

[REDACTED]
13 March 2019

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)
Level 15, 2-14 Rawson Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attention: Mr John Madden

Submission re North Sydney Council Special Rate Variation Application 2019

I strongly oppose the application from North Sydney Council for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) and ask that IPART reject the Council's application for a five-year 7% per annum increase in rates.

My opposition to the proposed increase is based on the following:

1. Current financial status of North Sydney Council (NSC)

An IPART-approved SRV has been in place for the last six years, concluding on 30 June 2018. I am not aware of any evidence provided by NSC that this "one-off" rate increase has not delivered on its objective to address structural issues, nor any evidence to support that a further and even higher SRV is justified.

In fact, NSC's financial health appears sound. It continues to run and project surpluses and has significant reserves of more than \$37 million even given a policy over the last five years of utilising reserves to reduce the infrastructure backlog.

I understand that NSC meets and exceeds Office of Local Government financial benchmarks.

2. Flawed modelling to support increase

I understand that the planning assumptions set out in NSC's Resourcing Strategy (apparently exhibited last May and December) do not include the following essential components:

- the projected increase in new rateable residential and business properties as a result of current construction and State government policies set to deliver significant increases in residential and worker population;
- existing and future s7.11 development contributions and community benefits and infrastructure to be delivered via Voluntary Planning Agreements;
- detail on Council's existing and projected investments and interest and actual grant revenue; and
- detail on Valuer-General's revaluations expected over the next 10 years.

Additionally, I understand that NSC has not explored alternatives to a rate increase such as alternative revenue streams, service levels or internal efficiencies, nor

considered the use of special levies tied to specific infrastructure projects such as the existing stormwater levy.

3. Inadequate community consultation

I, and neighbours that I have spoken to, were unaware that there was any community consultation relating to NSC's intention to apply for an SRV.

I have read the detailed submission to IPART from Councillors Zoe Baker, MaryAnn Beregi and Tony Carr, and it is clearly evident that there has been a lack of transparency and community consultation throughout the process leading to NSC's lodgement of their SRV application with IPART.

I therefore urge you to reject the application from NSC for an SRV.

Yours sincerely

Coral Robinson