3 options for rate increases, including a more moderate option which would, according to their letter, allow for maintaining current infrastructure and improving some infrastructure. The 29% increase was to implement the entire council's wish list of proposed developments. The council has not demonstrated sufficient cost-saving measures, or prioritised desired improvements at a time when everyone is financially stretched. I would not be opposed to a more moderate rate increase, but 29% is simply gouging.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 5 March 2026

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).

Hello. As an aged pensioner living on a Centrelink pension, I find the Ku-ring-gai Council's proposed 29% rate rise really concerning. With the current rate of inflation, everything is expensive and pensioners like myself can ill afford to now cop a huge increase in rates for inadequate council services. To date, the road that I live on in Roseville Chase remains uncared for by council. As we are the last road on the council's eastern border we hardly ever get the road sweeper and trees that fall on the road have to be cleared by the residents, as it takes too long for a council response. This is NOT due to council lack of funds or workforce, but a lazy workforce in the area daily, supposedly to work on the Roseville Oval. Litter abounds in the bush on either sides of Chase Ave, Ormonde Rd and Cardigan Rd. This could easily be maintained to by council workers who are wasting taxpayers money by sitting in their trucks on Roseville Oval for hours running their engines to keep their cab air conditioners cool. The oval seems to be a regular hangout for workers, sometimes up to six or seven council UTE's and trucks for hours on end all running their engines non stop wasting petrol. I have witnessed this many times on my daily walks up to and on the oval, and have called the council on numerous occasions to report this to no avail. They drive on the roads leading to the oval, strewn with litter in the surrounding bush, which they should clearing up. Not only is this litter unsightly, but also dangerous to wildlife like swamp wallabies, echidnas and possums. I'm sick and tired of seeing workers wasting taxpayers money with little to no management. Instead of raising costs, council should better manage existing workforce and council assets. Cut all the red tape, and streamline the workforce and first get rid of inefficient workers rather than just increasing rates. It's high time the council did an audit of their own systems and management structure. General Manager David Marshall currently earns \$429,956.08...what an insult to us taxpayers. He should take an immediate 60% salary cut as well as those in management positions. Considering that Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's annual salary is \$622,050 to run the country, it is an insult to ratepayers that the Council GM earns such an exorbitant amount of money. Start cutting your salary overheads before you even think about increasing rates. It's a crying shame that the General Manager earns nearly half a million dollars. It's bloody outrageous. Stop this ridiculous waste of money and first focus on cutting your own overheads. Here is where you can start cutting costs by CUTTING salaries of the council's Corporate Management Roles: Corporate Strategy Manager: \$191,330, Delivery Director: \$158,719, Locality Manager: \$136,825, Library Manager: \$132,512, Area Leader: \$123,775, Land Manager: \$122,821, Inspection Manager: \$120,413 I'd say we first cut all senior staff salaries by 29% to show them we mean business by running a more efficient council. I think I have made my point.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 5 March 2026

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).

Long term residents who are self funded retirees have a fixed income and need to live within a budget. We cannot afford the pressure of increased rates, especially when the council doesn't use our rates wisely. I am referring to the Sports Center at St Ives High School to which they contributed mega funds to build, on land which they don't own and with restricted times that the residents can use them. Not contributing to the long term benefit of all the residents and ratepayers. I did not get a satisfactory answer to my question to Council as to the management of the centre and future running costs. Are they hiding something from the public? Also, the figures that they used in their presentations to the public trying to justify the requested rate raise only detailed future projected expenditure without taking into account future income that will be generated once the TOD is fully implemented. A hint of deceit?

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 5 March 2026

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 the Tribunal, I am writing to formally lodge my objection to Ku-ring-gai Councils application for a permanent Special Rate Variation. The proposed cumulative increase of 29.1% for the 2026-27 financial year is excessive and will place an untenable financial burden on our local community and further contribute towards inflation. My objection is centred on the following points regarding the "Reasonableness of Impact" and "Productivity and Cost Containment" criteria: Impact on Household Budgets and Livelihoods A nearly 30% hike in a single year is a massive "bill shock" that we the residents simply cannot absorb. With the price of essential utilities, insurance premiums, and groceries continuing to rise, this increase is ill-timed. Many households in the Ku-ring-gai LGA are already stretched by high interest rates. Increasing the average residential rate by approximately \$500 per annum risks pushing vulnerable residents, particularly young families like us, into genuine financial hardship. Inadequate Evidence of Internal Efficiencies Before asking ratepayers to plug a budget hole, the Council must demonstrate that it has exhausted all opportunities for belt-tightening. The community has not seen sufficient evidence of a rigorous productivity audit or significant reductions in administrative overheads. In fact, it is evident the Council has been using the funding to upgrade its own offices rather than using the funding in community. It is unreasonable to expect the community to subsidise Council's financial position without a clear, transparent plan to reduce internal waste and improve operational efficiency first. Misalignment of Spending Priorities The application suggests that a portion of this hike will go towards servicing debt for major projects, such as the St Ives Indoor Sports Centre. While infrastructure is important, core services such as the maintenance of our 100-year-old drainage systems and local roads should be funded through existing revenue and better financial management, not through an emergency-style rate hike on the community. Ratepayers should not be penalised for the Council's decision to take on significant debt for "nice-to-have" projects without a sustainable funding model already in place. Lack of Fair Justification for a Permanent Hike A permanent SRV of this magnitude is a blunt instrument that lacks nuance. There has been insufficient exploration of alternative funding models or a staged approach that would be less damaging to the livelihood of local residents. Compounding Macroeconomic Pressures: RBA Hikes and Geopolitical Risks The Councils application for a 29.1% increase cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader economic climate of 2026. Ratepayers are currently facing a "perfect storm" of financial pressures that make such a large, one-off hike fundamentally unreasonable. With the RBA having recently increased the cash rate to 3.85% in February 2026, and further increases expected in the coming months, mortgage holders in Ku-ring-gai are already facing significantly higher repayments. For many, a \$500 annual increase in rates coming on top of thousands of dollars in extra mortgage interest is simply unaffordable. The escalating conflict in the Middle East, particularly involving Iran, has caused a spike in global oil prices. This is already flowing through to Australian bowlers and increasing the cost of freight and groceries. Pushing inflation upwards By seeking such a substantial increase at a time when the RBA is actively trying to curb household spending to fight inflation, the Council is working in direct opposition to national economic objectives and placing the livelihood of its residents at risk. Conclusion On basis of the above, I urge IPART to reject this application in its current form. The proposed 29.1% increase is not "reasonable" or "fair" given the current economic climate and further economic uncertainty due to current geo-political environment. I request that IPART holds the Council to a higher standard of fiscal responsibility rather than allowing this significant cost to be shifted onto the community. Regards,

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 5 March 2026

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 do not support increasing rates and taxes at levels far above inflation. A rate rise which is 10 times the rate of inflation is totally unacceptable -- Cannot afford that much of 29% increase when households and businesses are facing extreme cost-of-living pressures.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 5 March 2026

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).

As aged pensioners, the size of this increase is very significant and will adversely impact us financially. We have no means of alleviating such an increase in our costs as the size of the increase far outweighs any benefit received by indexation of pension benefits. We don't support councils rationale for such a hike in costs and believe the size of any increase should be limited to CPI and other cost reduction and review

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 8 March 2026

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).

Surely if ku ring gai council are planning 24,500 new homes/units and the average rates for this council are in excess of \$1,500 per annum that gives the council an extra income of around \$36,750,000 per annum. Perhaps the big sports center could wait until funds are available which would assist members of the community who are already struggling financially. Thank you for your consideration

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 9 March 2026

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).

Dear KMC Council, I have lived since 1994 in the Council area and I see the steady decline in infrastructure to serve the community. I note that there are contributions required for developers who are now destroying the fabric of the area. Rather than slug to residents who like I have paid our rates for over 30 years, the additional demands should not need to be met by those who have already paid their way, and will continue to do so on a basis of fair. Simply, the 29% rate increase is a farce and not realistic given the average wage rise is only 2-4% and completely out of step. No-one can afford a 29% increase in goods and services, this is non-negotiable. Before wanting the residents and shop owners to pay a huge rate increase the Council, the question of why? this needs to occur and will need to be completely justified. I mean completely. If there is insufficient contributions from the NSW State Government, call it out. Secondly the whole of Local Government spending needs to go under the microscope. Assume there is no additional funds coming into the Council. Same as a person on a fixed income, if theres no extra money, you need to economise. What internal measures will the Council now undertake to cut its costs? Let me suggest that reprioritisation of the essentials must be the focus with that being core infrastructure services above everything else. By this I mean sanitation services, roads, drainage must be the priority. Everything else may need to wait. Look at the level of council staffing as this would be a significant cost. Another saving may be that the mowing and parks services may need to push out, so instead of say 2 weekly mowing, perhaps it goes to 3 weeks? for example. Nice to have items such as community events, Councillor study trips / meetings etc may have to go, and for how long is not determined. I hate the overdevelopment that Kur-ring-gai is facing, absolutely hate it. This will NOT improve the local area and will extremely and adversely impact the local residents. Make all development fees for multi-level (out of character) property development multiply by 5x or 10x times the current values, even more is better. The destruction of roads and congestion being inflicted on the existing and long term residents should not be their problem to pay. Most importantly, the Council (a Public Service organisation) is there for its Residents first and foremost and as a taxpayer and rates paying resident the Council must remember it works for Me and must appease the Residents firstly rather than set its own agendas, nor those of developers who mostly reside outside our area.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 9 March 2026

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 am completely against KMCs proposed 29% rate uplift. The council should seek efficiencies and economies like all citizens and businesses have had to do in the current fiscal climate. Financial irresponsibility such as Norman Griffiths Oval upgrade demonstrate that KMC has insufficient control over current spending. Why would one want to grant them any uplift - let alone 29%.

9 March 2026

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal NSW

Special Variations & Minimum Rates 2026-27 – Ku-ring-gai Council

The application by Kur-ring-gai Council (**KRG**) should be refused by IPART on a number of separate grounds. I would be grateful if IPART would consider each of these separately.

1. CONSULTATION

The OLG Guidelines requires KRG to run community awareness and engagement strategies before applying for an SRV. The processes run by KRG were manifestly deficient for two primary reasons:

(I) The material produced by KRG contained highly emotive language and little detail to support that language. For example, it was heavily emphasised that maintaining the status quo would mean degrading services and infrastructure but made no attempt whatsoever to explain what that would mean. It appears from the materials provided to IPART that degrading services and infrastructure still includes KRG expanding the number of footpaths in the LGA, despite many of those footpaths being planned for areas where there is little or no evidence of incidents with shared road use. This is not consultation – it is, at best, misinformation.

(II) Little or no regard appears to have been had to the fact that a very significant number of respondents did not support the SRV being sought, despite the issues regarding messaging set above. I personally wrote to my two councillors regarding my concerns – one replied indicating he did not support the SRV, and the other did not respond until I posted publicly about it on social media. This can hardly be called engagement.

KRG also relies on the above as evidence for the community's willingness to pay the SRV. IPART should reject that submission entirely on the basis of (I) above alone. The highly emotive language used in the materials circulated to the community are an entirely inappropriate method for obtaining a genuine reflection of community views. I would strongly encourage IPART to examine the materials actually provided to the community in detail.

IPART should not approve the SRV on the basis that KRG has not engaged in proper community awareness and engagement strategies.

2. ALTERNATIVES

Consistent with the note above that KRG did not communicate what the baseline increase would actually mean for owners, KRG's materials supplied to IPART do not indicate that KRG has considered that scenario in any meaningful way. There is no clear indication of what projects or services would be cut, or what assets could be sold. The council refers to the fact that there was minimal community support for renovating the Marian Street theatre at this time. This has been an ongoing project for the council for over a decade. I have been unable to locate figures confirming the council's total investment in that site (in terms of both staff hours and expenses) but one would have thought that an obvious cost saver would be ceasing further investigation of development and selling the site.

It is not possible to demonstrate a need for the SRV without properly demonstrating the baseline scenario, particularly in circumstances where KRG has already had the benefit of a prior SRV.

3. COST CONTAINMENT

KRG's submission to IPART having emphasises that its cost containment strategies are focussed on maintaining low staff numbers and retendering contracts regularly.

KRG appears to conflate low staff numbers with operational and cost efficiency. That is not the case. KRG acknowledges in its submission that it maintains low staff numbers by relying on outsourcing. It is impossible to tell from the materials provided to IPART whether that approach is indeed the most efficient, but what is relevant is that KRG does not appear to have given that analysis any real consideration. An SRV should not be approved in those circumstances as KRG has not demonstrated actual productivity or efficiency measures – it has only shown that it has low permanent staffing.

Similarly, while it is commendable to retender contracts regularly, KRG does not appear to have engaged in any strategic review of the projects that are being pursued. It is genuinely mind boggling that residents are being asked to accept a SRV to fund, in part, a new indoor sporting centre at St Ives, in circumstances where the KRG LGA has one of the higher number of sporting fields in the state (a fact that KRG accepts in its own submission). Retendering without any strategic review should not be considered cost containment.

4. AFFORDABILITY

The affordability study that KRG has included in its submission is also deficient. The report is highly focussed on the ability of older and wealthier residents within the LGA (of which there are many) and takes little account of the pressures on young families, which account for a significant proportion of the LGA's population – i.e. higher than forecast inflation and rising interest rates, which disproportionately affect young families, especially in circumstances where house prices within the KRG LGA are among the highest in the State. Bradfield (which overlaps substantially with the KRG LGA) is the most unaffordable electorate in the country: <https://everybodyshome.com.au/resources/electorate-snapshots/> and <https://eliteagent.com/sydney-has-the-most-unaffordable-electorates/>

As noted above, the local councillor that was supportive of the SRV being sought did not even respond to correspondence until publicly named. It would not be bold to suggest that other residents were also ignored. This cannot be considered as evidencing the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Speaking again to my own experience, KRG points to the fact that a very small number of people have approached it for financial relief in the past. I have not approached it in the past either (and hope never to have to approach it in the future), but if this SRV is approved, I will likely need to reduce medical treatment for a chronic illness in order to pay for it. That is not a reasonable cost to place on the community in light of the factors listed above, and by no means should be taken as an indication of capacity to pay.

KRG Resident

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 9 March 2026

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).

This 29% increase in council rates will adversely affect our community by greatly increasing cost of living pressures on families. It has been rejected by the community in two surveys but the council is still proceeding. Long-term council mismanagement of contracts and finances is the reason for the increase and the solution should be on the councillors to pay more attention to researching projects and managing finances more effectively before mindlessly slugging residents with unaffordable rate increases.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 9 March 2026

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).

With the Reserve Bank of Australia working to achieve a target for inflation in the order of 2.5%, inflation running at 3.5% or so, how can it be acceptable for Council to propose a rates increase of 29%. Council should be do its part to assist in reducing our cost of living. What evidence is there of measures introduced to lower operating costs? Has a thorough independent review been done on ways and means to achieve efficiencies.

From: [IPART](#)
To: [IPART | Local Government](#)
Subject: FW: Kuringai council rate rise
Date: Thursday, 5 March 2026 9:28:51 AM

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, March 5, 2026 6:36 AM
To: IPART <ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Kuringai council rate rise

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

[CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.]

Mr. Andrew Nicholls PSM
Chief Executive Officer
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240
ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Nicolls,

Ku-ring-gai Council Special Rate Variation

We write regarding the application by Ku-ring-gai Council to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to increase rates. Ku-ring-gai Council is seeking a permanent 29% increase in rates from 1 July 2026 under section 508(2) of the Local Government Act 1993.

If approved, this would mean an average annual increase of:

- \$499 for households (approximately \$9.60 per week)
- \$1,676 for businesses (approximately \$32.23 per week).

We urge IPART to reject this application for the following reasons:

1. Rate increase should be gradual and staggered, not one huge increase.
2. The increase is not justifiable with the cost of living and cost of housing already so high.
3. The increase will cause a burden on all residents. The proposed rate rise of 29% would pose an unduly harsh and unreasonable burden on all residents, especially retired residents such as ourselves who have no hope of increasing income to cover it. A 29% increase is completely out of touch with the community.
4. A rate rise which is 10 times the rate of inflation is totally unacceptable. Residents and businesses are having to tighten their belts so why shouldn't the Council.
5. So much money was wasted by the council in the past several years. This includes on matters such as fighting the State Government on the Transport Orientation Development (TOD) plans. Many of the residents opposed this action by council. At a time of significant economic pressure, councils should prioritise its own internal savings before seeking substantial increases from ratepayers.
6. The increase will mean significant additional pressure to our budget, also reduced ability to save and spend.

Conclusion

For these reasons, we respectfully urge IPART to reject Ku-ring-gai Council's application for a permanent 29% rate rise.

Approving such an increase would risk sending two troubling signals:

- That the consultation process is ignored, unresponsive and "a sham".
- That councils can avoid identifying savings and instead pass rising costs directly to households and businesses.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature line]

[Redacted signature line]

[Redacted signature line]

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 11 March 2026

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).

Please reconsider any rate increase in Ku-ring-gai. Our services do not warrant this and there are hundreds of more ratepayers with all the new units. Many thanks.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 11 March 2026

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).

Kuringai Council's proposed rate rise at well above the current inflation rate is concerning on two levels. It suggests the previous council was, or the current one is negligent or incapable. Secondly, not all residents can afford dramatic, sudden increases or move house easily

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 17 February 2026

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).

This council has demonstrated a lack of respect for ratepayers and their financial contributions. Public funds should be managed responsibly and transparently, yet there have been repeated instances that suggest otherwise. For example, last year council members held a meeting at an expensive hotel, costing ratepayers approximately \$20,000 for a single weekend. This expense appears unnecessary, particularly when suitable council chambers were available for use at minimal cost. This is just one of several decisions that raise concerns about whether ratepayer funds are being treated with the care and accountability they deserve. Another significant concern is the CEOs salary, which many residents feel is disproportionate to the size and operational requirements of this council. At a time when communities are facing financial pressures, leadership should demonstrate fiscal restraint and ensure remuneration reflects both performance and community expectations. If funds were allocated strictly according to community priorities, rather than administrative overheads or discretionary spending, current rate contributions may well be sufficient. Where additional funding is genuinely required, councils should first review internal costs including senior executive remuneration as private sector organisations commonly do during financially challenging periods. It is also concerning to see the ongoing push for special rate variations through the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), placing further financial strain on residents, as has been seen with Northern Beaches Council. Ratepayers deserve prudent financial management, transparency, and genuine accountability before being asked to contribute more.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 17 February 2026

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 oppose the special variation rate rise sought by Council. Council has bad financial management: a multi-million dollar sports centre in a state school, which should have been fully funded by NSW Govt, and which is only available for use by ratepayers out of school hours; Marion St Theatre, which is basically a stage for kids - any hall will do!; Norman Oval in bicentennial park that is \$6m over budget and years out from completion; weekends away in the Blue Mountains for Councillors; ... these are just a couple that come to mind quickly. These expenses are unnecessary and could have been better spent on essential infrastructure. Council needs to improve financial management before asking residents to increase funding. Council did a survey of ratepayers about the increase in rates and has NOT made the results public.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 18 February 2026

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 be clear- a 30% rise is inappropriate in the current economic climate and without an adjacent plan for council to justify how they are cutting costs and managing their spending. We live in Wahroonga, amongst families with teenage kids, of our six immediate neighbours, five of the adult family members are out of work, having gone through redundancies in the past year. These are folks in their 40s and 50s, with large mortgages, and are averaging eight months out of work so far, because corporate australia is shedding jobs at such a rate and they arent hiring at an equivalent rate or pushing up salaries more than 3% a year. Everyone expected an increase in rates but 30% are they absolutely serious- how do you expect people to afford that on top of interest rate rises, on top of house insurance premiums also rising 20% annually, food bills that are topping \$400 a week? Where is the money supposed to come from? What is even more galling is the state government having opened up the planning controls we are now getting high rise and an increased population within our suburbs- which means that councils should be charging developers accordingly and equally recognising that their population size is expanding rapidly to contribute to rates so it will be a net gain in revenues, they dont need to hike it so substantially for incumbents. Councils are taking their mismanagement of funds and making it a private citizens problem- who are they accountable to? Because Kuringai council certainly do whatever they like, for example they arent transparent about how many people voted for the increase, they wont release those papers to the community about which option was voted for and I can tell you right now no one in our community voted for a 29% hike. All thats going to happen is council are going to become debt collectors because there will be a lot of arrears. That and the way NSW is going, theyll have no families or young people left because theyll migrate to other states or other countries because the cost of living in Sydney is completely unsustainable against the wages actually able to be earned.

Submission to IPART: Opposition to Ku-ring-gai Council's Special Rate Variation (SRV)

My name is [REDACTED], a resident and ratepayer in the Ku-ring-gai LGA. I am writing to formally oppose Ku-ring-gai Council's application for a permanent 24.6% SRV (a total 29% increase including the rate peg) starting 1 July 2026.

While I recognize that councils face genuine financial pressures, I believe this specific application is structurally flawed and places an unnecessary burden on residents before the Council has exhausted its own internal options.

Ground 1: Failure to Account for "Natural" Revenue Growth

- **The Development Pipeline:** Council is one of the fastest-growing LGAs in Sydney, with a pipeline of over 10,660 new dwellings by 2036, and an additional 24,562 units approved under the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) scenario.
- **Structural Revenue Growth:** Every new apartment and townhouse adds to the rate base automatically, separate from any SRV. Even a conservative 400 new dwellings per year adds approximately \$720,000 in recurring revenue.
- **Lack of Transparency:** Council's application refers to this only as a "variable" that might cause a "slightly different" outcome. IPART should require a transparent, peer-reviewed calculation of how this massive, compounding revenue stream has been factored into the supposed funding gap.

Ground 2: Lack of Expenditure Discipline & Hidden Cash Reserves

- **Inadequate Efficiency Audits:** No independent audit of Council's operational expenditure or senior staff costs has been disclosed. Ratepayers should not be asked for a permanent increase until a rigorous efficiency exercise is proven.
- **Discretionary Spending:** Council is proceeding with tens of millions in non-essential works, including \$9.9M for streetscape upgrades and \$7.6M for park upgrades. A council in a "financial emergency" should defer amenity projects before raising rates.
- **Unrestricted Cash Position:** I ask IPART to scrutinize Council's **Unrestricted Cash Reserves**. If Council is holding significant discretionary cash while claiming a crisis, they should be directed to use these internal buffers to smooth out the financial impact on residents rather than requesting a 29% permanent hike.

- **St Ives Indoor Sports Centre:** This \$20M+ discretionary facility should be funded via user-pays fees and developer contributions, not a permanent universal rate increase. The community was not told that this development would cause a massive rate increase in subsequent years.

Ground 3: Obsolete "Capacity to Pay" Data

- **2021 Data is Irrelevant:** Council's affordability analysis relies on 2021 Census data. This fails to reflect the 13 consecutive interest rate hikes since May 2022, which added thousands to monthly mortgage repayments for local families.
- **The 2026 Reality:** High inflation and surging rents mean a rate hike deemed "affordable" in 2021 is a serious hardship in 2026. IPART should require an updated assessment using current 2025–26 data.

Ground 4: Flawed Community Consultation

- **Lack of Real Choice:** The consultation presented four options, all of which were rate increases. Residents were never offered an option for "Efficiency Savings First".
- **Omission of Key Facts:** By failing to disclose how natural revenue from new development would offset the funding gap, the Council shaped a response that does not reflect a fully informed community.

My Request to IPART

I respectfully ask IPART to:

1. **Decline the current application** and require Council to return with a proposal that includes an independent efficiency review and a peer-reviewed forecast of development-driven revenue.
2. **Mandate a Phased Approach:** If an increase is approved, it should be structured as a phased 6–7% (above the rate peg) over three years, with annual accountability checkpoints to ensure promised efficiencies are actually delivered.
3. **Exclude Discretionary Items:** Direct that loan repayments for the St Ives Indoor Sports Centre be excluded from the general rate base.

A 29% permanent increase in a single year—before exhausting development revenue and internal savings—is neither proportionate nor responsible.

Yours sincerely,

██████████

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 20 February 2026

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).

