

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 20 June 2017 11:09 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox
Subject: Rate rise for Mid Coast Council

Dear Mr. Boxall,

I am writing to you to tell you I strongly oppose the Special Rate Variation for Mid Coast Council.

We currently have no elected Councillor representation serving on the Mid Coast Council therefore I argue the "voice of the people" is not being heard. Our current administrator Mr. Turner was appointed not elected. Mr Turner's position will be over in a matter of months and I believe he has no rate payer mandate to make such far reaching changes.

We have acreage outside of Bulahdelah and already find the current rates a burden. An increase in the order that is suggested will be prohibitive for our business. Unfortunately this doesn't carry over to the steak on your plate as a consumer- just another expense we have to wear. Our current rates provide us with a poorly maintained gravel road access, a weekly garbage collection and fortnightly recycling collection. No green waste bins for us out here! Our town has few footpaths, little kerb and guttering, a pool that the community fundraised for, sporting grounds that the community fundraised for, a hall - looked after by volunteers, a library 2 days a week staffed by volunteers and visitor information centre also staffed by volunteers. We have always seemingly been on the bottom of the food chain along with Stroud when looking at where our rates go.

I do not believe there was sufficient consultation within our enlarged shire area to get a fair and concise representation of what we as rate payers can and cannot afford. Many in our old shire of Great Lakes Council are pensioners and self funded retirees on fixed and inflexible incomes. As a resident of the Bulahdelah area, employment is a major issue with a serious decline over the past thirty years of possible employers. Many Government offices / services have relocated, businesses closed and two major employers - our hospital and nursing home have been downgraded or downsized leaving a serious void in employment possibilities. Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest rely on extremely seasonal visitor income and that of retirees for employment. There is little to no industry in either area.

I have been led to believe that of the three councils that merged to form Mid Coast Council, the Great Lakes shire already had higher rates than either Gloucester or Manning. Perhaps a fairer way to increase funds for the Mega Shire would be to raise the rates of the other two old shires to meet what Great Lakes already pays? It should be remembered that Great Lakes Council could have stood alone unlike the other two that needed to merge. Perhaps the other option of taking back Midcoast Water would also raise much needed revenue.

I hope that you take all of these points into consideration when you make your decision on whether or not to further burden an already low socioeconomic area.

Yours sincerely,
Stephen Barry