

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Government Mailbox](#)
Subject: Port Stephens Council application for a SRV
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In 2015 Port Stephens Council made a submission to IPART in which they stated quite unequivocally that they were "Fit for the Future", that they were planning for a surplus budget and that they did not need any extra funding to maintain their commitments. To support this claim, they furnished IPART with, amongst other documents, a "fiscally conservative Long Term Financial Plan to 2025" which "will be achieved without the need to apply for a special variation to rates".

It beggars belief that now, a little over three years since Council produced this independantly prepared document they they feel the need to introduce an SRV. What has happened to change this? Could it be that faced with a forced amalgamation with Newcastle Council (who were not deemed "Fit for the Future") the Port Stephens Council indulged in a little "creative accounting"? Or perhaps one of their very expensive advisers made a little boo-boo which Council forgot to mention to the ratepayers who funded this document?

Considering that within the Port Stephens council area, independantly funded construction is underway on at least 4 large "Lifestyle Villages" which will all be required to pay some considerable rates to PSC for little or no outlay on roads, street lighting, tennis courts, bowling greens, libraries or swimming pools as the villages install and maintain these with no funding at all from Council. These, when added to the 4 or more villages which already exist would contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Council coffers for no expense other than a weekly garbage collection.

It follows then that Port Stephens Council's application for an SRV appears to be solely to finance a kind of "Municipal Wish List" which has only marginal benefit to the majority of its ratepayers. If this is not the case then the application underwrites PSC's inability to operate within its own financial guidelines

I strongly suggest that none of the 4 SRV options submitted by council should be accepted and further suggest that if Council is either unable or unwilling to operate within its own LTFP then perhaps it could be time to consider the appointment of an administrator.