

Sent: Monday, 9 March 2015 4:48 PM

To: IPART Mailbox

Subject: Coffs Harbour Council Special Rate Variation proposal

Hello

We are Coffs Harbour ratepayers and are objecting to the proposed 2015/2016 rate rise Council has asked of IPART.

We say NO to a 16.5 per cent cumulative increase over 2 years to be retained permanently in the rates base. This is in addition to 7.9% already approved for 2014/2015.

We know of a property in Strathfield NSW with a land value of \$2.2m including large land area and tennis court, paying yearly rates under the cost of the rates on our property. This seems extraordinary and is not an unusual comparison.

The Coffs Harbour area is the second lowest socio-economic region in NSW behind only Broken Hill and therefore is one of the least likely to be able to bear increases in rates. We should also mention that the recent increase in salary to Coffs Harbour General Manager bringing him to \$300,000 p.a. is sometimes as much as 10 times what is considered a reasonable income for workers in the Coffs Harbour area. Many people do not work full time but wish they did and have to contend with work whenever they can get it.

Last year, IPART refused to permit Council's application for three consecutive rate rises above the pegged limit due to Council's lack of communication with rate payers of the likely impact. Only one was allowed.

This year, Council's recently completed mail and online survey of residents logged a 71% objection to Council's rebranded rate rise scheme, but Council ignored the survey results and has applied regardless.

Council has for years been propping up unviable services not benefiting the community in a fair and equally distributed way.

Many of our street do not have sealed paths or curbing, yet Council can find \$1.4m to erect a roof over a parking lot.

Council spends an inordinate amount on "special events" of a sporting, entertainment and cultural nature yet does not account for the ratepayers portion of these expenditures. The continuing subsidies of these events provide a cushion preventing the incentive of events to raise money through non ratepayer means.

The above reasons are our total objection to any Special Rate Variation and we wish to have our objection officially registered.

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