

[REDACTED]
12th May 2022

IPART

Re: Uralla Shire Council

Additional Special Variation for 2022-2023

[REDACTED]
Key Contact for Public Submissions

Dear Sir

I wish to state my objection to the Above Submission by Uralla Shire Council for the following reasons;

It's about affordability

USC have Displayed no empathy or consideration for the level of stress, financial hardship and emotional trauma caused by their actions towards the Bundarra residents and in particular to the older and vulnerable residents and all those on fixed incomes who have no means of improving their situation e.g. pensioners, old aged persons etc.

Population 348 (Census 2016) and decreasing as per Census figures 2011(402) and the downward trend is increasing!

Average income \$424 per week - \$200 less than the NSW average no growth/no job opportunities/low fixed incomes

85% of people in Bundarra are on fixed incomes with no ability to raise revenue.

Council cannot and should not be able to increase charges above a communities' capacity to pay.

There is no growth in a bankrupt village.

There has been no communication by Uralla Shire Council with the Bundarra community on the actual cumulative costs \$\$ on each ratepayer

With regard to the 'proposed Special Rate Variation of 2.5%', merely a statement by the [REDACTED] (who earns in excess of \$252 p.a.), in the USC submission that states that she considers the increase affordable, USC are clearly out of touch with reality!

1. *The USC submission does not even take into account the 10% increases in water and sewerage costs (we now pay \$675 p.a. for sewerage each year) and this is also increasing by another 10% p.a. which they intend to implement.*

2. The 'new' sewerage system needs electricity to work – another cost to residents and electricity costs predicted to rise further
3. We travel 45km to Inverell or 78km to Armidale and we need to use our own vehicles - another cost - especially with the rising costs of fuel!
4. **None of the following** in our village of Bundarra, medical services including doctor hospital, chemist, post office, veterinarians, supermarket, butcher, bank, ATM, community or public transport and that is just a few of the services we don't have, we travel at our own cost for these essential services.
5. Living costs have risen and will continue to rise with inflation which is already at 5.1% and rising!
6. Bundarra residents wrote to USC last October and voiced our objections to the draft LTFP 2022-2031 and stated that it was quite simply **unaffordable**, council did not respond *despite the GM stating in the November 2021 newsletter that a report on community feedback would go to the new Council.*
7. We have even held public meetings and invited the General Manager, and all council staff and councillors to attend in an effort to convey to them our concerns over the continuing escalating costs - they refused our invitation!

This variation if granted, is \$440,000 in extra revenue over the next 5 years, USC's deficit currently stands at \$2.7m, this leaves a huge shortfall which could only be filled by more increases to rates or services at ratepayers' expense

We would like IPART to carefully assess our situation here in Bundarra and in other parts of the shire before they grant this special rate variation especially in view of the aging population, below average income and declining population growth and especially the lack of affordability.

