

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 13 February 2019 3:36 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox <localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE INCREASE

13th February 2019

Dear IPART

We wish to register that we 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 of 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 fuelled 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 'wants'. We 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 are only increasing. Cost of living is rising, and we are in a list of 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 uniform. This is without a rate rise.

Port Stephens Council has ignored residents, and we ask that you listen to us when we say: this rate rise is unnecessary, unaffordable, and will cause extreme hardship for many in our community. We ask and implore that you reject this application outright.

Kind regards

Sharon & Garry Blunt

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(we agree that this submission can be made public)