



Greater
Hume
Council

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Local Government Election Cost Review
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
P.O. K 35
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

Dear Sir/Madam

Review of local government election costs

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the review of local government election costs and Council provides the following comments.

1. Council strongly disagrees with IPARTS assertion that the increases are relatively modest and does not take into consideration the cumulative impacts of State Government charges in Audit fees, Emergency Services Levy and now potentially Election costs.
2. Council has no confidence in IPART's ability to accurately reflect the increased cost to local government in the Local Government Cost Index when this year IPART allowed for a 2% increase in ESL charges when the actual increase to local government Councils in the Riverina JO area ranged from 23% to 28%.
3. Recommending a costing methodology that increases costs to Councils by an average of 62% is inconsistent with the Review's Terms of Reference.

(Terms of Reference: IPART report page 72 – The Purpose of IPARTs review is to ensure a robust methodology for determining costs is applied, in order to minimise the financial burden on councils and ratepayers and ensure local government elections are conducted efficiently and cost effectively)

4. The timing of the Review is such that it will not allow additional entrants to enter the market in time for the 2020 elections meaning that if the State Government was of a mind to accept IPARTs recommendations then a significant increase in cost will materialise without any likely improvement in service delivery.

Council must make a decision on the conduct of the administration of their September 2020 elections by 1 October 2019. Clearly this is not sufficient time for Councils' to realistically consider options for the conduct of the 2020 elections other than the NSW Electoral Commission.

5. In view of the comments above if the State Government accepts the IPART recommendations then they should not come into effect until the 2024 elections to enable new entrants to enter the market.

6. Council is very sceptical that the recommendations will lead to increased competition for elector services in rural areas leaving Councils with increased costs without any likely improvements in service delivery.

Should you have any further queries in relation to this matter please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours faithfully



Steven Pinnuck
General Manager
GREATER HUME COUNCIL

18 July 2019

Our Ref: SP