

## **Submission to IPART: Randwick Council Proposal**

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to express several concerns about both the consultation process and Randwick Council's recommendation.

Problems with the process include: a low response rate, biased framing of questions, and the fact that only three options were put to residents, none of which came close to capturing my own preference (e.g. respondents weren't given the option of re-allocating funds across services within existing rate levels or re-allocation within modest rate increases without recourse to borrowing, nor were respondents asked about shifting more of the rates burden to property developers). Even with these short-comings and framing effects, it has been reported that a majority of respondents were opposed to the Council's recommendation (the third option).

Looking beyond the consultation process, Randwick Council's recommendation is troublesome for several reasons. Firstly, the Council will be liable for a sizeable debt, with associated servicing costs and exposure to interest rate rises. More fundamentally, some of the most expensive proposals are either not necessary or inappropriate for a local Council to fund (e.g. costly security measures feature prominently in the proposal when such measures, if needed at all, should be addressed at State/Federal levels, not inefficiently devolved to individual Councils). By contrast, for Randwick residents the focus should be local services and community amenities – drains, sewerage, litter, verges, more trees, more open spaces, dog parks, surf clubs, coastal walks, etc. And savings can be made by not constructing concrete paths where they are not needed – apart from the economic waste associated with such expenditure, there has been significant loss of natural amenity (ironically, there are examples of this in and around the Environment Park, as well as elsewhere across Randwick).

In sum, residents should have been presented with a fourth option involving a re-allocation of expenditure (e.g. away from security measures and concrete paths) and modest rate rises for the things we truly desire (without the need to borrow).

Kind regards,

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