

From: Christine Martin
To: [Local Government Mailbox](#)
Subject: Clarence Valley Council SRV Rates Rise
Date: Sunday, 11 March 2018 9:04:00 PM

TO MAKE IT PERFECTLY CLEAR AND THAT IPART DO NOT MISUNDERSTAND OUR SUBMISSION.

I AM OPPOSED TO:-

1. ANY SPECIAL RATES VARIATION (SRV).
2. Council has not at any stage implemented or considered internal cost savings, before applying to IPART.
 - a. Council travel Expenses, will at a conservative figure will be around \$30000 .00 next financial year, Council reimburses Councillors for the use of their private vehicles at a rate of up to \$0.78 per klm (no of cc) this is above the ATO rate of \$0.55 per klm, Council has a pool of cars that could be utilised for business travel by Councillors, like any other business., however they do not take advantage of this as a cost saving. Please Note that Councillors [REDACTED] (\$2453.00) and [REDACTED](\$ 4692.00) have only 9 months in Council at the time of this report. Page 7 Councils financial statements for 2016/2017. Council Expenses were granted an increase in block vote, in 2017.
 - b. Councils advertising budget, we have two local free press papers that service the valley, why does council continue to support [REDACTED] in this, [REDACTED] is part of an [REDACTED] so money spent is sent out of the area, [REDACTED] has a history of misinformation reporting regarding Council matters:- [REDACTED] 27 December 2017,” Council denies privacy laws breach” the fact that 2 Councillors previously worked for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was editor, and Councillor [REDACTED] a reporter. T his is clearly a conflict of interest in awarding the majority of Council advertising budget to this entity.
 - c. Council follow their own Council Policy on conferences and Seminars, IE Councillor [REDACTED] application for approval to attend at least 3 conferences in 2017 and 3 in 2018 including an interstate Conference in Victoria. Per Policy “Councillor attendance at conferences”, point 3, Document Version V4.0 adopted 21 July 2015.
 - d. Employment:- Council has currently advertised a number of positions, Councils most recent claim that there was 16 vacant positions a further 5 FTE from the Super depot, they initially claimed 10 FTE, now we see advertisement of 8 positions. Council employ 600 Staff some 250 more than any other Council our size in the state.

- e. SRV on Tourism \$197000 was levied on business owners and was to be kept in a separate account and spent on tourism advertisement, Council in its wisdom transferred this amount to general funds and then closed all Tourist Information Centres in the Valley, Moving them to the Council buildings, and selling off the land the current one was on at the entrance to town, despite many objections.
 - f. Council has lifted its borrowing limit by \$13M to allow us to get into more debt. Which we do not have the capacity to pay, given our already large debt. Council has raided the sewerage account to top up the general fund to appear "Fit for the Future", which we are clearly not,
3. COUNCIL MAKE KNOWN TO IPART THAT THEY HAVE BORROWED FROM OUR SEWERAGE AND WATER FUND TO TOP UP OUR GENERAL ACCOUNT, ALSO THE FACT THAT THE PREVIOUS SRV FOR TOURISM IS NOW IN THE GENERAL ACCOUNT AND THAT TOURIST ENTITIES HAVE BEEN CLOSED. IN OTHER WORDS BE HONEST AND TRANSPARENT.

Council has the lowest socio economic coverage area in NSW, with the mean average wage of \$477.00 per week (Current ABS) well below the average of approximately \$1100.00 per week. Our aged pensioners make up 9600 of our population of 51367 (current 2016 census), almost 19%, these people cannot afford to stretch their pensions any further, this does not include people that are on income support from the Government. In June 2017 that was 8.97% of our population, 4600 of our citizens are unemployed. Therefore struggling on a limited static budget. So in effect 28% of our population is either aged or unemployed. This does not include the number of children in the Valley also, does not include the number of people that are on income support as they are on low income.

Councils estimate of \$600,000 per KLM of urgent roadway maintenance is ludicrous, and their statement that there is 290 mtrs of roadway that is urgent, at their cost of \$176000, is an attempt to justify putting forward a SRV. You already have that in the SRV you have stashed away from the TIC, that is now in general funds.

Council have failed to adopt the cost saving measures that they stated they would do to make us fit for the future, they continue to increase service costs and decrease service availability, they have closed local swimming pools and push forward a plan for a Grafton Aquatic Centre. They continue to push a boulevard/boardwalk to attract tourists to Maclean despite objections from locals, tourists come to Maclean to see the rustic village it is, not the Gold Coast on a mini level then close the Tourist Information Centre so tourists will not know where it is. They fail to understand or interpret the ABS figures for our economic community and the wage level

we are at.

They as Councillors voted to increase their expenses claims reimbursement at a time when they expect the lowest socio economic area be further taxed to cover their failure to understand the financial crisis we as a community are in.

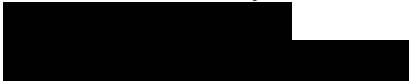
They continue to put out conflicting information on the economic impact this will have on the community, In essence we as a community cannot afford this Council.

The postal questionnaire sent out to the general public as part of their consultation procedure, was to say the least ambiguous , it did not ask the question "Do you support Council applying to IPART for a SRV".

We as a community have gathered 5500 signatures on a petition, plus numerous submission letters to bring to IPARTs attention that despite claims to the opposite we do not want or support a SRV, we as a community cannot afford it.

Regards

Christine, Anthony and James Martin

A black rectangular redaction box covering the names of the signatories.