

Author name: D. Schwarz

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Submission: -----Original Message-----

From: David Schwarz [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, 9 March 2016 7:33 PM

To: IPART Mailbox

Subject: Submission to IPART re Clarence Valley Council's SRV

Dear IPART

I wish to make a small submission re Clarence Valley Council's request for a Special Rates Variation.

I live in Yamba. Following the amalgamation of Maclean Shire Council with other local council's to form the Clarence Valley Council 12 or so years ago, I have experienced huge rates increases. My current annual rates exceed \$4,000 pa. Many in Yamba are already paying up to and exceeding \$6,000.

We have a spend, spend, spend council that has no regard to ratepayers income. They have 600 staff. Their debt has grown exponentially over the last 10 years and is now \$150M! Even with that hanging over their heads, they are now proposing to spend another \$17M on a new Grafton-based depot (and they found a tame consultant to say it'd actually save them money!). They attempt to justify huge rate increases based on state and federal governments "cost shifting". I would encourage you to look at the quality of the councillors monthly meeting minutes; talk about overkill, I'd suggest they're prepared by half a dozen English honours graduates! In my opinion they are grossly over staffed with administration staff yet lacking in "workers".

The Clarence Valley is severely disadvantaged in terms of employment opportunities and size of incomes able to be earned. Yet council seems to think residents need "services" at astronomical cost. For my \$4K pa all I see is a weekly rubbish collection, an occasional pothole fixed (very occasional), a water supply which offers water I am unable to drink (it costs me \$15 a week to buy drinking water), a sewerage service that pollutes our beautiful ocean and, when we have a southerly wind, smells out my golf course, a library with very few new books, and a development application service which seems to exist to frustrate any new building applications! Not much for \$4K+ pa of after tax money, is it? On top of that, lower river residents feel disenfranchised as we seem to have a Grafton-centric council with little interest in Maclean, Yamba or Iluka. You just have to look at the ongoing sagas re a supermarket in Maclean and the redevelopment of a riverside park in Maclean to reach this conclusion (and despite vast amounts of ratepayers money being spent to date, no decision to proceed on either development has yet occurred).

I trust you will look at the value residents receive currently for their money and refuse this SRV. We already pay very high rates compared to most of NSW. We have a thinly populated yet large in area shire, and it is unfair we pay so much compared with many other shires. I urge you to refuse CVC's request.

Yours sincerely

David Schwarz
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