

**From:** Premala S [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Wednesday, 6 March 2019 6:44 AM

**To:** Local Government Mailbox <localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au>

**Subject:** THE PEOPLE OF PORTLAND NSW SAY NO TO THE PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

I am writing today as I seeked advice after realising that the Extraordinary Meeting that is going to be held on the 29 January 2019 at 7pm at Council Chambers for the announcement of whether Council are going to increase the rates is one where the the public cannot speak or voice their opinion. I have attached two documents. Firstly a cut and paste directly from the Lithgow Council website about what their plan is and why. Second a petition that has been signed from people around in Portland stating they are NOT in favour of a 11.7% rate increase.

The people of Portland and the surrounding areas have the same opinion how are we going to pay for something when no more money is coming in? On top of that they had a special rate variation a few years ago and they never managed to resolve any of the issues, why would it change now? They are stipulating that this money is going to be used for many services however right now almost every road in Portland has damage and requires fixing, when they do send the contractors to fix it, it is not a permanent fix; instead they pour black bit of tar and tap it into the hole and then when it rains, the hole gets bigger and bits of tar is spread everywhere around the place. Nothing is done to completion and everything is badly done and not overseen by a Council employee at all.

Now I am not against increasing the funds but I do not think this should be done at the expense of the people. If Council is unable to handle their budget and allocate funding appropriately then I believe we should seek help in dissolving Lithgow Council.

The people of Portland are very much against this course of Action and will not stop their sense of injustice that is currently taking place in the Lithgow Council.

I am on the opinion that Lithgow Council is not being clear in their budgeting and what they can achieve with a 11.7% increase. I am already paying for an approximate [REDACTED] property that has a house and is owned by a Pensioner and myself, over \$ [REDACTED] annually, the roads out the front of the property is not maintained, the verges are not cut and the trees are never pruned. The road behind us is a dirt road and the roads around us have pot hole that

have to be avoided in order to not have wheel alignment issues. The roads are narrow and have never been addressed or on the table for addressing in the future.

I have been a business owner myself for over 15 years and ran a company that did an enormous amount of event management, as such I do understand the concept of budgeting and making sure the money is allocated appropriately. I am of the firm view that this has not occurred and they are imposing an increase that is unsustainable and in low socio-economic area that pay too much for lack of services.

We are a small town and there are many more small towns like us that are being taken advantage of.

In their survey that they put out there was no actual way to say clearly that you were against the increase and were not up for any increase. So basically to Say NO!

We want to see the basics done before we are happy to give more money to people who are mismanaging our funds and our services.

I was advised to get in contact with yourself to seek advice and find a way that we can STOP this decision that they are about to make as they have had a lot of people say NO but the Lithgow Council is about to process the increase in spite of having had opposition and upset from their constituents. They seem not to care about what is being said and have indicated that if they do not have an increase they would have to fire people from their jobs in Council, the roads would get worse and the services would go to disarray. This is not a reason to increase rates. If they have done something with our money that is dishonest, there has to be some level of ownership.

We the people of Portland are not going to sit still for a 11.7% increase as we cannot afford it all. We say NO and we want to be heard.

I hope as the Minister for Local Government, you are able to help us with this matter and give the people of Lithgow Council area some resolution for an absurd increase.

Kind Regards



## Special Rate Variation in Lithgow Council and its actual meaning

“At its meeting on 26 November, Lithgow City Council resolved to notify IPART of its intention to apply for a permanent increase, above the normal rate peg, in our general rate income to commence in 2019/20. This process is called a Special Rate Variation (SRV) application.

Council proposes to apply to retain the current SRV of 4.77%. Council also plans to request an additional one-off SRV of 4.23%. The total SRV application will be for a 9% increase in rates revenue (i.e. the current 4.77% SRV plus a new 4.23% SRV) plus the 2.7% (set by IPART for 2019/20) rate peg will also be added.

### **Why is Council Considering a Special Rate Variation?**

Like many other NSW Councils, our roads, footpaths, buildings, drainage and other community assets are ageing and need to be renewed or upgraded. We know that our community places a high value on these assets, in particular our road network. Our assets in their current state are continually deteriorating and need costly maintenance. To improve our public assets we need to spend more money on maintaining and renewing these assets to ensure that they meet the needs of our community. Also, a small portion of the Special Rate Variation will be allocated to business improvement initiatives.

The proposed Special Rate Variation is an important step to help maintain and manage our current assets to ensure that we deliver services in line with community expectations and remain financially sustainable into the future.

### **Why can't my current rates pay for the additional maintenance and renewal works?**

The role of local Councils has come a long way since the days of roads, rates and rubbish. Today, we now fund many more services to meet our community's needs and expectations.

Some of these include:

- Parks, sports grounds, playgrounds and community halls; Libraries, arts and culture;
- Community development services for children, youth, older people, people living with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People;

- Public and environmental health;
- Environmental sustainability projects and invasive species management;
- Transport services including roads, footpaths, car parks, road safety and traffic facilities;
- Business development, events and tourism;
- Development services, such as development applications and certification;
- Land use and natural environmental planning; Stormwater and flood management; Emergency management;
- Community and council strategic planning;
- Executive, communication and support services

**Council is proposing to increase funding for the following assets:**

The projected total SRV income (from maintaining the current SRV plus adding the new SRV) is estimated at \$1.178 million for the 2019/20 year

- \$725,000 on Transport (sealed roads, unsealed roads, footpaths, cycleways, bridges and road drainage)
- \$100,000 on stormwater drainage
- \$250,000 on buildings

Increasing the level of funding for these assets will allow council to renew those which are currently in a poor condition. It will also ensure that the number of assets in poor condition does not continue to grow. It is essential that our community assets are safe, in working order and meet community expectations. The expenditure will ensure that the Fit for the Future asset benchmarks are met over time.

The remainder of the increased funding (approx. \$100,000 p.a.) will be spent on business improvement initiatives which will either generate additional revenue or reduce long-term costs. Examples of projects could include energy saving programs or technological solutions which would generate operating efficiencies.” *Lithgow Council website <http://www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com/srv/>*

***PORTLAND SAYS NO TO RATE INCREASES PROPOSED AND OPTION 2!***

WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN INCREASING OUR RATES AS WE HAVE NOT SEEN ANY UPGRADE TO SERVICES FOR THE LOCAL AREA OF PORTLAND. OUR ROADS ARE DAMAGED, AND MOST SERVICES ARE BASED IN LITHGOW, WHICH IS 25.9 KILOMETRES BY CAR. WHY THE INCREASE? IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE.

**WE SAY NO!**



# **NO TO RATES INCREASE IN PORTLAND NSW 2847**

**We, the undersigned eligible voters of Portland NSW, petition the City Council of Lithgow to recognise that concerned citizens are against the increasing of the rates that have been currently proposed.**

<b>Printed Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Live near a road that needs repair</b>
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