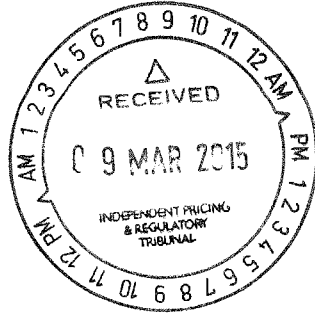


JOHN WEINGARTH



MARCH 7TH 2015

L. P. A. R. T.

LEVEL 15

2-24 RAWSON PLACE

SYDNEY 2000

Dear Tribunal,

I write re Ballina Shire Councils' application for a special rate variation to finance the upgrading of the Ballina and Alstonville swimming pools.

I would request that the Tribunal refuse this rate variation for the following reasons.

1. Council called for public submissions regarding this application. Of the 670 odd responses some 600 opposed the application for a rate rise. However, Council decided to go ahead with the application against the clearly expressed wish of the ratepayers.

2. Because it is a percentage increase it falls unfairly on those with higher valued land holdings, many of which have their own pools. Tenants would make no contribution but are much more likely to use the municipal pools. A levy on all residents (as opposed to ratepayers) would seem to be a much fairer system.

3. Ballina Shire Council has extensive commercial interests including Ballina / Byron Gateway Airport, a shopping arcade restaurants and industrial enterprises. If the need to upgrade the pools is so urgent, Council could consider the sale or lease of some of these assets

4. At a time when Federal and State governments are severely restricting wage increases and demanding productivity savings, Ballina Shire Council seems not to be reducing expenditure or making productivity savings. Rather than effect economies, B.S.C. instead applied for a rate variation which workers, ~~and~~ retirees and pensioners are increasingly unable to afford. Although the yearly rate variation seems small enough, the cumulative effect over a number of years is quite substantial.

5. In response to my letter of February 2, 2015 (your ref 14/44), I was advised to make my views known to Council and local councillors as the guidelines require the Council to engage with its community. As mentioned in point 1, council ignored the expressed views of the community. They are conducting public forums, but on what shape the upgrading of the pools should take. Council has employed consultants Ridgemill Pty Ltd. to conduct the consultations for them. This use of ratepayers funds ahead of the Tribunal's decision is indicative of Council's attitude. Please find attached a copy of part of Council notices for February 25, 2015 which states in part "The outcome will be dependent on funding strategies. This would seem to be a classic case of 'the cart before the horse'".

I trust that you will take these points into account when you consider B.S.C.'s application

Yours Sincerely,
G. A. Weingarth

ballina shire council

Community Forums – Possible Swimming Pool Upgrades

Ballina Shire Council is reviewing the possibility of upgrading the Alstonville and Ballina Swimming Pools. The outcome will be dependant upon funding strategies.

So let's be ready to move forward!

Come and share your views on the possible upgrades and contribute to the future of aquatic facilities in the Shire.

BALLINA

Community Information and Feedback Stall

Saturday 28 February, 11:00am – 4:00pm

Ballina Swimming Pool, River Street, Ballina

Community Forum

Tuesday 3 March, 7:00pm - 8:00pm

The Richmond Room, Regatta Ave, Ballina
(behind the Ballina Library)

ALSTONVILLE

Community Information and Feedback Stall

Sunday 1 March, 11:00am – 4:00pm

Alstonville Swimming Pool, 8 Freeborn Place, Alstonville

Community Forum

Wednesday 4 March, 7:00pm - 8:00pm

Alstonville Plateau Bowls and Sport Club,
10-14 Deegan Drive, Alstonville

All members of the public are welcome.

If you wish to attend a Community Forum please RSVP to Fiona King, Strategic and Community Facilities, Phone 6686 1284.

For anyone unable to attend these community consultations, Ridgemill Pty Ltd who is conducting the consultations on Council's behalf, is happy to accept comments, suggestions or submissions in relation to the proposed pools upgrade project by emailing Ridgemill@ridgemill.com.au

