

## **PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL RATE VARIATION SUBMISSION**

### **1. Proposed Works**

- a. The proposed works are at an early planning stage with no details or assessment presented of economic, social and environmental impact on the community.
- b. It is noted that while Port Stephens has a developed tourism infrastructure, tourism is based on the relatively natural environment of the area.

### **2. Consultation Meetings**

- a. We attended a Council community consultation meeting at which the vast majority of the attendees spoke against adoption of the rate increase and the extent of the developments proposed.
- b. The meeting we attended was poorly managed and was more about the process rather than providing real information in particular no details of the proposed works and the justification for the variation.

### **3. Economic Impact on Rate Payers**

- a. There are a significant proportion of retirees in the local area with fixed incomes and the proposed variation would potentially be a significant impact on these households. Based on the information provided by Council the proposed works would not directly benefit these residents. At the meeting small business owners expressed concerns about the impact on the viability of their businesses as a result of the rate increase. Council did not provide an assessment of the economic benefits that business could expect.
- b. It may be possible for Council to minimise these adverse effects by scaling down the schedule of developments proposed and reducing the rate increase.