

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, 12 February 2019 10:07 PM

To: localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au.

Subject: Port Stephens application for a Special Rate Increase (SRV) individual submission against it

Dear IPART,

I wish to register that I object to Port Stephens Council's ridiculous proposal to increase rates by 66% over 7 years.

Over 70% of submissions to Council's proposal were against the increase. Over 2,000 people made their voices heard. Council ignored every single one of these people. Thousands more locals have signed online and paper petitions. Local businesses are against this proposal.

There is, poor awareness about Council's proposed projects. This lack of awareness has been fueled by Council changing amounts of money being allocated to projects, between when this proposal first went out for public submission, and what has been submitted to you.

This includes \$25million less over 10 years for roads. Perhaps the 30% of people who indicated a willingness for a rate rise in the first round of consultation may have opted for no increase had they seen the most recent proposal from Council.

There is no evidence that any of the projects proposed by Council are 'needs'. Rather, they appear to be 'wants'. I agree that most of the projects would be nice to have, but none of them are essential to Council continuing to operate.

Council has, in recent years, demonstrated a sound capacity to fund large-scale projects without the need for a rate increase.

Wages are stagnant, power prices are soaring, and the cost of petrol, insurances, and consumer goods is only increasing. Cost of living is rising and I am one of many people who are already struggling.

Pensioners are already deciding between turning the heater on in the dead of winter, or not spending that money so they can pay bills. Parents are already deciding whether they can afford to buy bigger shoes to send their kids to school in, or whether they can afford a bigger school uniform. This is without a rate increase!

Port Stephens Council has ignored residents, and I ask that you listen to us when we say: this rate rise is unnecessary, un-affordable, and will cause extreme hardship for many. Until the council can cleanse itself of the mismanagement of its finances, resources and the incompetence and contempt it has for the community then then I will never support any rate increase and then only a realistic rates increase but this whole process has is just been a slap in the face of rate payers of Port Stephens.

I ask that you reject this application outright.

I believe (and demand) that the submission be made fully public. If there is truly nothing to hide then this submission that has the potential to cause people to become homeless should be made public so that people can see what has added needless stress and potential financial pressure to their lives.

Regards

Stephan Belan

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