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Your submission for this review:

I have attached my submission as a word document. This is in the name of Ross Hitchcock dated 24th October 2021

## Submission to IPART on Central Coast Council water pricing

Ross Hitchcock

24<sup>th</sup> October 2021

- 1) Council is represented by an unelected representative of the state Government in which ratepayers have no recourse, discussion, majority determination or rescission available.
- 2) Any decisions made by IPART requiring a normal vote of council should be postponed till elected representation is in place.
- 3) The provision of reticulated water and the waste from that is a definable amount and should be full cost recovery plus provision for contingencies.
- 4) Stormwater charges should be a separate issue, one without precise parameters and should be based on cause and effect not on property value.
- 5) A property which has a demonstrated storm water management plan in operation and with identified low level of impermeability should have the ability to reduce any stormwater charges or levy. (Eg ref- Bryon Council)
- 6) Council submission does not provide details on the scope of stormwater works proposed or completed and where such works are required for cost apportion.
- 7) The amount proposed gives no incentive for properties to reduce stormwater affects.
- 8) My farm now pays for the stormwater to recharge the groundwater feeding my stream, I then pay the state to pump the same water back for irrigation.
- 9) Property values have increased for the next rating assessment by at least 20% meaning any rates revenue will also proportionately increase.
- 10) I have to pay the full cost for my non reticulated water supply and onsite sewage management. Council bin waste service is also a full cost recovery.
- 11) Biodiversity Conservation Trust areas on private land are exempt from rates and therefore should be also be exempt from the stormwater charge.

In reference to point 7 and the last significant storm event. Many rural properties were given grants up to \$30,000 to repair storm damage that resulted in erosion etc. I was quoted \$11,000 to desilt and remove affected trees as a result of an adjacent property's lack of runoff mitigation. That property enlarged its building layout with more hard surface coverage, no stormwater retention and a farm layout conducive to erosion. Under the

current storm water charge both properties would pay the same amount. Under a property value system the adjacent property being smaller would pay less for more runoff.

Capacity to pay the increase in storm water charge is significantly reduced by the general rate increase of 47%, in my instance from \$2900 to \$4200 and further increases projected. With property values increasing, not from farm production demand but from life style choice, only broad acre farms have increased their income but probably not profit. Horticultural income from fresh foods production especially tree crops has decreased. In my instance adverse climate has resulted in very little harvest and even less income for the last 3 years.

I have a water extraction licence of 72 megalitres which has to be metered on pumping and which for the last 3 years has not been utilised. This stream flow feeds the Central Coast Council weir on Mangrove creek allowing for over 216 megalitres of potable supply to Gosford City and which I cannot get a credit for and I pay a licence fee ironically determined by IPART for the privilege.

Council's submission refers to the costs of Mangrove Creek dam water catchment management in regards to storm water issues from fire. There is no mention of credit to the RFS volunteers living in the locality like myself for the hours spent on managing their programs and emergencies every year.

Summary;

No capacity to pay increase. Stormwater be separated from other water charges. Stormwater not be included in general rates. If a charge for stormwater is continued then a credit system for stormwater mitigation be introduced. Reticulated water and waste water charges be increased. Credit for water supply to Central Coast Council and payment for volunteers for catchment fire mitigation be introduced.

Thankyou

Ross Hitchcock