

[REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 22 February 2019 12:08 PM

To: Local Government Mailbox <localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: Port Stephens SRV

IPART submission – Port Stephens Council proposed special rate variation.

Mr. and Mrs. R.J and J.G Francis – [REDACTED] East Seaham NSW 2324.

My wife and I **do not support the proposed special Rate variation** and therefore ask that IPART **do not approve** this SRV.

I offer the following reasons in support of this request: -

We are both self-funded retirees / age pensioners. As such I believe that the proposed overall increase of 65.9% (7.5% compounded for 7 years which then becomes part of the base rate) represents an unnecessary and unjustified increase in our cost of living. I am aware that the Council will offer some discounts to pensioners, but even with these considered my understanding is that the overall increase will still exceed 50% after 7 years. As retirees we have no choice but to live within our means – I expect my Council to do the same.

I am less than happy with the way this proposed SRV has been communicated to rate payers by the Council. My wife and I both volunteer at Hunter Region Botanic Gardens and I clearly recall one of our volunteer gatherings being addressed by Mayor Ryan Palmer. He spoke of the proposed SRV of 7.5% with proceeds to go towards special projects – no mention of 7.5% each year for 7 years. I had no concerns over the proposal at that time – I would happily support a 7.5% increase in rates, but not a 65.9% increase. The whole truth of the proposal took some time to become apparent, and even then, I needed to visit the Council Chambers and specifically ask. At that visit the council officer I spoke with confirmed the SRV details (65.9% increase over 7 years) and advised me that this information had been placed on the council website (but who looks there). I would be surprised if the majority of rate payers truly realise the amount by which rates will increase if this SRV is approved. Surely a failure by Council to properly communicate their intentions to all rate payers is sufficient reason to reject this proposed SRV.

Robert J Francis BE DipEd