

Dear Mr Sir/Madam,

I am writing to oppose any special rate variation increase above the NSW State government's rate peg.

I realise that the council is struggling with financial sustainability; however this is the case for many other councils in this region. If the NSW Government is going to continue to promote Byron Bay as the second biggest tourism destination after Sydney, then council should be lobbying the state government for additional grants and funding to maintain infrastructure.

The introduction of paid parking was spruiked as the answer to the council's financial woes and as a result I now have to pay \$100 a year for my wife and I to park in our own town. There has been over twenty years of mismanagement and wastage by successive councils. I have no confidence that any additional revenue generated by rate increases will be managed and spent accordingly by Byron Shire Council and believe that amalgamation of local councils will allow for better savings and reduce staffing levels.

Byron Bay has some of the lowest incomes in the state and salaries for the Northern Rivers region fall well below the state average. The continued increase in the cost of living in this area is pushing many long-time local residents out and if this proposed special rate variation goes ahead then it will cause many more to leave. I have spoken to a lot of residents in the shire and for many this increase will be the final nail in the coffin. The result will be a town of Airbnb's and holiday homes to the detriment of this community.

Not many residents get 7.5% salary increases every year and the proposal of 7.5% is an extreme hardship for the elderly and working families. The fair increase would be in line with CPI and council should target their funding to maintaining existing infrastructure, with **no new spending**.

I hope that iPart will carefully review this proposal and reduce it to a more sensible rate.

Regards,



Please review our communities' response to Byron Shire Council below:

██████████ We're already becoming a community of extremes with those that have and own assets like residential properties exploiting the high demand for rental/holiday accommodation and those that run businesses in hospitality etc able to exploit the youth and lower paid/government wage subsidised employment sector. This is a tough place for the average worker to rent in if they cannot purchase.

The Council is also a victim of its own inability to adapt given limited revenue streams available, notwithstanding past borrowings to pay out legal losses. The mismatch is also between demand on infrastructure and maintenance with underlying funding hobbled over the last 20-30 years by state government rate pegging and cost shifting (if the council want it their community can pay for it). Queensland coastal tourist towns are overall so much cleaner looking while offering similarities in destination experiences. Other NSW coastal tourist destinations do not suffer the road pavement deterioration that is widespread here and not just on the occasional rural road but throughout the suburbs and cbd areas in every town. When it becomes hard to sell your place because it has become more like a third world shabby reflection of what we once had, then what?

██████████ The fact is that this is an attempt to make this community pay for twenty years of miss management, the structure BSC had was working fine until it was torn apart during Westings era put a succession of totally fragmented elected councils, self interested incompetent management senior and middle and you get a mess that is what we have now.

██████████ I read with interest ██████████ article in today's Echo where he tried to explain why locals need to foot the bill for roads and infrastructure that's falling apart under the weight of mass tourism, and it always seems to come down to the same reason, if we don't increase your rates we will be deemed unfit for the future and be forced to amalgamate. Isn't it due to the lack of maintenance in previous years that we are in this state of disrepair and now we are being asked to save their jobs. So I have a couple of questions, would we not be better off if we amalgamated and secondly who in their right mind would have us ?

Classic typo..."On Feb 2 Council will decided to apply for a Special Rate Variation." Will they decide or have they actually already decided? I totally agree to further pursuing the bed tax option. It's ridiculous that our small rate payer base should carry the burden or let's just amalgamate with Tweed.

I visit twice a year and as a cyclist I can safely say the roads are still deplorable if not downright dangerous but surely there must be a way to 'tax' us visitors instead of pricing out long time locals. Or perhaps those businesses that profit most from tourists could pull some extra weight.

How much of our rates is paying for all this advertising telling us the rate payers why it will so good to pay more rates Like a lot of rate payers I find this a kind of bullying "if you don't pay extra we will have to amalgamate "like it is something to be feared Not sure if it is a bad thing but as Byron bay resident you only have to drive on Ballina's roads to see the difference

The primary focus of this council over the last 4+ years seems to be to become Financially Fit for the Future in order to stave off amalgamation. Has the council ever thought that amalgamation might be the best choice for the rate payers? Have there been any studies exploring this issue?

Seriously I'm glad I left the shire 12 months ago. You really do discover how much Byron Shire are not doing for their rate payers. I moved to a coastal up north which is also a tourist town and we have beautifully kept parks and amenities and the roads are consistently being repaired. Byron Shire are just blatantly ripping off the rate payers and need to be held accountable for all there frivolous spending.

Who cares if Byron does have to amalgamate...No rate rise please.
If Byron were amalgamated we may get better road repair verges neat and tidy, and public amenities fixed and maintained.

Don't agree with rate rise at all, you need to manage the rates we already pay better and stop the waste and deal with the tourist effect who on the whole ruin rather than build up our areas.Drain the swamp.

Why can't we tax the tourists like many of the tourist locations around the world? I never seem to get an answer to this question. As a lot of the infrastructure is put under heavy pressure from the many visitors and then the ratepayers have to foot the bill. A large percentage of the rate payers are not always gaining greatly from the tourist dollar. Yes yes I know, we don't want to scare them away and I do appreciate the immense economical value they bring to our town, but in many top tourists locations, they add an extra \$1 and the tourists are aware of it, are happy to pay and still come! This seems to be such a simple solution, but it's always the locals who have to keep paying more and more, but not really getting more and more bang for our buck. It seems the developers can come in build more and more high density living, resorts or whatever, make a motza and then we have to pay more for the fall out that this creates. And still no bloody bypass!!! But many more dwellings and cars and more to come! Seriously how many councillors/pollies does it take to make a decision and get a bypass through? Sunrise is bursting at the seams from continuous approved developments and we can't even get into town! But they still want us to pay more every single year in rates....I've heard all the arguments, answers, reasons, asked to read this and that, but now we want some action, BEFORE we have to again pay more.

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Didn't we have a referendum in 1988 that denied the existence of local government. Byron shire council is a disgrace. They plan on lifting rates by 60%. For a house of \$1.5million which is pretty normal in Byron Bay the rates are \$15,000. The increase will lift it to \$24,000 a year. This will force people out of town.
Is not the Byron Shire Council a foreign corporation registered in the US?
Does not BBSC have no jurisdiction in Australia?
Is not BBSC acting unlawfully in contradiction to the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution 1900?

Does not BBSC have many millions in savings that they will not use?

Did not BBSC lose millions in the GFC from making ridiculous investments in Prime mortgages ?

Stop ripping off the people of the bay.

Enough is enough.

State Govt Destination NSW Ballina businesses as well as Byron businesses are set to relaunch and promote Byron again as an international conference destination. While they're rubbing their hands in anticipation, the community can be heard to groan. If liveability is the measure of success we are failing . Slugging ratepayers to fund the aspirations of the state govt is never going to work because of our low population rate base and high transient population. It's time for a fairer model. I agree with [REDACTED] and see no reason why the State Govt shouldn't maintain our roads. I see no reason to continuously pay higher rates (how many special rate hikes have we had now over the last twenty years?) while members of the community still have to pick up rubbish off the beaches, and illegal drinking camping and partying on beaches is getting worse.