

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 9 June 2017 7:40 PM  
**To:** IPART Mailbox  
**Subject:** Submission Against MidCoast Council SRV 2017

## MIDCOAST COUNCIL SRV 2017

I object to the proposal to increase the land rates in the Midcoast Municipality. I currently pay almost \$2400 in land rates, not including water rates (\$1200 before the you turn the tap on ), compared to the centre Sydney , around \$1200. It is outrageous that ratepayers in the country pay twice that of their city cousins. City dwellers enjoy all the facilities on offer: Opera House, Entertainment Centre, Sporting Arenas, Transport facilities, Major Hospitals, greater choice of Education facilities, and better roads and bridges, out of which our taxes also contributed too.

Now we are asked to contribute more for our country roads and bridges that all of the residents of Australia enjoy. Here in the country we pay more for food, electricity fuel and of course land rates. If Midcoast Council is successful in their application, in a few years, ratepayers will be paying over \$3000 just in land rates in 4 years.

Midcoast Council (MCC) was a merger of Taree, Gloucester and Great Lakes Councils. In 2016, an Act was passed in Parliament preventing merged Councils from increasing their rates for 4 years. No doubt this was to sort out the differences in disproportional rates charged by the three different council areas. Also, and the main reason I would presume, is that, this time would be used to work out boundaries or wards for local elections to take place. At present we have no elected representatives to consider our requirements and represent us in council.

When this application was first mooted, yes, discussions were held with the community and the usual surveys revealing, that, "the ratepayers don't mind paying increased rates provided they receive improved services" Well frankly, one is a little tired of these surveys that produce the same result each time. Then word came through that, MCC would be ineligible to seek a rate increase, because of the Merged Councils Act. In February, MCC indicated to ratepayers that an increase would not be necessary as they had found the money in savings for the roads and bridges.

In March 2017, Paul Green MLC, from the South Coast, was approached by MCC to have the Act changed thus allowing MCC to apply for a rate increase and on the 31st of March, the Act was changed and MCC was exempt from the Act, thus allowing MCC only, to seek a rate increase.

There has been no discussion with this latest proposal with the community. Surveys have indicated that 20% could afford to pay the increase, 55% said they would be "inconvenienced", with the balance 25%, indicating it unaffordable. According to the dictionary, "inconvenienced" means "burdened". However, MCC has accepted inconvenienced as being capable of affording an increase making 75%. What's more, this figure has now grown to 80% in rounding off. I believe this is blatantly manipulating the figures and deceptive to the community.

This current SRV proposal has a cumulative increase of 28.5%, almost 30%

over the 4 years and when inflation and wages growth has been at an all time low, I find this absolutely outrageous.

The MCC area consists mainly of pensioners and self funded retirees,who basically rely on CPI increases,currently less than 2%.The MCC proposal is near triple the CPI.Political parties of both persuasions stress lately that"we must live within our means".In the past, under Great Lakes Council,we, the ratepayers have suffered with the huge increases granted by IPART.It's time that the ratepayers of the MCC area were given some reprieve from these continuous, outrageous rate increases.

I ask IPART to consider the application process, in which I believe the procedure has been flawed.There have been no community information sessions on the latest proposal,the majority of ratepayers are against the increase and over the past 2 decades ,we, the residents have suffered numerous rate increases,often thrice the CPI.

John Alterator

