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Submission: Important new information:

Using council figures, currently 10% default on rate payments in shire. Obviously correlation, higher the annual increase to rate payments, higher will be payment defaults.

In 2015 & 2016, council applied for special rate variations to upgrade pools in Ballina & Alstonville but never carried out upgrades. Wasted ratepayer's money.

Proposal to finance Healthy Waterways Program (Richmond River) has never been a council concern until now & only used as means of deceitfully applying to IPART for permanent increase in its annual rate income.

Council engaged Micromex Pty Ltd to undertake survey to reflect community views to application for increase in annual rate income. Council & Micromex colluded to achieve council's aims. Micromex conducted unreliable telephone survey with unrepresentative small sample of maximum 400 residents. Survey was push-polling with 4 options biased to achieve outcome council wanted. Governments never conduct surveys unless they are sure of favourable outcome. Survey unjustifiable waste of ratepayer's money.

Mayor in written & email responses to submissions deliberately lied about overwhelming opposition by ratepayers to justify decision he had all ready made prior to community consultation process. Quote from mayor in his personal reply to respondents concerning council should spend within its means: "I feel that as a council we have always done that in that we don't undertake a number of social and community based programs that other councils do." Obvious question is if council always spends within its means, then why does it annually apply for special rate variations & now wants permanent increase?

Council in extraordinary meeting (10 Feb), voted 7 to 3 for support of application to IPART, so not unanimous & majority of those in support played follow mayor's lead.

If IPART truly independent, has integrity & takes into account overwhelming opposition to permanent increase, it cannot approve it.