

Dear IPART

Thank you for the opportunity for allowing me to make a submission regarding the special variation for Central Coast Council

Below is a table of the proposed rate increase that I have calculated that will incur by the resident and businesses of the Central Coast Council.

Securing your future option - 15%						
Residential Average						
Gosford	2,021					
Wyong	1,015					
Total	1,197					
Central Coast Council Resident						
Financial Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments
Rates	1,101.74	1,101.74	1,267.00	1,295.10	1,324.88	How did Central Coast calculate the base rate in 2021
Rate Peg - annual IPART CPI increase		22.03	28.09	29.79	30.47	2024 and 2025 Central Coast Council used 2.3% instead of 2.5%
Special Rate Variation -NEW LEVY + Harmonisation - NEW LEVY		143.23				Central Coast Council has not advised on the split between SRV and Harmonisation
Domestic waste charge	512.00	512.00	512.00	512.00	512.00	
Total	1,613.74	1,779.00	1,807.10	1,836.88	1,867.35	
Summary						
Ratepayers will have to pay a one off \$143.23 SRV levy plus a Harmonisation levy for the Merger of this Council and the unlawful use of restricted funds						
Securing your future option - 15%						
Business Average						
Gosford	2,021					
Wyong	2,593					
Total	3,997					
Central Coast Council Business						
Financial Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Comments
Rates	3,241.74	3,241.74	3,728.00	3,807.36	3,894.93	How did Central Coast calculate the base rate in 2021
Rate Peg - annual IPART CPI increase		64.83	79.36	87.57	89.58	2024 and 2025 Central Coast Council used 2.3% instead of 2.5%
Special Rate Variation -NEW LEVY + Harmonisation - NEW LEVY		421.43				Central Coast Council has not advised on the split between SRV and Harmonisation
Domestic waste charge	512.00	512.00	512.00	512.00	512.00	
Total	3,753.74	4,240.00	4,319.36	4,406.93	4,496.51	
Summary						
Ratepayers will have to pay a one off \$421.43 SRV levy plus a Harmonisation levy for the Merger of this Council and the unlawful use of restricted funds						

I would like to advise IPART to reject Central Coast Council proposal of a SRV (Special Rate Variation) for the following reasons

1. Central Coast Council did not provide adequate level of community consultation to its constituents:
 - a. Referring to ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics) <https://www.abs.gov.au/> the ratepayers of Central Coast Council is a low social economic community.
 - b. All the online community consultation provided by council was designed as a presentation rather than a discussion.
 - c. All the workshops, telephone calls and drop in centres consultation provided by council could not provide me with the split between SRV levy and the harmonisation levy.
 - d. Central Coast council letter to residents was too difficult to understand and it neglected to present the final cost that will burden the ratepayers. See page 86-87 [https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Council/Meetings_and_minutes/Attachment_3 - Securing Your Future Consultation report - 4 February 2021 Final Version.pdf](https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Council/Meetings_and_minutes/Attachment_3_-_Securing_Your_Future_Consultation_report_-_4_February_2021_Final_Version.pdf)
 - e. Central Coast council did not offer me with a rate calculator like the ratepayers of Canterbury-Bankstown Council <https://www.cbccity.nsw.gov.au/resident/rates/onerate/rates-calculator>

- f. No one from the Central Coast council can advise me on how the base rate was calculated found on page 86-87
https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Council/Meetings_and_minutes/Attachment_3_-_Securing_Your_Future_Consultation_report_-_4_February_2021_Final_Version.pdf
 - g. For years 2024 and 2025 Central Coast council has used 2.3% rate peg rather than 2.5% as mentioned in the securing your future consultation report.
https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Council/Meetings_and_minutes/Attachment_3_-_Securing_Your_Future_Consultation_report_-_4_February_2021_Final_Version.pdf
 - h. Ratepayers should not have to pay for the unlawful use of restricted funds. Council should undertake legal action to the individuals that approved this. As a ratepayer, I need to rely on the system of local government that checks and balances are in place to ensure the future of this organisation. Any unlawful activity needs to be handled by Ms Hancock from the office of local government and address accordingly. The state government cannot burden its ratepayers to pick up the bill. This Levy needs to be absorbed in the state budget.
2. Central Coast Council has been forced to pass on the Harmonisation levy to Central Coast ratepayers due to the inefficiencies of the state government forces amalgamations.

I would like IPART to reject this levy due to:

- a. Central Coast ratepayers did not request the two councils to be merged. This decision was made by the state government. It is therefore the state governments responsibility to pay for this levy. Not its ratepayers.
 - b. Central Coast ratepayers missed out on \$10m from the stronger community fund grant that was meant to pay for council amalgamations.
[REDACTED]
 - c. The merger of these two councils was to provide savings and efficient to its ratepayers. This has not been the case. Refer to <https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/council/forms-and-publications/annual-reports>
 - d. Services provided by Central Coast Council has decreased dramatically as a result of the forced council amalgamations.
3. Central Coast Council is requesting a SRV levy to be paid by Central Coast ratepayers due to the mismanagement of its financials.

I would like IPART to reject this levy due to:

- a. The merger of these two councils was to provide savings and efficient to its ratepayers. This has not been the case. Refer to <https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/council/forms-and-publications/annual-reports>
- b. Services provided by Central Coast Council has decreased dramatically as a result of the forced council amalgamations.
- c. Community forums has allowed ratepayers unite and voice their disappointments on the failures of this mega council.
- d. I have no trust and reliability that the acting CEO, Mr Hart will deliver on the promises made in the securing you future document. I strongly suggest, that there is no other

option, but to demerge this council and start again. Throwing more money to an already dysfunctional system will not fix the administration of Central Coast council.

- e. I am concerned with the financial stress and mental health of the community especially during this pandemic. Central Coast ratepayers is a low social economic community with capped income streams. Refer to <https://www.abs.gov.au/>

I would also like to advise that I rejects any alternative rating structure provided to IPART to consider, such as the Base Rate + ad valorem or any other rate structure other than the Valuer General property Value ad valorem Rate structure.

Conclusion:

I strongly requesting IPART to reject the SRV proposal by Central Coast Council. Since the amalgamation of the two councils, the members and ratepayers of the Central Coast LGA has not received the level of service that this mega council can provide to its ratepayers. Pre amalgamation, both councils delivered to their budgets. This Council has had enough time to derive efficiencies, apply cost synergies and advocate to its state MPs to get access to grants. IPART, this council is not working for the people of Central Coast, especially for the former Wyong ratepayers. To request more money from its ratepayers to pay for council inefficiencies and delivery of low standard capital related programs is like throwing money into the fire or paying an unskilled professional to build you a house.

Furthermore, I strongly requesting IPART to reject the harmonisation levy. As it was the state government that merged the two councils not the ratepayers. This levy needs to be paid by the state government, not its ratepayers. The premier, Ms Berejiklian administration did not provide the full \$20m stronger community fund grant that was needed to fund the merger of the council. Therefore accepting responsibility to this levy shortfall of \$10m. The state government should absorb this cost in their budget.