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Submission: To Whom it may concern,

I wish to make a submission in regards to the Ballina Shire Council special variation application. I do not believe this special variation should be approved by Ipart for the following reasons. Firstly the council undertook a consultation process with the community. My understanding is the results of that process showed that approximately 90% of the ratepayers (the vast majority) were against this rate increase. The council in its infinite wisdom decided to vote against the ratepayers feedback and proceed on with the quest for the increase regardless of our views. I am happy with council making hard choices at the appropriate times but this does not need to happen on this occasion. Secondly there has been no formal plan shown to ratepayers about how this money is to be spent, merely we are told it will be used to 'clean up the Richmond River'. There are a range of Government organisations and agencies that can assist with this task along with associated government grants that could be applied for but the council has not even attempted to go down this path and the whole thing appears to lack any real organisation. I believe the money may eventually be wasted without it having any real impact for its 'so called' intended use. Thirdly this is the second major special rate variation that the council has applied for in recent years with the last one only having recently been completed for use in regards to the repairs/refurbishment of pools at Ballina and Alstonville. You cannot tell me in this day and age that you would not be able to plan for the natural ageing of these assets and therefore the likely refurbishment they would require. A case of failing to plan rather than planning to fail on the council's behalf. In real terms peoples wages have in recent times become flat in relative terms or even regressed after CPI, etc. We can't afford the increase. Don't let us be gouged. Yours Sincerely, [REDACTED]