

From: robert.stavrou@bigpond.com [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 25 February 2020 11:40 AM
To: Local Government Mailbox <localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au>
Cc: 'Jeremy Shand' [REDACTED]
Subject: IPART Submission - Lismore City Council (Special Rate Variation)

To Whom It May Concern:

Please find attached above the;
Shand & Stavrou IPART Submission – Lismore City Council (LCC) Special Rate variation (SRV).

Respectfully yours

Robert and Jeremy.

SPECIAL RATE VARIATION (SRV) - LISMORE CITY COUNCIL (LCC)

To Whom It May Concern;

We are both Primary Producers (of cattle) and have small mortgaged holdings within LCC. We strongly oppose approval of this Special Rate Variation.

- Due to no fault of the ratepayers we find ourselves in the situation of this bewildering and staggering SRV proposal; ie. no burden should be apportioned to the ratepayers.
- Fault needs to be clearly identified as being past poor fiscal and operational management practices on the part of LCC – the elected representatives and senior management. It would appear that there has been no acceptance of responsibility for this and no plans for rectification of these LCC senior management issues.

This SRV does not guarantee appropriate expenditure, financial sustainability or sustainable management into the future.

- In our previous submission to LCC we sought from our elected representatives on LCC an understanding of the socio-economic realities and the significant negative impact that this SRV proposal would have on us and our community.
- We have undergone floods (2017 was a shocker, with extensive damage to property and loss of livestock); we have felt the huge impact of drought (eg. 500mm below average rainfall last year) - limiting pasture growth and diminishing water supplies (eg. November 2019 hottest and driest on record, daytime temperatures 3.5 degrees above average); and then, to top it all off, we had bushfires.
- As our elected representatives LCC should have recognised that our community needs should have been paramount to any and all of LCC's other determinations. They had to be aware that their community was struggling!

This SRV places additional and unsustainable demands on their already suffering and slowly recovering ratepayers.

- No consideration was given when suggesting this SRV proposal that this local government area has generally one of the lower socio-economic demographics of rural NSW with **LCC area having higher than the state average for unemployment and lower than the state average for taxable income** (refer 1).
- We are one family of five (with a severely disabled child), the other a retiree; we desire to reside in this regional area for the duration of our lives. However there seems little opportunity for Jeremy's children to remain in this area as they grow up and Robert's have already left.

We do not seek LCC's financial support (or support of any kind), nor their sympathy (empathy should have been expected), we have generally always 'done it alone' (as most people in rural Australia do!) and see no foreseeable changes going forward.

- **2017-2018 statistics indicate that (refer 1):**
 - **LCC employee costs, stand at approximately 28% of their recurrent budget, 10% above the state average for employee costs; and**
 - **equivalent LCC full-time staff numbers stand at appropriately 431, the state average for local government employee numbers is 349; and**
 - **LCC's road length per capita is 27.9kms, the state average road length per capita is 39.5kms; and**
 - **LCC's infrastructure backlog is 13.6%, the state average 5.6%; and**
 - **the LCC area has a decreasing population ie. minus 1.3% for the five years leading up to 2017-2018; and**
 - **our LCC area unemployment rate is at 5.6%, the state average being 3.6%; and**
 - **on the socio-economic index LCC stands at a lowly 45, with Low being 1 and High being 128, (eg. socio-economic index for Ballina is 92)**
- We said to LCC Councillors; *Colleagues, and I do use that word hesitantly, because colleagues are individuals that work together with a shared sense of purpose & vision for the future!*

ie. we consider ourselves to be resilient individuals (as are most Australians generally), but what LCC are proposing with this SRV, will have a significant negative impact on already diminishing household budgets, for the future!

Respectfully yours,
Jeremy Shand and Robert Stavrou

PS. Our ratepayers already pay above the *state wide average* for all Ordinary Residential, Business or Farmland rates! (refer 1)

References.

1) NSW Government – Office of Local Government

<https://yourcouncil.nsw.gov.au/council-data/lismore/2017/finances/>