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Submission: Bland Shire Council wishes to lodge a strong objection to the proposed increase in local government election costs for the 2020 local government general elections, as proposed in the IPART Report.

The recommendation from IPART to impose a 62% increase appears to be in direction contradiction to the Terms of Reference which is 'The costing methodology is required to minimise the financial burden on councils and ratepayers...'.

It appears that the costing methodology now being promoted by IPART is totally inconsistent with these terms of reference.

Council is of the opinion that it is unreasonable to adopt a methodology that results in higher costs for small rural councils compared to metropolitan councils. It is noted that election costs are not included in the Local Government Cost Index that IPART refers to each year to determine the rate pegging limit.

Council can see no justification in IPART recommending a 62% increase in costs when it is IPART that has set the rate pegging limit at 2.7%.

The proposed increase in election costs added to the recent Emergency Services Levy increase will totally absorb this council's rate increase of 2.7%.

Metropolitan councils have a much greater capacity to generate own source revenue outside the rate peg unlike the smaller rural councils such as Bland.

Council accepts that there will be some increase in the election costs but would like IPART to consider utilising the Local Government Cost Index when determining this increase and to also take into consideration the capacity of the smaller rural councils to absorb such increases.