

Sent: Monday, 16 March 2015 9:17 PM
To: IPART Mailbox

Subject: Coffs Harbour City Council Special Rate Variation Application

IPART – Re Coffs Harbour City Councils' Special Rate Variation Application

My wife and I would like to lodge an official objection with IPART to the Coffs Harbour City Council's application for a Special Rate Variation in 2015. We are already adversely financially impacted on by previous Special rate Variations which Coffs Harbour City Council has obtained.

We have owned and lived in our house at Sawtell for 37 years. **We have limited income.** I rely on superannuation as my main source of income which is indexed to the CPI. So my income each year rises **in accordance with the rate of CPI increase.** What the Coffs Harbour City Council asks for, and has done so in the past, is a yearly Special Rate Variation which in most if not in all instances, is higher than the CPI rises in my superannuation income. Consequently, **my disposable income decreases proportionally each time the Coffs Harbour City Council has been granted a Special Rate Variation by IPART.**

The north coast of NSW has one of the highest proportion of elderly residents (therefore retirees and pensioners) in Australia (7.30pm ABC News NSW North Coast pre-election report 15/3/15). So many other people in the Coffs Harbour City Council rate area would be similarly effected by granting the Council the special rate variation they ask for.

Currently, because of land values in and around Sawtell, our current Coffs Harbour City Council rate bill on our home is \$4540.00 per year.

The Council always argues that "average" rate payers will only be effected by such and such. They do not specify whether they are talking about the mean, medium or mode average so what is the real picture. What percentage of **rate payers are like ourselves, facing ever increasing land values and thus Council rates.** Our pensions (which along with real wages) will not increase anywhere like the percentage increase in rates that Coffs Harbour City Council seeks through a Special Rate Variation Application.

Coffs Harbour Council argues that the Special Rate Variation will be offset by lower costs to residents in other Council levies and charges. I would argue that not all rate payers will benefit in this way or benefit equally. Furthermore, that whatever offsets the Council implements these will still fall far short of the revenue Council stands to gain from their proposed Special Rate Variation. Consequently, **rate payers will be still be worse off financially,** especially those on pensions and wages if IPART grants Coffs Harbour City Council their requested Special Rate Variation.

The Council argues that a Special Rate Variation is required to maintain general services like road maintenance, sewage, footpaths etc ., They don't say that it is required to fund less basic expenditure items like Sister City Relations, International Car Rallies and other sporting events, an entertainment centre etc. The Special Rate Variation probably wouldn't get much sympathy from the majority of rate payers if they did say it was to fund these type of things instead of basic services. **These less crucial Council expenditures (not named as the reason for the request for a Special rate Variation) could be tightened and the money saved spent on the basic services without a need for increasing rates.**

My wife and I, as do most families in the Coffs Harbour Council rate area have to live within a budget. It is time Coffs Harbour City Council was forced to live within a budget instead of trying to increase their revenue by increasing rates above real rises in pensions and wages.

We hope IPART will refuse Coffs Harbour City Councils application for a Special Rate Variation.

**With faithfully,
Keith & Lynn Jervis**

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16/3/15