

LG Submission Form 2021-2022 - notifications

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IPART Special Variation Submission Form

Industry	Local Government
Review	(LG) Special Variations & Minimum Rates 2021-2022
Document Reference	
Council	Armidale Regional Council, Application Notification Letter

Please leave your comments in the comment box below.

I feel as if financial mismanagement has been an ongoing issue of the Armidale regional council for many years. I am not well informed by any means. But as far back as the global financial crisis and the reputed loss of thirty million dollars that the ARC invested in stocks based on sub prime loans it would seem the ARC has learned relatively few lessons in responsible handling of finances. This thirty million dollar investment was money the council at the time loaned if my sources of information are correct.

I have spent the last 20 years living and working in Armidale or Guyra. During this time I have seen a steady increase in the number of vacant stores. Largely the stores that have closed were what I would class as stores offering products that were minor luxuries. I place the blame for this on the fact that

- Wages have stagnated.
- Each business closure has meant a few less jobs are

available (further reducing the amount of disposable income flowing into businesses).

- The UNE has actively encouraged students to study externally, thus reducing the annual influx of students and the money they spend which once bolstered the economy.

- And finally according to some former business owners I know, the high cost of renting retail space has made it hard to stay in business.

It's reached a point now where one of the major employers in Big W has closed it's doors. Now Big W is a store which I think should benefit from a time when people have less money to spend because traditionally they offer many budget priced goods.

All I have said above is to demonstrate two main points

(1) Armidale residents have little disposable income already.

We are in no position to cope with a permanent rise in rates. The steady decline in the business sector should demonstrate this fact clearly. Every extra dollar we must throw towards rates is a dollar that will be pulled out of the local stores. This creates a cycle of gradual closures and job losses.

(2) The Armidale council are seemingly unable/unwilling to learn from the errors of the past. Throwing more money their way will not teach them financial responsibility. It will further damage the towns ability to support it's own businesses, jobs and local taxes.

The case in point about financial irresponsibility is here- At a time when a significant portion of the community is gathering to protest against these rate rises which will further damage the local economy, this council has the audacity to give itself a pay rise

(20% to the councilors and 36% for the Mayor). This is a combined added yearly expense of \$60,270. While this seems like a petty amount in regards to the annual spending of the council, it is a clear indication in my mind that this council have no sense of the appropriate use of funds.

So I would request that anybody within IPART who reads this submission votes to reject the ARC application to introduce a SRV at this time. As a town that has already seen a steady rate of business closures, we can scarcely afford the impact of less money flowing into those remaining. We can scarcely afford the job losses that will eventually occur as a result of businesses tightening their belts.

If you have attachments you would like to include with your feedback, please attach them below.

Your Details

Are you an individual or organisation?

Individual

If you would like your submission or your name to remain confidential please indicate below.

Publish - my submission and name can be published (not contact details or email address) on the IPART website

First Name

Alan

Last Name

Staples

Organisation Name

Position

Email

[REDACTED]

IPART's Submission Policy

I have read & accept IPART's Submission Policy