

2 March 2019



**Attention IPART - DungogShire Council Special Rate Variation**

To whom it may Concern

I am sending this correspondence to advise IPART that I am completely opposed to the proposed Rate increase by Dungog Shire of 97.8% over a seven year period.

This whole process has been misleading and it was only prior to Christmas that residents became completely aware of the size of the rate increase.

I have had a discussion with one of my local Councillors and was advised to forward a submission to IPART to express my opposition to the proposed rate increase.

I own two separate small rural properties and I lease a third property to run cattle on in the Dungog shire. As with most farmers in this Shire I have off farm income and I work for myself and have a small contracting business and my wife works at a local store in Gresford. My contracting business at time struggles and I am currently in another downturn period given no primary producers are undertaking a great deal of work due to lower cattle prices, the impact of a prolonged drought and increasing feed costs.

Whilst the above indicates the cyclic issues that occur within this Shire and I don't think anyone would argue that our rates should increase marginally, but this proposal to double our rates will have a great impact on my ability to operate a small cattle producing business to the point where I won't be able to afford to run cattle on agistment any longer. As the agisted property is by far the largest of the three it would spell the end of my time as a primary producer. Profit margins on cattle are small enough without a doubling of production costs.

If IPART approve this massive rate increase it will not only impact primary producers but also all the other businesses who will not only experience a downturn in their business but they also have to increase their own profits to cover the costs of the rate rise. Whilst the impact to them will not be as great as it is to primary producers, it will certainly impact due to the ripple effect.

I can also foresee an increase in rural land sub divisions and people breaking off small parcels where they can and this also leads to less productivity. It is nearly impossible to have a profitable farming operation on land that is not river frontage or at a minimum, at least 120 – 150 ha in this shire. We will all suffer and as I have read, not for better or increased services, but purely to keep Dungog Council afloat.

Yours Sincerely,

