

Author: The Entrance Peninsula Community Precinct (“TEPCP”) – covering Magenta, The Entrance North, The Entrance Blue Bay, Toowoong Bay, Shelley Beach and Long Jetty

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Submission

We are writing on behalf of TEPCP and welcome the opportunity as ratepayers to make a submission to IPART to object to the proposed Special Rate Variation (“SRV”) of 6.9% by Wyong Shire Council.

During community consultation, Council provided a “Residential Rates Calculator” table showing the ordinary rates payable depending upon the Rateable Value of the property.

This table shows that ratepayers with a Rateable Value of \$500,000 to \$999,999 are currently paying about \$3,009 in ordinary rates which is four times the Shire average.

Many of the properties in this Rateable Value range are in the TEPCP and the average extra cost of the SRV for these ratepayers will be four times the cost to be borne by the average ratepayer.

The properties in our Precinct have a higher value as they are located in close proximity to the coast/ beach and or Tuggerah Lakes. Whilst their properties may be of a higher value, the majority of ratepayers in our Precinct are pensioners or are self funded retirees on limited income.

There seems to be a general attitude that those who choose to live in this Precinct must be able to afford the extra rates. We are aware that for most of the ratepayers in this area that assumption would be incorrect and they fearful of any increase in their living expenses.

Many have converted their previous holiday homes into their permanent residency or they have retired to The Entrance area from Sydney. The additional rates would place a considerable strain their limited income which in many cases are fixed.

Rate payers in this Precinct suffer a triple whammy. In addition to the additional rate increase proposed by Council, many of the properties on the coastline and lakeside are being devalued from Council’s predictions of flooding and sea level rise. The entire suburb of North Entrance is proposed by Council to be rezoned to R1 (one storey) in Council’s draft LEP 2012 – which will disadvantage the sale of these properties for future development.

This negative impact on these coastal and lakeside properties, is further added to by the increased cost of home insurance. However, these properties have not had any reduction in the NSW Valuer General’s Land Valuations and consequently, there is no relief in the level of ordinary rates payable.

We are aware that compared to properties in the Sydney Metropolitan Area, this Rateable Value band would be marginally above the median value whereas the ordinary rates currently being paid in Wyong Shire is already orders of magnitude greater than the ordinary rates being paid in Sydney.

In conclusion, from the perspective of ratepayers in TEPCP, the 6.9% rate increase which Council promotes as costing no more than \$30pa (compounded for 7 years) is a fallacy.

Therefore, we recommend that Wyong Shire Council’s SRV application of 6.9% be rejected and that IPART consider a more affordable increase.