

Author name: Anonymous

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Submission:

Coffs Harbour Council should not be allowed to raise rates. Their initial survey was poorly publicised and explained and failed to advise respondents that a rate rise would be required to maintain all the services listed. The survey sample size was too small to be indicative of the majority of ratepayers. An online survey conducted in Jan, 2014 was better explained and the result was an overwhelming rejection of the plan to raise rates. The Council cannot claim to have community support for the plan because they clearly don't. The majority of ratepayers would prefer to see a reduction in superfluous council activities which in recent years have become greater and greater even though ratepayers have never been asked through a referendum if they want to pay higher rates in order to fund a wider range of council activities. Coffs Harbour residents already pay high rates and cannot afford more increases. Coffs is a low income area. Coffs Council has become a diverse bureaucracy which is now more concerned about its own continuation of activities than it is for its ratepayers wellbeing, many of whom are on very tight budgets. Coffs council can continue services that are needed, if they cut services which are not needed. This is what most ratepayers want. They also, need to learn that the age of entitlement is over, they should keep their spending within the existing budget, rather than expecting ratepayers to fund their growing range of activities which were not even asked for. At the most recent council election there was no mention of wanting to raise rates. A rate rise should only be allowed when the council has a clear mandate, or after a referendum. Stand up for democracy, respect the wishes of the majority of ratepayers and say NO, to this outrageous rate increase.