

Author name: K. Russell

Date of submission: Tuesday, 5 March 2019

Submission: 1. I do not understand why Dungog Council wants to double my rates. Over the last few years we have been told many times that the council is too small to survive into the future. Then Council refused the offer from Port Stephens to amalgamate with them.

During the 2017 council election we were asked if we wanted to amalgamate when it was always going to be too late to do anything about it afterwards. This was most under-handed. Most people wanted to be part of Port Stephens and they wanted us.

We were told rates would have gone up about 23% and the election result confirmed the obvious choice was to join Port Stephens. But this did not happen and the residents of Dungog Shire were duped.

Before the elections the Mayor said that council would never double our rates and yet they are doing a back flip! I would like someone to explain why we have to do this after all we have been told in the past and with the government now promising millions to fix things that we are being asked to pay for with a huge rate rise. Wouldn't that be double dipping, and shouldn't we wait until we know what they will actually give us?

The council does not care whether I can afford it or not, and it seems that future of the council itself is more important to the council than my situation. With all this extra money that would be paid in rates Dungog Shire would still be too small. Council is saying that our rates would be similar to our neighbours, but the level of services cannot be compared.

The Council might be telling the NSW government that they have consulted the community about doubling our rates, but I consider that the Council has cheated me.

2. I do not feel that I was properly asked about this proposal to increase the rates. The first I knew about it was a bulky letter with my July 2017 rates notice that did not actually say that the council wanted to double my rates.

This letter came across strangely after all the stuff that was sent out in the last couple of years about