

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 5 May 2022

Your submission for this review:

*Significant demographic issues relevant to submission - Bundarra Village -Bundarra is part of Uralla Shire LGA/North Western Boundary -Population 348 and decreasing as per Census 2016 -average income \$424 per week which is \$200 less than the NSW Average -85% of residents are on fixed incomes. i.e. retired, pensioners and welfare recipients -170+ residential properties will be affected by rate and surcharge increases -services are not comparable to the main township of Uralla I wish to object to rate increases proposed in application for Additional Special Variation 2022-2023 submitted by Uralla Shire Council. Please find attached summary of additional information to support my objection

[REDACTED]

5th May 2022

IPART

Additional-Special-Variation-for-2022-23

Re: Uralla Shire Council application

[REDACTED]

Key contact for Public Submissions.

Dear Sir

We state that in principle a number of elements of the LTFP and application for additional special variation (ASV) by the Uralla shire Council do not consistently align with the guidelines of IPART assessment criteria.

1. **The need for and purpose of a different revenue path to General Fund as identified in scenario i.e. Special Rate Increase**

- The plan doesn't consider the financial impact of increases in water rates and an existing sewerage levy
- Savings and revenue raising aspects of the plan doesn't indicate where the money will be spent
- We believe that past poor financial management by council should not be a driving force to raise rates above IPART recommendations to meet obligations.

2. **Evidence that the community is aware of the need for and the extent of a rate rise**

- No effective communication by council of the full cumulative increase of proposed special - Rate increase over the term of the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) and the effect on individual ratepayers in dollar \$\$\$ terms.
- The community had little or no knowledge of understanding that the original (SRV) was 45% over 3 years commencing 2022-2023 – Much to our disgust and horror!
- The plan submitted by Uralla Shire Council doesn't define any improvements or projects of significance, just revenue raising.
- Council must accept submissions from ratepayers in good faith when engaging methods of awareness – This doesn't happen!*

3. **The impact of affected ratepayers must be reasonable**

- Socio-economic indexes of Bundarra village clearly defines and exhibits the impact of rate increases on the community as compared to the shire as a whole
- There is a clear relationship between 'reasonable impact' on ratepayers and the low/nil population growth
- Uralla Shire Council cannot demonstrate in any scenario that rate increases have been assessed against the community's capacity to pay
- Bundarra residents have already been burdened with 3 years of sewerage levy totalling approximately \$1800 per household for a service that didn't exist.
- The mood is apparent that the community is also unwilling to pay extra rates considering the attitude of council executive and increases in fees and charges.

4. **EXHIBITION OF DOCUMENTS**

Not all residents have access to online services- internet services are intermittent at best
-Including strategic plans, (1) copy is available for viewing at the local general store and (1) copy at the local library which is only open ½ day each week depending on volunteers being

available. On Uralla Shire Council's website there is no information regarding where the documents are on display in Bundarra or elsewhere.

- Submissions by Bundarra residents regarding the LTFP were ignored in 2021 including financial impacts of rates & charges

- Residents were not advised of Uralla Shire Councils resolution to approve and submit the Special Variation Application, including amendments.

The application was available online at IPART website after the application had already been submitted

- There is no evidence of council methods to recognise community input in assessing impacts of strategic plans

- We submit the Uralla shire Council are acting contrary to their own core values by failing to communicate in an open and transparent manner

5. **Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP & R) must explain and quantify productivity improvements and cost containment strategies reflected in the past and plans to realise**

- We don't see evidence of any explanations

Some trivial initiatives are apparent:

- Reduction of elected councillors

- Reduced service levels e.g. mowing nature strips, most residents mow their own anyway

- Closing Bundarra Library

- Removal of Community grant program

- No Plans to maximise administrative efficiencies

- No plans to eliminate budget blowouts on projects

- No plans for any expansion of services to develop and enhance productivity initiatives

- Certainly no cost containment strategies of any significance

6. **Growth – a recent introduction to assessment criteria**

- There has been no growth in Bundarra village – in fact ABS (Census 2016) indicate a reduction in population

- We have no post office, no community transport, no banking facilities (not even an ATM) and have lost several businesses in recent years

- Services are not comparable to Uralla but we are imposed with the same rate cost/increases

- If Bundarra's future is in forced or otherwise amalgamations these proposed rate increases will cripple this community needlessly.

SIMPLY STATED

There are no growth opportunities in a bankrupt village.

