

LG Submission Form 2020-2021

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Question	Response
IPART Special Variation Submission Form	
Industry	Local Government
Review	(LG) Special Variations & Minimum Rates 2020-2021
Document Reference	
Select Council	Lismore City Council
If you have any general feedback regarding your council's proposed SV, please leave your comments in the comment box below.	<p>The SV is not justified. It is a result of poor management by Council over previous years both in terms of accounting practices, general management, maintenance of road surfaces, wasteful road maintenance practices and a bloated administration function rather than front line service delivery.</p> <p>Rather than always assuming they can increase revenue, council should look more closely at where they can save costs. Council is frequently straying from the original remit of providing services directly to local residents. They delve into social policy areas (think declaring climate emergencies etc), they over regulate rate payers and have far too much internal focus and not external focus.</p> <p>Council should be requested to look more closely at cost and waste reductions and how to do road maintenance more efficiently. Private enterprise can't reach for the revenue button everytime there is an issue, they always have to look at the expense side in detail. Council should be no different.</p> <p>The consolation process has been half hearted at best. Community consultation sessions did not even result in council members recording feedback given. There were lots of excuses and not much really listening to rate payer feedback.</p>

Your comments on Criterion 1:	<p>Council has not clearly articulated and identified the need for and purpose of the SRV. The real reason is poor management which they have disguised as a need to attend to road maintenance. Road maintenance is critical to road safety and Council should focus on this area of service delivery more than on other spurious aspects.</p> <p>Council has not articulated why the road maintenance backlog and future maintenance needs to be funded by this SRV as opposed to other areas of its service delivery. Why is it attributed to roads and not other areas of council services. The answer is they can hide behind road safety and flood/weather impacts to justify this increase when in fact they haven't identified other areas that could have been cut to reduce the need for the SRV or why those other areas have not contributed to the supposed revenue shortfall.</p>
Your comments on Criterion 2:	<p>Council has communicated the full cumulative increase in percentage terms and the total increase in dollar terms. However, they have not sufficiently justified why it is required relative to other options they considered. In particular, insufficient emphasis was placed on possible cost reductions and efficiency measures.</p>
Your comments on Criterion 3:	<p>Lismore council area has a large agricultural base. Despite some recent rains these rate payers are dealing with the prolonged effects of drought, the ongoing issues associated with the deregulation of the dairy industry and generally a lower social economic rate base. Accordingly, Council has not adequately taken into account these factors in assessing variation. Like their constituents Council should first be required to thoroughly investigate cost savings, efficiencies, abandoning non value adding services or services not strictly within their remit, before slugging rate payers who can little afford these increases.</p>
Your comments on Criterion 4:	<p>No comment other than 80% of respondents did not endorse the rate variation but council still proceeded with the application to IPART. This makes a mockery of consultation.</p>

Your comments on Criterion 5:	Refer previous comments. Council has paid lip service to cost reduction, containment strategies and productivity improvements. In consultation meetings we were told the bulk of councils costs were labour related and that they can't address these costs because the State Government sets the awards applicable to Council employees. This is convenient for Council to hide behind but does not address the other ways of containing costs such as efficient use of the resources they employ, making sure there is effective management of those resources to gain maximum benefit, hiring at appropriate levels and making effective representation to State Government on the effects of any proposed wage increases. Council employees enjoyed real wage increases in excess of most of other economic sectors who actually saw real wages increase, and now those same employees in non real wage growth areas are being asked to pay an above inflation rate variation.
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.	Anonymous - my submission can be published but my name should remain anonymous
First Name	
Last Name	
Organisation Name	
Position	
Email	
IPART's Submission Policy	I have read & accept IPART's Submission Policy