

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, 14 February 2019 5:27 PM

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

Subject: Port Stephens Shire Council Rate Rise Request

Dear IPART

I wish to register that I object to Port Stephens Council's ridiculous proposal to increase rates by 66% over 7 years, if in fact that is actually the real number as there seems to be some ambiguity in relation to what the council has stated that the rate rise will encompass and it is concerning to think that the rise will be possibly more in the region of 88.3% over the 7 years.

Over 70% of submissions to Council's proposal were against the increase. Over 2,000 people made their voices heard. Council has totally ignored every single one of these people and in fact lodged their application to IPART prior to the public comment process being completed. Thousands more locals have signed online and paper petitions. Local businesses are against this proposal.

There is, extremely poor awareness about Council's proposed projects. This lack of awareness has been fuelled by Council changing amounts of money being allocated to projects, between when this proposal first went out for public submission, and what has been submitted to you, it would appear that council has deliberately been ambiguous and vague as to their real intentions.

This includes \$25million less over 10 years for roads. Perhaps the 30% of people who indicated a willingness for a rate rise in the first round of consultation may have opted for no increase had they seen the most recent proposal from Council.

There is no evidence that any of the projects proposed by Council are 'needs'. Rather, they appear to be 'wants' many of which have been promised previously and still remain undelivered, there is no guarantee that if IPART approves this excessive rate increase that any of these projects will actually see commencement. Whilst some of these projects would be nice to have, **none** of them are essential to Council continuing to operate.

Council has, in recent years, demonstrated a sound capacity to fund large-scale projects without the need for a rate increase.

Wages are stagnant, power prices are soaring, and the cost of petrol, insurances, and consumer goods is only increasing. Cost of living is rising and many people are already struggling. Pensioners are already deciding between turning the

heater on in the dead of winter, or not spending that money so they can pay bills. Parents are already deciding whether they can afford to buy bigger shoes to send their kids to school in, or whether they can afford a bigger school uniform. This is without a rate increase!

Port Stephens Council has ignored residents, and I ask that you listen to us when we say: this rate rise is unnecessary, unaffordable, and will cause extreme hardship for many. I ask that you reject this application outright.

Regards

Brett J Perkins

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area, obscuring the name and any handwritten notes or dates that might have been present.