

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) NSW

Level 15, 2-24 Rawson Place Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Tribunal Chairperson Dr Peter J Boxall AO and members Mr Ed Willett and Ms Deborah Cope

Re: Special Variations & Minimum Rates 2018-19 – Randwick City Council

As a ratepayer and joint property owner in Randwick City Council (RCC) in the [REDACTED] area for over 30 plus years I am appalled by the application by the RCC officers, voted on by recently elected (Sept 2017) Councillor's – [REDACTED] being 10 out of 15 newly elected Councillor's, attempting to increase our Council rates by up to 20% despite campaign promises to control the RCC budget not load the ratepayers with future public debt.

There are a number of reasons that IPART should reject the misleading and deceptive application by the RCC and may I suggest to IPART, question those Councillors (*in IPART public hearings if conducted*) who voted on this misleading information provided in support of the RCC application. Some of the reasons the RCC application information provided to IPART is misleading is as follows:

1. The so called council survey / consultation submitted by the RCC in supporting the rate increases were conducted between December 2017 and February 2018. The survey was sent to householders only **not to ratepayers** who pay the actual council rates. A household would generally have two ratepayers. To conduct such a survey / consultation was dishonest in the extreme as every person and family in Australia except for essential services shuts down for those 2 months of the Christmas / summer holidays. People are on holiday, mostly travelling interstate or overseas or just switching off.
2. So the figures stated by RCC would never reflect all ratepayers living in RCC. Furthermore the RCC has refused to release the complete survey details despite public calls by local ratepayers and wider media. So for the RCC to state publicly it has majority ratepayer support is dishonest and misleading. To further support my objection concerning this dishonest survey by RCC, I draw the Tribunal members attention to a news story in this week's Southern Courier newspaper – southerncourier.com.au Tuesday March 6 2018 on pg. 19 **"Council not honest about the rate rise" by Maroubra resident Ann McEwin** who amongst other facts states **"50.3 per cent of those 6,316 respondents opposed this option"** The option opposed was the large increase 19.85%. The fact that only the response information of only 6,316 residents was used by RCC despite the Council area population (*which according to 2011 Census (9 August) population of 133,519*) shows major faults and dishonest use of the survey information by the RCC.
3. Some of the RCC proposed reasons for the rate increase / funding needed are misleading if not dishonest and not the responsibly of the RCC but that of the State or Federal Governments. The following two examples of such are the **installing of CCTV in public areas spaces to prevent criminal activity** and **funding for countering terrorists attacks as part National Counter Terrorist Plan**. Those funding and budget decisions are the **"constitutional**

responsibly” of both the NSW State Government, its agencies NSW Police Force etc. and the Federal Government, its agencies ASIO, AFP, AICC and ADF amongst some.

4. Furthermore these public funding needs are not the requirement of Local Government as determined under the Local Government Act 1993 or related NSW Legislation. Funding needs for any National Counter Terrorist Plan **should not be imposed on the ratepayers of any Council in the State of NSW**, that public funding should come direct from the Federal Parliament & the Commonwealth Government as they are responsible for all Counter-Terrorist legislation and related laws via the new Department of Home Affairs and the COAG Attorney-General & Police Ministers agreements between the States and Territories.
5. The RCC has no public plans to control ongoing/forward expenses except spend more of ratepayer’s funds without any plans to find savings or gain revenue streams for future budget planning years. This further sustainable impost on RCC ratepayers will also further damage local small business operations in RCC who will be sluggish with more rate costs while further damaging that local employment opportunity.
6. The RCC has recently just wasted ratepayers funding (*undisclosed amount in the millions*) on NSW State owned land – Malabar Headland National Park control by the NSW National Parks Service, to build – **A Coastal Walk Way** opened February 2018. The full details are in Southern Courier newspaper – southerncourier.com.au - Tuesday February 13, 2018 on pg. 08 to 09 – **New Coastal walk to open at Malabar Headland Park**. Again this is further evidence of the RCC using ratepayer’s funds on **non-council activity** where it is the clear responsibly of the State Government NSW and the Commonwealth Government via its agency the Department of Finance who controls part of the land adjoining under lease to a non-profit community organisation running the “Anzac Rifle Range at Malabar”. RCC refuses again to release the full costs to ratepayers and the media for this **non council activity** which I believe is contrary to the Local Government Act 1993 and related NSW legislation to conceal such RCC public expenditure matters from the public.
7. The current CPI index is 1.95% as per the Reserve Bank of Australia website in March 2018, a long way from the 20% rate increase sought by the RCC without proper justification.

In conclusion the application by RCC for near 20% percent rate increase should be rejected in total by the IPART NSW. IPART should only grant the lowest rate increase possible, all Governments must live within their budgets as the rest of the community, taxpayers and ratepayers have to.

I am prepared to appear before the Tribunal to give evidence, be questioned on my objections and to support my application before IPART, to reject the RCC rate increase if the public hearings are conduct on this matter concerning RCC proposed rate increases.


8 March 2018