

**From:** William Day [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 22 February 2016 3:55 PM  
**To:** Local Government Mailbox  
**Subject:** IPART Review of SRV application submitted by Clarence Valley Council

To the Officer in Charge of Clarence Valley Council Special Rates Variation Application

I attach material I sent to your office in August 2015. At that time i was advised that IPART would not consider submissions from the public on the Clarence Valley Council (CRV) application for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) until mid-February 2016. I now wish to make such a submission.

To begin with I would like to ask if IPART accepts at face value the material contained in CVC's SRV application or does IPART examine the validity of Council's statements and claims? I have no doubt that any objective examination of the CVC application will generate major concerns.

While there are so many issues I would like IPART to examine I would, in particular, like to raise the following concerns:-

- 1) I note that Community Consultation is stipulated by IPART as an essential ingredient of any Council application for a SRV.....but the Community Consultation undertaken by CVC has been shockingly inadequate and downright misleading. I trust IPART will assess the value of the CVC's attempts at Community Consultation.
  - a) CVC has made no effort to assess the ability-to-pay of rate-payers in an area that has a large percentage of pensioners and is generally regarded as having very low socio-economic status.
  - b) CVC has spent little effort to present 2 sides of the SRV arguments within material provided to their community.
  - c) I attended the only public meeting in Maclean re the SRV which was supposed to cover 3 major towns, numerous villages and surrounding areas. I believe there were around 100 people in attendance. The overwhelming mood was totally against the SRV but Council staff made no effort to conduct a vote. and I doubt CVC will have provided IPART with an accurate summary of this meeting.
  - d) I am unaware of any effort by CVC to advise local people of their right to contact IPART in response to their SRV application.
  - e) CVC conducted a printed "survey" to seek community support for their SRV. This survey, by their own admission, was statistically invalid and I request that IPART submit the survey, the survey process and the survey results to an appropriate body to determine its value. The CVC stated that responses to their printed survey will **not** be provided to IPART.
  - f) This same statistically invalid survey was then instrumental in determining which people were permitted to participate in a follow-up telephone survey.....residents contacted by the telephone pollsters had to claim that they had read the printed survey material before they were interviewed by telephone. Only the results of the telephone survey were to be supplied by

CVC to IPART.....so they conducted a shonky printed survey to create a shonky telephone survey....to send to IPART. Surely IPART will not accept this process.

2) I'm sure CVC will attempt to advise IPART that they have maintained rate increases at rate pegged limits up until this application for a SRV.

This is clearly untrue.

Since 2008 CVC has regularly increased residential and business rates in the major towns of Maclean, Yamba and Iluka substantially above rate pegged limits. These increases have been selective and consistent and if combined with this SRV they will hurt many people on limited incomes.

3) Since 2007 the CVC has consistently run massive General Fund deficits, often well in excess of \$1 million.

Project after project has run at massive deficits.....I can name many of these projects but there have been so many and I'd be sure to miss some significant ones....if IPART require details from me I will research and supply them but I believe IPART's resources to research such issues are far greater than mine.

I believe that in most years the CVC General Fund deficit would more than consume the entire revenue provided to CVC by the SRV.

4) CVC has suggested that revenue from a SRV will be entirely directed to their roads budget however if they continue to operate at massive General Fund deficits there will be no money to spend.

The other concern is that CVC may well remove other funds from their roads budget and merely substitute for those funds with funds from a SRV. It is possible that less money overall will be spent on local roads.

I, like many local people, do not trust this Council.

5) In 2004 this area was forced into an amalgamation of four local Councils into one.

At that time we were promised that the new Council would be far more efficient and demands on rate-payers would be reduced.

The CVC has been an enormous disappointment and I trust IPART will examine CVC performance since 2007.

I sincerely hope that IPART do not just act as a rubber stamp to the SRV application from CVC.

I believe IPART should insist that CVC prove that they can consistently operate to a balanced budget before they apply again for a SRV.

The vast majority of local rate-payers will applaud if IPART refuse this SRV application by CVC.

I would appreciate an acknowledgement that this submission has been received and will be considered.

William D Day



[REDACTED]

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**From:** William Day [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 23 August 2015 4:49 PM  
**To:** [localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au)  
**Subject:** Clarence Valley Council misleading ratepayers re rate rise

--Forwarded Message Attachment--

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au)  
**Subject:** Clarence Valley Council misleading community on rates increase  
**Date:** Sun, 23 Aug 2015 16:25:40 +1000

Our local council is dysfunctional and despite amalgamations in 2004 is now applying for massive rates increases.

Their campaign is viewed by many local people as totally dishonest.

I attach a media release which gives some background.

I will appreciate your advice as to how this community can convey our true feelings to IPART.

Bill Day

[REDACTED]

"Never before in the history of Local Government in the Clarence Valley has a council endeavoured to mislead and manipulate its ratepayers in the manner the Clarence Valley Council (CVC) is doing with its current campaign to inflict a 46 percent general rate increase on this community." said local citizen and former Maclean Shire councillor Bill Day.

"CVC has recently conducted a very expensive but totally unprofessional survey of local ratepayers and their absolute and only motive in doing this is to create an illusion that they are genuinely consulting with their community so that they can make this claim when they place their formal application for the rate increase with the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

The CVC survey is just window dressing, just a smoke screen..... it is no more than a cynical exercise designed to deliver to the council their real goal of massively more money from ratepayers.

When I spoke to senior CVC staff at an information session in the main street of Maclean last week they admitted that the survey was "statistically invalid", that results could not and would not be statistically analysed and submitted to IPART.

Their only justification was that Councillors had requested the survey because they had to convince IPART that CVC had consulted the local people. They do not care that the methodology, the content, the backgrounding, the targeting of the survey is as much value as a three dollar banknote.....it's only a means to an end.

Council staff advised that the only statistical information of feedback from the community that CVC will furnish to IPART will be a telephone survey from just 500 calls (out of a population of more than 50,000) conducted by IRIS Research.....Incredibly, only people who claim to have read the CVC brochure supplied as part of the CVC shonky survey will be permitted to complete and be included in the telephone survey for statistical analysis and transmission to IPART. There is no public access to the questions CVC is requiring IRIS Research to pose to their 'filtered' telephone audience.

CVC hope that the local people finally included in the IRIS telephone survey will be influenced by claims the General Manager made as part of the council survey that the at increase to CVC rates will be equivalent to a cup of coffee a fortnight or that council staff pay rates too (failing to mention the CVC staff responsible for this campaign earn more than \$200,000 per year).

In his survey support documentation the General Manager even calculates the potential general rate increase across all items included in an annual rates notice - which includes utility service charges such as garbage, sewer and water. Unfortunately he fails to advise that these utility service charges are not controlled by any rate-pegging limits and rise annually at the discretion of elected councillors. There will be a council election next year and he doesn't even know who will be elected.....yet he speaks on their behalf.

CVC hopes that local people don't care that they have not been given any background at all on the list of CVC services that the council has listed as 'discretionary services' in their survey including items such as "Community care services not funded by other levels of government" when such local services not funded by "other" forms of government are fully funded by the local users of these services. Why do they intend to cut a service that costs them nothing?

There are so many holes in this council's campaign to rip the financial heart out of its ratepayers that it would take pages to list them all.

The most important thing to note is that if you are a local ratepayer or citizen who opposes the CVC rates increase proposal YOU CANNOT TRUST THIS COUNCIL TO CONVEY YOUR OPINION TO IPART.

If you sit back and do nothing local rates will go through the roof and so will local house rents.

Every single person, every concerned community group MUST COMMUNICATE THEIR OPINION DIRECT TO IPART. The only way to fight this deception is by people power."

The details are as follows:-

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)

1 Market Street

Sydney NSW 2000

Email: [localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au)

Website: [www.ipart.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au)

MEDIA RELEASE SOURCE

Bill Day

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