

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

I cannot understand how the council can justify the application to increase our rates, we have continued to have rises over recent years, without seeing any improvement of services e.g. water supply upgrade completion date has yet again been pushed back, condition of local roads is decreasing rapidly, water quality poor. We were told we needed the last increase to ensure being fit for the future apparently we are not as now asking for more. The regular turnover of management of the council has me questioning their suitability.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not that I am aware of.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No not to my household.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I am not aware of any response.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

My answer to an above question can apply again, like a majority of my fellow residents in Werris Creek we are retired and therefore have very limited incomes so during these times of financial uncertainty the last thing we need is a further cost for little return.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Have the council even considered the community's opinions.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I have not seen any documents, but to be fair I have not tried to see any only what read and hear via the media.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

The council has not explained any of the above to me, but I can see around our town the decline in many ways, water quality, road surface, condition of swimming pool, the changes to local rubbish tip, the ever rising cost to dispose of rubbish over and above general rates, green waste, recycling and domestic waste all dumped together???

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

1. We live in a small town with limited advantages. 2. All mowing around town is done by volunteers, who also look after the cemetery. 3. The only thing we get is our garbage picked up. 4. The pool is neglected and council doesn't look after it. 5. They sweep the streets maybe 1-2 times a year. 6. Roads are patched up but that is about all. New kerb and guttering was put in in some streets. 7. We cannot afford an increase in the rates. People will have to move somewhere else.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

To maintain the auxillary services.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not that I'm aware of

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. Not at all.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Everyone said no to the rate increase last year and the council took no notice what so ever.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The council doesn't care whether the residents can cope or not. Most of the residents are in the lower socio economic group and paying \$555.00 per quarter, and that is with a pensioner discount, is very hard to sustain.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. They don't care and don't listen to us. People that have lived there for years have said that they have never listened to them.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

It's not promoted so I don't know.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not as far as I know

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

They held a meeting and explained what they wanted to do via consultants years ago but they didn't listen to our objections at all.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

It saddens me that, within LPSC area, one of the richest agricultural areas in Australia, brimming with wealth, our fate is being decided by the current council. That is a council of limited business skills, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]....As residents and rate payers, can we be assured, the current Mayor is a fit and proper person, to act in our best interests. Locals tell me [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] As I said, it saddens me, when LPSC has some of the most successful agricultural companies in Australia, like Pursehouse Rural and Eykamp Kikuyu, with business acumen and ethics beyond reproach. Our multi million dollar LPSC agricultural enterprises and future are, in the hands of a questionable seven, with a town centric view.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No LPSC has definitely not established this need in any form. LPSC residents and ratepayers have not been communicated within a proper way, apart from local community paper, which most do not read, particularly those in western remote areas of council areas. With due respect to residents and rate payers, if council duly cared, council should have, firstly directed information letter to all rate payers with annual rate notice via post or email. Secondly, all rural residents in agriculture area, should have had an info sheet letter box drop, as other councils have done in the past with other relevant issues. Two excessively expensive full page ads and consultants were engaged to deliver info. to residents and ratepayers, with most not receiving, unless they read the paper. \$100,000 of waste right there from a council crying poor. LPSC website, once a hive of info., is now a generic shadow of itself, being changed by previous General Manager, into a secretive non attractive portal for anybody be it residents or visitors. Non appealing and repels you.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No the council has not canvassed alternatives, apart from going for the financial juggler of the ratepayer. This is the third rate rise endured by myself since 2015, with first one being compounded rate rise effectively rate rise by stealth, as I deem it. Any resident or ratepayer who knows ex councillors or ex council staff, knows why there is financial problems. Financial mess has been created by council spending money on excessive vanity projects or luxury items, when there is not a need or justification. This is after previous Mayor Andrew Hope and GM Ron Van Katwyck declared LPSC Fit for the Future after Fit for the Future took place, with submissions called for. Of which, I took part in. According to ex Mayor Hope and past GM LPSC came out in glowing terms and why not ! LPSC is situated in one of the richest agricultural areas in Australia, brimming with wealth. LPSC is on a parallel to Moree Council area, and Moree never has a problem. LPSC was also abundant with drought funding and other funding, so what is the go ? The problem is past GM and current council mismanagement plunging LPSC into financial abyss [REDACTED] which have not been disclosed to residents and ratepayers. Ex Councillor and other ex council staff told me [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Ex Councillor told me unnecessary new library built, despite pandemic and drought. Library went right over budget, then money bought from other council areas to prop it up. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] with declaring positions vacant, as is meant to be, under council guidelines.

Executives were hired at the expense of long term local council workers, who were, effectively sacked and shafted. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Also, a highly paid media officer was engaged to project council message, for a council, who never had or never needed a media officer. Media officer is more suited to large regional council, not one of 7,000 residents. Community Events Officer hired during pandemic, when there is no events. All through this GM and current Mayor, with total conflict of interest, worked closely together. Undeclared to residents and rate payers has been Mayoral vanity project proposed Kokoda Track from Quirindi to Werris Creek. LPSC was actively involved in this due to Mayor pushing it. Consultancy fees on this project have never been disclosed and how much it cost council. Mayoral conflict of interest lies in his Quirindi RSL executive role, with council projects of benefit to RSL, including proposed Kokoda Track beginning and ending at Quirindi RSL. Under Mayors regime, LPSC pushed Quirindi Silo Art opposite RSL Club, when originally, villages of Willow Tree and Premier were meant to have silo art to assist their village economies. With undeclared conflict of interest, current Mayor should not be Mayor and should be terminated along with previous GM, who deserted the ship.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. As I said previously, council has not communicated correctly in any form, paying due respect or their obligation to residents and ratepayers as prime stakeholders and shareholders in their council LPSC. Like many other rural based council areas, LPSC has suffered greatly from the double whammy of extended drought and pandemic ripping the social and financial guts out of the community. Many with the compounded effects of cost of living, coupled up with rate rises, will be forced into

miserable living from hand to mouth. The increased exodus from the city post pandemic forcing up real estate, at locals expense, only adds fuel to the financial fire. In short, council needs to be sacked.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. As I said before, not in any shape or form.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I have not observed any action taken by council, except for their constant self promotion by their assigned media officer. All designed to control public narrative, so no questions asked.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Following the double whammy of extended drought and pandemic madness tearing the guts out of the rural based economy of LPSC, with many losing their jobs, to look after community welfare, not one rate rise of any description should be considered. Financially pressuring rural people even more can lead to more social problems, like suicide. Do not look at residents for the problem, look at council mismanagement.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. LPSC following the double whammy of extended drought and pandemic, is selfish and arrogant to the extreme. No consideration by council has been given to detrimental social effects of this action, with many I know, including myself, considering selling and relocating as this council does not act in the best interest of the whole community. Council is reckless and not considering the effect on both employers and employees. This council action can lead to less disposable income in the community, affecting all. As council is now completely town centric, with all councillors residing in Quirindi and Werris Creek, with most of remote western council area ignored, a Rural Ratepayers Group is urgent. It is urgent for all those outside of Quirindi and Werris Creek to have a united voice to council, particularly in a time, such as this.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I have not seen any evidence of the council plan to address hardship. Following double whammy of extended drought and pandemic, it is beyond council capacity to address hardship. With council selfish action, council is opening up a problematic social can of worms.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not in my knowledge precinct.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Not in my knowledge precinct.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 13 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Neither

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. The council is broke. This is they only option

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. This council continues to lie and deceive the ratepayers.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

They continue to pay thousands of dollars for consultants to come in but nothing changes

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They ignore your concerns. Dont take any feedback on board cause any kind of criticism is quickly dismissed due to poor mismanagement

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is any ageing population in the area. The ability to pay the current rates which are already too high for the services provided will push many out of the area, forcing them to sell Up and leave. The council is already poorly managed raising rates will not help ratepayers

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Submission to IPART 2023

Liverpool plains shire Council proposed Special Variation 2023 Permanent

25/2/2023

Submission objecting to the proposed Special Variation.

Senior Officer

IPART Sydney

Dear Sir,

After reading the LPSC application to IPART it was very clear to me that there were a number of misleading statements that would need clarification before your department could agree to any increase in rates.

As a former [REDACTED] I believe I have the credentials to raise my concerns regarding the long term future of our Shire.

- (1) Records show that the FFF report tabled in 2015 shows that LPSC was Not Fit. Part of Councils application at that time was dangerously flawed with Council identifying 64 items that were to be actioned --- and were not! Please refer to Item 2 Attached documents that was sent to [REDACTED] in February 2021 which included full details of items that were never actioned.
- (2) In 2021 Council applied for a permanent Increase, but was only partially supported by IPART, and with a number of recommendations for improvement including ,
  - (a) Improved productivity and cost containment! No evidence to show this has been achieved with council and council reporting to community meetings that there had been a 33% increase in productivity!!
  - (b) Net Debt Ratios
  - (c) Operational ratios--- not sustainable with 5 years of Deficit budgets and ranked 127 by LGNSW and NSW Audit.
  - (d) Councils SEFA rating --community continues to be disadvantaged.
  - (e) Councils use of the additional income 2021 (2 Years) to fund asset maintenance and renewal--- could you ask Council to quantify where the extra income was spend!! Not just a note from the GM (who is no longer employed) by council.

### 2023 Application

History shows that we have been continually running deficit budgets for more than 5 years, which is why we are ranked 127 out of 128 local government councils, this situation cannot continue as IPart reported in 2021 that council will expend \$16m of cash reserves by 2029 if it prevails on its current course of self-destruction.

The last GM was appointed in December 2019 (resigned December 2022) has left council in a very precarious position , overseen a high turned of staff (102 staff) in 3 years with last year alone incurring \$980,000 in Redundancies, payouts and recruitment costs.



A number of multimillion dollar projects were started and have all gone over

budget because there has been no oversight by senior staff or project managers. Management has continually failed to report acquittals on projects to council. In the last 2 years council has been the recipient of grants from Resources for Regions \$3.6 m , which as you are aware is for only councils that are impacted by mining in their community. The Department stipulates that it is for council and community projects and that up to 30% can go to community driven projects. I know the community of Werris Creek have a number of projects that could have been funded by these grants, Including Werris Creek Cemetery, Pool, Cycle paths. Instead council hijacked these funds to finance a Waste Strategy Program that had no budget or funding. Disgraceful.

There was bullying and harassment reports filed with the OLG because of the culture that the GM seemed to cultivate. The GM and councilors are to blame for poor communications and engagement with the community with members of the community complaining about response to emails, letters and phone calls from staff and elected members. An example of incompetent response from council , I sent a submission to council requesting answers to the 2019-20 financials , didn't acknowledge receipt nor did it go to full council?? See copy of submission. (4)

Also refer attachment 3 re the response from the GM in 2021 total rubbish

There are currently no active community advisory committees, most were disbanded by council, and there is only one committee (CAG COEG) that has 1 community member. We previously had included hall committees, sports committee, aboriginal, Community grants and scholarship committee ,economic development, Australia, Day --- now none!!

#### Comments on Councils Form B

**Page 9—Make council financially sustainable and cash flow positive? Deliver operational efficiencies combined with cash savings??How?**

**Page 18 – confirming the temporary SV from 2012 2023 – was the money spent funding asset management—seriously? Please quantify.**

**Page 27—Councils Operating performance ratio ? refer Audit office comments ??**

**Page 31—Substantial capital works funded by grants—ie Library project \$2m over budget, Waste management strategy \$3.4 m funded by Resources for Regions --underfunded by \$10m??**

See Table 5 financial indicators --- going down a big black hole.

**Page 35—community engagement was a shambles—115 members, 40 minute sessions with no questions allowed, there are a large number (age) of the community that cannot access councils web page and don't buy the local paper.**

**Page 41 -- council will be forced to reduce service levels--? A question was asked at a meeting and management couldn't not answer – what services??**

**Page 43/44—Capacity to pay refer IRAD report .-- Be mindful that the Base Rate is only one component that rate payers are responsible for, factor in Sewer , water , waste , has increased 33% in 5 years, tip fees 100% in last 2 years' --included copy of local rates 2021-22. Attach 1**

**Page 55— Some Asset management plans have not been updated since 2012—**

**Fleet and Plant 2012 –**



Buildings 2012

Sewer 2012

Page 58 –59—Ct Management group, Morrison Low reports.

Question-Procurement strategies Pursuing opportunities for commercialization and business improvement review of councils assets in order to divest and rationalize—seriously?? All the component staff and experienced either left or were sacked , the GM has relied on contract planners, engineers, HR, IT, consultants and even workforce . Reviews have been completed on the Royal theatre, Service NSW, Visitor Information, Gym all bleeding council funds.

Page 60—Innovation what a crock—The IT awards were won by a Tracer program (Document management system ) that had a long ICAC inquiry and senior staff were sacked for corrupt conduct. Project management—what a untruth/ Council engages contractors and consultants to project manage everything, GHD, Constructive solutions, Swimplex, H2o, MRU, Bath Stewart, just to name a few !!

Page 61-64—refer summary of reports from CT Management Group and Morrison Low consultants?

Council has no capacity to undertake their own reviews of Non-core services and for a number of years have continually paid out consultants who are on site for a only a few days receive a report that a year 10 student could provide.

Take for example the Royal Theatre purchased in 2010 for \$200k, over \$1m pumped into refurbishment, yearly running costs over \$150k a year, building now valued at \$200k –can confirm!! Average movie attendance numbers 19 over past 8 years ----yes that's right!! A number of government agencies over the past few years recommended that council move away from these loss making ventures like the Theatre.

Most of these non-core assets should not be owned and certainly not managed by council Looking at the including the Movie Theatre, Gymnasium, East Side Child Care (Cannot compete with private facilities).

Savings achieved through efficiencies Charts—total rubbish, Note, In progress, TBC, ??

Page 65---69 proposed potential Options, Lease out Swimming Pools, Review Library services – (remove the books) pretty smart idea. Depreciation a total mess especially road valuations and over \$50m capital spent in past few years, depreciation is only going to high higher?? Management has no idea! IPART should ask for council to quantify these figures.

Finally I believe rate payers know that costs are continually rising and we all know now about food costs , electricity and interest rates, but council has to rise to the changing dynamics and adjust their fiscal policies and reduce the yearly spend and get back to a balanced budget and only then residents would be more supportive of rate increases , but while ever council runs big deficit budgets \$5m plus there will be no support.

Kind regards





[REDACTED]  
Quirindi

**Attachments**

Copy of rates

Copy of document to [REDACTED] 2021



**Liverpool  
Plains**  
Shire Council

**RATE NOTICE**

01/07/2022 to 30/06/2023

**LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL**

ABN 97 810 717 370

Address: 60 Station Street, Quirindi N.S.W. 2343

Postal: P.O. Box 152, Quirindi, N.S.W. 2343

Enquiries: (02) 6746 1755

Office Hours: Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 5.00 pm



QUIRINDI NSW 2343

**ASSESSMENT NUMBER**

1966

**POSTING DATE**

25/07/2022

**VALUATION DATE**

01/07/2019

**RATE CATEGORY**

Residential

**PROPERTY LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

**RATES AND CHARGES**

**Rateable Value**

**Cents in \$ / Charges**

**Amount**

|                             |       |            |          |
|-----------------------------|-------|------------|----------|
| Residential Quirindi        | 66400 | 0.01074700 | \$713.60 |
| Residential Quirindi (Base) | 1     | 438        | \$438.00 |
| Water Access Charge (20mm)  | 1     | 775        | \$775.00 |
| Sewer Charge - Occupied     | 1     | 645        | \$645.00 |
| Domestic Waste Occupied     | 1     | 431        | \$431.00 |
| Tip Facility Charge         | 1     | 100        | \$100.00 |

80 31/8/2022

If you are experiencing financial hardship and unable to pay by the due date please contact Council to arrange a payment plan for additional time to pay. Interest will accrue on overdue rates and charges at 6% per annum, calculated daily.

**PAY BY INSTALMENTS**

**Date Due**

**Amount**

**PAYMENT IN FULL**

**Amount**

Overdue

First Instalment 31/08/2022 \$777.60

Second Instalment 30/11/2022 \$775.00

Third Instalment 28/02/2023 \$775.00

Fourth Instalment 31/05/2023 \$775.00

31/08/2022

\$3,102.60

Please deduct any payments made since

20/07/2022

①

Submission to IPART re SRV proposed by Liver Pool Plains Shire Council

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Quirindi 2343

Attention [REDACTED]

IPART

10/02/2021

As a [REDACTED] have unfortunately over the past 7 years witnessed poor governance, serious fiscal incompetence and staff bullying that should not be tolerated in any workplace. But sadly after numerous emails and reports including supporting evidence to the OLG, Auditor general's department, Privacy Commissioner and ICAC. no one seemed interested in my concerns. I believe that some government departments are fearful of enforcing the policies and legalisation when it involves a Local Council.

LPSC has had [REDACTED] both left in 2020. Now we have a GM [REDACTED] and a Mayor [REDACTED] God help us.!!

OLG and Council – in December 2018 a special investigation team visited the council and completed many interviews with senior staff and councillors regarding a history of non-compliance and its failure to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and standards and poor financial performance.

(see attached copy OLG response 18/03/2019)

Comments on the Special Variation form Part B—sent by Council to IPART.

Description and Context—Question 2 – Why council needs the SRV—It will improve financial sustainability? Increased maintenance- renew deteriorating assets-- \$500k is not going to help, this shipwreck just waiting to sink.

Attachments—N and M are missing from the webpage??

Page 9 Re proposed SRV in 2017-18, what a lot of lies. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] as was the CFO Anne Newsome at the time (she was sacked 2 months after) The FFF document has to be read in its entirety where you will see that there were 62 actions planned by council and most of those actions were never started or completed. , see below a breakdown of the document.

Fit for the Future

2



One of the components of FFF in 2015 was a recommendation that council look at a SRV in 2017-18 even though there was still an overhang for the SRV in 2014 of 12.5% which has now compounded to 28.37%.

As we know more money is not always a panacea to solve all financial problems. Additional commitment is needed to build technical knowledge and financial understanding of both staff and elected members.

Council should understand that decisions about service levels and revenue raising are critical factors in long term financial performances. At LPSC we have seen financial management responsibilities as primarily to ensure compliance with legislative requirements

**In 2015 FFF submission councils 10 year program included the following:**

- (1) Break even annual operating positions—NO
- (2) Smart strategic planning processes and real world documents .No
- (3) Asset management planning prioritised and directly linked to the LTFP. NO
- (4) Sound policies and guidelines around smart growth and use of restricted assets. NO
- (5) Good accounting and fully integrated financial systems. NO
- (6) Good quality performance reporting systems to measure performance and operational efficiencies. NO

**LPSC had promised to introduce the following**

- (a) Include measures to promote efficiency improvements. NO
- (b) Soundly justify any proposed increases in service levels or creation of new assets.NO
- (c) Contribute effectively to progressive elimination of an operating deficit.NO

Liverpool plains have stated it was committed to improving its services didn't happen!!

**LPSC promised a programme agenda?**

- (1) Conducting efficiency reviews, including zero based budgeting?
- (2) External service reviews—to ensure best value---NO
- (3) Leveraging better value services NO
- (4) Internal service reviews – community capacity 355 committees, cost recovery.NO

Council has just engaged CT consultants (\$150k) to provide a report on an Efficiency review, which should have reported before council applied for a 28% SRV. If management had provided something tangible in cost savings, then the community might have been more accepting of an increase.

In 2015 FFF councils promised fiscal agenda included the introduction of a NEW Projects Guidance Procedure for Capital projects, including the following

An initial strategic assessment, developing a business case , project development , Tender process Contract management , and project review—What a load of garbage.

**How was council going to measure success.**

2





22 April 2021

Director  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal  
PO Box K35  
HAYMARKET POST SHOP NSW 1240

Via email:

Our reference:

Contact:

no more for res  
WASTE ABLE  
IS NOT  
5050000000

Dear

**Response to formal opportunity to comment on Liverpool Plains Shire Council's Special Variation Application**

Reference is made the correspondence from IPART's Executive Director, Pricing & Policy, dated 14 April 2021 regarding Liverpool Plains Shire Council's 2021-22 Special Variation (SV) Application. Thank you for time on 16 April 2021 to discuss this matter by telephone.

IPART has sought Council's position on:

1. Our willingness to consider a temporary SV while we implement planned initiatives to achieve cost savings; and
2. Our preferred duration of a temporary SV.

For the reasons outlined in our SV Application, Council's preference is that IPART approve a permanent SV under section 508A of the *Local Government Act 1993*. Through the NSW Government's *Fit for the Future* process, Council was assessed as being "not fit", and at that time, Council committed to pursuing an SV. In the years since *Fit for the Future*, the organisation has continued to provide significant operating deficits. Our position remains that a permanent SV is essential to maintaining local assets at existing service levels.

Council's Infrastructure Backlog Ratio within Special Schedule 7 has been steady near 2.10 per cent for several years, with the condition assessment of our road assets being last completed in 2014/15. We have been undertaking asset condition inspections throughout 2020/21 as part of our transportation revaluation and have identified significant condition issues within the network. This work had not been completed at the time of our SV application.

With inspections nearing completion, I can provide a clearer picture of Council's asset condition. Our inspection data shows that 27 per cent of Council's sealed road network is in an unsatisfactory condition, and a further 59 per cent of Council's unsealed network is in an unsatisfactory condition. Utilising the same methodology used in our 2019/20 Special Schedule 7, it is expected that an Infrastructure Backlog Ratio of approximately 9 per cent will be reported in the 2020/21 financial year.

LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL  
60 Station Street PO Box 152 QUIRINDI NSW 2343  
TEL 02 6746 1755 FAX 02 6746 3255 EMAIL [lpssc@lpssc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lpssc@lpssc.nsw.gov.au)  
WEBSITE [www.lpssc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lpssc.nsw.gov.au) ABN 97 810 717 370

3



Notwithstanding our preference for a permanent SV; should IPART instead favour a temporary SV, our preferred duration would be three years. This timeframe would allow Management to work closely with the incoming Council following the upcoming 2021 local government elections to implement various cost containment strategies, service level reviews and efficiency improvements prior to seeking a permanent SV at a later date.

Finally, I wish to reiterate the point that I made when we spoke last week: along with my Executive Management Team, I have undertaken a significant body of work since joining the organisation in December 2019 to achieve savings, realise efficiencies, enhance productivity, and strengthen our financial controls and governance arrangements. I draw your attention to the following achievements during this period:

- Review of Council's organisation structure aimed at achieving long-term savings and improving functional alignment;
- Review of the organisation's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, including development of a compliant Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP);
- Prioritisation of a business systems replacement project and associated IT improvements aimed at enhancing productivity and modernising the way the organisation operates;
- Reconstitution of our Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee and recruitment three skilled, remunerated independent external members to that Committee; and
- Review of our Internal Audit Charter and design of a rolling programme of internal audits for the coming three-year period.

Despite the considerable steps we have taken over recent months to improve Council's financial position, we acknowledge that further work must be done over the coming years to reduce expenditure, achieve savings, and refocus our efforts on core services. As you are aware, prior to making application to IPART, we engaged CT Management Group to prepare a Service Efficiency and Improvement Plan to identify areas for potential further efficiencies. We have already identified various recommendations from that review which will be incorporated into Council's draft Operational Plan 2021/22 for delivery over the following 12 months.

Should you require any further information from me to assist in your consideration of Council's SV Application, please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED] or via return email at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

General Manager

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copy NO I PART

Submission 2019-20 Financial Reports.

9/12/2020

The General Manager



LPSC

Submission regarding the 2019-2020 financials of LPSC.

**Questions for Management**

- (1) **Page 4—Income statement.**—Could council quantify the 40% increase in Depreciation from \$9,264,000 to \$13,354,000 in the last financial period. Refer to Note 5. Could you explain how and why council changed from the previous Consumption based Depreciation to Straight Line Depreciation, when the roads and bridges assets of LPSC have not been revalued since 2012-2013, a year when the financials were qualified due to issues with assets valuations of property and plant?? Councils focus should be on asset management plan and analysis of how to enable council to continue to provide services and generate sufficient revenue, neither relate to depreciation expense.
- (2) **Page 11 (Trust Fund)** States that separate accounts are kept to account for all money received by council. Could council quantify where the Amount Of \$163,000 that was donated by the Salvation Army in 2017 to be held in trust on account of the Quirindi Basketball Assoc for future work on the new basketball facility in Henry street. Normally it would sit in Cash Contributions refer 2017-2018 financials.
- (3) **Page 18—note 3—Revenue from continuing operations.** Could council quantify the allocation of \$1.3 m of Roads to recovery grants received that should be allocated to Capital not to operating? Most councils recognize Roads to Recovery grants are for capital works. (refer safety guard rail on Williewarina Road \$200k plus)
- (4) **Page 39—Note 13 Council as Lessee.** Could council quantify where the reserves and expenditure for the operation of Summerhill Lodge sits in the financials. There is no line item for this operation and as council leases this facility from the Department of Housing and there are contracts in place for rental received and, maintenance and capital improvements. In 2017 Income was \$69,000 compared to \$37,000 in 2020. ??
- (5) **Page 44 note 15 Provisions.**— ( Remediation of tips and quarries ) Could Council explain the huge variation between 2018-19 provisions for remediation \$1,533,000 to \$11, 847,000 in 2019-20 financial year. Can council quantify the disparity between the two, and how council allocated \$1m in 2019-20 for remediation's of village tips when there were no reserves and to be funded from the General Fund, Council reports indicate that the council

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is applying to use Resources for Regions (towns that have been impacted by mining) funding to fund this project, ??

- (6) **Page 74 Note 27(a)** Statement of performance measures--- Operating performance ratio. Can council report on their LPTFP and how council is going to turn around this operating ratio currently the General fund -47%----- Sewer fund -3.2%, with the result for this financial year sitting at -36%. Councils mission should be to budget for surplus and to take into account the conditions and maintenance requirements of assets in the process?
- (7) **Page 70 Note 25 – S 7.11 Developer contributions** Note that there is no report of contribution from a ongoing operation in the southern part of the shire. See previous years when it has been reported?

Finally as a member of the business community I have real concerns regarding the long term financial viability of council, since 2013 there have been a number of qualified audits and a large number of repeat issues that have been raised by the Auditor General and that have not been systemically addressed and quantified. A review of Councils Fit for the Future 2015 submission, shows there are currently 30 plus outstanding areas that have not been addressed by council .

Yours Faithfully



Quirindi 2343

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Liverpool Plains Shire Council  
Cash, Investments and Borrowing Statement

Quarterly Budget Review Statement  
for the period 01/01/21 to 31/03/21

| Description   | Balance as at     | Movement (1/07/2020 - 31/03/2021) |                  | Balance as at     | Comment                 |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
|   | 30/06/2020        | Increase                          | Decrease         | 31/03/2021        |                         |
| Cash on hand and at bank (Actual Statement Balance)                       | 8,775,776         | -                                 | 781,090          | 7,994,685         |                         |
| Investments (Maturity less than 12 months)                                | 25,250,000        | -                                 | 50,000           | 25,200,000        |                         |
| <b>Total Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>                                    | <b>34,025,776</b> | <b>-</b>                          | <b>831,090</b>   | <b>33,194,685</b> |                         |
| Attributable to :   |                   |                                   |                  |                   |                         |
| External restrictions   | 26,121,001        | 237,640                           | -                | 26,358,641        |                         |
| Internal restrictions   | 6,766,220         | 356,635                           | 2,571,400        | 4,551,455         |                         |
| Unrestricted  | 1,138,555         | 1,146,034                         |                  | 2,284,589         |                         |
|   | <b>34,025,776</b> | <b>1,740,309</b>                  | <b>2,571,400</b> | <b>33,194,685</b> |                         |
| <b>Restrictions</b>   |                   |                                   |                  |                   |                         |
| A Externally Restricted Reserves  |                   |                                   |                  |                   |                         |
| 1 Specific purpose unexpended grants - general fund (Liability)*          | 3,330,660         |                                   |                  | 3,330,660         |                         |
| 2 Specific purpose unexpended grants - general fund (Revenue recognised)* | 801,457           |                                   |                  | 801,457           |                         |
| 3 Specific purpose unexpended grants - water fund*                        | 320,000           |                                   |                  | 320,000           |                         |
| 4 Developer contribution - general fund                                   | 1,317,983         | 171,515                           |                  | 1,489,498         | DC received             |
| 5 Developer contribution - water fund                                     | 594,575           |                                   |                  | 594,575           |                         |
| 6 Developer contribution - sewer fund                                     | 28,856            |                                   |                  | 28,856            |                         |
| 7 Water supplies  | 10,387,332        |                                   |                  | 10,387,332        |                         |
| 8 Sewer services  | 9,276,581         |                                   |                  | 9,276,581         |                         |
| 9 Deposits, Retentions and Bonds  | 63,556.83         | 66,125                            |                  | 129,682           | Retention/Bond Received |
| <b>Total external restriction</b>   | <b>26,121,001</b> | <b>237,640</b>                    | <b>-</b>         | <b>26,358,641</b> |                         |
| B Internally Restricted   |                   |                                   |                  |                   |                         |
| 1 Property  | 500,000           | 356,635                           |                  | 856,635           | Assets disposal         |
| 2 Employees leave entitlement   | 1,200,000         |                                   |                  | 1,200,000         |                         |
| 3 Remediation - Quarry  | 100,000           |                                   |                  | 100,000           |                         |
| 4 Remediation - Waste   | 1,000,000         |                                   | 97,403           | 902,597           | Actual expenditure      |
| 5 Infrastructure/Renewal  | 200,000           |                                   | -                | 200,000           |                         |
| 6 FAG - Operational - Received in Advance                                 | 1,280,418         |                                   | 1,280,418        | -                 | Restriction removed     |
| 7 FAG - Road - Received in Advance  | 735,802           |                                   | 735,802          | -                 | Restriction removed     |
| 8 Business System Remediation   | 800,000           |                                   | 123,614          | 676,386           | Actual expenditure      |
| 9 Plant and vehicle replacement reserve                                   | 950,000           |                                   | 334,163          | 615,837           | Actual expenditure      |
| <b>Total internal restriction</b>   | <b>6,766,220</b>  | <b>356,635</b>                    | <b>2,571,400</b> | <b>4,551,455</b>  |                         |

**Borrowings**

| Loan Reference                         | 111              | 112                  | 114                  | Total            |
|--|------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Purpose                                | Urban Stormwater | Quipolly Dam Upgrade | Quipolly Dam Upgrade |                  |
| Fund                                   | General          | Water                | Water                |                  |
| Interest Rate Type                     | Flexible         | Fixed                | Fixed                |                  |
| Current Interest Rate                  | 2.62%            | 6.53%                | 5.21%                |                  |
| Commencement Date                      | 22/09/2010       | 28/06/2012           | 30/06/2015           |                  |
| Maturity Date                          | 20/09/2030       | 28/06/2032           | 30/06/2035           |                  |
| Principal Amount (Original)            | 1,100,000        | 1,837,596            | 2,355,500            | 5,293,096        |
| <b>Outstanding Amount (31/03/2021)</b> | <b>583,578</b>   | <b>1,444,821</b>     | <b>1,905,473</b>     | <b>3,933,872</b> |

\*Transfer from/to unexpended grants liability/revenue will be processed at the end of the financial year



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Through both personal observation and talking to other residents and rate payers. We have not been properly consulted or are getting value for money from the rates we are already paying. Services have been reduced and personnel have left.

From what I have heard it will be Tamworth. Gunnedah does not want us. Tamworth Regional Council has been eyeing off the LPSC for several years now. They have huge debts and need our council area assets to offset their mismanagement. The "Fit for the Future" process was a stalling technique, implemented by the state government. With the State Election due in just a few weeks, the entire Liverpool Plains Shire Council LGA has now been included in the State Seat of Tamworth. After the Electoral boundary was moved recently. At the last state Election, the southern part of this council LGA, was is the State Seat of Upper Hunter. The SV rate rise is being done by stelf, to assist the process in the lead up to council Amalgamation. We are being used to prop up inefficiencies and over-paid council executives for other vested interests. This will result in collateral damage, which will mean that people will lose their homes and their lives will be ruined. Many of us will never recover from this. We have already suffered from the trauma of affordable housing and homelessness. We cannot afford to have that hapoen again. It is unfair and unreasonable.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The council has NOT clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for council's General fund. Less than two years ago, the former Mayor resigned. He was asked in a radio interview, "What was your greatest achievement as Mayor?" He replied "The Liverpool Plains Shire Council is Fit For The Future". When the new Mayor was elected and started his term, he stated that the LPSC is not fit. The Quirindi Advocate newspaper headline read - "We are NOT FIT". The former General Manager stated the same thing. We nad a new General Manager imported from inter-state, following the resignation of the previous long term GM. The imported GM from inter-state tendered ner resignation back in November last year. We now have an interum GM filling in. After receiving millions of dollars in drought funding from the former Federal Government, the people have not benefited in any way from the projects that were decided upon. The residents, businesses and rate payers were not consulted in any significant capacity. The projects decided on by the council where as follows. Replacement of existing public toilet blocks, replacement of pavillion at Show Ground complex, replacement of Rodeo Arena Complex at the Racecourse. As a result of these developments, the people have been forced to pay much higher admission fees to these events incorporated as part of the Annual Quirindi Show. Post Covid pandemic. This replacement program also included a new public Library. This new Library now has fewer public computers, costing more for printing and photocopying and is open less hours, than it was before Covid pandemic. The residents, business owners and rate payers have been left frustrated, angry and ignored, in relation to the lack of consultation by this council. The former Mayor stated that "There would be continued prosperity for many years to come". All we have seen in recent years is a decline in our services and in the prosperity and viability of our communities.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

The council has not gone out of its' way to canvas alternatives to the rate rise. The council has engaged a Sydney based consultancy firm for the purpose of meeting with concerned rate payers at community halls, having recently been conducted a few weeks ago. Someone asked the consultants at one meeting. "How much is the consulting process costing?" One consultant replied. "Nearly \$100,000." This big spending spree from council, follows the purchase and instalation of computer accounting software and employment of a software manager. The accounting software was rumoured to be worth. More befitting of a super regional council. One former councillor resigned in protest of excessive and unexplained payments,. All this follows the. This includes office, parks and gardens, maintenance, accounts, cleaning, waste management and tourist visitor information centre. Councillors are uncontactable by residents and rate payers. When calling the council chamber office, any call is either not answered or is not returned. No councillors are contactable after hours if there is an emergency.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

This council did not adequately communicate the full cumulative increase of the SV rate in both percentage and dollar terms. All they did is promote the proposed SV in general terms. This was communicated via the local newspaper the Quirindi Advocate, with a double full page spread. Plus extra articles to outline when it will commence. There was no itemisation of the percentage or dollar terms of increases. All we know is that the SV rate increase will start in the next year or so.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

This council has not engaged an appropriate community angagement strategy or a variety of engagement methods to ensure

awareness. The most important method of community engagement that has been missed, is the personal consultation by elected councillors. The people who the residents and rate payers voted for, to represent them. They are all uncontactable and remote from us. All the councillors are residents of only two towns on the Liverpool Plains Shire Council LGA. Those towns being Werris Creek and Quirindi (where the council chambers are located). There is no representation for all the other smaller towns and villages. [REDACTED]. The council has only communicated through the local newspaper articles and info sessions at community halls. Each info session only lasted around 2 hours maximum time allocated. All rate payers should have received letters from council, outlining exactly how much the will be paying for their rates, after the SV rate rise kicks in.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

There has been no action by Liverpool Plains Shire Council to respond to any feedback by rate payers or residents. We have no opportunity or gateway to do this. The previous informative website, has now been replaced by a generic basic web site, which just has the one landline phone number for the council. Previously, all councillors were listed. Along with their mobile phone numbers, for contact purposes for residents. We (the rate payers) are effectively locked out from being able to contact councillors, or general manager. Unless we know the councillors personally, we have no hope of being able to communicate with them. Rumour has it that, the Liverpool Plains Shire Council [REDACTED]

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The SV rate rise is totally unreasonable on rate payers. We have had so much to deal with in recent years. We have had a drought, mouse plague, which caused an economic downturn. Some areas of this council has also had to recover from floods. Recently, Covid caused lockdowns, staff shortages, migration of people from cities that has pushed up rents and mortgages, products and services, which has been passed onto the people. We are a low income family and are very stressed about the prospect of paying higher rates. We are already trying to deal with cost of living pressures and interest rate hikes. We have a larger population of older demographic of people who live in this LGA. We also have a large population of lower Socio-Economics residents and rate payers in this Council LGA.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The council has not taken any consideration at all, for the community's capacity to pay. They have already stripped back many of the services they were providing. Pre-Covid. Example being: Garbage and recycling drop off hours have been reduced. Public library is no longer open on a Saturday morning. Public toilets are not open as long and not cleaned and maintained as often. Also, the return and earn facility at the recycle centre is only open one day per week and you have to book.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Unless residents and rate payers can be in contact with the right person, in accounts at council. It will be difficult to be able to negotiate any payment plan, that results from hardship. I paid a water account back in July last year, over the phone. The payment was late, as I was helping my elderly mother move house in another council area. The office lady processed the payment, without issuing me with a receipt number. They referred the situation to the accounts department to call me back. I didn't hear back from them after that. They just indicated that the payment seemed to be fine at their end.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I'm really unsure about this part. As far as I am aware, there is a document on the table, located in the reception area at the Council Chambers. Usually, there is a document collection and display area, where people can inspect the proposal in writing. The timing of the SV rate rise notification was first mentioned, in the lead up to Christmas last year. Most people would have been too busy at that time. Also, I can't recall the council announcing how long the documents would be available for viewing.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I can't recall any exact details of the quantify of productivity improvements and cost containment strategies. I am aware of the impact of several years of drought, a mouse plague, flooding, and now the Covid Pandemic. However, this council has also over spent on rebuilding and other excessive spending. This equates to financial management. This, during the times whereby the people have had to miss out on many other things. Many people have not benefitted from Covid payments, for example. Many were not eligible. All this council has done is change personnel, not disclosing their long term strategies, making their councillors uncontactable and most importantly, remove and reduce services. We are not getting our money's worth.