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Have your say. Should Council apply for a special rate variation for 2012/13 General Rates?

Question 1

If you would like to leave a comment regarding council's application to IPART for a special rate variation please use the box below.

All comments are anonymous and will be treated confidentially.

ID	Text Answers (42)	View
9763310	As a constant user of the dirt roads of the Eastern part of the Shire, I find that money could have been spent better for many years by improving drainage, as pointed out in Section 8.5 of the Unsealed Road Maintenance Review. Previously when I approached Council to improve the Carters or Stewarts Brook roads I have been ignored or at best treated as to "what do I know". I find Council has wasted a lot of funds by not improving drainage and not rehauling roads with gravel in the past. There has been the cry of "Shortage of funds". I have pointed out that continually sending out work crews to rectify defects would be more expensive in the end. I have seen Council Plant removed from a job unfinished, to go to another job, never to return to finish the original job. I find it offensive that Council is asking for a greater increase in funds when it (Council) is not using its funding for road repair efficiently now. I do agree with the report "Unsealed Road Maintenance Review" BUT it does not go into the financial loss to Rate Payers, not having access because of poor maintenance to Gravel & Unformed Public Roads to or past there Property to conduct there Business. This has happened to me several times up the Carters & Stewarts Brook Roads. Until Council can display a more efficient Practice to Gravel Road Maintenance, I think a Rate increase would be throwing good money after bad. Yours Faithfully Stephen Gardiner	View
9763489	Dear Upper Hunter Shire Council, 'I would be happy for my comments to be published. We pay very high rates on our combined property, a total of \$7,377 for the last financial year. We are cattle producers and eek out a modest income from our property. Council rates currently equate to a tax of around 5% of turnover NOT profit. In return for our council rates we get restricted access to a local library and access to a council office in town to pay other government charges. We pay very high rates if we take our rubbish to the tip. The only actual specific service we receive from council is the maintenance of the access road to our property, Springfield Rd. We are absolutely against a special levy to fund the road program as we are already paying a substantial amount to subsidize other services of the Upper Hunter Shire which we have no access to. There are a number of roads being "beautified" in the Scone area at present, it would be preferable to reallocate the funds being expended on this program to the unsealed roads maintenance program. Kind regards	View
9931345	UHSC already has one of the highest council rates of regional councils in NSW, and now you want to increase them 6.4%!!? Over-chlorinated water supply, sewage levies that mean nothing as council expect residents to pay for any backflow issues above and beyond the 'services' rendered, and frequent fully paid council 'business trips' for senior staff members of the UHSC and you wonder why residents have lost faith in the transparency of our amalgamated council who do very little to support business & communities outside of Scone.	View
10052249	Scone can't afford it. The rates we presently pay are far above other rural towns and even some city council rates. There was a large increase in land values 2 years ago followed by councils continued rate increases, which both have added a large increase in funds to the council. As a resident of Scone I cannot see where this money has been effectively spent. I'd suggest smarter spending is required before hitting residents with more fees.	View
10052293	We already pay an extraordinary amount for rates in Scone, far above any other rural town and even those of some city councils. The most recent 3 years have seen an increase in land values and council rate percentage increases impact significantly the amount we pay.	View
10052302	I am in strong disagreement to another rates variation, Scone shire rates already excessive. I own a couple of house in Newcastle and Melbourne and there rates are much cheap then Scone, Upper hunter rate payers are already paying to much for rates. An previously said I am in strong disagreement.	View
10054222	IS IT CORRECT TO ASSUME (BASED ON THE ESTIMATE IN THE FLIER THAT THE AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL RATEPAYER WILL PAY AN ADDITIONAL \$52.83 PER YEAR....) THAT THE ONE-OFF 6.4% RATES INCREASE + THE ALLOWABLE 3.6% - MAKING A TOTAL OF 10% - WILL ONLY APPLY TO THE "RESIDENTIAL SCONES" COMPONENT OF THE RATES & CHARGES NOTICE THAT APPLIED LAST YEAR? IN OTHER WORDS, THERE WILL NOT BE A 10% INCREASE IN THE WATER, SEWERAGE AND DOMESTIC WASTE COMPONENTS? WHILE I APPRECIATE THIS IS INTENDED TO BE ANONYMOUS I WOULD APPRECIATE ADVICE ON EITHER TELEPHONE OR E-MAIL Thanks	View
10058532	I think this increase is a discusting proposal by an already over priced council.If we keep getting slugged by these price increases, it will only push another nail in the councils coffin,as more people,(including myself), will leave this shire of overpriced rates . Because of the greed,or mismanagement,which ever senario is the reason for this unsuitable increase, of the elected councilors that are supposed to be representing the people of this shire,we,the public have to endure yet another price hike. How dare the council send out a propaganga pamphlet to us indicating an increase of approxamatly \$52.83 a year, my current rates are \$1540.00 per year, This is an increase to me of \$154.00 per year,almost triple what the supposed "average" increase will be (just shows me the ineptness of the council,you cant even figure out correct figures of a 10% increase). I work hard and long for my wage and only get 4% increse, what gives local government the right to think you can jack up rates whenever you like by as much as you like . (It almost amounts to theft, this is about the third "one off" increase that we have been hit with by this money hungry council, its becoming unpayable, and what do we get for this enormous fee, sweet bugger all, except for larger tax bills. I am strongly opposed to this increase, and think the funds for the proposed projects should come out of the overinflated wages of the councilors pockets. Don't forget, we are the ones paying your wages,enough is enough, get your act together and budget more wisely instead of just slugging the rate payers all the time, I think we already pay enough!	View
10077588	Councils should not be asking for an extraordinary increase in rates. Upper Hunter Shire Council can find funds to build new chambers and offices and then cry poor is an absolute insult to every ratepayer. If you cannot manage funding as every body else in the community in these tough economic times then resign or appoint somebody who can. It is disgusting to think that council is applying for an increase of 10% when everybody else in the community has to make do with minimum wage increases of approx 3%.PA Council is trying to bled us dry, when will it end.	View
10090506	I do not agree with the councils rate rise idea, cut back on the office staff we have employed and redirect that money back into the road maintenance. Every week in the local paper you are advertising for more office staff at very high salary levels I am sure most of your ratepayers who pay your salaries would like to earn as much.	View
10106733	I object to the current application to raise the rates past the pegged rate. I think Council needs to become more efficient in its running of its own affairs. I will be looking for an IPART web page to also object. Are rates are dear enough now.	View
10107403	Office of the Mayor, Upper Hunter Shire Council. NO Council should not increase rates maybe Councilers should come out Of thier ratepayer funded new chambers into the real world and talk to some of the pensioners and lower paid workers in thier district that are struggling to pay the mortgage, excessive power bills, excessive water rates etc before they can afford to eat. How much more can these people be expected to pay not everyone in the Shire works in the mines or is a Councilor. These people have a right to expect to be considered by our greedy Council when they make these yearly grabs for more money from the ones who can least afford it. There would be a lot of pensioners who cannot afford to own and run a motor vechile or are too old or too ill to drive so why should they be forced to pay for roads etc they will never use.Show some consideration for the less well off when making these decisions instead of just screwing the people who elect you.	View
10138847	I've just filled out a survey recommending a rate increase. But where does it end Council in there wisdom can put on levies or increase other services to get the funds they want. In fact there are ways and means of getting around the rate pegging. The council needs to be more transparent, they need to restructure there services on a regular basis. Balance sheets can be manipulated to reflect any issue that council wants. Independent audits need to be carried out to identify wastes and the need to improve services, the audits need to be published so that ratepayers have informed choices. Council should as a matter of course supply to IPART a business plan on how the increase of rates are to be used and importantly the ratepayers should be informed.	View
10189198	There are many other ways to raise funds for infrastructure maintenance, such a drastic step as a Special Rate Variation should be a last resort, not the first. We all use the roads in one form or another, and no doubt we would all like to see them improved, but not at the cost of a Special Rate Variation. A more modest increase of say 5%, slightly above the cap, would be a far easier pill to swallow for the majority of ratepayers. I would implore you to seek more advice from other funding sources; sales of assets, grants or increased borrowings, before you seek this rate variation. Let the community know that you have exhausted all other avenues first before you do this. With a stroke of a pen you can commit this community far into the future, please be mindful of the power that you wield. In a world of rapidly rising costs in essential services like electricity and ever increasing fuel and food costs, can the community be brought to bear this one too? Please, have a conscience and find some other way.	View
10206288	As a small business owner in Merriwa, I would agree to an increase in rates, ONLY if the revenue that is raised in each area is spent in that area. For example, Merriwa's main street pales in comparison to Quirindi. Have a look at Oval # 2 where the local Little Athletics can't even run a proper 100m sprint because the track has so many dips in it. The Showground is a disgust! People living out of town, particularly in the Cassilis area, have a constant battle with flooding and punctured tyres due to the state of the roads. Apex Park is often unkempt, weeds in abundance and overgrown lawns. I was glad to see an attempt to increase productivity, if we ran a private enterprise the way this workforce is managed we would go out of business. Any works program that is undertaken should also support local businesses in that area, after all we are the hard workers funding it. I would like a guarantee IN WRITING that the money paid by residents not in the Scone area, will receive their fair share.	View
10214310	Each time I have requested a timeframe for sealing the Hunter Road outside our house, I have been told that there is none. If Council wants rate payers to support an increase in rates, there needs to be some certainty about the projects to which those funds are to be applied and the associated timeframe. The current approach to forward planning clearly does not work.	View
10221242	Council is misleading the community with the material it is supplying saying it is a one off increase, not explaining that this increase is going to be carried on for the next ten years.. Council makes it sound like the increase is going to affect the next years rates only.	View
10255924	I have no objection to the Special Rate Variation as I believe that the area is in urgent need of road maintenance, particularly the replacement of the Hunter River floodway crossing between Aberdeen and Segenhoe that was washed away in recent floods. New homes, including my own, will shortly be built in the area. I am greatly concerned that, now that the Rouchel floodway is no longer operational as this leaves only the floodway on Glenbawn Road for access to the Trig Point estate the builders' trucks and heavy machinery cannot use the Allan Bridge Road bridge to cross the river and will not be able to cross the floodway between Segenhoe and Glenbawn is impassable in heavy rains. I believe this bridge building or floodway replacement project should be at the top of Council's list of priorities to provide the people investing in and moving into the area with necessary infrastructure. Many thanks.	View
10256443	Why doesn't Council supply us with information on which area the Council will be spending the money, on which roads. Council has to plan ahead surely it is able to provide this information.	View

10287355	I have no objection to the Special Rate Variation as I believe that the area is in urgent need of road maintenance, particularly the replacement of the Hunter River floodway crossing between Aberdeen and Segenhoe that was washed away in recent floods. New homes, including my own, will shortly be built in the area. I am greatly concerned that, now that the Rouchel floodway is no longer operational as this leaves only the floodway on Glenbawn Road for access to the Trig Point estate the builders' trucks and heavy machinery cannot use the Allan Bridge Road bridge to cross the river and will not be able to cross the floodway between Segenhoe and Glenbawn is impassable in heavy rains. I believe this bridge building or floodway replacement project should be at the top of Council's list of priorities to provide the people investing in and moving into the area with necessary infrastructure. Many thanks.	View
10320078	As land owners of both residential and rural property within this shire we feel strongly that rates are currently high enough. We are retired. We receive little assistance from any Government Department. Expenses in all areas have increased dramatically whilst our income has remained stagnant. We would be only one of many I am sure. No support coming from this family for the extra hike in rates.	View
10320268	We all have to make do in these difficult times and major capital works delayed until better general economic conditions. The pressure on our roads and bridges is a function of increased mining activity all around us and the beneficiaries [NSW and Fed Govs] should pay for the infrastructural investment needed to support the movement of mining related traffic. Many in the shire have had enormous cost increases across our businesses because of the expansion of mines all around us. The mining companies should also do more to contribute to the cost of community infrastructure.	View
10331292	I do not think there should be a rate increase to cover the cost of roads etc as council is there to see to these things not buy up daycare centres etc. What is the cost of wages for the shire? people seem to be offered great packages including cars to work for Council. Have the council overstepped the mark by building the monstrosity of a building that seems to have so much wasted space. You could hold a dance in the front foyer of the building which whenever I go there never seems to have any more than two or three customers at a time or only myself most of the time. I also think that council spends too much money on getting advice on how to run things and then completely ignores what they have been told should be done to improve things. Wasn't Council told in one of their paid for surveys that they didn't listen to the ratepayers. If you have to keep paying for surveys to try and make the council work then it is time to get a new CEO and a new batch of Councillors. Cut the wages Bill and stop purchasing unneeded businesses, stop all this push for Tourism which should save money and let the people who benefit from Tourism take over the advertising etc. We keep paying high fees for going to the waste depot and then the Government slugs us another fee on top of this. Where does it all end? People are moving away from the Shire because of the cost of Rates etc. I pay \$25 per annum for drainage on my rates and the road is broken up because there is no curb and gutter and there is no maintenance to keep the dirt and grass build up to allow water to run into drains. On speaking to a Council Supervisor about this he replied "I like it like that to stop having an edge on the tar that will wash" So we don't have an edge but the road is a mess and has to be repaired because the water gets under the tar and the grass grows into the tar. Get out of your Office Mr. Dutton and have a look around and see first hand how your Staff are not doing their jobs and are wasting Rate Payer's money. Does scone Need Bicycle tracks, skateboard tracks, upgrades to Scone Airport to attract more people here etc.? We are hardworking rural people who don't need or use some of these facilities you purchase on our behalf. We need good roads and bridges, street lighting and pedestrian crossings in Aberdeen.	View
10337973	While I recognise the need to repair the roads and bridges in the shire, this is a farming area, and those in Primary Production should not be penalised as we already pay a significant amount back to the council in rates. Not only that, but as we are in primary production, we bring staff to the area, we help to populate the schools with the families we employ, we buy and sell our cattle in the local area which benefits the local area. We also buy all our produce and materials locally. It does not seem reasonable that the council should then go ahead and charge us more for roads and bridges. What about the miners - I realise that they make a contribution for roads etc, but has it been taken into account how much damage is created by their heavy equipment and their huge influx of population into the area? Have they contributed a proportion which is reflective of what they are taking out of our local region?	View
10345716	I don't understand how you can apply for a special rate variation to improve/maintain the rural roads when you are decreasing the maintenance on the roads. I am from the Merriwa area and have been told that Council has reduced its maintenance grading of roads from 3 times a year to once a year. No wonder the roads deteriorate and you need extra money to then repair them. The roads in the township of Scone are crap I would hate to see the condition of the rural roads. The roads in the former Merriwa Council area had always been kept in a good condition, our area has some of the best maintained roads compared to neighbouring shires, proof of this is to take a drive on the Mudgee Road as soon as you pass the Ulan turn off the road goes from being a nice wide smooth road to a narrow bumpy pot hole filled road. Anyway I am getting away from my point. How can you decrease your annual maintenance grading and then apply for an increase to improve these roads. As far as I can see this is just bad management of the roads in the first place and then to ask the rate payers to pay extra because you have not been able to manage the maintenance properly is absurd. I have not seen any publicity showing which areas the Council intends to spend the money, I hope it is not all going to the Scone area.	View
10377164	I do not believe that the Upper Hunter Shire Council should apply for a Special Rate Variation in its present form. The proposal looks like it means that we will be paying 10% in the first year and this will go on for an unlimited time. What will the rates be in another 5 or 10 years? What happens when the council finds that they want / need more revenue? Go for another one-off permanent rate increase? I would be more likely to agree to an increase if it was not open ended. (PERMANENT) Why has this problem just now been raised. Who hasn't been doing their job? What guarantee is there that ALL the money raised over the ????? years will be spent on roads etc. It sounds very much like the NSW Governments 3+3 (many years ago) for the roads that just went into the consolidated revenue and not the roads. We still don't have good roads. Local, State and Federal Governments are well known for changing direction as they like without concern for the people. What guarantee do we have that \$5 million over the next 10 years will maintain the roads and bridge infrastructure? Before putting a burden on the rate payers, why hasn't the Council layed out what funding sources, asset sales, grants and increased borrowings have been looked at. Give us figures. I think that everyone knows that no matter what the rate payer thinks, the council will go ahead with their plans anyway. Why not wait until the next election to put the proposal to the rate payers? If the majority of people agree with the Council then they will support them at the election. Kindest Regards,	View
10380355	Instead of asking for extra money from ratepayers council should put more pressure on state and federal governments for increased funding from the road and fuel taxes that we pay every time we fill our tank or register our vehicles. This should be justified by the fact that traffic in the shire has increased substantially over the last few years.	View
10393659	We object to the proposed rate variation rise of 10% as we feel that the lesser rate is excessive as it is. Owners of larger properties in the Shire already pay huge rates and an increase like this would not mean just an extra few dollars but thousands of dollars. And what do we get for this? The facilities of the town are available but not easily accessed because of the distance we are from town so the only benefit we get is the occasional grading of our one unsealed road. This is hardly worth the thousands of dollars we would be paying in extra rates. The Council is sitting pretty in its new building and should have been able to manage the finances in a more judicious way to anticipate the costs of maintaining roads and bridges. What about getting the Coal companies to contribute? Their trucks drive over the roads every day and potentially we have the spectre of CSG companies using the roads. In the Brawboy area the Council widened and graded the road so that the drilling company could have better access! What a great use of ratepayer funds. WE also think that doing a phone survey of local houses is fatuous as the extra amount they would pay is insignificant and many are renters anyway.	View
10427320	No the Council should not apply for a special rate variation. I discuss the rate charges with people who live in Lake Macquarie, Singleton and Muswellbrook areas and they can not believe how much more expensive the charges are in the Upper Hunter Shire compared to the charges they are levied. I live in town in a street without street lights or Kurb & guttering and yet I'm already charged a premium for the privilege. Perhaps cost cutting is required. Better management of the money and not hitting the rate payer for more money.	View
10463348	As a rate payer of Scone I find it incredible that rates have to rise for maintenance of the roads. What is done with our money, we live in Oxford Rd our part is barely sealed and has been the same since purchasing our home in 2002. We have no proper drainage or gutter just dirt which turns to mud and giant puddles when it rains. Our town has pathetic playgrounds for its young people, one in Elizabeth Park which was partly fundraised by Sconeites, no shade cover. Neither tiny play areas in playing fields by golf course have sun shades and have very outdated equipment. We feel disappointed with our Council, no community spirit, no Christmas decorations or Christmas lights, no skate/bike park the preschool cannot even get a small path of concrete for the children with wheelchairs to access its gate. What a waste of money is your big Council building with all the staff and cars etc calling in consultants when the community is not attended too.	View
10484497	Note: The issues on rural gravel roads and the "expense to maintain them". We are commenting on Cliftlands Rd Scone as we are owners of a small property on this road. Regarding the speed limit set as 100 kims, this needs to be reduced as it is used by B Double Milk Tankers (twice a day) continual use by large horse floats, twin steer large feed supply trucks, tractors and implements, semi trailer cattle carriers, garbage collection residential and industrial pick ups, as well as the twice a day "scool bus run" travelling together with the pot holes, lack of vision due to dust and as above the excessive speed limit. Also the mention of road widening due to the spreading of gravel the speed limit only adds to this problem. These issues are we believe due to excessive speed limits set on most councils gravel roads. If the speed limits were reduced even for a trial period the conditions of the road may improve and save costs that council are reported to be seeking!! As we were at the council meeting regards the rate increase we were encouraged to leave our comments by council staff, and would appreciate a return comment and ask if council will consider the above recommendations as if a rate increase was sought we the ratepayer need to see improvements.	View
10511290	Having heard comments from the farmers and graziers at the Merriwa meeting last night (on radio) and as a rural resident that traverses 50km gravel rd daily (since 1983) major complaint by myself and the local community is the lack of accountability by road's contractors. Continually, our road is repaired, very poor workmanship and expertise and the work doesn't stand up to the elements and returns to a vehicle damaging poor state very quickly. How hard can it be to check the work these people do? I bet they got paid y our rates ! Yes, the people who live there do know a good job from a bad one, why not consult with them on this issue? We see good roads turned into horrific by poor operators that obviously don't know their profession or just don't care.	View

10545752	I am a resident of the former Murrumbidgee Shire. We the ratepayers of this former shire were strongly opposed to amalgamation. The opposition of the day, now government warned us of the very issue that we are now faced with. The new council now has a far greater area to service with a much reduced workforce and having to stretch the dollar further. Whilst the dollar value of the percentage variations you mention in the online survey are not unrealistic I don't believe we as ratepayers and taxpayers should have to continually prop up the previous governments incompetence. Will this guarantee better roads and bridges? I would suggest not, particularly in one financial year. So in reply to the question of whether council should apply for a special rate increase it depends on what the council has in mind and what we get for our money. The council needs to better communicate this. I say go and find Tony Kelly and extract it from him!	View
10590718	I attended the special rate variation meeting in Merriwa on Thursday 9/2/2012. I was extremely disappointed to find that the meeting was held without sufficient space for the people attending. We could only stand in the foyer of the room - therefore we were not able to see the speakers properly or to view the screen. I find this amazing to think that council would consider this acceptable. The definition of a forum is - an assembly, meeting place etc. for the discussion of questions of public interest. The lack of consideration on the councils part made participating in this forum unacceptable to members of the public, this is unacceptable in my opinion.	View
10590768	Why is the general public not able to read the comments that others have left on this page?	View
10593365	RE:SPECIAL RATE VARIATION TO IPART. We are in favour of this special rate variation. The rural roads in Merriwa district are in dire need of extra funding so they remain safe and trafficable in all conditions. We understand this comes at a cost. We also understand that the minimum rate increases applied by UHSC in the past have been unsustainable and that Council needs to "catch-up". It is unreasonable to think we can get something for nothing. We believe that UHSC is relatively efficient and well managed and that there are few savings to be made here. We are situated in the township of Merriwa and do not frequent the rural roads extensively but we understand the need for their improvement and would pay accordingly. Conditional on the special variation being wholly applied to rural road and that Merriwa district gets a fair proportional share we support your application for this special rate variation.	View
10602443	I would like to see the council become more proactive rather than be reactive. I travel a number of roads in the Shire in my job and in recreations so I see a large cross section of roads. I am of the opinion that early maintenance on some of the roads would stop them getting into the bad state they are now in. I am still waiting for work that was promised to be done. Also with regard to areas where trucks can and do stop is that the council looks at providing areas for this activity. An area could be set aside in Parkville close to exiting tioletts away from homes and another area that could be developed is at Halcomb Hill near the old railway overpass. This could be developed into a very nice area not only for truck but the travelling public due to existing access and the reopening to the old bridge to allow traffic travel north to exit. I would like the council get the basic infrastructure up to speed first then progress from there	View
10605995	I am totally against any increase, scone rates are already extremely high.	View
10612850	The proposed Rates increase, if successful, would pose a disproportionate burden on rural property rate payers and so cannot be supported. The rural road network has been allowed to deteriorate over 20 or more years by lack of Council's will to address the problem, combined with lack of competent management both in the budget area and in the engineering area. The "sudden" realisation of this is at least a positive, but to ask rate payers to correct the situation with such a savage increase is, to say the least, grossly unfair. What guarantee is there that all the increase would go towards road work if, unfortunately, the increase was to be approved? A period of 2 or 3 years of budget savings, that were put exclusively to road maintenance, prior to any rates increase application, would demonstrate the Council's ability and desire to truly assist rate payers fairly. There is no doubt the Scone rural road network is in a disgraceful state and compares badly with surrounding Shires, as it has done for many, many years; our past rates have not been used efficiently or directed to that area, so asking us to approve Council taking more from us to correct the situation now is most disturbing and I must object to the proposal. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the debate. 13-2-2012.	View
10613278	I am a former shire employee. I wish to make comment on the grader crews productivity. I feel that if this productivity could be improved and the need for a rate variation could be offset. It is obvious that some grader operators/crews cover more ground per day than others. Why not monitor each crews production and gauge those that are not productive by reaching targets and weed them out. Is there any record of production rate for these crews. Most truck drivers only do one load of gravel after lunch as this is directed by some grader operators. Crews often have half hour smokes and 1 hour lunch breaks in which they leave there machinery running to get the hours on the metre. This is why I got out, as this behaviour is not ethical if you have been brought up to do a good days work for a good days pay. They need to be pulled into gear and this needs to come from the top. Stop dodging it.	View
10615689	We support a one off rate variation as specified by the general manager of Upper Hunter Shire. The Upper Hunter Shire does have special circumstances, exacerbated by the unusual seasonal conditions over the last 5 years. Whilst it is acknowledged there have been several old wooden and collapsed bridges replaced, and extensions of sealed roads, there is an urgent need for existing gravel roads to be re sheeted and there needs to be extensive re sealing/side sealing of council's existing bitumen road network. Failure to find funding for this type of work ASAP will lead to an ever increasing rise in road surface failures leading to greater cost in years to come. Thankyou for the opportunity to comment.	View
10615906	These comments will be sent to IPART and The Scone Advocate separately. The comments are predicated on the belief that no tax or levy should be granted 'in perpetuity' and certainly not without rigorous built-in accountability. Should the Upper Hunter Shire Council be granted the rate variation, then a process of accountability must be established, possibly along these lines: 1. A committee of (mainly) ratepayers independent of Council should examine, at least twice yearly, the progress and costs of Council against their own predetermined works program and budgets. 2. The original rate variation (if granted) should be for a maximum of three years, subject to satisfactory progress being recorded by the independent committee. 3. Should Council be found unable to perform within their own parameters, then IPART or relevant government agency should take appropriate action to ensure that Council is administered for the benefit of ratepayers. At the recent public meetings, Council made much of its 'governance and transparency'. I suspect that Council might have had a more positive affect on ratepayers if the proposed special rate variation had been accompanied by a system of accountability and transparency along these lines. Kind regards	View

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