

8th March, 2016

To the IPART Committee

As a Ballina Shire ratepayer and resident of 14 years, I write in response to the Ballina Shire Council's application for a special rate rise above the government pegged rate. I responded to the Ballina Council's public consultation process and indicated that the process was rushed, offered incomplete information and was inappropriate in the current climate especially on top of a recent rate rise to cover the cost of rehabilitating two swimming complexes in the Council area.

I would point out that Ballina Shire Council waited until the middle of the holiday season to raise this application and its public consultation model. The whole process was flawed, rushed and sadly not reflective of what is, on the whole a very capable Council.

The fact that the overwhelming percentage of respondents to the Council consultation process were not in favour is informative. The fact that councillors voted to ignore the community response and proceed with the application is instructive in their intent.

It would be better if the Council had committed itself to a genuine process of informing the community and consultation with it. A potential 17% rate rise is extra-ordinary and will commit many rate-payers to a prohibitive increase on top an already demanding period of increases in life-expenses. (Electricity, Healthcare,)

While the focus of the increases might well be worthwhile, it is in inappropriate time to commit ratepayers to such a huge and continuing expense.

With respect I ask the IPART committed to decline Council's application.

Yours Sincerely,
Allen Simmons

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