

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 March 2017 1:09 PM  
**To:** IPART Mailbox  
**Subject:** Objection to proposed rate rise in Shoalhaven City Council area

Good afternoon

I wish to lodge an objection to the proposed rate rise put forward by the Shoalhaven City Council.

The council has failed to properly inform the community of the real cost or benefits of the proposed rise. They have not presented to the community a comprehensive long term strategic plan, cost/benefit analysis, efficiency audit or any other sound factual based data or report to support this application. Has there been independent scrutiny of the council's plans?

Before any application is considered by IPART, Shoalhaven City Council should develop a long term strategy, undertake cost/benefit analysis, undertake an efficiency review and any other reviews, discoveries and/or plans that are then widely circulated within the community for comment. Has the council looked at other means of raising funds or reducing operating costs other than just increasing rates?

Shoalhaven City Council is intending to present to the community in the Milton Ulladulla area next Monday night, after IPART has considered their application. This meeting is intended to provide ratepayers with the facts. We need to know these facts before, not after, the decision is made.

At a meeting held at the Civic Centre in Ulladulla last night, it was disclosed by a councillor that the council is forecasting a surplus of \$18 million this year. This indicates that, if true, the council is not in a dire financial position and that they do not need to rush into an apparently massive increase to rates without undertaking some rigorous investigation into what increase, if any, is actually required.

Please be mindful, when making a decision, that the Shoalhaven area cannot be compared to the Kiama area when assessing rates. There is a significant proportion of the residents who are retired and have no access to additional income to meet such increases in living expenses. An example is my 84 year old neighbour who is still living in the family home on a single old age pension. A large rates increase will be financially crippling for her and there are many more like her in our community. We also have to travel for any significant medical treatment.

Further, any increase will also deprive local businesses, who often struggle to survive, of income as the money spent in the community will instead be redirected to the council. Many of the owners bought these businesses to earn an income. And the council will deprive them of that will, in turn, cause unnecessary hardship.

In Ulladulla, we do not ask for fabulous art, fancy parks, fancy anything. We just want to continue living in a lovely neat community where many retirees volunteer to help others usually at a financial cost to themselves.

We have simple needs such as liking our garbage to be collected and pot holes and parks to be repaired or maintained.

We don't mind that we don't have stormwater and need to put in recharged systems to run our roof water onto the street so that it does not flood our neighbours' yards. Many don't mind that they don't have kerb and guttering, access to town water or sewerage.

What we do mind is having a council who, apparently, is not caring for the wellbeing of the ratepayers rather than looking for efficiencies in its operations.

Please consider any increase very carefully as many, many ratepayers will be seriously caused hardship by the Shoalhaven City Council's proposed increases.

Regards

Anne Lindley

