

**Sent:** Monday, 16 March 2015 4:40 PM  
**To:** IPART Mailbox  
**Subject:** Coffs Harbour City Council - Objection to Special Rate Variation

As a Coffs Harbour council ratepayer I object to the permanent Special Rate Variation requested by Council for 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Coffs Harbour City Council, in an information booklet "Funding Our Future" sent to ratepayers in the LGA, proposed rate increases of 8.14% in 2015/16 and a further 775% in 2016/17. This booklet was a result of IPART's previous refusal of the above increases due to Council's lack of communication with ratepayers. However, the booklet was so biased in its language and presentation that it must be considered no more than Council propaganda.

Three surveys by Council saw a majority of respondents opposed to the proposed rate increase, with the percentage ranging from 71.4% to 88%. However, CHCC has dismissed the public consultation survey results apparently on the premise that the survey respondents were "self-selecting". Of course they were - how could it be otherwise unless the voting was compulsory? As Council has proceeded with its application to IPART, having spent ratepayer's money on a public consultation survey, it appears they had no intention of listening to ratepayers.

Council came up with the idea to lighten the impact by freezing water and sewerage access charges so that the average residential ratepayer will pay a 3.9% increase in each of the 2 years. This begs the question - do they need the rate rise they are asking for? Also this would have an unfair impact on rural ratepayers who do not pay for or receive these services

Council's director of business services said rural ratepayers who conducted a business such as farming were able to claim a tax deduction for council rates. There are many rural ratepayers who do not have water and sewerage service available but do not conduct a business on their property. Also, there are owners of residential rental properties who can claim a tax deduction for their rates.

The public consultation survey booklet was circulated to ratepayers but ignored those members of the community who are not direct ratepayers but who are affected by rate increases through, for example, higher rents.

Council has, over several years, sponsored organisations such as Rally Australia and football clubs (not local). These organisations are commercial, profit-driven entities and Council is using ratepayer money to further their interests and profits over providing services which are Council's responsibility. Further, any requests for details of the amounts paid in sponsorship are refused on the grounds of commercial confidentiality.

[REDACTED]

Given all of the above, I petition that IPART reject in total the application by Coffs Harbour City Council for a special rate variation.

Yvonne Cramp

16/3/15