

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 13 March 2017 1:19 PM  
**To:** Local Government Mailbox  
**Subject:** Ulladulla/Mollymook region as part of Shoalhaven council submission for special rate variance

Dear Leticia

Our council has called a meeting this evening to discuss the shoalhaven significant increase in rates which I only heard about last week from the independent party in the council. There has not been evidence of any attempts to contact me as a rate payer to advise of these rate rises or the increases proposed. When I asked this week for detail I was told to attend tonight's meeting but this after your cutoff date for submissions which is insufficient for community to respond.

While I am not adverse to a small rate rise I object to the extent of their proposed rate rises especially as the council will be in surplus this year, there is no evidence of any review of budgets and no significant projects or spending in our area to justify the increase. I am concerned several council members have tried to have an independent review of the council budget which was refused and that information required for a submission to IPart is not forthcoming. Not getting answers to our questions to enable us to lodge a submission.

I am also concerned that reference is made to wealthy communities with high income brackets like Kiama but not to like areas who like our region predominantly made up of pensioners, self-funded retirees, low income earners. This will cripple our community many pensioners currently struggling with the government changes with a levy on their rates, significant rise advised recently by council in water rates above the proposed special levy as well as real threat of mortgage rate rises.

I seek those who represent the community voice in IPART given we have not had proper consultation by our council for access to key figures to respond to the rate rise proposal of Shoalhaven Council. Its not the rise itself that concerns the community but the extent of the rise which on top of other council rises will cripple our community. It should also be noted that many full rate payers are also self-funded retirees of which I am one and we don't show up in the statistics as why many are on similar monies to govt funded pensioners we are not entitled to concessions as ours are self-funded not govt funded. Add those numbers to the pensioners and the low income families in this region and the fit for future picture also changes. Note that despite a significant surplus this year there has also been according to an independent councilor advice today wastage by this council entering into projects in Nowra including funding a national govt funded project which should not have been funded by a local council and not outsourcing other projects to developers to lease or own to reduce costs. There is money hidden under other codes I was advised by a council employee. I would request an independent review of council funding and future projects by independent body. Council has also not advised our community how and where the money will be spent as they put up the rates a few years back with promises never kept and we are concerned no accountability for our funds or where the money for their proposed rate rises would go.

There was also a fit for future report done two years ago as advised by a former councilman who told me the figures significantly differ to current proposals and the proposed rate rises are significantly less so once again where is the evidence behind their figures and are they

comparing apples with apples or picking the areas not like ours to justify their case? I'd love to write a reply but they have only just announced a community meeting for this evening to discuss their proposal with Ipart which is after your deadline. There is a lack of transparency to the community which I am aware is a key part of any submission.

On top of recently announced water/sewerage rate increases which are significant and the recent change to govt putting insurance levy's on rate payers a rate rise that is proposed above their already advised 6% to 33% will cripple many of us financially especially with the electricity, health and mortgage rate rises this year. Many small businesses in our region rely on the community to sustain their business and many of us will not be able to afford soon to use their services including small cafes, fuel, local food outlets and specialty shops. There has already been several small businesses close down recently due to decrease demand as the community is struggling we are not a high income earning region.

I am aware the Independent party to Shoalhaven council is preparing a submission as they may have information we are not party to then please consider their submission as truly representing the community as theirs is the only voice we have heard so far.

Thank you for your time. I am not against a rate rise but the extent of the proposed rate rise is excessive given majority of rate payers in the area I live are pensioners, self-funded retirees and low income earners. Our town cannot sustain this level of rise.

Thank you for your time

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