

D & J I ANDERSON



IPART,
PO Box K35,
Haymarket Post Shop
NSW 1240

Dear Sir,

**CLARENCE VALLEY COUNCIL
SPECIAL RATE RISE APPLICATION**

We hereby object to the granting of **any** Special rate Rise approval to the Clarence Valley Council. We believe there is no basis whatsoever for any increase and our objection is based on the following:

- This Council was created by way of a forced amalgamation and promoted to a disbelieving Public on the basis of saving and efficiencies. These benefits have never eventuated.
- The conduct and record of this Council since amalgamation has been deplorable and the only people to benefit have been ratepayers in Grafton (who were part of a Council that was effectively broke) and the grossly overpaid and underperforming buffoons that masquerade as Senior Council management and staff. It is funny that there is no mention of reducing the salaries of these pretenders in any proposed cost savings.
- It is the current and immediate past Council, Management and senior staff that have allowed the Council to be in the alleged parlous financial position and they now expect unwarranted increases in rates and charges to cover for their mistakes and inefficiencies. To allow any increase is to provide rewards for their gross negligence. Local Government is widely known as a haven for inept and generally unemployable administrators and allowing any increases further reinforces such a reputation. You would be rewarding ineptitude.
- Council supposedly engaged in "Public Consultation" as part of the IPART application which was little more than a joke. The supposed survey they issued allowed only limited responses and not an adequate forum for ratepayers to properly express alternative opinions. At least one senior Council staffer admitted when questioned that the Survey had no real purpose other than to satisfy the conditions of the IPART application and that the results of the survey were of no real consequence. They were simply "ticking a box"
- There is ample evidence (local press statements) that several existing Councilors do not support such an increase.
- In a fairly close Council (Ballina) I have a friend with a similar house and land to one we own on a waterway, it has similar block size, building size and age. The rates and charges on that property (PRIOR TO ANY INCREASE) are over \$1,100 less.
- To contemplate that any significant rate rise would provide benefits would be folly. Pensioners, small business operators and landlords would all struggle and in many

instances any increases would not be able to be passed on and make the area less attractive and less competitive with surrounding areas.

- When we have the very smarmy (blow in) General Manager of this Council stating the proposed increase is “really just the cost of a cup of coffee” it is an insult to many honorable and decent people who are be struggling in this Valley. Most people are not indulged with a completely unjustified salary package in excess of \$250,000 per annum that this person receives. He may well be able to afford the coffee others cannot.
- There is a history in this Council of indecisiveness and cost overruns at great cost to the ratepayers. The regular engagement of expensive consultants (seldom local) for many projects, project cost overruns (eg Maclean Council depot) are well documented and yet they still want to go on unabated and repeat these mistakes with projected plans for new Council Depots in Grafton among other things.
- The mayor of this Council (“Mayor of Grafton”, he does not represent the valley as a whole) is both out of touch and completely out of his depth. He is an embarrassment to the position and regularly is quoted in the local Grafton press and on radio as saying there is minimal (if any) opposition to the Rates increase. He simply does not choose to listen to anyone who has an opinion different to his and is quite misleading in statements he makes in regard to increases and to the depth of objections to this proposed rate rise and to the Council itself.
- In my adult life (almost 50 years) in this Valley I have never seen or heard so much discontent with Council. The Grafton paper, the Daily Examiner, has a sycophantic view towards Council and the Mayor no doubt due to it being the principal source of advertising for Council. The second publication in the Valley, The Independent paper, which does not benefit as much from Council spending largesse regularly has considerable volume of correspondence of complaints and objections to Council and its ways, particularly in regard to proposed rate increases.
- In recent years there has already been significant increase in other charges such as water, garbage and sewerage that the Council has made. Yet they now try and take credit to limiting their proposed increases and excluding these charges. Just how stupid do they think the Community is.
- This Council and its Mayor and Senior management are so far out of touch with the expectations of the Community they should not be rewarded with further funding. Frankly they should be dismissed and the Council placed under administration.

Regards,

DOUG ANDERSON