

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Local Government Mailbox](#)  
**Subject:** Submission to oppose the LG rate increase fo CHCC  
**Date:** Monday, 3 March 2014 9:20:24 PM

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Cr Nan Cowling

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a Councillor of the Coffs Harbour City Councillor that voted against the proposed rate rise along with one other Councillor I would like to place on record my reasons for this action.

- The overwhelming submissions against the rate rise. See table below.
- The way the reasons for the rate rise were put to the residents. The residents were given the option of lowering the level of Service or face a rate rise. There was no mention of an external audit to remedy inefficiencies, no mention of the T2S program being implemented or reduction in staff numbers.
- The strategies put in place to reduce the deficit have not been implemented as yet. The T2S has numerous components to increase revenue while lowering expenses. This should have been given at least 12 months in action before asking for a rate rise.
- One of the Council services was reported to Councillors as making a \$2.6M profit in the last financial year and expects to return more in next year's financial year. Why couldn't this be put towards the first year's rate rise of \$2M? Then the following years \$2M should be able to be met from the strategies mentioned in the above point.
- The Annual Financial Report for 2012/13 showed an over \$13M turnaround in just 12 months. Our Council's figures showed a positive \$6.302M to negative \$6.826M = \$13,128. These figures in my mind is an indictment on the management as this has never been reported to Councillors in any briefing

during the time since Feb 2013 when the rate variation was first mentioned.

To back up my reasons I will quote directly from the report to Councillors from the Meeting agenda that recommended the rate rise being sent to IPART.

## **RESULTS OF OPEN PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES**

Strongly disagree	67%
Strongly agree	13%
Disagree	10%
Agree	6%
Not sure	4%

This was an online submission process. There was also written submissions received that were 90% opposed to the rate rise. This to me shows that the residents that do not have internet access were in the lower socio economic class and at 90% opposed their reaction was an affordability problem. Coffs Harbour LGA is one of the lowest socio economic areas in the state. Therefore my thoughts were that inefficiencies should be made a highest priority followed by the strategies that Councillors have been asked to fund in the Transformation to Sustainability (T2S) program before a rate rise was recommended by staff.

<b>A summary of the comments received</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Control</b>	
Council expenditure cuts	36%
26%	
Concerns about affordability	19%
22%	
Support Proposal	15%
33%	
Reallocation to Core Services	11%
8%	
Lack of value for rates	10%
9%	
Lack of services to Red Rock/Mullaway/Corindi	5%
1%	

Apply for more Grants  
0%

2%

The last point I wish to make is regarding the comparison between CHCC & the Average within NSW Local Governments Areas regarding Governance & Administration costs. CHCC is 60.6% higher than th average. This must be the first area for correction before a rate rise is contemplated.

Please consider these points when making your decision on the CHCC submission for a rate rise.

Thank you for the opportunity to put my comments forward.

Yours sincerely  
Cr Nan Cowling.