

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Special Rates Variation (SRV)

We are rate payers for the property, [REDACTED] since 1988. We are concerned about Clarence Valley Council decision to apply for a *“Section 508V of 8% for 3 years commencing 1st July 2018, which is a cumulative increase of 25.97% by year 3 (2020/2021) of SRV (with the cumulative increase permanently built into the general rate after the 3 year SRV has ceased)”*. In 2015, IPART (The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of New South Wales) had dismissed a similar application from the Clarence Valley Council, where Council had applied for an 8% cumulative 5year SRV. This new attempt by Clarence Valley Council is upsetting as a majority of the current councillors had stood on a platform of no SRV.

We object to the current SRV lodged with IPART for the following reasons:

Clarence Valley Council mismanagement of finances, including:

There seems to be no cost savings since the forced amalgamation of 5 Clarence Valley councils, in fact costs have increased.

Council have failed to divest material losses made from commercial operations like Grafton airport, South Grafton cattle yards, Grafton regional gallery etc).

Council continues to borrow for new ventures like Grafton water Park, Yamba camping ground upgrade etc without repaying all/any borrowings.

Hence Council has failed to demonstrate a capacity to balance annual spending to within its revenue generating capability and instead pass on these continuing losses to be borne by the rate payers.

Clarence Valley Council states to be the biggest employer where staff numbers appear very high compared to other councils in NSW of a similar size.

Clarence Valley Council also continues to avoid the tough decisions that would benefit to current and future rate payers.

Clarence Valley Council rates already seem very high and further increases will become unaffordable for struggling families and pensioners.

Mark and Mignon Halford