

[REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 4 March 2019 12:07 PM

To: Local Government Mailbox <localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au>

Subject: Objection to SRV being sought for Port Stephens Council

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW

I am writing to seek your rejection of the SRV currently proposed by Port Stephens Council. My reasoning why this proposal should be rejected outright is as follows.

I have been a ratepayer and permanent resident for 26 years and have been directly involved in Port Stephens community activities such as Landcare and the former Precinct movement. Over that time I have submitted comment on numerous Development Applications that I felt would affect the ambiance of the community and in particular cause further environmental degradation.

This varied contact with the workings of the Port Stephens Council has given me an insight to its inefficiencies. More revenue from rates will not overcome this systemic problem.

In particular in 2018 I had need to raise a formal GIPA to attempt to clarify the designation of a parcel of land. Not only did the result of this GIPA confirm my doubts about the correctness of the land's designation but it showed a protracted history of inefficiency in the Council's practices reaching back to 2006. The underlying problem was not one of insufficiency of rate revenue. My fear is that access to more funding will only exacerbate the inherent inefficiency of the Port Stephens Council.

Having read through the schedule of proposed capital works that the postulated SRV could advance, I found nothing there that could be deemed essential. Some items made it onto the list more from neglect in the past than having any sense of innovation or material benefit.

My final comment relates to the affordability to me personally of such a significant cost burden on the rates that I presently pay. I am sure there are many others in the Port Stephens community who would be similarly disadvantaged. I am one of many who planned their retirement years here on a fixed superannuation benefit. My forward budget was premised on cost increases commensurate with the ruling inflation rate. While capital value increases on my property may add to my estate on my death, they're of no consequence in my day to day living. Furthermore if the SRV is implemented, my discretionary spending will fall sharply. The multiple effect of this decrease across the community will materially effect the financial viability of many local businesses.

I submit that denial of any portion of the Port Stephens Council's SRV will not effect its ongoing viability as a Council. On the other hand granting any increase in rates above the inflation rate will effect the viability of living in this local government area for many residents, be they rate payers or renters.

Walter Lamond

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4 March 2019

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