

TO IPART

INDUSTRY: Local Government

Mid-Coast Council, Special Variation Application of 28.5%

Application DATE: 16 June 2017

Submission to IPART for the review of MCC SRV of 28.5%

1. CONDITION OF AMALGAMATION: NO RATE RISES FOR 4 YEARS.
We, the residents of the former amalgamated councils, were told that the State Government had made a Condition of Amalgamation, that if it went ahead THERE WOULD BE NO RATE RISES FOR 4 YEARS.*
2. We voted against the amalgamation
However, it went as we all believe, undemocratically ahead. The three Councils became known as Mid Coast Council and Mr Turner became the Administrator, ON THE BASIS 'THERE WOULD BE NO RATE RISES FOR 4 YEARS'. It was also said it would deliver significant saving.
3. The submitted application from Mid Coast Council to IPART states that the residents of the new formed Mid Coast Council support the increase. THIS IS NOT TRUE!
 - I am a ratepayer and I DON'T SUPPORT A RATE RISE and most of the residents I have spoken to, don't even know about it yet! It is in my opinion also immoral and unethical to race for this increase now, after telling us there would be no increase for 4 years.
 - This to me looks like misleading and immoral behaviour by an interim Council.
4. MCC states, that it has informed its residents of the rate rise.
When, where and how this information took place, should be an object of investigation by IPART, as the needed TRANSPARANCY WAS NEVER EXCERCISED I believe.
 - If we, the residents, can receive a mailbox leaflet concerning the yearly council clean-up & if MCC can put a quarter page ad in the local newspaper; "Have your say about the new precinct" & if they can use their Facebook page to make announcements and ask questions, what was holding them back to give total transparency about a 28.5% rate rise?
 - I have no doubt that MCC has done their best to stay within the letter of the law. However, in my opinion, the whole process borders on a potential broken promise. Even worse, it has been made invisible for "normal" people like me.
 - How can I and for that matter any resident, reasonably be expected to find a SRV hidden in words as "addendum"? One could hardly call that transparent communication.
5. MCC states that it has done a survey.
 - In my opinion this Jetty survey should be Nul and Void, as it, amongst other things, only focussed on people with a landline. Only 59% of people, according to the statistics, still have a landline. I strongly recommend IPART have a closer look into this survey and judge it on its merits!
6. This is a 28.5% rise
 - According to the **NSW parliament's NSW Economic Update** Autumn 2016 Statistical Indicators 2/16 By Chris Angus:
- Economic outlook-
"The Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) national economic growth forecasts have remained largely unchanged since November 2015. In its February Statement on Monetary Policy, the RBA commented that **GDP growth**,

although remaining below trend over the course of 2015, has been revised up slightly to **2.5-3.5%** by December 2016."

- **IPART** website: Media release: 29 November 2016
2017-18 **RATE PEG** FOR NSW LOCAL COUNCILS
Continuing low inflation and minimal growth in council costs will limit the increase in the general income local councils can recover to **1.5%** in 2017-18. This is lower than last year's rate peg of 1.8%.
- The first year rate increase would start in August and would be 11%! That is unjustifiable considering the above Rate Peg and GDP. We simply cannot afford it.
- MCC is below the State Average in income with low fixed income residents.
- Personally we will be paying \$750 MORE P/Y in 4years. That is \$66 PW in Council rates alone.

7. The newsletter, by David Gillespie MP

Our local Federal member, writes "**EXTRA FUNDING** for our local councils to fix roads and bridges and other local key infrastructure, **is in the Federal Budget!**"

- SO WHY DO THEY WANT MORE MONEY from us in such big amounts in such a short time. WE certainly cannot see the immediate necessity

8. Council elections are in 2months

- Why now, why not wait until we have a new council?

CONCLUSION

I strongly object to the 28.5% SRV and need IPART to refuse the it because:

- Condition of amalgamation were: NO RATE RISE FOR 4 YEARS
- The Amalgamation was going to save us money
- A Dodgy Jetty Council Survey that states we agree with an SRV
- There was no intended transparency in the SRV process.
- There has been NO democratic consultation, nor transparent information about the SRV. (think of people that work and hours of opening and meetings of council)
- The process followed by this interim council might have been within the letter of the law, however this borders on another broken liberal promise.
- This interim council should not be allowed to make those big decisions just before the council Elections in 2 months.
And most importantly:
- The GDP- bleak Economic outlook for Growth is 2.5-3.5% as stated above and IPART rate peg is 1.5% for 2017-2018 - **NOT 11%!!!**
- We cannot afford \$66 pw! We have a limited income as we are pensioners and so are many in this area. We may have to leave our house and this area, because of this rate rise.
- **This rate rise is neither reasonable nor justifiable.** In an ideal world all back logs would be gone, roads and bridges fixed and all maintenance would be up to date. However in a bleak economic outlook, we all have to tighten the belt including this council.