

# LG Submission Form 2021-2022 - Applications

Submission date: 25 February 2021, 8:31PM  
Receipt number: 129  
Related form version: 2

## IPART Special Variation Submission Form - Applications

Industry	Local Government
Review	(LG) Special Variations & Minimum Rates 2021-2022
Document Reference	
Council	Central Coast Council, Special Variation Application
If you have any general feedback regarding your council's proposed SV, please leave your comments in the comment box below.	<b>PLEASE, PLEASE PLEASE don't give these people any more than perhaps double inflation, in the middle of a pandemic, when people are unemployed and on fixed incomes, when those [REDACTED] have so spectacularly w</b>
Your comments on Criterion 1:	<b>OF COURSE there should be alternative revenue paths! How about leasing out those vacant floors in the council building? how about selling the building and leasing only what is needs for the FAR LESS THAN 2000 EMPLOYEES that this Council has managed to accumlulate, not counting contracted waste and dog pounds? What about increasing parking fines? what about privatising swim centres and sporting fields? (they they might get used!)</b>

Your comments on Criterion 2:

the only information we have received is through the media. The community is this aware of the EXTENT of the rate rise, but the NEED is disputed - if there had been even vaguely adequate financial management by staff, the CEO and the Council, this would not be necessary.

we have been advised by the media that our rise will be 43% , they LIED to us about 10-15% "average". The weekly rate that Council advised through the media is RUBBISH - our rate rise will be \$1000. Council DELIBERATELY MISLEAD the population via the above, AND sent out a fraudulent survey to my elderly parents threatning that if they did not select 10% or 15% there would be "debt recovery" - now they are afraid Council will sell their house out from under them. Mountain residents have had NO information at all, and have been unable to go 30km to see anything that might have been on show.

Your comments on Criterion 3:

43% rate rise is UNREASONABLE. Being notified only a month or two prior to implementation is UNREASONABLE. Loading 43% on Mountain communities that receive virtually no Council services is UNREASONABLE. having this happen without notice in the middle of a pandemic is UNREASONABLE. Loading Council's [REDACTED] financial management onto ratepayers after they built all those edifices to themselves is UNREASONABLE. Ignoring infrastructure in favour of edifices is UNREASONABLE. Laying these increases onto so many fixed income families and then threatening them with "debt recovery" is UNREASONABLE.

Your comments on Criterion 4:

who would know? I presume that they have done so because they want the iPART tick...

Your comments on Criterion 5:

**HA! the population was NOT consulted, there has not only been on taking of responsibility but actual exoneration by the Liberal Government Appointed Administrator (stooge). What documents? those of us who live on the Mountain weren't even notified that there were any.**

If you have attachments you would like to include with your feedback, please attach them below.

[21 IPART.docx](#)

## Your Details

Are you an individual or organisation?

**Individual**

If you would like your submission or your name to remain confidential please indicate below.

**Anonymous - my submission can be published but my name should remain anonymous**

First Name

Last Name

Organisation Name

Position

Email

[REDACTED]

IPART's Submission Policy

**I have read & accept IPART's Submission Policy**

Dear iPART,

**Re: Central Coast Council**

I write in relation to the proposal from Central Coast Council to raise rates for residents by 15%, submitted to iPART last week. I am a ratepayer.

PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW THIS RATE RISE TO BE APPROVED ABOVE THE LEVEL OF INFLATION.

This is for the following reasons:

1. There has been complete financial mismanagement by this Council. Nothing has been done to ameliorate this situation, indeed, Council has just put in a development application for a tens-of-millions-of-dollars Regional Library! Not only have they not learned from their mismanagement, they intend to perpetuate it. If iPART grants these people any rise beyond inflation, the message to ALL Councils is clear: engage in flagrant spending, the [REDACTED] can be hit for the loss via their rates.
2. There has been flagrant financial mis-expenditure by this Council. They have put flashy sandstone edifices on all the major roads announcing "Welcome to the Central Coast" – removing the old signs, for no benefit to ratepayers. They have spent tens of millions on a huge edifice on the waterfront, removing a much-loved green sporting space, when their finances were ruined. They employed 2000 people! How in earth can a Council employ 2000 people, PLUS contract waste management, plus contract dog pounds? If iPART grants these people any rise beyond inflation, the message to ALL Councils is clear: engage in flagrant mis-spending, the [REDACTED] can be hit via their rates and iPART will just fall into line.
3. Council has no responsibility to apply the proposed rate rise equally across the Council area. We are now informed that our rates will rise by **43%**. We were NOT consulted or even informed until a retired accountant perused the hidden figures and announced it on radio: Council only now admits it did this. If iPART grants these people any rise beyond inflation, the message to ALL Councils is clear: who cares about consultation, the [REDACTED] won't know!
4. Council engaged in a "public consultation" program that was disingenuous and misleading. They sent a letter to my elderly parents asking them whether they preferred a 10% or 15% rate rise and then announced that "the public supported 10%". NO, THEY DIDN'T! They weren't given an opportunity! They did NOT have other alternatives. Council threatened "debt recovery" in the same letter - which has my over 80yo elderly parents in mortal fear that Council will sell their house out from under them, given that they are on the pension and can't afford ANY rise. If iPART grants this Council any rise beyond inflation, the message to ALL Councils is clear: engage in fake consultation and iPART will just "play the game".
5. Council wants a 43% rate rise when they provide my rural area with no services at all! I am charged water rates when Council does not provide water (Gee, thanks, iPART, you got suckered into that one in 2019!). I am charged "drainage" charges then the drainage is so poorly maintained that Council allowed 50,000L of water from the road to enter my property in Feb 2020, resulting in \$20,000 damage. I have no access to any library within 30km. Aquatic centres are not open at any time I can get to them and are at least 40 mins away. "Inspectors" raided my property on a false complaint from a driver that we were dumping asbestos, and found nothing, resulting in huge stress for our family. All local roads are poorly maintained, with potholes and frayed road edges. When I phoned the Ranger about a stray dog terrorising my sheep I was told to "shoot it, or get it in your car and dump

it in the bush far enough away that it won't come back". Where are Council's 2000 workers in our area? If iPART grants this Council any rise beyond inflation, the message to ALL Councils is clear: deny services to significant parts of your zone and then it's OK to slug them with a 43% rate rise.

6. Council has failed in its fiduciary duty to make rates consistent across the Shire, in spite of having had years to do so. (What have these Councillors been DOING to earn their money?) Now it wants to add rates consistency to a huge slug to cover their financial mismanagement resulting in a 43% rise, and they are threatening "debt recovery" on any [REDACTED] who didn't accidentally budget the additional \$1000 for the extra rates. Council lied about that too – their "\$7/week" is rubbish. If iPART grants this Council any rise beyond inflation, the message to ALL Councils is clear: do what you like, iPART will just be a tool of government and the ratepayers don't matter.
7. Council is threatening ratepayers in their "consultation" that if the ratepayers don't fall into line and accept huge rate rises, "Libraries will close, and services will have their hours cut". This is a clear indication that Council has NO intention of making the budget fit the outcome, they just want to slug ratepayers instead. If iPART grants this Council any rise beyond inflation, the message to ALL Councils is clear: don't take action to get your house in order, just slug the ratepayers and iPART will "rubber stamp" it for you.
8. So many in this Council area are aged pensioners, disability pensioners, self-funded retirees and young or large families, who moved to the area because of cheaper housing in the past. THESE PEOPLE CANNOT AFFORD A 43% RATE RISE! Most are on fixed incomes. Does Council intend to "debt recover" by selling up the houses under all these people? Is this a plot for Council to make money from forced housing sales? If iPART grants this Council any rise beyond inflation, the message to ALL Councils is clear: threaten ratepayers with "debt collection" while doing nothing to get your house in order, iPART will follow suit.
9. Council wants a 43% rate rise in the middle of a pandemic, when heaps of locals have become unemployed and when financial stress on all ratepayers is endemic. If iPART grants this Council any rise beyond inflation, the message to ALL Councils is clear: hit the [REDACTED] while they're down, iPART will follow suit. *That's un-Australian.*
10. Council continues to blame the Liberal state government for up to half the debt cost, citing "forced amalgamation". IF this is the case, why isn't the state government being held liable to make good the funds, or adjust *their* budget to cover the shortfall? If iPART grants this Council any rise beyond inflation, the message to ALL Councils and the NSW government is clear: no matter the degree of mismanagement, or who is responsible, iPART will "rubber stamp" anything we like to make the [REDACTED] ratepayers pay, or we can take their houses.
11. The CEO is appointed, and Councillors ostensibly elected, to act as Company Directors, to exercise due diligence and good governance on behalf of ratepayers on an ongoing basis. They are supposed to know the financial situation of the "company" and act to rectify problems in good time. Not only have Councillors **not** done this, but they have been inappropriately exonerated by the state-government appointed Administrator! The message that this sends to the population is clear: become a Councillor, do what you like, with impunity and with no responsibility at all for your actions. Even [REDACTED] has not been afforded this level of discharge!
12. Council has put NO other alternatives to the ratepayers, so here's a few ideas:
  - Immediately stop the building of any further edifices to memorialise Councillors, local members, or the state government.

- Retrench as many staff as you have to, and cut any services you have to, to get your house in order, particularly in the short term. Swimming centres and sporting fields can be let to private operators for a profit to council. Regional libraries can be closed in favour of a single, useful one. Stop running seminars for the over 60's (useful and fun, but not if your budget is shot) – or “sell” them to private operators .
- Stop paying Councillors who do not perform
- Stop supporting Cleanaway's profit margin by re-employing your own garbage collectors. Their service is lousy anyway.
- Sell all council owned buildings and lease them back – the current Council chambers have whole empty floors – this Council's management is so poor they can't even make money from that????
- IF the state government is *genuinely* at fault for some of the debt, call in the favour.
- Get someone in to manage the toxic culture of the place. One of the ways that Council got to 2000 employees was to allow people to “lean on their shovels” and then encouraged them to empire-build.
- Move to a complete “user pays” model. Increase charges to real levels for any service that isn't.
- Charge developers properly. The Central Coast has been “discovered” by Sydney residents who are driving up real estate prices rapidly, creating windfall profits for developers but adding to load on services that current ratepayers are paying for.
- Consider prudent zoning changes to increase rate-able property. Let the 1ac properties be rezoned residential. Let small farms *with no commercial water licenses* rezone to semi-rural. Pick up the developer contributions.
- Enter into a formal agreement with creditors to manage loan repayments, or liquidate and “start again”.

COUNCIL HAVE DONE NONE OF THESE THINGS! WHY HAVEN'T THESE BEEN DONE IN WHOLE OR PART BEFORE BLEATING TO IPART FOR A 43% RISE IN RATES? If iPART grants these people any rise beyond inflation, the message to ALL Councils is clear. Don't act with fiducial responsibility, just get on with slugging ratepayers – and ‘debt collect” any that can't afford to pay.

iPART is NOT a tool of government, it is supposed to be independent, and demand good governance. If a company went to a business administrator with a proposal to slug its customers 43% because they were financial idiots, the administrator would laugh the proposal out of the room and then liquidate the company, sell the tangible and intangible assets, and recommend charging the Directors. It would enter into arrangements with creditors, refinance debt, and remove all those non-performing staff that got into the mess in the first place (like ASIC removing Crown Company Directors and CEO). ***Why shouldn't this Council be held to the same standards of governance?*** There are many, many Councils in NSW that through poor financial management are looking at the outcome of this process. Does iPART intend to start a storm of applications for 43% rate rises, locking in patterns of Council irresponsibility and financial ineptitude?

iPART should grant this terrible, mis-leading, incompetent Council only that rise to match inflation - or at worst, double the current inflation. That rise MUST BE CONTINGENT ON a properly constructed plan for asset sales, loan refinancing and agreements with creditors, removal of all underperforming staff, and a refocus only on minimal services needed retain infrastructure, along with new revenue streams that don't just ██████ the ratepayer.

Other Councils are watching...

Yours Sincerely

██████████ (by email)

25<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021