

To Whom it May Concern

RE. Port Stephens Council 7.5% Special Rate Variation

I have been a resident of Port Stephens Council area for over 40 years and I would like to lodge my objection to the proposed 7.5% Special Rate Variation on the following grounds.

1. The population of Port Stephens area is approximately 70,000 of which 23 percent are over the age of 60 and on limited incomes such as pensions and savings.
2. The Consumer Price Index June 2017 to June 2018 is 2.1 percent
3. Council's Enterprise Agreement 2018 to 2021 giving pay rises to its 484 staff of 2.75 percent each year for 2018,2019 and 2020. This is way in excess of past and projected CPI increases.
4. In addition to this Council has a very generous annual Retention Allowance of \$2034.36 (2019) which is given to all 484 employees who have 12 months or more service (paid in early December each year). (this equates to nearly \$1,000,000.00). There are many other very generous provisions in Council's Enterprise Agreement 2018 to 2021 and it is worth viewing a copy on Council's web site.  
(<http://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/work/careers/working-in-port-stephens>)
5. 72 percent of those residents which responded to Councils initial proposal did not support any rate rises. The Council has refused to acknowledge the impact Special Rate Variation will have on the majority of their residents.
6. I also have concerns with Council's current civil works team's capacity to efficiently carry out any escalation in the works program if the Special Rate Variation were approved. For example - there are 2 capital works crews working different times. One crew works a 9 day fortnight whilst the other works a standard 38 hr week with one roster day per month. This cannot be an efficient use of Council resource's.
7. Compared to other councils throughout New South Wales Port Stephens Council is already very well off financially. Council also a very extensive property portfolio both outside and within Port Stephens.
8. Port Stephens Council has a 50% share in the highly profitable and expanding Newcastle Airport based at Williamstown.

This Council is already very well off financially and has many other areas where it can get extra revenue if it so desires rather than through this unrealistic 7.5% Special Rate Variation.

Thankyou for taking the time to read this submission

Kind Regards

