

**From:** .Alan Bottle [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, 12 March 2016 3:44 PM  
**To:** Local Government Mailbox  
**Subject:** Penrith City Council Special Rate Variation

To IPART for consideration

This SRV requested by Penrith City Council should be supported with detailed proposed expenditures and not just "blanket" expenditures.

I have a total lack of trust in Penrith City Council after my involvement in the previous SRV in 2010, which was a total "rort".

I was honoured to be selected as a member of a focus group to discuss the proposed SRV increase. There were two focus groups only.

To support the SRV the Council had three methods of approach - Telephone Survey, a Mail Out and the two focus groups.

The response from the Telephone Survey and Mail Out did not meet survey criteria, so the results of the two focus groups were the sole justification. There were also letters from organisation connected to Council but not incurring the proposed increase. The Minutes of the Council Meeting stated 66% of these two focus groups supported the SRV increase.

Knowing the results of the focus group I attended did not support the increase so I then wrote to the General Manager about my concerns of 66% agreement. His return letter stated that 100% of the other focus group had supported the increase. A previous newspaper article stated all members of the other focus group did not support the increase, so I rang the individual involved and he confirmed that 100% did not support the increase.

Then I realised Penrith City Council were rorting the results and felt totally disillusioned (putting it mildly), that a local Council would be this dishonest.

So when this current SRV was being surveyed I made comments through the appropriate channel to Council on three areas.

1. Income was up through increased housing development.
2. Costs would be down through a joint agreement between Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith City Councils.
3. Money unspent from the previous SRV was to be wasted on a Pop-Up Park costing \$2.5 million that was only supported by a very small number of and I mean small number of people. The residents Of Penrith concerns are around parking or lack of parking, not Pop-Up Parks.

I did receive a response from Council which I consider to be a whole lot of meaningless "jargon", which I immediately responded to and the email

is attached. My concerns were not truthfully answered.

Resulting from the previous SRV application where full details of proposed expenditures were stated there were still funds leftover being wasted. In this SRV Penrith City Council is not supplying details of proposed expenditures and mention "blanket" expenditures only and this not sufficient justification for a SRV of this magnitude.

The proposed SRV increases will not be spent in the year of calculation but put into Investments for Future expenditure. The residents would benefit from a pay later time when expenditures are actually being spent. The major expenditure is to be a car parking facility at an unknown location as no detail is supplied.

This SRV Increase should not be approved without detailed justification by Penrith City Council as "blanket" expenditure is open to manipulation.

As mentioned above, I have attached my email correspondences with Penrith City Council.

Thanks Alan Bottle

## Fw: Special Rate Variation

.Alan Bottle

Sun 7/02/2016 5:24 PM

[REDACTED]

Mayor and Councillors

The SRV is up for discussion at tomorrow night's meeting and the level of increases are not warranted.

The increase of 9.09% in 2016/2017 is far too excessive compared with the previous increase of 6.3%.

This money will not be spent in 2016/2017 and would be better in the residents bank accounts than in Council's bank account.

Judging by the Minute Report only 50% of a very small number of residents believe the increase is necessary and therefore the increase is not supported by the residents.

The Individual response to my submission is shown below, and as you can see it is "Nonsense" under the Council Letterhead.

Thanks Alan Bottle

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**From:** .Alan Bottle [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 26  
**To:** Our Future  
**Subject:** Re: Special Rate Variation



In response to your explanations

If all the developments create losses to Council by costs outweighing income then stop all new developments because the Council will get deeper and deeper in debt. Stop all development at Jordan Springs.

Mike Baird is quoting the savings by amalgamation of Councils, Where did he get the savings he is quoting because they are very big figures Sydney wide. Even a reduction in the level of SRV is a benefit to the residents.

The current SRV was to upgrade Memory Park in Penrith and Coachman Park in St Marys and not to create the pop up park. This has been use of the SRV monies.

Alan Bottle

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**From:** Our Future <ourfuture@penrith.city>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 26 November 2015 9:01 AM  
**To:** .Alan Bottle  
**Subject:** RE: Special Rate Variation

Dear Alan,

Thank you for your comments and feedback.

We would like to take the opportunity to respond to your comments.

“Council has extra rates coming in from developments at Mulgoa Rise, Caddens and Jordan Springs so an increase is not required”

While Council do have new development areas coming online, they also bring with them increased costs to maintain. This includes new parks, community buildings, drains, open space and parks to maintain, street lights to power, streets to sweep and maintain and so on. This is in addition to the extra load the increased population has on the City wide services provided by Council. Overall this increase in service costs outweighs the increases in rates we receive.

“Council will have cost savings with the recent agreement between the three Councils Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith so an increase is not required”

At this stage Council has entered into an agreement to investigate a strategic alliance. There are significant discussions occurring around areas of common interest. There is the potential for significant resource and information sharing which could lead to cost savings. A business case into what the potential savings are has not been carried out so the actual cost savings can't be quantified. Having said that, for the strategic alliance to be established there will likely need to be an injection of funds before any savings are realised.

While there are clearly opportunities for the strategic alliance to achieve savings for each council it is unlikely that these would be enough to mitigate the need for the rate rise.

“The last SRV increase had excess funding left over so you wasted it on a Pop Up Park so an increase is not required”

Council realise that the existing ‘pop up’ park has raised some strong opinions, both way, among the community. The permanent park was endorsed by Council earlier this year following two evaluations of the temporary ‘pop-up’. Those evaluations, undertaken independently of Council showed that residents have a desire to have a space at the western end of High Street that has shade, greenery, places to sit and places to meet friends.

The development of a permanent park in that space is being undertaken with funds from the current SRV but certainly not with excess or left over funds, it is part of a planned response to revitalise the Penrith city centre. The previous SRV increase continues to roll out improvements for example there are significant works currently being undertaken in Queen Street St Marys to upgrade the lighting and footpath. This work will commence in the Penrith city centre over the coming financial years.

Many thanks for your comments and for taking the time to contribute to this process.



### Penrith City Council

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Penrith Council logo

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**From:** .Alan Bottle 

**Sent:** Thursday, 29

**To:** Our Future

**Subject:** Special Rate Variation

Dear General Manager/Mayor

A Special Rate Variance is not appropriate at this time because:

Council has extra rates coming in from developments at Mulgoa Rise, Caddens and Jordan Springs so an increase is not required.

Council will have cost savings with the recent agreement between the three Councils Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith so an increase is not required.

The last SRV increase had excess funding left over so you wasted it on a Pop Up Park so an increase is not required.

Thanks Alan Bottle