

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Government Mailbox](#)
Subject: Bellingen Shire Council SRV
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Cost of living pressures are being felt by all citizens. Now is not the time for the Bellingen Shire Council to increase rates over the rate peg.

The "Have your say" forums were a sham. This was no consultation, lacking in transparency and very little evidence of accountability. Notwithstanding that the Councillors had not formally voted to adopt the SRV, the deal was already sealed. Some senior staff and some Councillors arrogantly pretended that this was consultation. It was no such thing.

The Mayor told me personally that the council was intending to pursue a social and cultural agenda which included addressing such things as vandalism and petty crime in the shire. We have a police force to address these issues.

Bellingen is a high rainfall area and minor to major flooding is a fact of life here. It appears to me that council relies on such things as natural disaster declarations so as to attend to repairs and maintenance of infrastructure that should be covered in the normal budget.

Paying rates is a fact of life which I accept but I would also like council to demonstrably work within our ability to pay. Continually asking for more is all too easy. A transparent and accountable approach to increasing value for our rates dollar is something this council needs to work very hard to implement. Seeing my rates money wasted makes me very angry.

If this SRV is granted, I would like IPART on my behalf to insist that council transparently show all rate payers exactly where this money is spent and it is not diverted to non essential pet projects or grand schemes.

I seem to recall NSW statistics published in the last couple of years showing that Bellingen Shire is only second Byron Shire in the state for the number of single parent families and welfare recipients. This is not a wealthy shire and council thinking should well and truly take this into account. In summary I object to the application for a SRV. The burden will fall to all too few.