

[2015 March 7-14]

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Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal
P.O. Box Q290
QVB Post Office NSW 1230

Coffs Harbour City Council, application for Rates Variation

Dear Sir/Madam,

Council made an earlier proposal last year, this year there are some differences, but the road maintenance situation seems to me to be an ongoing problem. Another difference this year is that I think that this year council is offering a freeze on water or sewerage or domestic waste charges in exchange for the special increase in the rates for roadworks and other maintenance.

I think that from the point of view of ratepayers in hip pocket dollar terms the domestic waste charges are much more problematic than roadworks, since domestic waste charges have in the past 20 years greatly outpaced inflation (see chart). I would like to see council freeze the domestic waste charges indefinitely, and provide smaller bins if necessary (Denmark uses similar but smaller bins, as does the council here, in some parks.) A long term perspective suggests to me that the waste management system adopted by Coffs Harbour has actually facilitated severalfold the amount of garbage produced per occupancy, compared with say 1976. Similarly, the kerbside bulky goods pickup service has had detrimental collateral effects on the streetscape, as it is heavily abused by parts of the public.

I compiled a chart last year. This should be on a following page. I provide the raw figures on another page.

I have taken a variety of photographs depicting some of the maintenance issues on roads around Coffs Harbour. There are also photographs of some streets where kerbs and guttering have not been provided despite the streets concerned having been there for 80 to 100 years (e.g. Korff Street, Edgar Street, North Street, Barrie Street, part of Brodie Drive, Vost Street, neighbourhood King Street, Valley Street, Avenua Street) - and having paid council rates for each of those years. These can be seen online at:

[REDACTED]

Some of the situations shown in the photographs have been rectified or repaired since the photographs were taken. Maybe IPART could require council to specify which particular streets will be part of councils 2015-2016 programmes.

I am opposed to the announced council plan to turn Pioneer Park into a road (part of the CBD).

Yours faithfully,

Donald Telfer

Errata:

I wrote a submission last year, in [May], which was after the deadline. Part of my submission last year still applies. Part of it does not. In particular the part that may not apply is the question I raised about the figures used by council. I came to the conclusion council's figures were wrong because the average rates for a typical property around Coffs Harbour would not in my opinion be the figure of \$3088 used by the council, it would be more like \$2400. Only this year I learnt that Council's figure of \$3088 for 2014 included water usage, whereas my average figure (educated guesswork) of \$2400 does not include water usage charges. This has now been cleared up. Council included an estimate of average household water consumption in the figures it was relying on. Either council did not make this clear at the time - in 2014 - or I did not read last year the relevant explanation by the council. In this year's 2015 application the council makes clear that when the council writes about average rates it includes an allowance of something like \$400 for average water usage fees per occupancy.

Date	CPI (old series)	Domestic Waste charges	Normalised
1-Jan-86			
1-Jan-87	79.8	\$75.68	79.8
1-Jan-88	85.5	\$93.53	98.6
1-Jan-89	92.0	\$99.60	105.0
1-Jan-90	99.2	\$106.86	112.7
1-Jan-91	106.0	\$114.02	120.2
1-Jan-92	107.6	\$114.02	120.2
1-Jan-93	107.9	\$116.98	123.3
1-Jan-94	110.0	\$121.06	127.7
1-Jul-94	111.2	\$123.24	129.9
1-Jul-95	116.2	\$125.84	132.7
1-Jul-96	119.8	\$138.42	146.0
1-Jul-97	120.2	\$152.25	160.5
1-Jul-98	121.0	\$157.60	166.2
1-Jul-99	122.3	\$157.60	166.2
1-Jul-00	126.2	\$157.60	166.2
1-Jul-01	133.8	\$162.00	170.8
1-Jul-02	137.6	\$190.00	200.3
1-Jul-03	141.3	\$209.00	220.4
1-Jul-04	144.8	\$220.00	232.0
1-Jul-05	148.4	\$252.00	265.7
1-Jul-06	154.3	\$290.00	305.8
1-Jul-07	157.5	\$305.00	321.6
1-Jul-08	164.6	\$314.00	331.1
1-Jul-09	167.0	\$330.00	348.0
1-Jul-10	172.1	\$345.00	363.8
1-Jul-11	178.3	\$400.00	421.8
1-Jul-12	180.4	\$460.00	485.0
1-Jul-13	184.7	\$534.00	563.1
1-Jul-14	190.3	\$566.00	

Some years are exclusive of greenwaste

Other years had no separate greenwaste charge

There was a 6 month rating year transition period in 1994