To IPART,

Here is my submission re the above.

RATE
INCREASE OBJECTION

I hereby request that IPART disallow the special rate increases, currently being sought by Ballina Shire Council.

Specifically:

That the Special Rate Increase to use on river health, be disallowed completely. Council has not publicly provided information about how the money is to be applied. Problems with the health of the Richmond River start the other side of Casino and involve land use and farming practice all along the river. Council has not demonstrated that the use of this special rate will make any significant difference to the river's health.

And

That the Special Rate Increase above the pegged rate be halved and made non-compounding. Council has failed to both properly inform and truly consult its ratepayers. Its attitude to IPART's (and therefore the State's) requirement is barely lip-service. For example, Council sent us a letter which nominated its proposed rate increases, and with words to the effect *if you don't like it, write to IPART*.

Community meetings arranged by Council were few and difficult to attend, but in any case, made no difference

to Council's intention. This is what happened last time, and we are sick of that kind of "consultation".

Council has a complex website and no doubt regards putting detailed information on it as being sufficient. IT IS NOT! There are many elderly rate payers who do not spend the day at a computer or popping their arthritic fingers on a device. They have the right to be properly informed and consulted. They have not been, in this case.

 Note

We regard Ballina Council as one of the better councils in the Northern Rivers area. The staff are good at what they do. But they do not have the right to extract scarce dollars from the rate-paying community by bulldozing continued compounding increases through. We rely on **IPART** to ensure that the ***right thing is done right*** here.

John Broadley