

**From:** Gordon Smith [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 13 March 2016 12:21 PM  
**To:** IPART Mailbox  
**Subject:** Proposed rate rise for Clarence Valley Council

#### A SUBMISSION TO IPART

IPART Since the conception of the proposed rate rise the Mayor and the GM haven't been completely honest with the residents of the Clarence Valley.

For both men to go on record in Council's printed material, the papers and on the NBN NEWS and claim that 8% rate rises over 5 years, (which equates to a 46.933% increase in the minimum or base rates plus the ad valorem amount) would equate to an average increase of \$1.50 cup of coffee per fortnight for local rate payers and residents is not only misleading but a lie.

The facts are, for every thousand dollars per annum of residential rates (minimum or base rate plus the ad valorem amount) residents would be looking at an extra \$500pa at the end of the 5-year period. If this equates to a \$1.50 cup of coffee a fortnight, well my calculator doesn't agree.

At an extra ordinary meeting called by councilor Andrew Baker there was a plan tabled to exhaust all avenues and alternatives like selling unused assets before increasing the rates. A majority of CV Councilors voted against supporting the motion We are already in the top 1/3rd of average Residential Rates for All of NSW and that we are in one of the poorest Local Government Areas as measured using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio Economic Index For Areas (SEIFA) analysis.

After sometime, the mayor put forward a motion to apply to IPART for a reduced rate rise of 6.5% over five years equalling 37%. IPART needs to consider, the average Base Residential Rates are already over \$1040 per year and this figure has continually climbed over many years and all this before IPART consider any further increases

CVC claim the necessity for the rate rise is for roads and bridge maintenance with all the extra income received will be consumed for this purpose. Based on this issue both state and federal governments collect \$billions from motor vehicle related taxes. What is this revenue for, if not maintenance of our roads and bridges? IPART if you believe CVC has a case for a rate rise based on road and bridge infrastructure maintenance claims, you need to examine the state and federal government cost shifting issue carefully before considering any increase. There's a large number of retiree rate payers in the CV that no longer use these facilities

I know I don't stand alone in this argument I've read and heard many people talk since the issue has been on the table. Some time back I hand delivered a letter to the office of Chris Gulaptis MP on the issue of cost shifting. When he answered my correspondence, part of his response was this, and I quote: **"Over the past four years the NSW government has undergone significant reform to emerge from being the poorest performing state to the strongest economy in the country. This was done by restructuring the public service, strategic legislative changes and prioritizing our service delivery. As a former Mayor of Maclean shire council a Councillor on Clarence Valley Council and a Clarence Valley ratepayer. I would expect Council would undergo a similar restructure before acknowledging that a special rate increase of 8% per annum is necessary Clarence Valley Council has a responsibility for its staffing structure and its service delivery model and I believe this would be a logical option to consider before proposing a special rate rise"**. I emailed a copy of the full letter to each individual Councillor so they might consider our State Members advice. The question must be asked? When are our Councillors going to Listen to the ratepayers? They did a survey to the tune of \$50k that clearly stated 78% wouldn't under any circumstances support an 8% rate rise over 5 years. CVC manipulating the percentages by 1.5% to deliver what they believe is an acceptable compromise. When will all parties including the Very well paid upper management team get on the same page and finally listen to what so many people are saying? IPART, CVC need to do the hard yards and tackle the real issues of restructuring and cost cutting. Stop taking the easy way out. Stop passing the cost of council's incompetence back on to us, the residents and businesses of the Clarence Valley, and get their revenue raising hands out of our pockets. There just not deep enough.

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