

From: NIGEL [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 28 June 2017 1:56 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox
Subject: Fw: MCC Rates Increase. (SRV 2017)

Attention:- Dr Peter Boxall.

Dear Sir,

I wish to object most forcefully to the proposed imposition of a Special Rate Variation (SRV) by an unelected and, therefore, totally unrepresentative political hack who has been imposed on us ratepayers in a brazen act of 'political nepotism' to fill an interim and thus temporary office until we are finally given the long overdue opportunity to democratically elect our own representatives to tax us as we see fit.

It was never part of Baird's election platform to amalgamate any Councils and most certainly not by fiat. One could be excused for thinking that such dictatorial excess had been relegated to history's waste bin. It speaks volumes either for the lack of neutral, objective talent in the Public Service and elsewhere, or his 'in your face', looking-after-a-political-mate attitude that he stooped as low as attaching Turner to the public teat in the guise of 'Administrator'.

In a flagrant display of how to abuse power with which one has been briefly entrusted, Turner is prepared to enforce on ratepayers by diktat extra rates charges beyond any normal annual increases and bind our September 9th legally elected representatives to imposing such additional costs for the next 4 years. We thought that this could not be done to us; that merged councils could not apply for any rate increase for 4 years, as per the NSW State Government's specific commitment to ratepayers and the subsequent legislation; that we could trust Baird, Turner, Handford and relax. Only belatedly did we discover that a state MP politically allied to Turner, someone from elsewhere in the state with no affiliation to the MCC region, had surreptitiously arranged to meet Turner's needs by having MidCoast Council – and solely MidCoast Council! – excluded from such protection. It takes an individual with a seriously compromised moral compass to arrive at this level of deviousness.

In any context this would indicate a disturbingly autocratic personality; in this instance it is a clear case of behaviour by Turner requiring intervention and investigation by ICAC. The unquestioning complicity by the General Manager, Handford, (perhaps explained by a salary increase based on the extra funds managed?) also merits attention.

Until 2016 our Council, then Great Lakes, was one of the few regional ones found to be financially viable. It was evident at that time that Gloucester most certainly was not and Manning, due to serious mismanagement, was in imminent trouble. Both were about to become major liabilities for the State Government. Baird's solution was to foist his government's responsibilities onto the rate-payers of Great Lakes, attempt to fob us off with derisory financial bribes and block any attempt to reach an ethical resolution of his problem. Again, this demands the involvement of ICAC.

Neither Turner nor Handford has been prepared to detail how much of the increase is destined for each of the three original council areas and for what specific purposes. In other words we are being denied the knowledge of how much extra we formerly Great Lakes rate-payers are being forced to pay to bail out the State government and its problem of two failing councils. This is fundamentally unjust and yet again merits ICAC`s intervention.

Claimed discussions with ratepayers to seek their opinions and input have been perfunctory at best, with Turner dismissing any objections and intent from the outset on terminating any such interactions. One could be excused for concluding that a large part of this reprehensible behaviour is attributable to ego, an exaggerated sense of self importance. 'I have spoken; it will be so.'

You have it within your statutory power to rescind any actions taken to date by Turner, Handford et al and have this matter held in abeyance for the barely more than two months until our designated election of September 9th, when we can express our democratic choice by freely electing our own representatives to tax us in our name. There is no fundamental reason why this matter has to be addressed to suit Turner`s agenda and cannot be deferred until the advent of our own representative body. Its constituents will then be able to reach locally informed decisions as to our individual contributions for the next four years and beyond, the abilities of this predominately aged demographic relying on pensions to pay such increases and to restore trust and confidence in Local Government through transparency and dialogue.

History is replete with examples of 'Taxation without Representation' and the often unpredicted outcomes. Could we please have your assistance in ensuring there is no such occurrence locally ?

Sincerely,

Nigel Tully.