

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 11 February 2019 2:11 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox <localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: Ipart rate increase submission - Port Stephens Council

Dear IPART

I wish to register that I object to Port Stephens Council's ridiculous proposal to increase rates by 66% over 7 years.

While we are not currently registered property owners within the Port Stephens LGA. We are renting at our current address while we await registration of lot 13, Piper St, Fern Bay, NSW, 2295. Expected registration is March 2019.

Over 70% of submissions to Council's proposal were against the increase. Over 2,000 people made their voices heard. Council ignored every single one of these people. Thousands more locals have signed online and paper petitions. Local businesses are against this proposal.

There is, poor awareness about Council's proposed projects. This lack of awareness has been fuelled by Council changing amounts of money being allocated to projects, between when this proposal first went out for public submission, and what has been submitted to you.

This includes \$25million less over 10 years for roads. Perhaps the 30% of people who indicated a willingness for a rate rise in the first round of consultation may have opted for no increase had they seen the most recent proposal from Council.

There is no evidence that any of the projects proposed by Council are 'needs'. Rather, they appear to be 'wants'. I agree that most of the projects would be nice to have, but none of them are essential to Council continuing to operate.

Council has, in recent years, demonstrated a sound capacity to fund large-scale projects without the need for a rate increase.

Wages are stagnant, power prices are soaring, and the cost of petrol, insurances, and consumer goods is only increasing. Cost of living is rising and I am one of many people who are already struggling.

Pensioners are already deciding between turning the heater on in the dead of winter, or not spending that money so they can pay bills. Parents are already deciding whether they can afford to buy bigger shoes to send their kids to school in, or whether they can afford a bigger school uniform. This is without a rate increase!

On a more personal note. We currently live in a strata community, where we are required to pay additional fees on, top of Council rates, to have the public parks maintained. Which I might add is not conducted very well, due to Councils lack of knowledge of their responsibilities. There are areas within the estate that are under Council responsibility, however, Council do not seem to have any knowledge of this, therefore these areas are never maintained and left to residents, who already pay Council rates and strata fees, to maintain. And now Council want to impose ill advised rate increases to rate payers, who are already disadvantaged by Councils incompetence. How much is a community expected to support the wrong doings of a Council.

Port Stephens Council has ignored residents, and I ask that you listen to us when we say: this rate rise is unnecessary, unaffordable, and will cause extreme hardship for many. I ask that you reject this application outright.

Kind regards

Matthew Corbett

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