

10th March, 2019

By email: localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Special Rate Variation (SRV) PSC 2018-02118

This submission has been prepared to outline my objections to the Special Rate Variation (SRV) proposed by Port Stephens Council (PSC) in my area and in general.

- a) **Car Parking Spencer Park** - the proposal to construct parking bays along the Soldiers Point Road frontage of Spencer Park at a highly inflated cost of \$500,000.00 was never requested by local residents (as stated by PSC) and is not required. Local residents strongly opposed this parking proposal that was put forward a few years ago by Council staff as a suggestion to help solve the parking problems associated with a failed Soldiers Point Marina extension proposal. Residents were vehemently opposed to the construction of these parking bays as it would mean the removal of several substantial trees along that road frontage, thus severely affecting the amenity of the park. So this figure of \$500,000 would never be required to be spent on parking at Spencer Park and should never been included in their proposed figures..

- b) **Financial hardship to seniors and young families** – This must be considered as Port Stephens, is a favoured retirement locale as well as being affordably attractive to young families. It has a great percentage of residents on limited fixed incomes and whilst the economy has been showing good growth, incomes have been relatively stagnant. PSC has declared that it is “Fit for the Future” so how then is it fair and reasonable to request a rate variation of 7.5% when the present rate pegging is 2.7%. If this high increase was granted I feel that pensioners and young families will be disadvantaged by such a leap in the rate variation, many people struggle as it is to pay bills. It is my opinion that PSC requested the higher figure so if it is declined by you they may be granted a lower increase of perhaps 3-4% which is more than the pegged amount

- c) **Non budgeted items** - PSC has proposed a sports complex costing \$65 million without a business plan being put forward for this complex. I feel that PSC have included items on the SRV report that are not required or are only one-off items so it would enable a surplus of funds that could be directed to this proposed stadium that nobody wants.

In my area of Soldiers Point the projects PSC have listed are either a one-off or definitely not required by residents and will not be done. Council have not been transparent as to whether rates would decrease after their proposed projects are completed. ***I think Council should have sold off some of the investments that it has purchased from previous rates paid to attain the funds needed before a special rate variation was applied for.*** We do not pay rates for the Council to invest as it sees fit.

Yours faithfully

Douglas Curtis

