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Submission: My opposition to Port Stephens Council application for SRV

Firstly, information meetings arranged by council were poorly attended in the main. This was because publicity was not strong on council agenda and because a lot of the meeting were held at times more to meet the need of council staff than the public.

None of the meetings gave any indication that as a group they supported any rate increase.

70% of response to council were opposed to any rate increase.

At the "information sessions" council staff presented a wish list of projects that might be funded by a rate increase, this wish list varied from suburb to suburb in an attempt to win over the people at each of these meetings. The projects were not carefully costed and further information indicated changes in the costings. Then the whole thing got unqualified by stating that these identified projects may change.

Secondly, for one of the justifications for a rate increase was that Port Stephens Council has a very low incidence of rates not being paid. This would indicate that council believe that if most rate payers pay their rates, then the rates are too low.

Thirdly, Council also boasted that Port Stephens council has very low rates compared to other council in the region. This does not stack up if an analysis is done on the rate yield on land value. Council compared oranges with apples when arriving at the figures they used.