



19 July 2019

Dr Paul Paterson, Chair
Local Government Election Cost Review
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

Dear Dr Paterson

Submission on Review of Local Government Election Costs Draft Report

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal's (IPART) draft report on the Review of Local Government Election Costs.

Council views with great concern the IPART's recommendation that councils should pay a larger share of the costs of providing local government elections compared to what they have in the past, and what the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC) has proposed for the 2020 local government election.

While Council agrees with IPART's summation that there needs to be more competition in the supply of election services, we disagree that allocating a larger proportion of the election costs to local government is necessary to achieve this outcome.

The recommendations in IPART's draft report result in an increase to council election bills of around 62% compared to the 2016-17 local government elections, and around 24% compared to what the NSWEC proposed.

For Central Coast Council this results in the local government election costs increasing from the 2017 amount of \$1.599 million to \$2.617 million for the September 2020 local government elections, which represents an increase of 64% for Council.

This proposed change represents an unacceptable increase in cost and represents cost shifting from state to local government that is detrimental to the Central Coast community.

It is understood that part of IPART's intent for the increase is to ensure that councils, rather than NSW taxpayers, pay for election services. This neglects to consider that all ratepayers of NSW councils are, in fact, NSW tax payers. However not all NSW tax payers are ratepayers of



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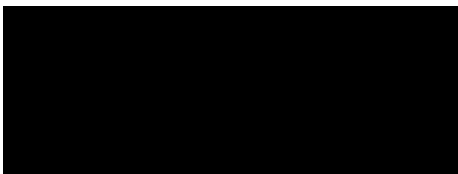
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NSW councils, which results in cost shifting to the detriment of all NSW residents, to allow the NSW State Government to keep more of the taxes generated from both ratepayers and those businesses outside NSW who pay NSW taxes.

IPART also fails to address in its recommendations the income that the NSW State Government receives from "Failure to Vote" fines received after the election has been conducted. If, as the IPART draft report recommends, councils pay a larger share of the efficient costs of providing local government elections, surely councils should be entitled to some, if not all, of the revenue generated from those fines.

The recommendations made by IPART in its draft report will have a big impact on council budgets and Central Coast Council urges IPART to take this impact into consideration when it releases its final report on Local Government Election Costs.

Yours sincerely,



Evan Hutchings
Director Governance

