

I have always lived in the Campbelltown local government area and have paid rates for over forty years. The proposal by Council to apply for a rate increase of 11% more than four times the IPART recommended rate is outrageous.

Not only have council rates been high over the years we have paid special loan levies as well. During this time there has been a huge expansion of council facilities and a corresponding increase in administrative staff.

Council's web site lists:-

8 child care centres

4 libraries

1 arts centre

3 swimming centres

2 indoor sports centres

4 off leash areas for dogs

150 playing fields

10 tennis facilities

1 bicycle education facility

3 skateboard parks

2 equestrian areas

Also the council has made large contributions to the Campbelltown Sports Stadium. Recently Macquarie Fields Swimming Centre was upgraded to include a heated swimming pool, electric barbeques and expanded shade areas, the upgrade was publicised but no cost was given. An additional skateboard park has been proposed costing up to one million dollars.

Because of the large state government housing estates in the Campbelltown area the state government provided grants for child care centres. When the grants were withdrawn the councillors kept the centres going and expanded the number of centres at the ratepayer's expense.

Employment costs are 66% of rate revenue for 623 equivalent full time employees. Residents I have spoken to do not believe this increase is for roads and footpaths.

I attended two council meetings to discuss the proposed increase.

At both meetings there were complaints about residents not being informed. The council letterbox drop was a folded pamphlet the equivalent of eight A4 pages and on the front headed up "YOUR CITY YOUR FUTURE" with no mention of the proposal. I believe most residents, recognising it to be more council propaganda, which 80% of it was, binned it.

The information provided by council did not comply with the IPART guidelines; no alternatives to the increase were given. The wording of the pamphlet did not comply with the guidelines and were misleading. The Mayor moved a motion that residents be given alternatives and was voted down thirteen to one, with one councillor being absent.

Council officers were asked to give details of the \$87,638,000 invested by council. They stated that approx. \$26m was externally restricted and \$52m was internally restricted. They appeared reluctant to give further details except to say the \$52m was a reserve because they self insure. They gave no further details as to why they self insure, what the benefits were, whether they had tried to outsource the insurance costs or how it benefited residents by self insuring.

I believe the council is badly managed and has never been able to manage within its available income. The council provides free bus services to a local cemetery, during summer free buses to the south coast beaches for young people, free skateboard lessons, free fireworks up to six times a year and has made overseas donations to foreign countries.

When the motion was put to council to lodge the proposal the Mayor was again voted down eight to four, with three councillors not turning up for the vote.

Councillor [REDACTED] unsuccessfully moved a motion to gag the Mayor for not acting in the interests of the majority of councillors. People I have spoken to believe the Mayor is acting in the interest of residents.