

# Proposed Special Rate Variation

## Short EHQ submissions

## EHQ short submissions

In a time when wages are stagnant and the cost of living for things like electricity and gas are rising phenomenally it is so wrong for Port Stephens Council to propose this level of rate rise. I live in Medowie and you spend as little as possible maintaining it. The roads are terrible and potholed, minimal street lighting, hardly any footpaths and no parks shame on you Port Stephens Council for even considering this

**DO NOT impose a Special Rate Variation.**

I am writing in firm opposition to the proposed rate rises in the stephens council area. I choose the peg increase of 19%. The works are not in the best interest of the council area occupants and are not affordable for the majority of occupants. I am in Medowie, paying 1600 a year and we dont even have footpaths. The proposed changes mean we will be paying 3000 a year for a bbq facility? We already have a bbq! We have potholes which need fixing first. If business benefits from the works they should pay. This is to the benefit of people outside of our electorate- Sydney siders on holidays. Until infrastructure is improved this should not even be a consideration. A 55% to 88% increase is ludicrous.

Raymond Terrace is mostly a low income area. Wages are NOT increasing, in our case, at all. I don't have a lot of faith that extra money into Council's coffers will necessarily equate to better facilities in Raymond Terrace when the focus always seems to be on Nelson Bay and surrounds. Also, I do not support extra money being spent on sporting complexes and events, which I think Mayor Palmer is keen to do. In short, I don't see a lot of value for money from our current rates, let alone an increase.

I do not support a 55% or higher rate increase at all. Our family struggles with rates as it is. I do not see how the council can justify such a large increase when they cannot complete works with the finding they have. They wasted 300,000 on a croquet court that I have not seen one person use since it was completed. Boomerang park playground is a joke with no suitable equipment for younger children. They misuse the funds they have and if the want to increase their budget maybe they should look at saving money elsewhere like on their fleet vehicles!

Please please please reconsider this rate rise. The cost of living is already out of control. With all the new buildings in Potters Lane and Henning Road, you are surely getting more than adequate funding. Think of people who cannot even afford the run heating during the winter. How do you expect them to pay for this rate rise?

To put it bluntly the SRV council is proposing seems, greedy, over the top and out of touch with the living situation for people in the area.

We live in a time of 0 wage growth, high mortgage stress and ever inflating prices and a massive increase in rates will out a lot of strain on people already struggling. If this rate variation goes through , it may be the difference of me having to sell up my house as I am already under mortgage stress

**Vote Option 1 - Maintain!**

Firstly council announced a 50% rate reduction for those affected in the red zone and then \$2.70 for psc rate residents to cover the cost. Now you are proposing 4 options, option 1 to maintain as is and other 3 between 55 - 77%! This means residents rates would be a minimum of \$800 extra a quarter, over \$2000 a year!! It's nothing but thievery!!! How about you cancel all the end of year bonuses you give your staff, I'm sure you will then be able to get the money!

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People find it hard enough to survive now. So why would you want to smash us with a stupid rate hike. No one here can afford that long term. Not around they have to when wages are stagnant.
A rate rise is fair enough, but not an increase of 55% minimum that's just ridiculous
We live in seaside estate fern bay. You do absolutely nothing in our area so we are of course opposed to any rate increase. Repeat absolutely nothing
Nothing gets done in Fern Bay area except garbage services. Therefore why would we support a rate rise when our suburb receives nothing at all.
I am a rate payer in Nelson Bay. I am opposed to the Special Rate Variation. I do not support it. Please add this objection to your survey.
I totally object to this proposed special rate variation. Port Stephens residents generally are not affluent. This could create much hardship. Surely Council can work it out. Totally shameful. Put a tax on the salt trucks using Nelson Bay Rd, charge the tourist buses coming for whale watching. Don't do this!
I am opposed to any rate rise above the rate pegging. My household is currently just getting by. We cannot afford to pay extra money just so the council can make town centres fancier. I am happy for the council to spend money on essential infrastructure and amenities.
I do not support this. You have always claimed how efficient and responsible you have been, how much good shape we are in. Why are you trying to screw us for more money?
Why don't I trust your proposals, you and our local member, continue to let us down, and fail to deliver on previous promises, why will this be any different, so disappointing.
I am against the proposal of a SRV. I pay \$50/fn already as a pensioner. I cannot afford an increase in my rates. Plus there are really no improvements being made to benefit my family or myself. Perhaps the council shouldn't have spent money on a round-a-bout in LTP that wasn't required. All because people cannot obey road rules. Also \$90k for a toilet is a bit over the top. No special rate rise please.
Anything other than the first option will increase the already considerable financial pressure on already stretched family budgets. For those with pegged salary increases at 2.5% the other options are two, three or more than the increase in salaries. The compound on the increase each year also means it equates to much more than the percentage stated. For many in the community who are retirees or again with families, already having to travel for employment the proposed increases in options 2 onwards are not realistic. Service provision in Port Stephens is viable on Option 1 and if the most recently elected Mayor and Councillors wish to ensure that they meet community expectations, than that includes not being financial pressured by exorbitant and unwarranted rate increases well above inflation. If however you wish to make Port Stephens only for the affluent who may no longer be tax payers working for a living than this is not acceptable for residents with a long history and connection with community in PS. Mayor I voted for you to ensure that Port Stephens embraced all citizens not to discard those who would be forced to leave the area as a result of a ridiculous rate increase that is not reported factually again when you consider the compound on the actual cost to the rate payer - some if not many will not have considered that 8% of let's say \$100 becomes 8% of \$108 the next year and so. Please consider all residents and not

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just the wealthy or even those on higher incomes. My husband and I work full time and this would leave us considerably worse financially and possibly within other option than to sell and move away from Port Stephens even though our whole family is involved is so many aspects of community life. Think about it Port Stephens Council before you move to accept any other increase other than that of inflation which is what wages increases are kept to.

New over 55's development at Anna Bay boasts that residents will pay no council rates. Surely these people will be using our roads, our library, our parks, our services etc. Before any increase is brought in, I would like it to be equitable. As the average rates are around \$1000, I am sure the landholder of this estate is paying nowhere near \$230,000. (229 permanent residences . If communities such as this paid their fair share it would lessen the burden on the average homeowner who is in fact subsidising a developer. Please look at this loss of income for council as there are more than one of these over 55 developments planned.

Councillors only care about being re-elected and will waste money to ensure this. Council can't even follow their own LEP and DCP or make evidence based decisions. You rely on emotive appeals rather than facts and figures. There is a culture of you scratch my back and i'll scratch yours. These people are infallible and there is absolutely no way I want them in charge of a larger budget than that which they already misuse. If you care about the community don't send us broke. We literally would have to move, sell our house, because we are just surviving as it is. We could not afford such a significant rate rise - it is un-called for. Wages aren't going to rise to support this and you will cut out the small business opportunities in this community. People will cut back on lawn mowing, ironing, cleaning and odd jobs which many of our community live off. Create a mass of jobs accessible to the community and maybe we can do this but if we don't have the money now we won't be able to pay you more in the future.

I oppose any rate increase. Council needs to prioritise projects and manage finances. i don't believe Nelson Bay town centre is a priority. Tourists flock here many returning because they enjoy the natural beauty and coastal feel. The sports complex is not a priority either. Update the existing facilities, if needed. Cost of living is climbing but wages and pensions are not.

The council should think again if they think we can afford a rise of 8.5%. I walk my dogs every day around Lemon Tree Passage and take note of the waste of time and money that this council seems to happy with. Ryan Palmer should get in his car and spend a week driving around and make spot checks on the poor work ethics of some council staff. It would seem half a job is good enough. Stop the waste of rate payers money please.

Let the federal government carry the can for their own problems. We the rate payers have had a gutful of the grand standing councillors that like feeding their ego by hitting the shire rate payers to offset the rates of the poor unfortunate people that live in direct area of PFAS. Spend your ratepayers money by taking the federal government to Supreme Court of Australia.  
cheers 44 years of paying rates in port Stephens.

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We are rate payer of 3 local properties in Port Stephens and are opposed to further increases outside of regulated set amount. Rate values are high compared to other areas across NSW and further increases would impact adversely to a majority on local retired residence. As the town begins to attract more visitors, the local rate payers are footing the bill without any tangible value to them. Port Stephens is quickly becoming very unaffordable for most people, noting annual waste management charges have gone up by some 9%, why? Control your expenses like most of society rather than take the easy road and tax people more. Thank you

Rates should not be increased above the pegged maximum. Pensioners can't get extra funding for their living costs and most workers are struggling too! If council can't afford to build edifices to their egos, such as sports centres etc, then it should concentrate on basics like fixing roads and maintaining existing infrastructure. Maybe even remember the "forgotten" areas such as Karuah, Swan Bay and anywhere isolated from the tourist strip.

-You do not have the right to do this. Your track record is terrible, you need to become far more credible and trustworthy before this is considered.  
-This sounds like "economic revitalisation". This means you want to give people's money to businesses to stimulate more business. Trickle-down economics have been proven not to work time and time again.  
-The Fern bay Hall development was a total waste of money. See point 1 above.  
-There are a lot of pensioners and people on low-income in the council area. this rate rise will make them worse off financially. Unacceptable. Perhaps you should apply the rate rise to properties worth in excess of 1 million dollars.  
- We do not want to become a city. I chose to move to the area because of the small town feel. Tourists love the area because of it's small town feel. Don't mess it up with more infrastructure. Small is good.  
Personally, I like small government, that just shuts up and does it's job- emptying bins and keeping roads maintained. Don't get fancy.  
- Shouldn't an increase in tourists benefit the residents? The added traffic and people in the tourist season is terrible. Maybe you need to compensate residents in tourists areas. Yes, you should lower rates for some people.  
I will be watching who votes what...

Before committing to any rate increase I would like to see some further investment into my own area which receives NO funding for improvement and has endured this for the entire 18 years I have lived in this street at Glen Oak. We may be the last Suburb in the Shire but we need not wait for all others to gain improvements before we gain so much as a Park.

I believe the area adjacent to the Williams River along the bank could be set aside and improved for public amenity. The area could include a small wharf and off street parking, by realignment of Clarence Town Road Utilising the existing road as access and raising the new section to avoid constant flooding.

The idea of paying more to my local council has merit provided the following conditions are met. All moneys received by council to be retained by council for its own use. No skimming of funds by the state gov from council rates and charges? All moneys received from rates to be used for "utility purposes", such as roads, water/sewage waste services, public amenities, halls, care of the less affluent or disadvantaged. Once the basic needs of community are well met, then surplus may be utilised for nice items, such as skate parks, walking paths, sports fields, and last of all tourist lures.

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I am completely against any rate rise above the rate peg, families are doing it tough now, just putting food on the table is a struggle, with meat prices going through the roof, worst to come with the drought, there are a lot of units in port stephens, we are already copping increased strata levies, i believe council should hold off until things improve.

I wish to disagree with a SRV. Previous councils have worked hard to keep rates low, still provide services and live within their means. A SRV will be applied now and never removed, so it is not for 7 years, just like the 3x3 fuel tax of the 80's is still built into fuel prices. I don't wish to fund improvements for business. Business can do that. Electricity and fuel prices are through the roof, keep rates as they are and budget for your improvements. A community needs sustainability not continuous growth at rate payers expense so business and visitors can profit. None of the proposed improvements will be utilised by me or my family, however if council proposed a one off levee of say \$100-\$150 per year on my rates for 5 years and then the levee was removed, I would consider that to get your improvements underway. The removal of said levee would have to be guaranteed though.

As retirees we **STRONGLY OBJECT** to ANY Special Rate Variations. We have to live within our means and so should Council. We can't ask for an increase in our finances - nor should Council. It is just a "sales gimmick " to offer variable increases as people invariably select the better of the evils. Council is a CON !!

With respect to increasing council rates beyond that which is recommended to keep pace with inflation keep in mind that a good number of local residents are self funded retirees, not entitled to pensioner discounts, have no way to offset increases in living expenses, and may even have less available funds after the next general election (given that your proposal is for 7 years)

I strongly oppose the proposed rate variation. It's no justification to say that Port Stephens ratepayers pay one of the lowest rates, or is lower than here or there. That is NO justification for making an attempt to get your hands in ratepayers pockets to ostensibly 'stimulate the economy, drive business growth and attract visitors". Council seems to be adopting the role of developer and at the expense of the poor old ratepayer. Electricity prices have surged, petrol prices, insurances,, everything has gone up by significant amounts leaving the average ratepayer with less disposable income every week. To add another impost on to people just so council can leverage more funding from government is reprehensible. I don't like the general public being viewed as cash cows there to be milked by all levels of government to satisfy their every whim,,, we ratepayers need to live within our means. There are plenty of people who would like lots of things but just can't afford them,, and council needs to start thinking the same way. If the rate rise goes ahead, i will be remembering who it was that voted to cost me and my family unjustly for something that WE DIDN'T WANT. Trust me

Rates are far too high as they are. Pensioners can no longer afford the rates to stay in their homes that they struggled to pay off their entire life. Rate increases suggested are not commensurate with pensioner incomes, or CPI and standard of living indexes. Such rate increases burden low income earners and middle class families. Council proposals represent the criminal extraction of money from a constituency that cannot afford it.

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How about just using the money council already collects from rate payers more efficiently and effectively. Look around for better prices-for everything, don't just accept ridiculous tenders for works or products needed....be thrifty. Get proper quotes for jobs and shop around, if no prices are at least reasonable then save the money and try again later. Maybe even put the money saved into employing a few more staff that can then do the jobs needing to be done, ie builders, tradesmen that could be on councils full time staff. Be great if you could stop pandering to the old people in Nelson bay too. There are other parts of the LGA that need attention for safety's sake.....way more important than some old duck complaining about something that's a bit ugly their street. You can't please everyone. Council can't afford everything and I can't afford a 55-75% rate rise over 7 years. I'm paying \$440 a quarter as it is. Stick to the things that affect community safety.

I do not agree with a rate increase...I find it hard to pay the rates as it is...we are pensioners.

While it is appropriate for council to provide services which at present are satisfactory, a significant increase would prove to be a hardship. The increases should be based on property valuation. Therefore properties in the high end of the market would net council more income.

Council could also establish a fee based parking area for all the boats, trailers& caravans parked around all of the suburbs on street frontages & more often on nature strips. (Which should be a priority)

It would be unfortunate if council raised the rates to fund councillors wages & over staffing of administrative officers. This is not a criticism as all dealings with staff at the council have been exemplary.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

We the undersigned, .... are completely against this proposal. We are happy with the village atmosphere we have here. This was one of the reasons that we moved here 4 years ago. If you are seeking extra finance for your sports stadiums etc, suggest you do a time and motion study of your council workers and management. Thanking you.

The council has not been competent in their building of infrastructure up til now. the main street gum trees, the boat ramp, Mustons Road walkway, community hall building, road pot holes. We need to know that for once the selected projects will be completed to a high standard.

SRV is for a collection ("wish list") of one-off and ongoing activities yet it looks like the increase in rates is retained in the rate base, without any real justification. The compounding effect is a significant and permanent increase in rates but nothing on the long list of activities will "transform" my lifestyle. Consequently, I do not support a SRV.

As retirees on fixed incomes our existing rates at \$4000 need to be considered by Council. There are a large number of people like us. Percentage increases are unfair. If there is to be an increase it would be fairer to be a flat amount for residential so we all pay equally not pay according to our land valuations.

Only 2-3 years ago you said we don't need to merge. We can stand alone. We ARE FIT FOR THE FUTURE. Now we find out you want more money. Completely opposed to the SRV.

If I want more I make cut backs here and there. I don't go asking my customers to pay more. If only you could hear your community.

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This levy is being applied because council is not efficient with their revenue. It is a travesty that council decide to penalise their ratepayers with an extra charge because they cannot find the money elsewhere in their budget. After all what are the rates for in the first place. We would rather not have the extra infrastructures if we have to pay extra rates for them. Reduce the size of your bureaucracy and find the money there. This is the thin edge of the wedge if we allow it.

I noticed that the only 4 options are increase to rates to fund works, you cant 'tax' your way to prosperity, another option would be to 'cut costs' along with a marginal increase in rates, that way everyone gives and takes a little, for example, reduction in councillors and mayoral rates of pay or freeze increase, this is a viable option because if council 'needs' to raise rates to conduct works, then the council isnt properly managing their financials so councillors and mayor arent doing their jobs effectively, sell of 'unused' or 'unnecessary' assets, e.g excess council vehicles (council employees, councillors etc) can utilise their own vehicles because they can claim work related travel expenses as part of the federal tax system, freeing up local rate funds for local works, there are far too many vehicles used by council that could be 'sold down' or reduction in leasing vehicles. Consider land sales to boost council capital, this would allow for more development = more housing = more affordability, council doesnt have a revenue problem, they have a 'revenue expenditure management problem, i.e pot hole repairs, if you fixed a pothole properly first time (instead of patching repeatedly) then an upfront expenditure of repair is offset by repeated bitumen costs, travel, fuel, wages, vehicles if a pothole is repeatedly 'patched' instead of repaired, costs upfront more but saves on above mentioned over time costing less to council

Showing residents council is willing to restructure and cut costs, along with reasonable rate increases is much better than giving '4' increased rates options, council wastes far too much revenue in poor planning, poor management, poor planning, this isnt residents fault, council are responsible, so dont punish residents for lack of planning/management

I would love to know how the new government defines the council as sustainable. Assessments are sold and it goes into the coffers but not back to the people who pay the rates and taxes, nor to the council who like the majority of Australians now try to survive. Instead of increasing rates and especially such massive percentages how about a demand from our councils and citizens to the government to start putting back into the people they are robbing? Neither council nor our community should be put into poverty as the government takes the money. People won't be able to afford to pay the rates. Is this going to increase out property values by 77%? I'm not disgusted with council, I'm disgusted with the government, but both council and government have a responsibility to provide adequate finances so our region isn't impoverished. In short, now and federal governments stop stealing from the people who pay your wages and start contributing adequate funding

There is a large leap from Option One Maintain 2.5% to Option Two 6.5%. Straight up Council is attempting to more than double our current rates. I do not accept such a large leap. This is way above CPI.

At consultation meeting the facilitator referred to Pensioners on fixed incomes being only a small percentage of rate payers that would be hard hit by the increases. But fail to recognise, that whilst I am not a pensioner, I am a low income earner. We are a family with 2 school age children, my husband has a casual 3

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day/week job in retail and I have a part-time job as a school assistant. Between us we earn less than \$60,000 per year. Our wages are not going to increase comensurately to councils proposed increase.

The facilitator also referred to the fact that PS residents are good at paying their rates, ie the number in default is low. I am not in default because the current rates are affordable. That is not a reason to increase my rates and to put me in a position where I am more likely to fail.

The facilitator made comparisons to other local councils, such as Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Maitland. But I chose to live here! When I was in a position to buy a home I looked at Newcastle and Maitland. Those big centres did not appeal to me. I chose Lemon Tree Passage because it is a quiet and quaint little town and it is affordable. I knew at the time of purchase that there was not much in the way of facilities, and that was part of the appeal.

In the time I have lived here I have seen lots of new residential developments. You don't have to be good at maths to calculate that with each new residence the council has the benefit of another rate payer. So Council income from rates due to new housing is on the increase.

I request IPART to investigate a rumour that one of the reasons for the increase is to make up the loss incurred by re-zonning residences in the red-zone. There is no mention of this in the information booklet. I support the re-zonning to provide relief to those residences, but I do not support a rate increase for the purpose of making up the loss. The Council should be seeking compensation from Fed Govt for losses incurred as a result of Williamstown RAAF negligence.

With respect to "community consultation", this to me was a farce. The meeting I attended was held at 4pm. I had to leave my job early to get to this meeting. I imagine that many people were not able to attend due to the time it was held.

I was under the impression that "consultation" meant feedback. But at the meeting I asked "will anything I say at this meeting hold weight?" to which the answer was "no". It was apparant that the purpose of the meeting was merely for the council to tick a box for IPART. And, whilst the information booklet uses the language "council is considering an application to IPART", the facilitator at the meeting said, "the decision has been made, Council is going ahead with the application".

Therefore the booklet is misleading, there is no "consideraton" of what the rate payers have to say; the application will go ahead, and all that we can do now is make a written submission.

We are now at a disadvantage because unlike Council Elections where residents are compelled to vote, there is no compulsion for residents to make a written submission. It's hard enough to get people to a polling booth let alone go to the trouble of making a written submission. So this to me also adds to the unfairness of Council's decision to make this application to IPART. This was not an election issue and it should have been.

I am a self funded retiree & a widow, who gets a pension as my source of income, which has gone up 1.9%. I do not support any increase in the rates from the normal increase of 2.5%. All other options are not acceptable. I am happy with the facilities in this area. I came to live here for the older feel of the area & not the facilities which you are proposing. By updating our facilities were are attracting more people to the area. Which I do not want. The Councils poor decision to let 3 relocatable home villages be built where none of the residents pay rates is outrageous. Why are we upgrading our facilities for some snobby Sydney siders. Who want the best of facilities? i am happy with what we have & I am not willing to

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pay for facilities from my rates , which I deem to be unnecessary.. When I voted for this Council, I certainly did not mean for them to put the rates up so much that I could not afford to live here on my pension. Your Proposals are disgraceful & not in keeping with area. I would ask that IPART reject Port Stephens's Councils request for any sort of Special Variation application, as I will find it hard to pay my rates & may fall behind in the payment, which will cause me unnecessary stress & hardship, as I am a widower. I submit that the Mayor, has gone a bit power crazy & trying to make Port Stephens a mecca for his developer mates. This will get rid of the community spirit we have here & make this another Gold Coast with traffic congestion & high rises. So no Special Rate Variation at all, it is wrong at all levels.

It was very disappointing and embarrassing that the information meeting became so heated. I think however it shows the frustration of the Tilligerry Peninsula that there is an inequity of rate benefits in the shire. Councillor Tucker is right. We feel over the years we have paid to support the Nelson Bay community. 36 million dollars has been allocated for town revitalisation and Tanilba Bay not even mentioned has bigger retail centre than Seaham or even Lemon Tree Passage. Overlooked again. Have many of the councillors even driven around here? We also have minimal pathways, severe foreshore erosion, a main road Ave of the Allies in an appalling state, and we don't even have kerb and guttering in our street which means my elderly pensioner neighbour has water flooding the rented property when it rains. So options 2, 3 and 4 are hard to support for value for money. Places like Seaham and Karuah receiving more or equivalent is not fair. All we ask is that the rates we all pay is shared proportionally to population. Thank you.

Rates should not be increased, as we as tax payers have enough to pay or in general let alone another increase for ya owning our own home feels like we get punished for working hard to own a home. It is NOT right at all everything goes up but not wages. Give us a break & breathing space. LEAVE THEM THE WAY THEY ARE...!!

I'm totally against any rate rise the people here can't afford it we don't need all these improvements you never mentioned this when you were running for election if you do this look for another job as you will need one come next election

I am a resident in Mallabula, the money we pay in rates should be used in this area like Lemon Tree Passage, Mallabula, Tanilba Bay the money which is collected here should be used to fix things here and not in Nelson Bay, Port Stephens Council doesn't care about Lemon Tree Mallabula or Tanilba Bay they just want our Money to beautify Nelson Bay and Shoal Bay, the state of Lemon Tree Passage Road is shocking especially when you drive up the Main Road in Tanilba Bay, is terrifying the roundabout should of been done at the coles at it is dangerous turning from the intersection going into the entrance of coles the coles car park, also there is drainage problems in Mallabula especially in Tanilba rd and the parkway south areas it so muddy all the time there is no proper drainage anywhere for those roads, and there are pot holes everywhere also there is no proper play areas for kids in Mallabula like In Tanilba Bay, I will vote again if work is done to fox's thing here seems to me the council in it for themselves

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<p>Before trying to raise residents rates all Australian Councils should do the following:</p> <p>Remove all wages and allowances for all elected Councillors (Community Voluntary positions only)</p> <p>Have all Heads of Departments as well as CEO employed on a performance based minimum wage structure</p> <p>Cease all travel entitlements for any staff</p> <p>Cease all 'Sister Cities' policies</p> <p>Cease all 'donations' to any organisation that is not health benefit to their communities</p> <p>Doing the above will allow Council to get back to basics of providing to their communities the services they were set up in the first place to do.</p>
<p>My wife and I deplore the srvc I can't stress hard enough how much financial stress even a 6.5% increase would cause us. I will encourage as many people as possible to also reject the srvc</p>
<p><b>RATE RISE OUTRAGEOUS</b></p> <p>Port Stephens Council (PSC) has proposed increasing our rates by approximately 55%-75% from 2019 over 7 years!</p> <p>Under the Council's SRV (Special Rate Variation) proposal, average residential rates would gradually rise to by about \$580 to \$807 per year over the seven year period. Options are for either a 6.5%, 7.5% or 8.5% per annum increase each and every year for the next 7 years.</p> <p>Have any of our local Councillors any idea of what your average battler is trying to deal with in terms of cost of living expenses? Thanks to their State and Federal counterparts, people are still trying to cope with the enormous increases in power prices of the last few years. Mortgage interest rates are likely to increase over the next few years, as well.</p> <p>It would seem that PSC rates are lower than surrounding Councils and so Council feels it would be a good idea for PSC to catch up! If Council had some imagination it would enhance the program of acquiring income-producing assets so as to gradually reduce the burden on ratepayers.</p> <p>Few residents of Port Stephens are in a position to be able to easily afford the proposed increased council rates. Council should do what residents have to do and live within their means.</p> <p>Most of the proposed projects (e.g. road sealing, public BBQ facilities and cycleways) should be doable by accessing Council's normal revenue sources.</p> <p>Unless Councillors are intent on electoral suicide, I would suggest they go back to the drawing board and devise a more creative solution, rather than relying on the easiest option.</p>
<p>Against the SRV struggling to pay power &amp; water, just managing to keep our heads above water, the increases proposed by council will be unsustainable for us. The true costs to us haven't been explained to us .What about the annual valuation increase based on the price of land ,10% per year for the last 20 years</p>
<p>It is apparent that rates in Port Stephens have dropped behind other comparable regions of NSW. It is also apparent that Council has a revenue problem that is constraining the provision of services and amenities below the level expected by the majority of the community.</p> <p>I am in favour of an increased rating level. I support the highest option proposed; Option four - transform.</p>

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Before I could support any increase in rates I would need to see some transparency about how expenditure is prioritised. For over 3 years I have been lobbying council to have a section of Bundabah St upgraded but keep getting informed that it is not on the forward planning list. OK, but when will it appear on this list. Surely there is some type of formulae, where long term problems such as this can come to the surface otherwise they will never be addressed.

I am a silent elector (of Port Stephens) for personal safety reasons and as such it is important that my details are protected.

This SRV Proposal doesn't take into account the people of Port Stephens and the tremendous burden this would place on them.

According to the Census, the median weekly income in Port Stephens is \$571, significantly lower than the NSW median of \$664. This alone illustrates how those in Port Stephens are less able to cope with a rate increase of any kind let alone a series of drastic rate increases. Also, 23% of the Port Stephens population are people aged over 65 who can least afford a rate increase, especially when the OECD states that one third of aged pensioners in Australia already live below the poverty line.

I went to the NSW Parliament to fight against rate increases and keep Port Stephens Council alive and at that time the council understood that residents shouldn't be burdened with such rate increases. Now it is our own council who is pressing for these increases and that is appalling. Recently you spent over \$130 000 on a skate park at Lakeside and about 4 children (usually the same ones) use it so that is the kind of extravagance we don't need.

Councillors really need to get out more in the community and understand the needs of the residents rather than focusing on the wishes of developers.

I am totally opposed to the SRV proposal and you should be ashamed for not declaring your desire for these rate increases BEFORE the council election. Hopefully common sense will prevail.

### NO SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

Council fees here are already higher than many Sydney councils. Council must work within its means, if you can't afford it you can't have it. Your FAQ sheet says "community has told us is important". A statement like this is spurious and unprofessional, who in the community, in what numbers, when was the "Community" the developers, the councillors wanting a "Fact finding" trip overseas. Provide detail, if you can, not motherhood statements.

### NO INCREASE IN RATES PERMANENT OR OTHERWISE

Don't change land rates. Our town is fine, we didn't want the recent changes to our roads, I don't want to pay for future unnecessary work I higher land rates.

I live in Karuah. Do any of you realise this great little town is still in Port Stephens?

Our roads are crap, our paths are uneven. Why would I want a rate rise when I know it wont be spent in my town. Get lost. Council should be renamed Nelson Bay council are that's where most of the money goes.

## EHQ short submissions

Karuah should not have to suffer the cost of a rate rise so the high end of towns in PS get the facilities. Karuah has always been forgotten by this council, the upgrade to our boat ramp is so dangerous, the Mustons road "fix" will be fatal also, all our roads lack maintenance, our local park is a backpacker/nomad campground, the potholes in Wattle street are so big they do damage. The derelict hotel is an eyesore, dumped cars at both entrances are still there months later.

I do not support the Special Rate Variation Proposal for the following reasons:

- o I chose to live in Lemon Tree Passage because of affordability. My fixed income will not increase to cover any the proposed SRV rises.
- o This is a new, untested council. We should have the opportunity to see how they perform on the money available before they ask for more.
- o The consultation process was timed so young parents or anyone with a job could not attend.
- o Option 4 would see the Tilligerry Peninsula paying higher rates than Newcastle - ridiculous, we have one bus, one main road, no trains, no ferry, no hospital but we would be expected to pay more than a community that has all these things

Port Stephens Council told us 2 years ago, when the merger was happening that there was no plans of a rate rise in the med to long term, I disagree with the rate increase with more rate payers in Port Stephens Council should its budget eg sell off the empty shops.

Why does PS have to catch up to other councils rates? Its based on property value so expect it to be different.

Community groups could obtain grants for some of the local projects. Try donations or other fundraising measures- lottery?

What happened to the money for LTP road upgrade-the work wasn't done as residents were promised it would be to Oyster Cove Rd- new work is failing already. Trust issue and waste.

Don't punish those that can't afford this hike- they will have to cut other things and it will be food, electricity, medical as very little else can be controlled. Current rates are approximately 10% of Newstart- what would the increase be. You want more crime and homelessness? I don't.

Offer options to decrease rates- eg smaller, cheaper waste bins- or charge even more for larger bins- user pays. My recycling takes about 3 months to fill. Red is mainly garden waste.

The pension rebate has been fixed for over 20 years! Will that change? It doesn't apply to Newstart.

Preserve the environment. I can't afford holidays of any kind so appreciate living in one of the world's beautiful places.

Yes I have read the documents. Why is a rate hike needed to pay for basics?

I am opposed to rate increases.

I like the P.S.S.C

I also admire some of the Councilors Being on the Disability pension, which I am very thank full for, I can't afford any more financial burden. Thank you for reading.

i do not support or agree with any rate rises in port stephens, as a future home owner in this area, it puts me off wanting to buy in this area. we already do not get proper basic roads etc maintenance and i believe any benefit from the rate increase will only go to the areas of port stephens that are "tourist hotspot" areas or large developments that will give you even more cash injection

## EHQ short submissions

I don't know where you are expecting pensioners etc to get the extra money to pay for your unrealistic wants, we struggle weekly already and I know there is no way in hell I can afford any extra money for your rates as they are very high even now. Please consider us, it is a real worry.

The rate increase was not part of the election promises. Has council checked their staffing levels? Have we checked each employees job? Does council intend to rebuild the car park in Donald St that has been empty for well over 3 years. Leave Nelson Bay as a village - no large buildings & keep to the building level. Playing fields do not need to be upgraded. Leave the rates where they are

I have read the information regarding the SRV and believe for the area to continue with growth for those generations behind us, it is imperative that there be a rate rise to assist in this.

In saying that, I am a local rate payer with a young family. Both my husband and I work (him full time and me part time) and know the constraints that comes with these sort of increases; perhaps the kids after school sports, an outing to a local cafe or even cutting back on extracurricular activities.

If you do implement the changes, I think it would be beneficial to also implement pay by the week rates (similar to those that electricity companies offer called "Bill Smoothing") where the total rate amount is divided into a manageable weekly, fortnightly or monthly amount. Perhaps discounts for people who utilise this option could be put in place too.

While I am all for a rate rise to see the regions infrastructure to keep up with growth, I also think there needs to be a better alternative for collection of the fees, rather than that currently in place.

I oppose the councils proposed SRV. We are a low income family who have saved very hard to be able to afford our first home in the port Stephens area.

With the increasing costs of living, and stable wages we fear would no longer be able to afford to live in the port Stephens area.

We would be in favour of the PEG amount of 2.5%.

We understand that this would mean council would not be able to undertake special projects and maintenance, however this means my family can keep a roof over our heads, electricity on or food on the table.

Thank you

No to the rate rise, leave it at the capped rate. Manage your funds more efficiently. People can't afford this.

I voted No to any extra increases other than the 2.5% annually

I believe the council needs to look in-house and restructure I imagine there are roles that could be multitasked like most businesses do less wages to pay and the road gangs have not changed always one or two working and the rest propping up shovels

We have unemployment on the rise families are just making it through week to week none of our utilities are reducing in cost just another nail in the coffin your unfair proposed rate hike

Port Stephens Council you need to spend some money on the little projects never mind the big ones.

Tomaree Road at Shoal Bay needs to be fixed potholes and dips everywhere and the BUS accesses that street and NO

footpaths. People are getting older and are walking and exercising more they need

## EHQ short submissions

to feel safe, one side slopes up and one down it's an accident waiting to happen. We don't want new projects we want existing infrastructure updated. High rates we pay now should be fixing this NOTHING has been done for years.

I am unable to complete your long survey form as it wont allow my opinion or point of view. Like so many in our community, I am forced retiree by way of job redundancy in late life. I am therefore self funded by a super pension that fixed and not indexed fir increases. As I dont draw an Aust Gov pension, I am NOT entitled to any rate concessions. Please consider our circumstance in your decision making process.

Strongly object to the SRV proposal, rates are quite high enough. Perhaps finances need to be managed better.

We have been briefed on the above proposed levy increases for Port Stephens Council, and we thank you for the honest and open information documents and also all the community consultation.

However, after having witnessed our Council working and living within the minimum amount of levies we are forced to object to any increases over the CPI annual average, as they will be a burden on our retirement funds.

We are still aware that there are a Drainage Levy of 3% and also a Economic Development levy incorporated in our current rates and the fact that in past applications the NSW State Government have refused various levies, one such being the Tourism Levy. Council needs to work smarter and within its means.

We found the statements that we are among the lowest rated Council in the Hunter Valley and also that the average Valuer Generals' land valuation is \$244,000 both these statements are grossly misleading in the extreme.

Council has many land, property and Newcastle Airport assets that should be considered for sale or lease to keep our roads and services up to the best they can be.

Every time an annual community survey takes place the highest, number-one request is for improvements to our bone-shattering, disgusting road conditions, and yet we still have third-world road conditions in some areas.

If ever Council gets its act together by building better quality roads and teaches our road construction and maintenance staff the correct way to build and repair our roads with heavy patching, and proper pothole repairs, then they will last for decades.

After having viewed the proposed expenditure over the CPI we cannot see the need for better rubbish bins and beautification of shopping centres, or a cultural centre, better sporting and other ancillary services which Council should not be spending in excess, when our roads should be rated a much higher priority.

We already have some of the best comparable sporting facilities in New South Wales.

The current mayor is only concerned with business development. Having lived in the area and paid higher levels of rates due to the land value nature of the rates calculation for nearly 40yrs, our street has seen little attention. Now the mayor wants to increase the rate burden to develop tourist based enterprise and business. If the rate hike is to proceed, then those who benefit should shoulder most of the burden and not those who every year contribute a larger proportion of the rates. If councillors tightened their belts for the 5yrs (no increase in their

## EHQ short submissions

allowance) then one would feel the rate rise might have more merit than if they are free to fete themselves.

I strongly believe that council should operate within its current budget. Prioritize and make sacrifices as your constituents must. My husband and I are working hard to stretch his income while I am at home with our new baby. This means that in the lead up to her arrival, we planned our finances and limited our expenditure to cater for our change in circumstances. This is not a novel concept and one we would encourage council to adopt themselves.

With regards to the SRV. A letter the Council sent with my rates said the extra money would help Council source other complementary funding. I don't see how that is relevant unless the Council plans to spend the SRV on Administration costs. If most of the SRV is going to salaries then the only winner here will be the Council, not residents.

Plans to revitalise Nelson Bay via extra accommodation is a furphy unless Council does something to assist business eg longer trading hours for restaurants. My biggest concern as a resident is having no where to take visitors at night to eat except NB bowling club. Nelson Bay is a dead centre at night and that is not due to a lack of people but a lack of things to do eg night markets or entertainment or eateries. The same applies to Newcastle.

There should be no special rate variations, all major projects should be shelved until better times, lets get through the drought first, and don't forget electricity prices are hurting!

At this point in time I cannot support your application for a rate rise. The economy of this area is struggling to keep its head above water and needs a break to catch its breath. This drought will also have a long term effect and prices of most commodities will rise so let's maintain the small rise in rates and try a set some targets for each area and work towards a more settled and sustainable council and maintained what we have. In the future a more fairer distribution of upgrades needs to be put rather than chasing the tourist dollar then we are left to maintain these services. Give each rate payer a great service re, garbage, service our roads, maintain our library service provide and support the volunteers that give up so much time and energy to make sure things happen in their areas. And maybe in the future the time will be right.

Port Stephens is a great area with a mix of older retirees and younger families. Neither of these demographics have money to spare, and imposing higher rates on those who are already struggling financially is not acceptable. Council work for the ratepayers of Port Stephens and need to remember that. My pay didnt even go up by 2.5% last year so how am I and others supposed to fund additional rate increases on top of insurance, medical and power price increases? Council should be looking after our best interests, not trying to build legacies for themselves or trying to turn us into another Gold Coast.

People live here and holiday here because the place is not overdeveloped and is affordable. Port Stephens was deemed financially fit for the future several years ago by the state govt. so I ask what has changed in that short time? Increasing the rates by any additional amount is not acceptable.

## EHQ short submissions

This council has only been in for under a year and they are already looking for more funds. The fact that our council was fit only 18 mnths ago I wonder what has happened. Also I have requested info regarding this SRV from council but have not had a reply. I am trying to make an informed choice but with being stonewalled by council I have to oppose this SRV on the grounds that the new council has little or no idea what they are doing. Example being they wanted a \$7k training course after elected? If you cant do the job do not apply.

Why is Medowie missing out again most of the money to be spent in Nelson Bay. Medowie is a large fast growing area with dangerous roads and poor amenities.

I don't trust this Mayor. He lied to the faces of Medowie residents when we opposed a Subdivision which the Commissioner of The Land and Environment Court could see was l'll-proposed. He has no integrity and can't be trusted with more of our money. He doesn't care about Medowie unless there is a photo opportunity involved. He wants to spend money on Nelson Bay car parks costing millions. There is no priotising of spending for basic services in Medowie like decent roads. Port Stephens Council needs a new general manager also. Very poor form.

Vote no on the rate rise. Bigger all funds going to Medowie. and public facilities ie parks and roads considering we have the fastest growing population in pet stephens. Plenty of da approvals on development but not enough maintenance.

I would like to submit my opinion of how unhappy I am regarding the proposal. Medowie is a small town growing on a large scale. Roads and community areas need to be improved to accommodate the increase and there is nothing to improve either of these in the works disclosed. Please reconsider what and increases can be used for!?

I would like to submit my opinion of how unhappy I am regarding the proposal. Medowie is a small town growing on a large scale. Roads and community areas need to be improved to accommodate the increase and there is nothing to improve either of these in the works disclosed. Please reconsider what and increases can be used for!?

I live in Medowie and see there is not much in the way of improving this community and area, a rent increase is something we do not need in the area, rate increase make rent go up and for us on disability pensions and retired older people in the community cannot afford the already crippling rent we pay, the government does not take into consideration this continuing rise in living costs to make our pensions come in line.

Medowie needs a lot of footpaths

A more equitable share of the rates rise would be good

We as rate payers of 3 properties in this council area are opposed to the increase. We have no benefit in the Medowie area directly associated with your proposed increases. This would be very unfair to give us an increase with no benefit especially the state our local roads are in.

Council is too focused on funding big projects while basic maintenance is being neglected. Anna Bay town needs a major revitalisation, more so than Nelson Bay. Also there are quite a few pathways, drains and roads in my local area, some that have been barricaded but not fixed for well over a year!

## EHQ short submissions

I live in Salt Ash and am amazed that minimal work is being carried out here, all that is being done is work at horse field which will benefit mostly people outside of Salt Ash. We have only 1 community asset here the hall, fire station and Lee Thompson park. We have been trying for 6 years to get a bbq and picnic shelter in park. But with no help from anyone. Workmen stop almost every day to lunch here at the 30yr old table in front of the fire station. We deserve better. People renting the hall ask if we have a bbq for their use. So we really need one here. A lot of money is being spent in other suburbs replacing their existing picnic areas and we have to do without. Come on Council spend some money here in Salt Ash as you are asking us to contribute.

I support a rate rise BUT it must be equitable. The current plan will tart up Lemon Tree Passage with banners!!!! and probably do other stuff from the Tilli Chamber of Commerce that been non functional for years but been revived for this process recently. Most people on Tilligerry Peninsula live, shop, attend school, work, play sport, attend church, use local businesses NOT in Lemon Tree Passage. Yet \$2 million is offered to be spent there as the Chamber does NOT represent here.

\*\$1 million of those funds should be spent here thereby revitalising both urban areas.

Projects necessary here that should not wait 7 years or longer are-

\*Full completion of Avenue of the Allies- footpaths, lights, drainage, safety improvements

\*Tilligerry Plaza is an abomination from the developers but not enhanced in any way by council.....Lloyd George Grove needs to have drainage, kerb and gutter, pedestrian improvements. The state of the ruin should be of concern to council.

\*Our 'main' street is NOT Cook Parade but President Wilson Walk. It is pretty untidy with little overall planning having been done.

\*The future retail area of Tilligerry would totally destroyed if the od plaza became a retirement village....two shopping centres with a retirement village between lovely. There is need for a Tilligerry plan that recognises that land for future commercial expansion.

\*Other councils when they plan to enhance their communities plan a street tree planting. This rate rise talks about taking out the big trees!!! but does not talk about street trees. Street trees have the ability to transform a neighbourhood because council has to do planning in every street deciding on width etc. The trees provide shade, a streetscape, delineate safe walking and play areas, inspire gardening. The current tree list does not allow this as you need trees that will last. There are towns in NSW who have nothing more going for them but their street trees and Port Stephens has neglected this for too long. We need to invest in street trees.

I am supportive of some small rate increases to cover some improvements in the area but i think some of the suburbs are being left out of the mix of improvements. Eg. Taylors Beach has no improvements at all. Salamander has only one improvement. We might not need improvements in Salamander at this point in time but I am sure we will in 7 years time. I am concerned this plan doesnt cover future needs.

## EHQ short submissions

Council are requesting approval to a large increase in rates whatever SRV rate is adopted. I cannot agree to an increase without specific purposes detailed. Motherhood statements like improve CBD's or improve footpaths or cycleways just aren't good enough.

The current yearly increase on rates is already a burden on most households, anything higher would be devastating on many households already struggling to meet ongoing bills. Council should learn to manage the funds more efficiently. Its annoying to see work gangs mowing median strips on Sundays & council sending staff on overnight junkets out of town ( especially to be considering NZ next year). Staff should be doing their jobs & not playing in sports tournaments during work hours. Council seems to be wasting too much money & should rectify the poor management of current funds before trying to grab more money in rate hikes from households.

At present its hard enough trying to keep up with the increasing cost of living. The proposed increase is to high. The proposed rate rises are significantly higher than the current CPI. Anyone who is lucky enough to get any sort income increase will have it based on the CPI. Increasing in property values don't effect a persons income. At the moment driving around a lot of community facilities aren't used to their capacity so increasing and/or improving them over maintaining them is a waste of money.

NO RATE INCREASE... DON'T READ INTO THE SURVEY. I Didn't "opt" for an increase. The money WILL be spent in Nelson Bay even poor old Anna Bay gets left out, (public change rooms and showers at One Mile Beach, enough said) so Medowie- no chance.

If this special rate is just added to current rates payers, those that hold rental properties will pay numerous times while renters don't chip in for any levies

The increase in retirement villages with mobile homes is increasing the aged population in our area; yet each house is not paying council tax due to the loop hole of not owning the land. Yet they use all the facilities. This isn't fair that the rest of the population is subsidising this increased population and they should pay council tax per home like the rest of the community.

I am really concerned that the council may be out of touch with household budgets in our area. We cant afford rate increases. Families are struggling now let alone expect them to pay more. I would rather see the council lobby for funds through government for their improved infrastructure rather than get it through the local people.

As a rate payer I am not happy with this. I am a single mum and a pensioner and it would mean going without something to pay extra.

No rises, find the money somewhere else and stop taking from us

Nelson bay is the flagship of port Stephens. it is the area everyone recognizes and knows whenever you speak to people from other parts of Australia. In the united kingdom there is no doubt the area would be classified as an "aonb" area "an area of outstanding natural beauty" meriting special consideration in planning and resources.

Nelson bay is the heart of the area but very very tired and in need of regeneration. Sadly the number of retail shops need to reduce in size and come into a more

## EHQ short submissions

concentrated area as internet shopping will only increase and as seen at present even more shops dotted around the town will become vacant.

Investment in good town planning together with quality shops with a vibrant business community and an appealing appearance for both residents and visitors will attract more people, visitors will spread the word in a positive manner to make the town even more vibrant, popular, prosperous and a place to be proud of in port Stephens.

PSC 2018-02118, I do not want this rate rise. You like the rest of us have to work with a budget, stop grabbing money just to help out when you can't do your job and work within a budget. We pay too much already for the little we get !!! Start investing and make the money work for you and stop just expecting rate payers to keep paying extraordinary fees to do your job !!! NO TO RATE RISE!!!!!!

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

As a Shoal Bay resident and rate payer, I applaud innovative thinking on projects, not to mention the council is now actively PLANNING hooray!! However, I feel suggested 6.7% per annum increase submission in real \$\$ is too high per average household.

I would as a community member agree to 3% rate rise per annum acceptable in order to see aged infrastructure projects prioritised. Many local aged infrastructure issues are proving to be safety issues / hazards which is unacceptable to myself and my family. Safety before beautification please!

Also, I think there should be a rethink about councils existing monies and assets with a serious focus on interest and investment revenues (showing static increases over next 3 years in annual report), such as investment in wind farms, solar banks, wealth portfolios to capitalise of what we have already instead of options such as selling assets to gain quick revenue.

1. Structure appropriate pensioner concessions upfront, considering the cumulative cost and increases of living expenses, and include waste levies. Apply a more gradual increase in rates, modeled on a greater understanding and sympathy to growing costs and be responsive to the needs of the majority demographic.

2. Undertake a cost benefit analysis to prioritise and rank projects based on greatest community and/or economic benefit. This is likely to be assisted by community views during this consultation period.

3. Explore heat mapping and allocating rate application in a more nuanced way that levies those most proximate, or expected to benefit the most, from a specific project higher than those marginalised from the benefits of a project.

4. Provide a robust transparent business case to the community re: the proposed projects and a detailed costing/timeframe for SRV projects which separates and justifies current rate spending.

I am an Anna Bay resident of 20+ years and a homeowner for the last 19. With regard to your proposed Special Rate Variation, I would like council to justify to me why I should pay higher rates when I see very little being spent in my town. Our foreshore is a mess, majority of roads do not have guttering and general infrastructure is completely inadequate for the influx of tourists we see every year. There is also the disgraceful condition of the failed resort at the entrance to town. Year after year money is promised to be spent in Anna Bay but it never eventuates. Why would I want to pay more to PSC when I believe it won't benefit my town?

## EHQ short submissions

We already have rates almost \$4000 and we are pensioners so any increase will hurt as do our power bills. There many many residents like us who are struggling. Any increase will result in an unreasonable impact on ratepayers like us.

I think the majority of respondents to these type of surveys are likely to be the vocal MINORITY who will be against these rate increases. However, I believe the silent MAJORITY would at least support Option 2. Most folks working full time simply don't have time to attend community consultations or sit down and complete these surveys. I would like to see either Option 3 or 4 implemented as without REAL new funds we are not going to see significant improvement in the area's infrastructure. Personally, I believe town centres, cycleways and roads should be the priority. A cycleway (either fully separated or some back roads, sealed and unsealed sections) that extends from Soldiers Point to Fingal Bay to Anna Bay (that follows as much as possible, the shoreline) would bring cycling tourism. It needs to be a scenic route. A final point, I would hope that if council is successful in Option 2-4, that it would offer hardship relief from the increases for folks who genuinely cant afford it.

people moved here as they dont want over infrastructure and over housing development, council are hell bent on turning the area into an over populated 3rd world country city. we dont want librariys and other crap, we pay too much for rates already,, cull the number of staff, any Councillor who supports a rate rise should be sent to work in a major city as its not wanted here. i welcome a class action against council if this greed continues as i will not be paying any more in rates, anyone who wants all this crap can move to a bigger city, turning this area into an over rated over populated slum is not going to happen

I feel very strongly that locals cannot and should not be paying any more for their rates premiums than we are already paying. If the tourism industry "injects" so called millions of dollars into the local economy, then devise a strategy for them to pay a significant contribution to support the local infrastructure and services that they use. Council could also prioritise spending and budgeting to better use funds without burdening us any more than they already do. We pay too much already.

The cost of day to day living is increasing quickly and stretches families enough. Yes the infrastructure does need improving especially when the airport is expanding increasing the draw of tourists to the area. An increase in rates will further stretch families when they pay tax which should cover these costs

I dont think our rates should go up at all with many causal or part time workers and pensions find it hard enough now to pay what the rates are at please consider lower income families trying to keep there homes and a roof over there heads.

You need to live within your means. 2.5% increase is already greater than inflation. If that doesn't cut it then go to a user pay concept for individual services, then see how important they really are to the community. I do not need to fund additionally to increase unwanted tourism or unnecessary development. If you can't do the job without seeking additional handouts they quit.

Council to this day have not called completed repairs as a result of the April 2015 storms. Fences are still missing holes in the ground where trees fell. All of this would have been insurance. If they can't manage that how do they manage additional funding that we cannot afford

## EHQ short submissions

While I don't doubt that parts of the community have been lobbying for better facilities and amenities it appears to be the nature of the generation under 40 years of age to demand the best that is available despite its cost and affordability. Particularly when that cost can be subsidized by other parts of the community. When Council says that 'our community is telling us they want more investment', they are actually only referring to parts of the community.

This apparent community desire should be viewed in the context of vested interests that are not necessarily shared by the wider community.

The recently elected Council made no mention of significant rate increases at the time of the election, they do not have a mandate to do so. Let them take it to the next election to gauge public opinion.

Although we'd all like top shelf facilities and amenities we can only have what we can afford. Most of us have to live within a budget, which is often very tight. PSC should learn to do the same instead of knocking on the door of every ratepayer to fund grandiose projects that the community can't really afford.

I'd like a Ferrari in the garage, but I can't afford one and no one else will buy me one. So I have a Toyota instead.

I am AGAINST the PSC making an application for an SRV next year. The greater community can't afford an increase above the pegged 2.5% as wages and other incomes growth has stagnated through out the LGA for a number of years to date. I believe the council should follow the lead of its rate payers and stop spending on items that are not directly related to providing those thing the rate payers expect and deserve.

I'm personally quite happy with SRV Option 4, so I nominate it as my preference. However, it would place a great burden on a lot of new home owners, and retirees. Therefore, I unfortunately believe that it isn't a suitable option.

Option 1, really isn't sustainable, since maintenance requirements will only be increasing. Option 2 won't achieve enough either.

Therefore Option 3 seems the most acceptable outcome.

It is my opinion, that given the burden an SRV will place on the ratepayer, once a decision is made as to which option is selected, there should be further consultation and feedback on candidate projects, including which to select or reject as funds dictate.

It is my opinion that Council should not consider divesting any of its assets, or income streams, and that the SRV should be conditional on this.

With respect to CBD and foreshore parking raised as a target of the higher SRV options, it is my opinion that Council should consider a higher fee structure that targets tourists, with less effect on locals. After all, we will be paying for the infrastructure through this SRV. Something akin to Byron Bay's annual parking fee that residents can purchase from their council. Further to this point, many locals would be quite happy riding into the the CBD, rather than driving, if there was a safe continuous esplanade bike track (separating children from traffic) from the Soldiers Point, to Fingal Bay.

Thanks for considering my comments, I look forward to the outcome.

I am currently not in favour of a SRV in Port Stephens.

I note that various SRV proposals listed by Council include minimal infrastructure projects for the residents of Tanilba Bay who number approximately 2,500 people. Funding for SRV related projects appear to be disproportionately directed to other areas of Port Stephens, including tourism hotspots such as areas within Mayor Palmer's East Ward. It is not good enough.

## EHQ short submissions

I have variously made my feedback known via the Port Stephens Council's online engagement hub <https://haveyoursay.portstephens.nsw.gov.au> and intend to contact IPART and the New South Wales State Government.

As representatives of the demographic in port stephens.ie; retirees and average wage earners, I think PSSC should work within your budgets as we the people that elected you, have to live within ours.

going to such large increases will cause financial stress on family's and they won't go backwards with the rates but I bet they will give them selfs pay rises each year they are good at that

Totally disagree with the rate rise, The main reason as we haven't even got a 24 hr perm Manned fire station, most of the time when our fire truck goes up to Nelson bay to back up Nelson Bay Station our town is totally uncovered

Council need to review the rates payable on primary production farmland. With the ongoing constraints faced by farmers (during droughts and past floods), any further rate rises will not be sustainable in todays economy.

PSC have categorised certain Williamtown properties at lower base rates and the same should be considered for properties operating as small farm holdings.

We have a small farm holding of 100 acres which is used for beef cattle production. Due to the land size and annual turnover, we are amongst many farmers that would not meet the criteria for government funding or relief (during droughts or floods). Increasing rates would place further strain on owners of small farm holdings.

Where councils are approving smaller size subdivision within or close to RU1 zoned land our farmland values are increasing yet the valuations do not consider that certain land in PSC LGA is categorized as high risk flood. These areas will never be suitable for any other use nor do they have development or subdivision potential. The only possible use for many low lying areas in the LGA is primary production.

In addition to the above, PSC should be considering an adjustment to rates to areas that may be subject to an increase in heavy truck movements. This is becoming more apparent with the possible expansion of Brandy Hill quarry. Residents within these areas (including residential and farming) should be re-categorised similarly to how William town rates and zones are categorised.

In ou opinion council should be seeking higher increases in rates or ongoing contributions from the owners of quarries and sandmines (within the LGA). PSC approved many of these operations in the past and expect residents to co-exist with these operations yet, most of the profits made are not being invested back into the LGA

No I do not agree with any sort of rate increase to cover the deficit in which council have splurged on wasted investment.

The new one way st in Nelson bay is a perfect example of such wasted funds because of course nobody wants an alternative route around the cbd from the waterfront?

## EHQ short submissions

seen way to much wastage and way to many promises by council , so why trust them now ,in my town alone lots of funding that has been there for a long time has never been spent properly , I also have seen final draft plans from 20 years ago and still to this day nothing has come from them towards improving facilities in the area for locals and visitors , if the council wants community support they first need to follow up on promises from many years ago , start the project and then the community will get behind them

Rates should not rise more than inflation our pay has not increased so how do you think we can afford this you are a bunch of heartless criminals to even consider this!

In the Councils "SRV – Busting the Myths" propaganda document you stress the fact that operations are currently run at a surplus. I commend you for running operations efficiently thus far, however, you then go on to say that "our community is telling us they want more than we can afford..." Anyone who runs a household can tell you that sometimes you just have to say "no" to living above your means. Your option of asking for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) with rises up to \$780 per year (\$15 per week) in 2025/26 will place a financial burden on many individual households, forcing them to say "no" to their families because you, our elected representatives, would not!

Here is a counter proposal for consideration:

On the following website <http://www.liveinportstephens.com.au/#about> the developers tout the fact that new units have "No council rates". That's 270 brand new units at the first of several new retirement developments that will enjoy the "enhanced services and facilities" provided by Councils proposed SRV without having to contribute any money in council rates. Perhaps the Port Stephens Council should apply its energy is closing the tax loopholes that allow this to occur instead of looking to current Rate Payers to fund everything.

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No ... use the money we pay already ....dont waste it putting in stupid roundabouts.

## EHQ short submissions

I understand that we need to maintain our roads and services but what has the council been doing with the current funds they are getting. i have not seen any changes to roads in Medowie or footpaths. I do not agree with the rate rise or such and increase. i will not get a 19% pay increase in the next 7 years. How crazy are you people. I should be looking for compensation as this was not in any fine print when investing in the area. Do better council or let someone else do it. I am against the increase 100% i know Medowie will never see it and there is no way i can afford it. Many thanks

I would only support the minimal increase proposed as I think it would result in personal hardship for many on fixed or low incomes. I would like my rates spent on improvements to roads and parking. Too much emphasis on looking after tourists and businesses. Over 55's developments also do not seem to be paying a fair share, considering the number of people on the site , all of whom use facilities provided by ratepayers such as roads, parks, the library etc.

No way .... why such a big increase ??? up to 77percent ??? ridiculous ..... stop being greedy and use the money WE pay already ..... remember there will be an election at some stage ... this could be the deciding factor

I believe that the rates for ratepayers should remain as is and not to go up not more than 2.5% over 6 years.

Yes we need facilities and amenities, but it should not come at a cost on families that are already under financial pressures.

Thanks for listening.

I grew up and live in the Bay rent is too high now and the cost of living is high when it is hard to get work that isn't seasonal - I do not support any variation of the rates in Port Stephens. I believe that Council should manage on the money they get already. Do all the new seniors developments pay the same rates as my landlord for my unit - that's hundreds of residences? Do the holiday units in Nelson Bay and around town pay business rates when they are in effect a business? Stop spending more than you have and don't build sports facilities that we don't need.

I do not support a SRV in any form - I believe that Council needs to live within its means and adjust its plans to meet the budget. I have serious concerns about the financial hardship this will cause to families and vulnerable people.

We would like more information on where and what extra funds will be aimed at

I feel that the amount of the rate rise is completely ridiculous. We live in Ferodale and have no infrastructure here, we don't even get the road fixed of potholes even when it's dangerous unless we make several phone calls to council. We are not able to have a decent phone line so haven't even got a home phone, we have satellite internet for gods sake. We are on tank water only and live on a dirt road. What am I paying fees for? What would the increase cover? Medowie doesn't even have a decent park for my children to play in. I disagree totally with a fee increase.

This proposal is outrageous. Start utilising the money we are currently paying effectively and then, maybe just then will people consider paying more when they see value for money rather than paying a donation and can't even get a pot hole fixed in their local area!

This is so disappointing just moved here and this rates rise will bring families down especially with the already high electric bills and petrol rises I already shop at Aldi to save money but times will be tougher again significantly if rates increase, sad day, I am negative and against this pay rise

## EHQ short submissions

No bloody rate rise I will not support it any form
The rate rise is a joke. The council is wasting money on projects that are not needed. Tanilba roundabout, new toilet block at Tanilba both where fine. How about making Avenue of the allies safer for pedestrians and motorist.
I have lived in Tanilba Bay for a little over 3 years. Yes the road out front was dirt when we purchased the property, however in the 3 years the road has deteriorated considerably. We have been told by Council basically bad luck nothing they can do. Last Wed. when the garbage truck tried to turn around he became bogged in our driveway entrance. It took a few hours for back up to release the truck. As this was only a few meters from the fire hydrant where the fire trucks had to fill up just the week before I couldn't help thinking how catastrophic had this been if one of the fire trucks met the same fate. A little maintenance on this road would be nice in return for our rates we pay.
Quite happy with the place as it is. Really not big enough for more people here. Happy with Council and its performance. So no rate rises please.
not willing to pay the increase as existing roads and facilities are a disgrace
As a rural land holder and primary producer we do not support a rate increase outside normal increase. We have two properties adjoining each other at Glen Oak. We find current charges just under \$100 per week reasonable but only barely affordable. Made even harder at the moment with drought conditions. We would support minor/moderate rate increase if land that is under primary production was made exempt. We are farmers trying to produce food for this country, we do not need further expense imposed in order to achieve food production. Please leave Primary Producers alone!
Did anyone think of offering a 25% or 45% or 70%? Those numbers would have been easier to look at. Seems only thing in mind is somebodies ambitious plans. No increase vote from me any many others I'm sure who have also seen 50+% and said no way.
I am totally opposed to any rate increase that is above the amount we are already charged. Council should re evaluate its economic plan to prioritise what it is that the ratepayers require most. I do not believe skateparks would even rate a mention but i shudder at the cost of them and the limited users they attract. Stick to the basics that benefit all the ratepayers.
I would be much more inclined to support a rate increase if Council demonstrated that funds have been appropriately used in the past. Waste, inefficiency, and poor planning have been features of Port Stephens Council run projects in recent years. Until there are changes to practices and outcomes I feel any extra funds wouldn't be used wisely. The list of SRV funded projects provided only reinforces my opinion. There is too much vague description, too many errors and too little detail to feel confident that all residents will get what the area needs.
The community survey can be completed more than once. This means it isn't valid.
The online Community Survey can be completed repeatedly on the same device. Therefore the result is invalid since it can easily be manipulated since it doesn't require a name and address.
The online community survey can be completed more than once and is therefore invalid.

## EHQ short submissions

The Council has wasted funds for many years instead of carrying out a normal work program. I am of the opinion that funds must be found within the Council's current income by better management rather than raising a "Special Rate" that will never be relinquished! Do you think we are stupid ? Manage Council, MANAGE

Any increase above the 2.5 peg would be very inflationary, effecting the whole community. As a landlord I would pass on the increased cost to my tenants, so will the owners of all types of accommodation and all types of business properties, this will make it more expensive to rent as a permanent or short term visitor or a business operator, this goes against the councils policy of trying to attract more businesses and tourists to the area. It will also reduce employment as businesses look for ways to cover these increased costs, casual hours will be cut. All of this has a adverse effect on the community especially those in a lower economic situation, but these people still vote and at the next election they will remember who made their cost of living more expensive, people care very little about drainage and other council services when it comes to putting a roof over their heads or being able to pay the electricity bill or the mortgage, the community doesn't want any added cost of living pressures which these large increases will put permanently into base costs.

Cut council unnecessary (aesthetic) projects.

Also reduce or cease incremental Middle Management bonuses.

With a history of working in all levels of government, and as a new home owner in Fern Bay, I understand, to a degree, the need for councils to be appropriately funded to keep up with community expectations and maintain efficient regulatory capacity. I know that most people will likely oppose the increase on simple grounds, such as "I don't want to pay more". I, on the other hand, wish to put forward my view on the increase proposal. I support an increase only if the Council has considered compassionately and pragmatically what an increase will do to some families and individuals. Whilst the Council may well provide better services and infrastructure, will those improvements outweigh the possible stress and financial burden it will cause, knowing very well how difficult it is to live week-by-week and that an increase may be small to some, but immense to others? Does the Council know how much it know costs to feed a small family and stay warm while costs for education, electricity, fuel, health and medicines continue to rise? Does the Council truly believe that a resident would prefer to drive down a brand new road, as opposed to a relatively new road, as they take their child to football practice with boots that are too small? Times are tough; I see it everyday with people who may appear to be well off, yet are struggling behind closed doors; Fern Bay is a perfect example of this. If the Council has truly and honestly considered these impacts on families, particularly now that interest rates are starting to rise, and that the Council is prepared to stand in front of a family, or perhaps myself, and say "having a vibrant town is more important that your financial situation", then I approve the increase.

It is my view as a (LONG SUFFERING) rate payer in Port Stephen's Shire Council that increasing rates via a Special Rate Variation will simply COMPOUND past mistakes and contribute to the overall decline of the area.

**I AM AGAINST ANY SPECIAL RATE VARIATION PROPOSAL.**

In my opinion council has blundered from bad decision to bad decision. BUT doesn't seem to be capable of critical examination of its own actions. I will be happy to discuss past actions that I consider against the best interests of ME as a ratepayer.

## EHQ short submissions

Commercial Rates are ultimately born by the shop keepers as standard commercial leases pass all "outgoings" on to them.

A critical look at the empty shops and offices in the Nelson Bay CBD should be a clue as to how that sector is going.

I detect managerial Hubris at a staggering level in PSSC – evidenced by the number of Law Suits the council has fought and lost over the last 10 years.

Port Stephens Shire Council needs to cut its operating expenses – become more efficient – root out the culture of 4 men 2 shovels that is still alive and well in some areas of the work force.

Reduce RED TAPE – create budgets to achieve everything listed in the proposal OUT OF CURRENT INCOME.

I hope we are not getting our rates put up, we are still waiting for our 10% reduced rates for our property in the broader management zone, and NSW Land sent us a evaluation on our property and its value has decreased %15 which your rates are suppose to be regulated by so in total we are still waiting our %25 reduction on our rates and hopefully it will be back dated aswell. Remember Council hid this from residents we didnt ask for it and we are entitled to reinbursement.

In the SRV booklet it states Port Stephens has the lowest rates of all group 5 councils in NSW, I believe the council should be congratulated on having such low rates and should try to keep them low. Low rates mean less running costs for businesses which can lead to more employment, low rates help keep the cost of accommodation down which is attractive to visitors and permanent tenants alike. When you survey the wants of the community of course they're going to ask for improvement, on my wish list is a luxury car and a overseas holiday but I can't afford those and I can't afford a large increase in rates, well above the CPI, lots of self funded retirees have set income so that means their quality of life style will go down as the small pleasures of life have to go so they can have a roof over their heads. Basic services like drainage should be funded out of normal rates and if it takes longer then so be it.

The average person can not afford the exorbitant rate rise, proposed by Council. The current 2.5% is more in line with the non-existent pay rises within community. Personally, I can see any and all funds raised by a rate rise going to the Bay area. The smaller out skirting communities, will see little or none, but paying the price for a nice new flash community hub in Nelson Bay. It is just plain greedy. Is council planning on a personal pay rise ??? I can see that coming.

I am dead against the proposed rate rises, we are paying enough already and what good will it do for we the rate payers in the outer areas of the West Ward, we always miss out on any of the expenditure. I bet the councilors get a pay rise no matter which way the decision on the rates goes.

I do not support the Special Rate Variation proposed. While I appreciate the challenge in the delivery of service under the standard rate increase, it is a challenge faced by every household. I would prefer to see the three levels of government working together better to avoid duplication of services towards improved efficiencies of available funding.

No thanks on the rate hike! Stop giving preferential treatment to developers and start collecting rates from all residents new and old. Every resident should pay their fair share to live here.

## EHQ short submissions

Having already responded to the survey, I wish to reinforce some points. An insufficient case has been made that the proposed additional increase will result in additional services or benefits to rate payers. Indeed when most of Councils development agenda and strategy focuses on 'Aged Accommodation', the proposed additional services are inconsistent with this. Many of the anticipated expenses (road maintenance, parking, social services, etc) appear to be as a result of this increased development and this cost should be covered by developers and business owners.

A lot of people renters, pensioners and self funded retirees live in the Port Stephens Council area and are running right on the quality of life line with normal day to day expenses with any increases putting more financial stress on individuals. This is a big issue and need to be thought through by council and not to act like state and federal counter parts.

And a statement the effected people could apply for hardship why impose it in the first place.

Council just needs to work through it project if it takes a while longer so what the rate payer should be the priority not egos.

Council has been repeatedly poor with infrastructure projects and simply awful at infrastructure management. Until council can show better decision-making there is no compulsion to give more funds to be mis-managed.

The intersection of Salamander Way-Town Centre Circuit is an example of awful design defended by council that will now cost more to fix. The 2 unsold blocks at the Aldi site at Salamander are terribly designed for access - no wonder they are not sold - yet Aldi wants a liquor store near the Salamander child Care Centre. Why is it designed that way? Then all the exits onto Bagnall Beach Road will be difficult to navigate in years to come as traffic increases - awful design. The excuse of a Chatswood-based firm designing it is pathetic. The huge cost of no more than a laneway at Yacaaba Street to Victoria Parade. The multi-storey carpark on Yacaaba never being re-built yet leasing another site that is now likely to become an apartment building. Allowing a developer to sell above height limit penthouses before approval makes Council look weak. The terrible state of Ferodale Road. Will Council allow Medowie Road to become a poorly controlled arterial with multiple housing developments and a school feeding traffic onto it (dangerous intersections)? Lemon Tree Passage Road is always being fixed yet is never fixed.

Why would the community support more money for roads when the consensus is that Council can't fix them properly now. Do a better job on several projects and use them as examples rather than giving residents a list of bad roads.

At the 2012 Council election almost all East Ward candidates promised a cycleway from Fingal Bay to Soldiers Point. Did it ever get past Bagnall Beach? Was it not a priority also? Even mowing reserves and road verges is left until after weeds have gone to seed – appropriate timing does not cost more in rates.

We are lucky to have good sports fields and some work on club facilities may be more useful than more grounds. Such as parking and the concept of multi-use areas where clubs share better clubroom facilities as happens all over the world. A synthetic turf hockey field can share club room facilities with soccer, netball, baseball – you name it – as it not about the field it's the other facilities that can be shared and therefore share costs.

Tomaree pool should have been re-developed with an indoor hydro pool and kids learning pool (25m long) already. Was it not proposed by those managing the pool

## : EHQ short submissions

already?

Council could link sports projects and hospitality infrastructure at sports areas to TAFE such as Casey Race or Pelican Point in Victoria. The funding for students kept costs lower and added community benefit with employment also. The TAFE at Tomaree Education Centre is by the sports fields. Be creative rather than dreaming.

Simply, the council needs to build goodwill before asking for so much.

Why is council supplying staff with free fruit, biscuits, tea, coffee, lollies , when some ratepayers are struggling to afford these items themselves. why are council staff offered junkets when video conferencing is available . How much is council spending on staff training. Why is the staff EBA so generous. Why are certain staff gifted \$14000 a year to drive their own car only to and from work in some cases. Why are staff only working 3 or 4 days per week and some working overtime on weekends, in effect working 5 days per week with 1 day paid as overtime. These issues need to be addressed before myself and others agree to a srv.

Totally disagree with the rate rise!! We struggle to own a home as it is!!!! And to increase it every year?? Is this rate rise to pay for the pay rise council employees are receiving??

I vote for option 1

We have no other choice than to live within our means.

Rather than being proud that Council can balance its budget Council appears to want to race towards the bottom of the pile by crying poor (we don't charge as much as other councils in the hunter).

Why call this process a SRV, it would be more appropriately to describe it as a Significant Rate Acceleration. You might be requesting a variation in the rate increase for the next 7 years. However, in only 7 years at 8.5% you gain the same rate increase as 23 years at 2.5%. You are jumping 16 years ahead. In real terms old age pensioners (whose pension is pegged at 2.5%) will be 16 years worth of increases behind.

Just because some want the best does not mean you should force all the rate paying residents to provide the best.

Revitalisation, thats a scary term that could spell bottomless pit.

Business pay a higher levy this should be used to help keep business areas clean, tidy and revitalised.

Parking spaces, don't new developments have to provide an appropriate number of parking spaces.

The first suggestion with any real consequence is more paths and cycle ways to keep people safe. A large number of residents walk and ride on the road past my house, a road frequented by a large number of B Doubles carrying gravel.

Why does the poor drainage exist. Who developed this area shouldn't they fix it or if its a very old part of town were the current owners informed during the due diligence searches?

How do you rate residents of Port Stephens who own homes in relocatable home villages or over 55 villages, I hope each resident pays the same base rate as Pensioners who own their own home. The land value component should be paid by the land (park) owner. I'm not talking about holiday parks (where sites are kept for short stays).

When you talk about special consideration for financially stressed older citizens do you mean giving some rate relief with the amount plus interest to be paid when the

## EHQ short submissions

property is sold at some time in the future that spells stress.  
Do you think if I ask the Treasurer to instruct my Bank to pay me 8.5% interest for the next 7 years so I can have my house painted and replace my roof it would happen? I don't think so I think.

I am against Rate rise we pay to much now for what?? All the rate money goes to the bay or Raymond terrace, all we have received on the Tiligary Peninsula is a Roundabout no one wanted closure of our tip & a patchwork quilt for a road They say you pay peanuts you get Monkeys we must be paying a lot of peanuts

I am NOT happy about the srv. I feel rates are barely affordable as it is. We have a mixed usage property and pay 2 garbage services which we don't need and we don't even get a recycling service so i feel i already pay money to council for no reason. In my experience with another council that had a temporary srv they have now adopted that srv permanently.

From our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased approximately 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of properties in The Cove Village, Fullerton Cove, including ours. The increased valuation is approximately 16%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge significantly without the additional special levies. Our next residential rate levy would increase about 19%. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

In addition to this I would like to note that The Cove Village residents (219), own and maintain our infrastructure of roads, community hall, water, power, etc on our site without any contribution from Port Stephens Council. Infrastructure in the general Fullerton Cove, Fern Bay area has minimal maintenance an no plans for improvement are included in the Special Levy. The only improvements are those initiated by the Fern Bay Fullerton Cove Residents Group.

Also, the developer's contribution to council for infrastructure has been "borrowed" and spent in another suburb and will probably never be returned and used in the area it was collected to fund.

Finally, the "survey form online" seemed to contain bias in favour of the Special Levy and did not allow one to indicate against the Special Levy but only gave choices of various levels of Special Levy.

For these reasons we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

I support 'Option 1' due to the fact that the 'Pensioner Rebate' has remained static for many years and any increased rate variation is going to unfairly target pensioners. If the 'Pensioner Rebate' was indexed to rate increases I may have looked at the options differently. Pensioners are forced to live within their financial means and the Port Stephens Council should do the same.

## EHQ short submissions

I am strongly against any of the proposed Special Rate Variation options for the following reasons:

This is a significant rate increase and most residents just cannot afford it, especially in the current economic climate.

I do not want my rates wasted on unnecessary, hugely expensive projects like a new Sports Complex at Salamander or an Art Gallery at Raymond Terrace. The current Sports complex is more than adequate as it is. These projects really are low priority and aren't needed.

There are far more important issues that Council needs to address, like maintaining and upgrading our long neglected infrastructure. Many of our local roads in particular are in an appalling state, crumbling away and full of potholes. Footpaths, kerb and guttering, better drainage systems, more street lighting, more parking, more waterfront BBQS and covered Picnic tables, more bike and walking paths are urgently needed.

Council should have been spending residents' current rates on these basic projects over the years, instead of largely neglecting basic infrastructure.

Also, many of the proposed projects may not be completed for 10 years, (if at all), which is an unreasonably long period of time for residents to see the benefits from these "improvements."

As a business owner and a commercial property owner in Port Stephens I oppose the proposed Special Variation Rate rise (SVR) rise by the Port Stephens Council. It will have a significant impact on businesses in our area.

Raymond Terrace Labor branch is opposed to the Special Rate Variation Rate (SRV) rise by the Port Stephens Council, as it will impact heavily on people in our community who are unable to afford more expenses. The Special Rate Variation rise has significant impact on family budgets and small business owner's budgets. The Raymond Terrace Labor branch members include business owners, home owners and home renters. Councils are available to seek funding from state and federal governments as grants or subsidies. In addition to the opposition to the rate rise we would like to take notice of the Port Stephens Council are seeking to secure a large amount of funding from the NSW State government for projects in the Port Stephens area as reported in the Port Stephens Examiner 20th June 2018.

The PSC has the scope to undertake new functions and major projects without the SRV rise, the review of Local Council Fit For The Future proposal -Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal – PSC endorsed this submission in June, 2015. 'Council's rigorous fiscal discipline allows for a modest surplus going forward which Council has determined would be applied to reduction in the asset backlog (with consequent reduction in the asset maintenance required over time). This will be achieved without the need to apply for a special variation to rates. Under this fiscally conservative Long Term Financial Plan to 2025 Council has the scope to undertake new projects provided that there is alignment with the Community Strategic Plan; and value to the community and Council that outweighs other priorities' (Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal).

We express our opposition to the Special Rate Variation (SRV) rise.

## EHQ short submissions

Council's main functions are to maintain roads, paths, parks and facilities together with an efficient garbage service.

I question the validity of Councils view of community needs/requirements and how they are collected, for example who reads the Community Strategic Plan other than local business people.

Events management is NOT a Council function. To propose the creation a new Council department with its ongoing expenses, clearly indicates that the Mayor and his supporters are not interested in maintaining rates at a reasonable level just growing the organisation that they control.

Events management should be funded and managed by the businesses deriving benefits from the events.

Additional major facilities should be funded, in the main, by the State government not ratepayers.

I can't afford it

I am strongly opposed to any increase in rates above the 2.5% annual adjustment. Currently, the council rates in Port Stephens are higher than many parts of Sydney.

I was a bit bemused to read this week's Informe where the General Manager stated "outstanding 85% satisfaction rating from our community" "we delivered an underlying surplus and ultimately achieved what we said we set out to do in our operational plan"

Our mayor is saying people are unhappy and want to see more done?

At our current rate level we have a 2% default rate on payment. In other areas of higher rates and higher unemployment the default rate is 10%. However I recognise that we will need to increase rates if we want to improve the appearance of Port Stephens. We must monitor progress and measure how it is affecting the default rate and move to stop increases if it appears people are really starting to suffer.

I believe option 3 will deliver the best outcome but we must certainly avoid becoming the highest rate cost Council in the region.

no increase of rates, sell assets/investments first, take pay cut for 7 years

I am strongly opposed to any proposed Special Rate Variation. Any variation only encourages poor budgeting and living outside council means. It imposes additional hardship on the most financially challenged residents, especially in times of negligible wages growth. An independent financial audit would be of greater benefit.

I vote option 1. People are under enough financial pressure already without this extra cost. Many residents are pensioners so how are they supposed to survive. Sell some assets to make things happen.

I oppose the proposed rate rises in total on the following grounds:

As a resident/ratepayer for 26 years with frequent interaction with the Council, I am not satisfied that the Council operates anywhere near the efficiency that it should. Their internal and frequent reviews never produce an efficiency dividend! This view is based on my long experience working in the public sector as an operative who advanced to senior management.

The proposed rate rises are unaffordable for myself as a self funded retiree but also many more resident owners and renters at the lower end of the income scale.

## : EHQ short submissions

I wish to object to any rate increase on the following grounds:-

We have been rate payers since 1992 and residents since 1995 and have observed many instances of ratepayers funds being less than judiciously used. Internal Audits of Council efficiency are less than convincing and should be done externally by a neutral party.

Port Stephens and Lake Macquarie have been identified as the least affordable places to rent.

Increases in rates would worsen this situation for the most vulnerable. We cannot meet increasing rates ourselves and have many friends who would simply need to move if rates increase - away from family and social, and medical networks. We are aware of many unable to work because of medical conditions and other issues. We would hope that our Council would have a social conscience so that these people need not fear eviction and relocation.

Lastly since 1995 we have contributed hundreds of hours in volunteer work, through writing grant applications, weed eradication, native plant restoration and propagation, other hands on landcare work, and many activities saving Council money. We try to give back in kind and personal cost to our community.

Every Property get the same services. Using a % of UICV is not equitable as each property pays a different sum for the same service. Rate should be standard across the LGA. Individual fees for the collection of garbage and then there is a fair and equitable system. % increases is also inequitable, 5% of 5000=250 but 5% of 10000 =\$500, so one person increase is double that of another but their property does not get DOUBLE the services. Regard

When I hear the words 'rate increase' like most people I react suspiciously. I've never heard of a work place or public service that isn't short of money. The sell is always the same - they don't specify exactly what the money is for, but lump it into broad categories, in this instance "infrastructure" or "projects." Having seen how public authorities work, I cringe when I see how much money gets wasted on things like unnecessary administration, goods and services, consultation fees, etc... I know people expect council to come flying in with the dollars when they have their own interests at heart (eg the value of their properties) so perhaps there should be more focus on a user-pay system for those extra projects you have in mind. If you increased the fees to the levels proposed I reckon I'd be one of many that wouldn't notice the difference. I think council is doing all right as is, and I'd like it to stay that way.

# Proposed Special Rate Variation

## Full submissions

*Note: PSC does not normally table full redacted submissions but given that the proposed SRV is a significant issue with a mixed range of responses and as IPART will also provide them on their website as part of any application made by PSC, they have been tabled as a part of this report.*

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 26 July 2018 8:02 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Dear councillors and mayor.

I have just come across on Facebook your proposal of rate increases.

I think that we are paying enough now as a young farming family, I looked at the scenarios you put forward and I think they only help mostly town people.

I saw maitland council do the same deliver all of these great things like indoor pool etc when they jacked the rates up. But you know the never come back down.

The other thing is, you cant guarantee me that my wages are going to increase that much over 5 years, so how are we supposed to afford this we just went through a drought cattle prices are \$2per kg cheaper then last year. And they still want to ban live export.

Thanks for letting me have my quick say.

Cheers,

18/1166087  
②  
1/6

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 26 July 2018 2:12 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Cc:** Cr Giacomo Arnott; Cr Ken Jordan; Cr Paul Le Mottee  
**Subject:** Special Rate Variation Submission \_ PSC 2018-02118

Good morning,

I wish to raise concerns over Council's proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV). I provide the following information as reasoning why the four proposed options should not proceed

Port Stephens Council's Fit for the Future submission was assessed by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in mid-late 2015 and found that Port Stephens Council was Fit for the Future (as can be seen by the table below extracted from Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal endorsed at its 9 June 2015 meeting).

Assessment summary

Scale and capacity	<b>Satisfies</b>
Financial criteria:	<b>Satisfies overall</b>
• Sustainability	Satisfies
• Infrastructure and service management	Satisfies
• Efficiency	Satisfies

**Fit for the Future – FIT**

- The council satisfies the scale and capacity criterion.
- The council satisfies the financial criteria overall. It satisfies the sustainability, infrastructure and service management and efficiency criteria.

**Scale and capacity - satisfies**

- The council's proposal is consistent with the ILGRP's option.
- Our analysis has not identified evidence for a better alternative to the council's proposal stand alone.
- As the ILGRP did not identify another option for this council, it was not required to demonstrate how it met each of the elements of scale and capacity.
- The council has a robust revenue base and has demonstrated effective regional collaboration.

**Sustainability – satisfies**

- The council satisfies the criterion for sustainability based on its forecast to meet the benchmarks for the operating performance ratio, the own source revenue ratio and the build and infrastructure asset renewal ratio by 2019-20.

**Infrastructure and service management - satisfies**

- The council satisfies the criterion for infrastructure and service management based on its forecast to meet the benchmarks for the infrastructure backlog, asset maintenance and debt service ratios by 2019-20.
- The council states it has revised the methodology for calculating the backlog ratio from the 2014-15 year onwards, which we consider to be reasonable.

**Efficiency - satisfies**

- The council meets the criterion for efficiency based on its forecast for real operating expenditure per capita reducing over the period to 2019-20.

Page 3 & 4 of the Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal states that:

*Management of Port Stephens Council (the Council) requested a review of the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) as part of the 2016 budgeting process. PKF Lawler Partners were engaged during January 2015 to complete the agreed upon procedures. The LTFP articulates the various financial strategies available to Council as part of fulfilling its overall objectives including (but not limited to):*

- Maintaining the existing standard of service provision to the community;
- Achieving long term financial sustainability;
- Ability to re-invest into asset renewal and capital works; and
- Being Fit for the Future.

*Covering a ten year horizon, the Plan is underwritten by a series of modelling and associated analyses (e.g. Fit for Future ratios), which take into account known events at the time of its preparation, but also make assumptions with respect to future events. This engagement was also completed concurrently with a review of the Asset Management Plan, which also forms part of Council's Fit for the Future submission to the New South Wales (NSW) State Government via IPART.*

#### **Scope to undertake new functions and major projects**

*Council's rigorous fiscal discipline allows for a modest surplus going forward which Council has determined would be applied to reduction in the asset backlog (with consequent reduction in the asset maintenance required over time). This will be achieved without the need to apply for a special variation to rates. Under this fiscally conservative Long Term Financial Plan to 2025 Council has the scope to undertake new projects provided that there is alignment with the Community Strategic Plan; and value to the community and Council that outweighs other priorities. Alternatively Council will have a cushion to absorb unplanned events that negatively impact on its budget – the April 2015 storm is an example, where the net effect on the bottom line is estimated to be <\$250,000.*

No mention of an SVR to enable Council to become Fit for the Future.

Page 20 of the Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal provides further information on Council's outlook to maintain Fit for the Future benchmarks:

## 2.3 Performance against the Fit for the Future Benchmarks

Description	Current Performance	Future Performance	Benchmark	Comment
Operating Performance Result	0.0010 3 year average from 2012-2014	0.035 3 year average from 2015-2017	Greater or equal to break-even average over 3 years	The current performance ratio is based on a 3 year average between 2012 and 2014. The ratio was affected by the non-payment of the 2014 4th quarter Federal Assistance Grant. Had Council received this operating grant the ratio would have been 0.010 instead of 0.0010.
Own Source Revenue	77.9% 3 year average from 2012-2014	81.21% 3 year average from 2015-2017	60.0%	Council has strong revenue streams outside of grants which include commercial income from our investment portfolio, commercial property portfolio, holiday parks and Newcastle Airport.
Building and Infrastructure Asset Renewal	85.4% 3 year average from 2012-2014	103.71% 3 year average from 2015-2017	>100% average over 3 years	Council has slowly been growing its capital budget in order to reinvest into its building and infrastructure. In 2014 Council achieved a 114% renewal rate with plans to continue at this rate.
Infrastructure Backlog	5.57% As at 30 June 2014	2.27% As at 30 June 2017	<2%	Refer to section 3.1 for comments on Council's Infrastructure backlog.
Asset Maintenance	50.7% 3 year average from 2012-2014	98.2% 3 year average from 2015-2017	>100%	Refer to section 3.1 for comments on Council's Asset maintenance.
Debt Service Ratio	8.19% 3 year average from 2012-2014	4.62% 3 year average from 2015-2017	>0% and <20%	Council's debt and cash ratios remain steady and within the benchmark limits.
Real Operating Expenditure per capita	Decrease from 1.33 in 2011/12 to 1.23 in 2013/14	Decrease from 1.24 in 2015 to 1.13 in 2017.	Decreases over time	Decrease achieved despite average population growth of 1.2% -1.4% p.a.

### No mention of an SVR to enable Council to become Fit for the Future

Page 21 goes on to say that a Special Rate Variation is not required. This statement has been taken directly from Council's Long Term Financial Plan 2015-2025.

In the past Council has applied for special variations to rates to fund economic development; environmental works; and re-development of the Nelson Bay town centre. Historically Council has applied the normal annual rates increase allowed by the Office of Local Government and later IPART and will continue to do so. However in the interests of our community it is not anticipated that Council would seek any special variations to rates for the foreseeable future.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Port Stephens Council Long Term Financial Plan 2015-2025

No anticipated need in Council's Long Term Financial Plan to need an SVR.

I now refer you to pages 39 – 42 of the Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal, which identified the current situation of the Building & Infrastructure Renewal and how Council planned to address the shortfall.

#### **Building and Infrastructure Renewal – Current Situation**

*Council has developed an Asset Funding Strategy: the statement of intent for the Asset Funding Strategy is to prioritise funds towards the renewal and maintenance of assets. This Asset Funding Strategy is cognisant of the Council's duties and responsibilities outside of asset management and not all monies can be diverted to the funding of assets. There are also other documented policies, such as the Acquisition and Divestment of Land Policy that already allocates sale of lands profits to other functions and services of Council.*

*The sources of funds included in the Asset Funding Strategy are:*

- *sales of commercial or Council operational lands*
- *savings made from commercial arm of Council*
- *borrowings*
- *operational savings*
- *sustainability reviews savings*
- *grants*
- *contributions from other organisations and committees*
- *continue to shift funds in the Capital Works Program from new assets to renewal*

*These additional funds can be used as seed and matching monies to improve Council's position in gaining additional grants and Section 94 to further reduce Council infrastructure backlog. While the additional monies are not guaranteed, when funds are available they are to be prioritised towards the renewal and maintenance of existing assets.*

*The average over three years is >100% which allows for a reduction in the infrastructure backlog.*

No mention of an SVR to enable Council to become Fit for the Future.

Page 47 of the Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal discussed how the Council would maintain assets into the future.

#### **Asset Maintenance – Future Performance**

##### **Approach**

*Council has recently changed its focus towards a risk assessment/management approach to asset maintenance based on condition and fitness for purpose.*

*Over the last several years there has been at Port Stephens Council change in funding the maintenance and renewal of existing assets to reduce the backlog. This change has, and will continue to have an impact on the financial sustainability of the organisation and gives an increased ability to provide services to the community through assets.*

*Each of the above challenges has been addressed through the Long Term Financial Plan 2015-2025. The LTFP is based on achieving the following outcomes:*

- *Progressively increasing the underlying operating surplus;*
- *Reducing the infrastructure gap;*
- *Starting to bridge the asset maintenance funding gap to ensure Council infrastructure is maintained at a satisfactory level;*

- (2) 5/6
- Achieving a financial structure where new assets or existing asset renewal needs are met from the base operating income of Council;
  - The retention of service provision at present levels.

**Financial:** Council intends to reduce the maintenance gap by 51.0% in the period to 2020. Council has focused its funding towards renewal of assets rather than building new ones until the backlog is addressed so that adding to its considerable pool of assets is not going to be an issue in the short to medium term.

To eliminate the maintenance gap entirely (i.e. meet the benchmark 100%) requires an estimated \$1.1 million additional expenditure per annum. Council intends to apply a combination of the following:

1. An additional \$500,000 p.a. directed to asset maintenance of sand extraction royalties, which are in the planning stage as at 2015 – to be put into the Long Term Financial Plan from 2016-2017;
2. Divert proceeds from land sales from general operations to asset maintenance;
3. Proactively re-assess actual condition of assets to refine required maintenance figures;
4. Increase borrowings, if available at low interest (e.g. LIRS) – Council currently has achieved success in two rounds, approved loans of \$1 million and \$2 million respectively. Council's debt service ratio is healthy across the period – see below;
5. Divestment of some vacant operational land, subject to market conditions being positive for a sale.

Again, no mention of an in this proposal to IPART about applying for an SRV.

Page 58 of the Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal forecast that Council would meet the Fit for the Future benchmarks

Criteria Results 2015-2017		
BENCHMARK	RESULT	
Operating Performance Ratio (greater or equal to break-even average over 3 years)	0.035	
Own Source Revenue Ratio (greater than 60% average over 3 years)	81.21%	
Building and Infrastructure Asset Renewal Ratio (greater than 100% average over 3 years)	101.52%	
Infrastructure Backlog Ratio (less than 2%)	2.27%	
Asset Maintenance Ratio (greater than 100% average over 3 years)	98.93%	
Debt Service Ratio (greater than 0 and less than or equal to 20% average over 3 years)	4.62%	
A decrease in Real Operating Expenditure per capita over time	Decreasing	
Criteria Results 2018-2020		
BENCHMARK	RESULT	
Operating Performance Ratio (greater or equal to break-even average over 3 years)	0.047	
Own Source Revenue Ratio (greater than 60% average over 3 years)	81.85%	
Building and Infrastructure Asset Renewal Ratio (greater than 100% average over 3 years)	115.17%	
Infrastructure Backlog Ratio (less than 2%)	1.96%	
Asset Maintenance Ratio (greater than 100% average over 3 years) <sup>12</sup>	101.67%	
Debt Service Ratio (greater than 0 and less than or equal to 20% average over 3 years)	2.95%	
A decrease in Real Operating Expenditure per capita over time	Decreasing	

Page 60 of the Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal discussed how the Council rejected considering an SRV when preparing it's Fit for the Future submission as per the table below (amongst other Actions not shown in my submission).

### 3.5 Other Strategies Considered

Council considered the options in the table below when drawing up its Action Plan. For the reasons outlined these options were not taken up.

Option	Rationale for Rejection
Special Variation to Rates	<p>a. This would be a 'short term' fix but is not justified in terms of impact on the community;</p> <p>b. Whilst it is always an option for Port Stephens Council, we feel that we have other mechanisms that would be better (own source revenue other than rates, for example) to fund any shortfall in asset maintenance, given that by 2020 we will achieve the target of &gt;100%.</p>

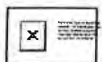
My questions to you, the Council, are as follows:

- What has changed significantly in the past 24-36 months to propose such a significant SRV given the examples provided below painted Port Stephens Council in a relatively strong position (i.e. Fit for the Future). Was the Fit for the Future submission misleading or incorrect to appease the State Government at the time?
- Are some of the projects identified (and not necessarily currently identified in any strategic masterplan of Plan of Management) the best use of Council's funds? Personally, the current standard of town centres and neighbourhoods across Port Stephens is more than adequate. I'm sure the tourists who might spend 1-4 weeks in our beautiful region each year aren't here for the streetscapes and pedestrian friendly areas. I also believe that the majority of the foreshore improvements and coastal protection works, including boat ramps, sand management and accessible beach access should be funded by RMS and the state government as the owner/controller of the waterways and not local Council's.

I feel that something has gone significantly wrong at some stage for Council to now be making an application to IPART for an SRV in such a sort time since it lodged it's Fit for the Future submission in 2015 that the Council needs to reconsider it's position and certainly question senior management about what has happened since mid 2015 when all things appeared to be on-track for a steady future for the area.

The average rate payer will not be able to absorb the significant SRV's proposed and I'm sure if given the opportunity to revisit their desired level of service compared with the cost to deliver, would reconsider quite quickly.

Yours Sincerely



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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 26 July 2018 7:11 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Special Rate Variation Submission \_ PSC 2018-02118

Good Evening,

I wish to raise concerns over Council's proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV). I provide the following information as reasoning why the four proposed options should not proceed

Port Stephens Council's Fit for the Future submission was assessed by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in mid-late 2015 and found that Port Stephens Council was Fit for the Future (as can be seen by the table below extracted from Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal endorsed at its 9 June 2015 meeting).

Assessment summary

Scale and capacity	<b>Satisfies</b>
Financial criteria:	<b>Satisfies overall</b>
• Sustainability	Satisfies
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**Fit for the Future – FIT**

- The council satisfies the scale and capacity criterion.
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**Scale and capacity - satisfies**

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- The council has a robust revenue base and has demonstrated effective regional collaboration.

**Sustainability – satisfies**

- The council satisfies the criterion for sustainability based on its forecast to meet the benchmarks for the operating performance ratio, the own source revenue ratio and the building and infrastructure asset renewal ratio by 2019-20.

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Real Operating Expenditure per capita	Decrease from 1.33 in 2011/12 to 1.23 in 2013/14	Decrease from 1.24 in 2015 to 1.13 in 2017.	Decreases over time	Decrease achieved despite average population growth of 1.2% -1.4% p.a.

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**Financial:** *Council intends to reduce the maintenance gap by 51.0% in the period to 2020. Council has focused its funding towards renewal of assets rather than building new ones until the backlog is addressed so that adding to its considerable pool of assets is not going to be an issue in the short to medium term.*

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- 5. Divestment of some vacant operational land, subject to market conditions being positive for a sale.*

Again, no mention of an in this proposal to IPART about applying for an SRV.

Page 58 of the Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal forecast that Council would meet the Fit for the Future benchmarks

Criteria Results 2015 - 2017		
BENCHMARK		RESULT
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A decrease in Real Operating Expenditure per capita over time		Decreasing
Criteria Results 2018-2020		
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Operating Performance Ratio (greater or equal to break-even average over 3 years)		0.047
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Page 60 of the Port Stephens Council Improvement Proposal discussed how the Council rejected considering an SRV when preparing it's Fit for the Future submission as per the table below (amongst other Actions not shown in my submission).

### 3.5 Other Strategies Considered

Council considered the options in the table below when drawing up its Action Plan. For the reasons outlined these options were not taken up.

Option	Rationale for Rejection
Special Variation to Rates	a. This would be a 'short term' fix but is not justified in terms of impact on the community; b. Whilst it is always an option for Port Stephens Council, we feel that we have other mechanisms that would be better (own source revenue other than rates, for example) to fund any shortfall in asset maintenance, given that by 2020 we will achieve the target of >100%.

My questions to you, the Council, are as follows:

- What has changed significantly in the past 24-36 months to propose such a significant SRV given the examples provided below painted Port Stephens Council in a relatively strong position (i.e. Fit for the Future). Was the Fit for the Future submission misleading or incorrect to appease the State Government at the time?
- Are some of the projects identified (and not necessarily currently identified in any strategic masterplan of Plan of Management) the best use of Council's funds? Personally, the current standard of town centres and neighbourhoods across Port Stephens is more than adequate. I'm sure the tourists who might spend 1-4 weeks in our beautiful region each year aren't here for the streetscapes and pedestrian friendly areas. I also believe that the majority of the foreshore improvements and coastal protection works, including boat ramps, sand management and accessible beach access should be funded by RMS and the state government as the owner/controller of the waterways and not local Council's.

I feel that something has gone significantly wrong at some stage for Council to now be making an application to IPART for an SRV in such a sort time since it lodged it's Fit for the Future submission in 2015 that the Council needs to reconsider it's position and certainly question senior management about what has happened since mid 2015 when all things appeared to be on-track for a steady future for the area.

The average rate payer will not be able to absorb the significant SRV's proposed and I'm sure if given the opportunity to revisit their desired level of service compared with the cost to deliver, would reconsider quite quickly.

Yours Sincerely



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#### Security Statement

This email may be confidential and contain privileged information. If you are not the intended recipient you must not use, disclose, copy or distribute this email, including any attachments. Confidentiality and legal

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 26 July 2018 7:18 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** SRV

SUBJECT: SPECIAL RATE VARIATION  
REF: PDF-75KB

25<sup>th</sup> July 2018  
The Port Stephens Council

I am very surprised and alarmed that the current council is seeking a rate rise through A Special Rate Variation. Since the election of the new council there have been some very radical proposals, namely the construction of high rise units in Nelson Bay and recently the proposed sale of a single block of land at Salamander foreshore and now a proposed rate increase.

May I remind council that many residents are doing it very hard at present with the high cost of living and the extreme increase cost of electricity. There are also many retirees like myself who came here to live in this area in the hope to have a pleasant retirement in the environment that is now threatened to be turned into another concrete jungle and cost wise will drive many of us out of the area.

It may be very nice to say we need an increase in rates to meet all the demands of the community but it is not always viable to please all concerned. I am dead against your proposal and I hope you listen to your rate payers objections and consider the burden they will have to carry in today's high cost of living.

Kind Regards

148/166098  
(5)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 27 July 2018 11:51 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** quoting psc 2018-02118

Good Morning,

I am writing to you today to declare that as a Family living in Port Stephens area under the Port Stephens Council we object to the idea that the Council can increase our rates higher than the CPI increase. So we are against the Council putting our rates up.

I was speaking with Craig from the Rates dept. and he assured me that by my emailing you today is the same as putting in a submission so if this is not the case please let me know.

Sincerely

81166091  
⑥  
1/2

## PSC 2018-02118 feedback - Special Rate Variation

Date : 27/07/18

I have read through the information o the council request for a Special Rate Variation.

Please find my objection to a rate rise by Port Stephens Council.

I feel the council past and present has been lacking in management, planning and consultation.

There have been some plans in the life of this council that are very costly , not a priority and not meeting the needs of the majority of residents. It seems council has focused on developing Nelson Bay to support local business and tourists. Neither should be the ratepayers' financial responsibility. The tourists I spoke to while on a stand last year love the town, were horrified at the ideas of high rise and keep returning because they love what is here. As long term rate payer of 20 years and 4 year as a permanent resident I don't believe there is anything wrong with the town centre. It might be improved with colour and plants but overall it is not a priority to have us pay more rates to see the town centre rejuvenated.

For instance the \$65 Million Sports Complex, I feel this is definitely not a priority. As 44% of the population are over 65 years of age and there are already very generous sports space how this can be a need. There is a difference between a need and a want. If he ammenities are in need than renovate. Don't ask us the residents 44% who do not use the complex to expect to be happy with \$65M being spent.

The previous council had borrowed \$6 Million, we have been told 1.7 M was spent on the Yaccaba extension. This was not a priority, it is approximately 500 meters of road that will take traffic from the town centre, in holiday peak season all it will do is cause a bottle neck. That money would have been better spent on kerbs, gutters ,sealing dirt roads etc.

Considerable money was spent on consultant fees to create a report on how to improve the foreshore of Nelson Bay. This is not a priority as tourists flock to the area and return often enjoying what is already there. If council wanted to know how we, the residents might like to see improvements made, or if indeed we felt they needed improvements they could have asked us and implemented our ideas, much cheaper than consultants.

During a council meeting in July, I heard Councillor Arnott ask why the Medowie Sports Club ( that council is funding) budget has blown out by \$1.5 Million, not one staff member at that meeting could explain why. Even more

worrying was the fact the other councillors were willing to pass that budget with that huge blow out.

I had read in the Newcastle Herald in February this year, that the Lagoons estate court case has been ongoing for many years in costing Millions. This case was due to be heard in May 2018. Council has not updated the residents on the progress or outcome of this costly lawsuit. If this has been settled out of court and the rates are being increased to pay for the costly drainage repairs council will have to provide, don't we deserve to know?

The main reason I do not agree is the fact the majority of the population is on a fixed budget, including me, and an annual increase to 77% is going to place enormous financial stress on us the residents. One lady wrote she is on a pension, already paying \$50 a fortnight and has no more to give. This is not an isolated case.

I feel council needs to be honest, live within its means and stick to their capital works list and not prioritise work that is not needed. For instance the \$90 toilet block at Tanilba Bay, that could have been improved at less cost. At Tanilba Bay the residents don't even have footpaths, the kids have to walk through mud and puddles to walk to school!!

It has become obvious to me that the residents come second here, business and tourists first.

The irony is if the council increase rates the local residents will not have any of their already limited budget to spend, this will affect local business. I will end with this following information provided by Port Stephens Council as another reason against a merger with Newcastle;

Port Stephens has demonstrated in its forecast that it will meet the infrastructure benchmarks by 2019.

The KPMG model does not include the impact of harmonisation of rates, which would occur after the four-year moratorium. NCC has had approval for a cumulative SRV of 31.68% above rate pegging, or 46.93% including the rate peg over a five year period from 2015-2016. The effect on residential rates at Port Stephens Council would result in an increase of an average of **\$500** per annum in a harmonisation. Businesses in Port Stephens will see rate increases between 33% and 61%.

Port Stephens Council does not have a Special Rate Variation in place and nor does Council propose the life of the current Long Term Financial Plan (2015-2025).

Both NCC and Port Stephens Council were declared to be financially sustainable across the seven go criteria and this proposed merger – due to its cost – will materially affect that sustainability.

I feel the SRV document was an attempt to blackmail us into accepting option 2. I won't be held to ransom by a council who has not been transparent. I will be sending this to IPART to share my thoughts with them.

Signed:

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Saturday, 28 July 2018 4:24 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Dear All,

We saw on Facebook you are soliciting comments from Port Stephens rate payers regarding the need to perhaps increase rates to fund the likes of road infrastructure.

We must say we are wondering how much thought has gone into some recent proposals such as the one to make Marine Drive (near Barry Park), Fingal Bay one way. That proposal seems to have come from nowhere and appears not to have been thought through as regards to cost, viability and more importantly need. This has made my husband and I question the need for an independent person to do a review of any and all other such proposals.

In the past we have sung the praises of Port Stephens Council but of late we are starting to question our lack of insight and due diligence.

Regards

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Saturday, 28 July 2018 8:45 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118

#### Feedback to Special Levy

I would like to put forward my objection to the current choice of proposed Special Rate Levy for 2019 & beyond. Reason for the objection is that I think the Mayor & Councillors are out of touch with the real people of Port Stephens.

In one writing you are boasting about having lower Rates for residents but by all of the choices for the proposal will significantly increase everyone's rates.

You as a council need to better manage the incoming rates & look at yourselves to negotiate better & especially when it comes to roads why keep renewing, resurfacing such roads that certainly do not require it, for eg. Richardson Road, Campvale that was recently done.

I understand the need to maintain & have a schedule to keep things up to scratch. Run this like any other business & cut costs where you can & spend when & where it requires it. Save for particular projects. Tighten your belts like everyone else has to. Sell assets that are costing money that do not & will most likely never make a profit.

Do not come into power & from what I can see by your own words want to be known for the Mayor who made a difference (you do not want to be the most hated Mayor & Councillors).

Regards,



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18/166094  
⑨

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, 29 July 2018 11:03 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Whilst I agree that our infrastructure does need some improvements I disagree with any rate variation .  
All our councils have seen the application for rate increases as an opportunity to tax their ratepayers over and above their normal rate contribution .  
Councils need to operate within their budgets , if they cannot make ends meet then restructure and do a new budget . Please stop looking at ratepayers as cash cows .  
Kind Regards

Sent:

18/166095  
(10)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, 29 July 2018 4:37 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** HPE CM: PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

**Record Number:** 18/166095

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I dont support a rate rise! We are battlers.

We are in Salt Ash just outside the red zone. Our pfos levels are high and no one gives a crap because we're not in the zone.

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 19 July 2018 2:37 PM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** Secret Rate increase

Hi there ,

Pretty poor form of the Mayor to be so secretive on regard to what percentage increase Council is seeking .  
How this money being spent by Council or should I say the Ratepayer will benefit the average family I don't know  
..!!???

What a Rip off .

Why don't they use some of the Fire inspection fee that gets gouged from owners of Industrial properties .  
Because it's not used for Fire Inspections .

Thanks

Tried the haveyoursay email but it's not working for me

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 30 July 2018 11:28 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** rates increase PSC2018-02118

The proposed rates increase for Tilligerry residents will be universally opposed because this area in general is populated by 'battlers'. They just can't afford it.

There is however a better revenue raiser available to PSSC and one which has worked well in the past. Tanilba Bay has vast areas of land designated as 'parks' which council has not developed and cannot afford to maintain. They were part of a visionary development in the 1930s which is no longer sustainable or relevant.

Five of the six 'inner circle' reserves were sold off years ago without complaint. This leaves one plus several in the outer 'circles'. Add to this connecting 'roads' which are blocked off and unsealed in both Tanilba & LTP and you have millions of dollars of unliquidated assets which are a liability. Sold off and developed they would generate huge rates income. This in turn, could be ploughed into fixing the roads and drains, the No.1 priority of residents.

If PSSC cares to do a cost analysis of this you will see the wisdom of the proposal.



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**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 30 July 2018 1:50 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Special rate variation PSC2018-02118

To Mayor Wayne and councillors,

As a long time rate payer in Port Stephens I am strongly opposed to this SRV proposal and the in my opinion Port Stephens Council needs to keep costs down especially when families are under pressure all over Australia with rising costs, static incomes and increasing debt.

Port Stephens annual rate costs are already higher than a number of other NSW councils and from my perspective for no obvious advantage to the local resident.

Is this council trying to take over the role of the State Government when it comes to investing in infrastructure?

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 30 July 2018 2:51 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Re proposed rates increase

RE: PSC2018- 02118.

4 Wagtail Way  
Fullerton Cove  
NSW 2318

LOT 32 DP270695.

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing on behalf of my wife and myself to object to any rate rises in the forth coming year. We live at [redacted] in an over 55s community. We are both on the full age pension and are not flushed with funds. The only service that Port Stephens provide to us is a weekly garbage pick up service. As the council provides nothing else i.e. we maintain all our roads ,guttering, tree lopping and all other services that would normally be provide by the council to the rest of rate payers in the Port Stephens. For this reason we,see no reason for council to seek from IPART , an SRV at least for our under serviced over 55s village "THE COVE"

Yours  
Faithfully

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 30 July 2018 7:27 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118

The council rates I pay are already FAR TOO HIGH!!!

Obviously the funds are not distributed efficiently.

Putting sticky fingers into the rate payers wallet is too easy a solution. PSC needs to do their job and and not take the easy way out.

and 18/167676  
18/180198 (16)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 July 2018 11:32 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Proposed Special Rate Variation  
**Attachments:** 180730 Special Rate Variation.pdf

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Attached is a letter objecting to the Council's proposed application for a Special Rate Variation.

Even if the maximum rate increase currently allowed by IPART is applied next year to our 1 July 2017 Valuation by the Valuer-General, our residential rate increase will be 19%.

Any Special Rate Variation above the 2.5% allowed by IPART will make this annual increase even higher than 19%. We believe that this is grossly excessive and totally unjustified.

Yours sincerely,

18/167676

(16)

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30 July 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment No**

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property by from the valuation of 1 July 2016 ( to , an increase of 16.2%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0031088, our next residential rate levy would increase from \$806.78 in 2018-19 to \$960.63, an increase of \$153.85 or 19%. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 July 2018 1:37 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

I cannot agree to any proposal to increase rates in Port Stephens.

I have recently been widowed and I am struggling to pay my way as well as pay for my husband's funeral and his outstanding commitments.

I have lived in Port Stephens council area for over 30 years because I like the lifestyle it offers. I do not want to lose my home but an increase in council rates would make that outcome more probable for me.

If you do decide to go ahead with an increase then you should also increase the pensioner concession.

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, 12 August 2018 2:47 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Feedback on proposed SRV

Dear PSC,

( and you are dear in most senses of the word, I heard last night that our rates are already much higher in this area than in Castle Hill )

I wish to strongly object to any proposal to increase residential rates in the Port Stephens council area in excess of the existing 2.5%.

I have read the documentation on council's website regarding the SRV proposal. To me, some of the proposed works are worthwhile, but many I would class as wish list. Some of the proposed works may benefit the business community, if that is the case let the business community bear the cost with business and commercial rate rises.

Recently Allan Kohler the respected financial commentator on ABC TV presented a graph showing that the disposable income of Australians has remained essentially unchanged since the global financial crisis. Our income is not going up so why should we be expected to fund an increase to council well above inflation.

If this idea is a thought bubble from our new mayor who has strong ties to the Nelson Bay business community then I really hope he is a one term wonder.

So if your attempts to gain community feedback are really genuine then know that everyone that I have spoken to opposes this SRV idea. Wide opposition was also reported in the Examiner in an article reporting on the meeting with ratepayers at Nelson Bay. Councillor Arnott who opposes this cash grab was reported to be the only speaker to get strong applause.

I hope you will regard this feedback as reasoned, honest and sincere.

I will now be contacting the Minister for Local Government and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to express my concerns directly and perhaps get a bit more scrutiny of Council in this regard.

Sincerely

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 July 2018 3:53 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Rate Rises

PSC 2018-02118

To Whom It May Concern

I wish to express my object to the recent and proposed rate rise implemented by the Port Stephens Council. Not only will the rate rises have a significant impact on my budget they will also affect my ability to continue to live in my home as a mortgagee.

Regards

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 July 2018 8:40 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Fwd: PSC2018-02118

Begin forwarded message:

**Date:** 31 July 2018 at 7:47:40 pm AEST  
**To:** [srv@portstephens.nsw.gov](mailto:srv@portstephens.nsw.gov)  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118

Hi,  
Emailing my feedback is something I have never done before but upon reading the proposed increases to our rates I felt I had to say something. We are a family of 5 living in port Stephens. We love where we live and the many facilities such as parks, playgrounds and boat ramps that the council provides. However I can not understand such a large increase to our rates. We both work to support our family but we won't be able to make the payments that have been suggested. Please reconsider such a large increase to something much more manageable.

Kind regards,

---

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If you have received this message in error please forward notify the sender and delete all copies of this message.  
If you wish to have us block your email address from receiving any future emails from this organisation please forward this email with your request to

Thank you.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 July 2018 8:53 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Feedback -PSC2018-02118

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and would like to take this opportunity to present my thoughts re increase of rates.  
I no longer work and am a pensioner.

Recently have heard about a survey (reported on ABC) conducted showing that NSW has the highest stress from household finances and so I don't understand why you need to add to this trauma.

Just like any budget, if you don't have the funds "don't start building pyramids in your name"

Not happy with the proposal to increase rates or even a "special" rate.

Thank you and sincerely hope you can think this decision through so as to not effect residents- you may not get elected at the next vote.

Sincerely,

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 July 2018 10:03 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

We nominate Option 1

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 1 August 2018 11:25 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Rate charges

Hi my name is [redacted] : located [redacted] a gated community that looks after their own parklands, roads, street lighting paid by the residents. The only service the council provides is a single red bin pick up a week and yellow bin once a fortnight a small amount of services combined with a high rate amount.. many residents are not happy about the high rates charged .

Cheers

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 July 2018 12:13 PM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment No.403931

PSC2018-02118

General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
P.O. Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE. NSW. 2324

Dear Mr Wallis  
Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment Nr

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART. On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property ( ) by ( ) from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$266,000) to \$309,000, an increase of 16.2%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0031088, our next residential rate levy would increase from \$806.78 in 2018-19 to \$960.63, an increase of \$153.85 or 19%. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 August 2018 12:45 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Rate Variation

Hello,

I am not aware of any details regarding Council's need for additional rate variation but my wife and I own as part of our self funded retirement 2 small retail units in

). We have had difficulty in the past finding long term reliable tenants and the outgoings are constantly highlighted as being a major issue. Approximately \$3,000 in Council rates for a very modest 110m2 of retail space away from the town centre is a heavy burden for what are very small businesses.

I register my strong objection to any increase at all – let alone a 'special variation' increase!

Regards,

---

2 August 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment 1**

I have just received the Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. I note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2017, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased the valuation of my property (L 100/100) by 16.2% from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$253,000) to \$294,000, an increase of 16.2%.

Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART, that would increase the charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0031088. Therefore my next residential rate levy would increase from \$767.35 in 2018-19 to approximately \$913.15, an increase of \$145.80 or 19%. I believe that this increase is grossly excessive.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation **above** the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in the residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

Unless there is a specific reason for a one off special rate variation which is articulated clearly to and supported by ratepayers, I am opposed to any move by Council to apply for it.

Yours sincerely

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 August 2018 7:14 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118

General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
P.O. Box 42  
Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis,

Re: Proposed special Rate Variation Application - Assessment No

I have just received my rate notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. I note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base of July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased by 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On July 1 2017, the Valuer-General increased his valuation of my property,( by an increase of 16.2%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-2020 rates, and also applying the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART, my next residential rate levy would increase by about 19%! I believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified to this single pensioner!

For this reason, I am opposed to any move by this Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely,

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 August 2018 8:49 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Dear Sir/Madam

I made this submission using the online form and I was surprised that the online form did not ask for my details. I mean I could be anyone, and this means the system has the potential to be abused. How do I now have confidence that some large scale developer has not just made hundreds of submissions in favour of the special rate increase?

Please see below the content of my online submission.

Yours faithfully

There is a large leap from Option One Maintain 2.5% to Option Two 6.5%. Straight up Council is attempting to more than double our current rates. I do not accept such a large leap. This is way above CPI. At consultation meeting the facilitator referred to Pensioners on fixed incomes being only a small percentage of rate payers that would be hard hit by the increases. But fail to recognise, that whilst I am not a pensioner, I am a low income earner. We are a family with 2 school age children, my husband has a casual 3 day/week job in retail and I have a part-time job as a school assistant. Between us we earn less than \$60,000 per year. Our wages are not going to increase comensurately to councils proposed increase.

The facilitator also referred to the fact that PS residents are good at paying their rates, ie the number in default is low. I am not in default because the current rates are affordable. That is not a reason to increase my rates and to put me in a position where I am more likely to fail.

The facilitator made comparisons to other local councils, such as Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Maitland. But I chose to live here! When I was in a position to buy a home I looked at Newcastle and Maitland. Those big centres did not appeal to me. I chose Lemon Tree Passage because it is a quiet and quaint little town and it is affordable. I knew at the time of purchase that there was not much in the way of facilities, and that was part of the appeal.

In the time I have lived here I have seen lots of new residential developments. You don't have to be good at maths to calculate that with each new residence the council has the benefit of another rate payer. So Council income from rates due to new housing is on the increase.

I request IPART to investigate a rumour that one of the reasons for the increase is to make up the loss incurred by re-zonning residences in the red-zone. There is no mention of this in the information booklet. I support the re-zonning to provide relief to those residences, but I do not support a rate increase for the purpose of making up the loss. The Council should be seeking compensation from Fed Govt for losses incurred as a result of Williamtown RAAF negligence.

With respect to "community consultation", this to me was a farce. The meeting I attended was held at 4pm. I had to leave my job early to get to this meeting. I imagine that many people were not able to attend due to the time it was held.

I was under the impression that "consultation" meant feedback. But at the meeting I asked "will anything I say at this meeting hold weight?" to which the answer was "no". It was apparant that the purpose of the meeting was merely for the council to tick a box for IPART. And, whilst the information booklet uses the language "council is considering an application to IPART", the facilitator at the meeting said, "the decision has been made, Council is going ahead with the application". Therefore the booklet is misleading, there is

no "consideraton" of what the rate payers have to say; the application will go ahead, and all that we can do now is make a written submission.

We are now at a disadvantage because unlike Council Elections where residents are compelled to vote, there is no compulsion for residents to make a written submission. It's hard enough to get people to a polling booth let alone go to the trouble of making a written submission. So this to me also adds to the unfairness of Council's decision to make this application to IPART. This was not an election issue and it should have been.

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 August 2018 8:58 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Dear Sir/Madam

My wife made a submission using the online form and I was surprised that the online form did not ask for her details. I mean she could be anyone, and this means the system has the potential to be abused. How do I now have confidence that some large scale developer has not just made hundreds of submissions in favour of the special rate increase?

In relation to the application for SRV:

There is a large leap from Option One Maintain 2.5% to Option Two 6.5%. Straight up Council is attempting to more than double our current rates. I do not accept such a large leap. This is way above CPI. At consultation meeting the facilitator referred to Pensioners on fixed incomes being only a small percentage of rate payers that would be hard hit by the increases. But fail to recognise, that whilst I am not a pensioner, I am a low income earner. We are a family with 2 school age children, my husband has a casual 3 day/week job in retail and I have a part-time job as a school assistant. Between us we earn less than \$60,000 per year. Our wages are not going to increase comensurately to councils proposed increase.

The facilitator also referred to the fact that PS residents are good at paying their rates, ie the number in default is low. I am not in default because the current rates are affordable. That is not a reason to increase my rates and to put me in a position where I am more likely to fail.

The facilitator made comparisons to other local councils, such as Newcastle, Lake Macquarie and Maitland. But I chose to live here! When I was in a position to buy a home I looked at Newcastle and Maitland. Those big centres did not appeal to me. I chose Lemon Tree Passage because it is a quiet and quaint little town and it is affordable. I knew at the time of purchase that there was not much in the way of facilities, and that was part of the appeal.

In the time I have lived here I have seen lots of new residential developments. You don't have to be good at maths to calculate that with each new residence the council has the benefit of another rate payer. So Council income from rates due to new housing is on the increase.

I request IPART to investigate a rumour that one of the reasons for the increase is to make up the loss incurred by re-zonning residences in the red-zone. There is no mention of this in the information booklet. I support the re-zonning to provide relief to those residences, but I do not support a rate increase for the purpose of making up the loss. The Council should be seeking compensation from Fed Govt for losses incurred as a result of Williamstown RAAF negligence.

With respect to "community consultation", this to me was a farce. The meeting was held at 4pm. My wife had to leave her job early to get to this meeting. I was not able to leave my job to attend and I have had to rely on my wife's notes of the meeting. I imagine that many people were not able to attend due to the time it was held.

I was under the impression that "consultation" meant feedback. But at the meeting my wife asked "will anything I say at this meeting hold weight?" to which the answer was "no". It was apparant that the purpose of the meeting was merely for the council to tick a box for IPART. And, whilst the information booklet uses the language "council is considering an application to IPART", the facilitator at the meeting said, "the decision has been made, Council is going ahead with the application". Therefore the booklet is misleading, there is no "consideraton" of what the rate payers have to say; the application will go ahead, and all that we can do now is make a written submission.

We are now at a disadvantage because unlike Council Elections where residents are compelled to vote, there is no compulsion for residents to make a written submission. It's hard enough to get people to a polling booth let alone go to the trouble of making a written submission. So this to me also adds to the unfairness of

Council's decision to make this application to IPART. This was not an election issue and it should have been.

Yours sincerely

(29)  
2/2

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 August 2018 12:24 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing in response to the Special Rate Variation Proposal. Overall I am broadly supportive and I would like to congratulate the Council for its vision for the future of our area. I do however, have some concerns.

Firstly, the proposed options result in a significant increase in rates over seven years. I wonder if enough consideration for those in financial hardship has been made. I know pensioners who are homeowners have access to rate discounts but I am sure there are many on low incomes who do not qualify for this concession. For example, my neighbour is a pensioner who rents. I am sure she would struggle to pay rent increases due to the increased rates on the property.

My second concern is equity. Tanilba Bay isn't even mentioned as one of the town centres for revitalisation even though the Tilligerry Peninsula accounts for about 10% of the population of the Shire. I believe equity must be addressed for this area to support a significant increase in rates. While it is inevitable that Nelson Bay and Raymond Terrace will attract the bulk of any new funding, smaller communities must receive their fair share.

My third concern is about the priority of projects. I realise this is not set in stone so I will set down here what I believe are the most pressing needs in Tanilba Bay. Firstly, coastal protection works to prevent further foreshore erosion are urgently needed from Tilligerry Habitat to Caswell Reserve Mallabula. The foreshore park at Lemon Tree Passage is also a problem. The second need I see is to upgrade Lemon Tree Passage Road, especially from the new roundabout to Mallabula. The roundabout is a great start but more is needed seeing this is such a busy road. I don't know what the problem is, whether or not it is heavy trucks but I have seen vision of roads in war zones in better condition.

Finally, perhaps not so urgent but important to me, Mallabula Pool should have shorter winter shut down times. I have found 9 weeks this winter excessive.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our views.

3 August 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment No**

We have received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable land value has been maintained at the value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property (I by from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$290,000) to \$319,000, an increase of 10%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-2020 rates, and also applying the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the residential rate charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0031088, our next residential rate levy would increase from \$879.57 in 2018-2019 to \$991.71 in 2019-2020, an increase of \$112.14 or 12%. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council also applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 12% in one year.

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 August 2018 3:13 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118

We the undersigned are **totally against** the proposed **SRV**. We suggest that you should find the funds required for your grand sports stadium elsewhere.

As for funds for roads and other areas of neglect, a Time and Motion study of your staff and management would probably reveal many areas for cost saving.

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Saturday, 4 August 2018 9:29 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Council taking easy way out by increasing rates.

Why not become more efficient.

EG 3 to 4 council workings driving around in expensive work vehicle to clean BBQs in Nelson Bay area. One cleans while others read paper. (Then they use the BBQ for morning tea)

These types off jobs should be contracted out to locals, it would be a fraction of the cost.

Besides as a pensioner I just cant afford rate rises.

**From:**  
**Sent:** Saturday, 4 August 2018 12:04 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** HPE CM: PSC2018-02118

**Record Number:** 18/172865

Good Morning,

My name is [REDACTED] I just wanted to write some feedback to council regarding this possible increase in rate (SRV), and how this will effect me.

[REDACTED], back then, there wasn't much except lots of sand. Raymond Terrace was just starting. From then to now, yes things have dramatically changed.

I went to primary school and high school at Irrawang and I still reside here with my mother in the same house that my parents both built and lived in.

I worked my little but off for so many years to save for a deposit on a house, and it was only last year that I was able to make my dream a reality. This house I'm renting out, as an investment property but mainly for the reasons I would not have been able to afford all the re-payments and bills on my own if I were living there. [REDACTED] But I hope to one day move into this new house of mine, which is [REDACTED]

Working three casual jobs, my income varies dramatically from week to week. I'm only just scrapping it through. I fear for this rate increase, that I may loose my new house, not being able to afford the rate repayments on both houses (My mother and I go halves in the one were we both reside in). My dream may just be snatched away from me.

I understand that council has some dreams of their own, but please, not at the expense of me, my mother, my family and nor any other rate payer.

There has to be another way.

Can you tell me what the increase will be?

Warmest Regards

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Saturday, 4 August 2018 12:05 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Re: PSC SRV 2018 - 02118

I object to any extra rate variation being introduced in this region.

As a pensioner I would struggle to find the funds to meet this cost.

I believe our council has many plans to improve facilities for the benefit of tourists at the cost of the general ratepayer who for the most part would not receive any benefit from projects such as these.

It is time our council focussed on good housekeeping by maintaining our roads and infrastructure which would benefit all including our tourists.

Council should also consult with ratepayers more in regard to roadworks in their region.

Making dual carriageways into single lane roundabout on a very busy intersection is not good management.

Making a narrow roundabout with many entry/exit points and taking the right of way from the main road on Lemon Tree Passage Road while other parts of this road are in desperate need of upgrade is just another prime example of lack of consultation and does not alleviate the problem of the original bad road design in this area.

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Saturday, 4 August 2018 12:11 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Hello

Digested the literature

My preference OPTION TWO - ENHANCE

Not Sedentary but Slow and Steady

Regards

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Saturday, 4 August 2018 2:25 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Regarding Special Rate Variation.

I wish to object to the proposed increase in Land Rates above the Rate Peg Increase of 2.5%. This Rate Peg was put in for good reasons; Rate Payers can't and shouldn't have to pay amounts higher than the CPI increases. Rate payers' incomes are not rising above this amount if at all.

Self-Funded Retirees incomes have been actually falling; Pensioners incomes are pegged, and Worker's wages are about CPI level.

We all must live within our income including Councils.

Stop paying out funds to Pressure Groups.

Stop paying out on Grandiose Schemes.

People will always ask for handouts for Clubs, Schemes or ideas without thinking of where the money comes from. Stick to basics as Councils should.

Business is dying in the Bay largely due to high rents, and higher rates will add to this. The Bay's Land Valuations are far higher than the rest of the Shire, in fact the Eastern Wards pays close to 50% of the revenue, but only 25% is spent in the area.

Most people can't move to cheaper areas so are forced to pay a disproportionate amount on rates.

One of your plans is to revitalize the Nelson Bay Business area by the extra funds you hope to get, will take a few years to achieve, collecting the money, get a loan and plan and complete your plan, meanwhile businesses will have increased costs so more businesses will fail and won't be there to revitalize.

Stick to basics, no grandiose schemes.

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, 5 August 2018 8:17 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118

I want option 1 for the following reasons:

Our rates usually have an increase compared to cpi increase each year. Currently that is well above what the wage growth is and will be for years in the future. On top of that is increases in electricity, water, petrol, etc etc etc. Most people cannot afford a huge increase of another rate increase. Even if you rent, the rent will increase to cover it.

After last election, there was a big change in councillors. Why within a year, this srv is put on the table. All for jobs and growth. Rubbish. Sounds like Liberal/Nat party politics. Which should NOT be in local council. Having paid rates for 36 years in Tanilba Bay and still not got kerb and guttering is beyond me. So have my contributions been for others who have it so that their property prices have increased alot. Councillor Tucker might be able to answer at ICAC. Another option would be for residents with kerb and guttering in the shire to pay option 4 so that us plebs get the same. To be told by council that kerb and guttering for the street I live in is not programmed within the next 10 years also means no increase after already paying rates for 36 years for no gain. Streets in Tanilba Bay are the worse of any town in Port Stephens and have been for decades. And if council think that work done in Clemenceau Crescent is value for money, need to rethink.

Nothing has been programmed for Tanilba Bay in this srv proposal. So why should I pay more. My rates are for roads, footpaths of which there are very few, garbage collection and park maintenance. Not interested in commercial area and sport complex upgrades. Do the basic improvements first that I pay rates for.

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, 5 August 2018 9:54 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118

Hello PSC,

I do not agree with the council following through with an SRV application.

My yearly rates now are \$1587.66. In Woodville all I get is garbage collection and few pot holes fixed in the road. No kerb and guttering, no town water for which I have to pay an extra levy + the costs of a service provider that must be registered with the council, no parks and no local amenities.

In an area like Woodville we already subsidise the wealth of public amenity at places like Nelson Bay while our area remains largely ignored. An SRV will make this situation even worse. Major projects as suggested by the community? It would be a fair bet that none of these will be in Woodville.

Regards,

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 6 August 2018 11:59 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118 Rate increase policy

The Council should not increase rates. There is no good case for this and the method chosen, of compounding cumulative increases represents a huge increase. I cannot find anything about this on your web site – you have not consulted or informed the community properly.

If money is required, you can apply to the State and Commonwealth governments for grants, just like other organisations.

Regards,

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 6 August 2018 12:32 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

To whom it may concern,

As a Port Stephens rate payer I would like it known that I support option one of the SRV.

My address is :

Along with your current listed work projects, I believe serious consideration should be given to the portion of Foreshore Drive, Salamander Bay that is beyond the current housing developments.

This road is in dire need of repair & upgrading. It is a potential death trap for cyclists & pedestrians who use this road.

The cycleway is not a continuous path but goes from a dirt track, to no path over the causeway to a poorly signed path on one side only of the road.

This road is heavily used by residents either by vehicle, bike or foot traffic & is also a primary access point to the Soldiers Point area for emergency vehicles.

If this is the incorrect forum for my suggestion for road works, could it please be passed onto the correct delegate.

Cheers,

From:

Subject: Port Stephens council representatives,  
ladies and g

Date: 4 Aug 2018 at 8:11:44 am

To:

Port Stephens council representatives, ladies and gentlemen.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I come from seaside

lane and traffic slows into the big roundabout. Council office have been helpful and polite with all my home establishment questions however we come under strata laws and have had 3 different developers creating seaside . There are nearly 1000 home lots there and my rates are just under \$2000 per year. Yes heading toward two million dollars per year going to port Stephens council in rates from seaside.

NSW laws allow councils to step sideways while developers build parks, toilets and bus shelters, demand guideline standards for fences, driveways and letterboxes and generally manage infrastructure such as stormwater , roads , power,internet,&phone lines. Developers are in business to make money and profit , so community grounds are minimised with standards . I'm yet to meet the inspector or policeman that checks the developers contract obligations and yet to meet the enforcer of the guidelines demanded of the home owner. We own the recreational areas (parks). Council can continue to step sideways with responsibility and accountability but take our rate money.

We get garbage pickup from council and that's it. Council doesn't own the land is their catch cry as we are a strata community with Body Corporate management that we pay about another \$500 per year, mainly to insurance and office fees. We are supportive of council delivering facilities to the shire and popular community recreational areas.

But what about us?

We have no bus shelter for the pickup of schoolies out front. It's unsafe and inadequate.

We have parkland and playground but no public toilets. No lawn or ground maintenance is done.

There's no lead free area for dogs. We have no support from inspectors such as a dog catcher.

Our community bylaws, that council would normally inspect and enforce, have been neglected by the developers. Things we need (speedbumps for example) go begging.

Play where you live or live where you play is the sales pitch. When you dig down you find the narrower roads don't allow street parking for cars or trailers (more blocks to sell) and council don't have responsibility to remove unregistered vehicles from the footpath or community area. We can only

access the beach by 4WD, or walk miles around when it's just a few hundred metres. But Worimi and National Parks have wired off a huge section out front, frontal dune erosion and camping areas, and no dogs allowed here but up at birubi is okay. Quads bikes only entry to be lavis lane.

Can council help us play where we live? No public toilets in our parkland, no parking for boats caravans or trailers, no practical access to the beach or water and no investment required in this community.

is in its final stages of development. When the developer finishes is council going to step up to the responsibilities normally expected and required or leave us abandoned to a body corporate with costs and decisions upon the residents for services. There is already a ground swell appearing about the legality of paying rates within seaside community.

Thank-you

General Manager

Port Stephens Council

PO Box 42

Raymond Terrace

NSW 2324

August 4, 2018

Dear Mr Wallis,

We have received your note regarding the proposed special rate variation application and offer the following comments:

1. We live in an . The only service the Port Stephens Council provides the residents of The Cove is the collection of waste and recycling.
2. We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-19 financial year. Whilst the rateable value has been maintained at the Valuer General's valuation as at the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300 an increase of 2.44%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.
3. On the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 the Valuer General increased his valuation of our property from \$259,000 to \$301,000. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-2020 rates, and that council will apply the maximum increase of 2.5% allowed by IPART, our next Residential Rate Levy would increase from \$785.55 to \$935.76 an increase of \$150.71 or 19.12%.
4. Any other increase above those allowed by IPART would increase this charge by a much higher percentage.

For these reasons we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours Sincerely

3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment No**

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property (i) by \$42,000 from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$259,000) to \$301,000, an increase of 16.0%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0031088, our next residential rate levy would increase from \$785.55 in 2018-19 to \$934.8, an increase of \$149.25 or 19%. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours faithfully

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 August 2018 7:45 AM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** Re Rate Rises

I fully endorse Paul Attard's letter in the Port Stephens Examiner dated 2nd July, 2018.

As a senior citizen living in this area with a fixed income and no real rises, I am against any excessive rate rises (as proposed by Council).

How does Council figure????

Would you please table this at your next meeting.

Kind Regards

2 August 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment N**

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property (l by \$40,000 from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$250,000) to \$290,000, an increase of 16.0%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge of 0.00303300 to 0.0031088 our next residential rate levy would increase from \$758.25 in 2018-19 to \$898.53, an increase of \$140.28 or 18.5%. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 August 2018 10:18 AM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** Proposed Rate Increases  
**Attachments:** Council letter re Rates increase.jpg

Hello Port Stephen Council

Please find attached a letter from me concerning the proposed Rate increase being applied for.

Can you please ensure it gets to the appropriate section.

Kind Regards

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Saturday, 4 August 2018 1:23 PM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** Email from PSC website

The following enquiry has been sent from the Port Stephens Council website contact form.  
<http://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au/contact-us>

Full Name:

How would you like to be contacted? : Email Your email address:

Your phone number :

Your address :

Your general enquiry : Attn. Councillor Steve Tucker . At the Lemon Tree meeting with residents, why wasn't the future increases in land prices incorporated in the SRV tables that were distributed at the meeting .The future rates will be just about double .Not very transparent

F

**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 July 2018 3:31 PM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Council Rate Rise Proposal

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal.

I would like to agree to the idea but nothing gives me confidence the money would be best used.

For example I

The street has been in need of resealing for at least 15 years. There is also no curbing, and no drainage. Yet Vista Avenue which really did not need any work was resealed last year. Who makes these decisions?

Requests for info on when any, that is any work, would be done other than filling pot holes yet again on Kent Gardens only gets a comment like,, "it's about 21 on the list of projects."

I ask you will this extra money result in our street being at least properly resealed, and when, given that the commitment in the examiner only talks about sealing almost every (unsealed) road, not sealed streets urgently needing action. Nothing said about curbing. So what roads are we talking about? None named? Nothing about timing to complete this work?

Also, it's not clear whether after 12 months the rates drop back to what would have been the norm, or as I suspect, this would become the new norm or base for approved per annum IP&RT increases each year. Hence is it not a one off increase, but in fact an ongoing cumulative increase being proposed?

Your advise and clarification on the above issues would be appreciated.

As it stands there is not enough detail in the general statement to enable me for one to support.

Thanks again

PS: Who pays for the Port Report we all just received? Not sure that expense is needed. Is this a best use of funds, when the Examiner basically covers the same issues anyway?

-----

The General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

6 August 2018  
E: [council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Sir

**Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment !**

I have recently received my Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year for property being

I note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

I also note that The Cove Village Fullerton Cove maintains its own roads and street lighting which cost is borne by the residents. Port Stephens Council makes no contribution to works or improvements in this regard.

The Valuer-General's valuation for 1 July 2017 was \$301,000 compared to \$259,000 on 1 July 2016, an increase of \$51,000 or 20% in one year! Council's proposed Special Rate Variation will increase this even further.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in my residential levy would be even greater than 20% in one year, thus imposing a financial hardship on me as I rely on the pension for living expenses.

**For this reason I am strongly opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.**

**PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL  
Information Services**

07 AUG 2018

File No. ....  
Action by .....  
☐ R.H.C. ....

30 July 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment**

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property by \$40,000 from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$248,000) to \$288,000, an increase of 16%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0031088, our next residential rate levy would increase from \$752.18 in 2018-19 to \$895.10, an increase of \$142.92 or 19%. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

I also point out that Council only collects garbage from our Community at The Cove and does not care for roads, lighting etc.

For these reasons we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely

18/1738408  
(51)

<b>PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL</b> <b>Information Services</b>
07 AUG 2018
File No. ....
Action by .....
<input type="checkbox"/> R.H.C. ....

03 August 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment N**

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property (L by \$43,000 from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$248,000) to \$288,000, an increase of 16.00%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0031088, our next residential rate levy would increase from \$806.78 in 2018-19 to \$960.63, an increase of \$153.85 or 19%. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Monday, 30 July 2018 3:14 PM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** Current Council rates.

1&gt;

We have lived at the above address for nearly 2 1/2 years which is a gated lifestyle community.

Due to the fact that the only dealings we have with Port Stephens council is the weekly garbage collection, a response to our querie would be appreciated.

Being a gated community, it is up to all the residents to maintain every aspect of our residential area including all lighting and internal roads.

As such, can you please explain as to why, as stated, that the only input that Port Stephens council has with our community is the weekly garbage collection

yet we are being asked to pay the full rates per year at \$1,390.43. Thankfully our pension rebate is included.

We hope you can supply a satisfactory answer to this question as we consider it quite unfair due to the limited input by the council.

Regards.



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

6<sup>th</sup> August 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment I**

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property (Lot ) by \$41,000 from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$253,000) to \$294,000, an increase of 16.2%.

If this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0031088, our next residential rate levy would increase from \$767.35 in 2018-19 to \$910.85, an increase of \$143.50 or close to a 19% rate rise.

We are both not working, we are not old enough to benefit from the pension scheme or on any other government assistance.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

For this reason, we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely,

---

6 August 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year and note that the charge based on the property value has increased by 0.000072 or 2.43%. We note that the maximum allowed by IPART is 2.5%.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased the valuation of our property ( ) by \$40,000 from the valuation of 1 July 2016. Assuming this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates and also applying the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would substantially increase our council rate charge.

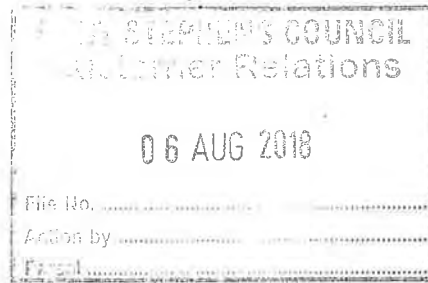
Should the Council apply for a higher rate again, our rates have the potential to increase as much as 19% in one year. We believe that this increase is excessive, unfair and unjustified especially when the only specific service Council provides to our community is garbage collection. We are responsible for, and have the added financial burden for maintenance of our own roads and street lights.

Do the residents of The Cove Village receive a discounted rate because the council does not fund our roads or street lights or are we in fact, being charged for a service that Council does not provide yet includes in our council rates?

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely

11m file 18/174331  
SCANNED



181174331  
(55)  
6 August 2018

PSC2018-02118  
Mr Wayne Wallis  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42 Raymond Terrace NSW, 2324

Dear Sir

*In relation to Port Stephens Council seeking an approved SRV to increase rate income under the provisions of the Local Government act 1993.*

*It is a disappointment that the opportunity to attend the community engagement activities that were conducted during July and August 2018, Swan Bay wasn't even mentioned on the listing, the closest would have been Karuah, held 1 August at 12 noon in the Working Together Centre, we don't get the Examiner delivered, the only way I found out about that forum was when I received an email from Rick Mackenzie on the 3 August giving an update on progress on road works on Swan Bay Roads, who attached the information about the forum. (But let's put that aside)*

*In relation to Council's application to The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for the additional rate increase, my opinion on the 3 options, I believe the only credible one would be a temporary increase for special projects (up to 7 years) with income returning to the previous levels, plus rate peg. at the end of the approved period, that way it would demonstrate that it was a credible request to Rate Payers and not a way of getting around increasing rates to top up general revenue; also council has not provided the size of the amount and what the projects are under consideration?; in councils information it mentioned a project, I believe it doesn't mean a singular project?*

*To reiterate my concerns and support of the option 3, if council were to go ahead and increases rates under the guise of special projects, once it had the money and just props up its general revenue, it would prevent ratepayers in the future accepting any rates increase over and above the Governments rate peg. amount, as it wasn't a credible request; it should be keep as a special purpose fund, with updates on projects that were achieve with this money to rate payers each year with their rate notices.*

*I put this forward to be constructive, as I am aware of the financial constraints that Council's are confronted with and their ability to deliver services with all the regulatory requirements that only exacerbates the problem.*

Yours Faithfully

18/174635

SSB

PSC2018-02118

Mr Wayne Wallis

General Manager

Port Stephens Council

PO Box 42 Raymond Terrace NSW, 2324

2 August 2018

Dear Sir

*In relation to Port Stephens Council seeking an approved SRV to increase rate income under the Local Government act 1993.*

*Should approval be granted by the Government? Council will use this additional income to build and maintain significant new infrastructure; the Swan Bay Community on the 29 June 2017 forwarded to council a Petition signed by 219 Petitioners, calling on council to make their roads safe.*

*It would be appreciated if the collective request by the community of Swan Bay that their concerns be part of an improved road network, supported by the rate increase proposal.*

*Attached please find a copy of the petition letter dated 29/6/2017, should you require a copy on the full petition please advice.*

*Awaiting your earliest reply*

*Yours Faithfully*



**From:**  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 7 August 2018 7:28 PM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** Council Rate Increase - PSC2018-02118

N



7 August 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis

I have just received my Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year and note that the charge based on the property value has increased by 0.000072 or 2.43%. I note that the maximum allowed by IPART is 2.5%.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased the valuation of my property (.....) from the valuation of 1 July 2013. Assuming this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates and also applying the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would substantially increase my council rate charge.

Should the Council apply for a higher rate again, my rates have the potential to increase as much as 19% in one year. I believe that this increase is excessive, unfair and unjustified especially when the only specific service Council provides to our community is garbage collection. We are responsible for, and have the added financial burden for maintenance of our own roads and street lights. I am also a pensioner and i am sure you will agree that there is no way the government will increase my pension at these levels.

Do the residents of The Cove Village receive a discounted rate because the council does not fund our roads or street lights or are we infact, being charged for a service that Council does not provide yet includes in our council rates?

(56)  
2/2

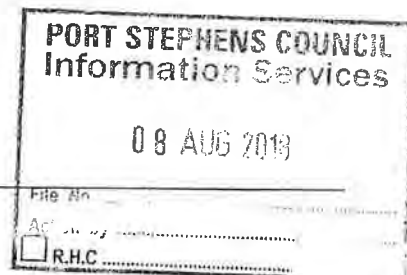
For this reason I am opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely

3

1

3/8/2018



Dear Sir or Madam,

Re. Proposed Increase in Port Stephens Council Rates  
re 'The Cove'  
Fullerton Cove 2318

We write to object in the strongest term to the information you have just sent us regarding your application to the NSW Government to increase our council rates.

This would be highly unfair to the senior citizens who are living in this community settlement of over 55's - and mainly over 70's - many pensioners - living at 'The Cove'.

With the small home lots we have here, the Council, would be collecting an inappropriate absolute windfall.

Your rates are already on a par with the Sydney suburb we left to enjoy a little stress and traffic free existence in our old age. (75 and 79)

We certainly do not receive all the services we had there - including a wonderfully comprehensive library just down the road.

Some of the MAJOR expenses NOT undertaken by Pt Stephens Council at 'The Cove' have been for our services.

You have NOT supplied any ROADS or LIGHTING at 'The Cove'...and any further repairs and maintenance, as they fall due, will not become a burden to the Council.

Trusting that you can use this information, to relieve this additional expense - not warranted - from this village.

3 August, 2018

General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis

Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment

We have just received a Special Rate Variation fact sheet requesting our feedback re proposed rate levy increase.

You say "Council requires a larger, consistent source of income."

We have been involved in private enterprise for 45 years, and it would have been great to have the opportunity to say to our clients "we require a larger, consistent source of income".

To achieve this we HAD to create a more viable business, make economic adjustments, and have the income meet the requirements of our family.

Instead of filling out forms it is beholden on your Council to provide good local government planning for your rate holders, by working within your Council budgets.

Your rate payers I would say, are to a large extent, pensioners. We already have to make economies to afford to live. You could very well find by your "requiring larger, more consistent source of income" will in fact bring you to the situation of many of us postponing payment of our rates until our death, which would absolutely negate any possibility of your meeting your obligations in the near future.

**We absolutely are opposed** to ANY move by Port Stephens Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours faithfully ✓

COUNCIL  
Services

08 JUL 2018

18/174649  
(59)

**Mr. Ryan Palmer,  
Mayor,  
Port Stephens Shire Council,  
P.O. Box 42,  
RAYMOND TERRACE. N.S.W. 2324**

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**1st August, 2018**

**Dear Sir,**

**RE : SPECIAL RATE VARIATION**

**As a pensioner couple struggling to keep up with increases in the cost of living, in particular the up and up costs of electricity, water rates, insurances, etc. , your proposal to increase Land Rates would be another 'nail in the coffin'. Therefore, we oppose any such rate increase!**

The General Manager,  
Port Stephens Council,  
PO Box 42,  
Raymond Terrace. 2318.  
1<sup>st</sup> August, 2018.

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL Information Services	
08 AUG 2018	
File No. ....	
Action by .....	
<input type="checkbox"/> R.H.C. ....	

Dear Sir,

**Proposed Special Rate Variation**

I refer to your letter accompanying our 2018 Rate Notice. My wife and I wish to register our opposition to Council's proposal to seek a Special Rate Variation.

My wife and I are retired and on a fixed income. Unlike Council, we have no mechanism to seek an increase to our income. Our council rates have already increased this year due to valuation increases. It is our understanding from both our own observations and media reports that many people, both employed and out of employment, are presently experiencing income stress yet costs seem to inextricably increase all around us.

We strongly believe that Council must 'cut its cloth' accordingly and, like most rate payers, allocate its available resources as best it can. The present circumstances just do not enable additional services and facilities to be added if Council cannot do so out of its currently available resources..

Even if you had articulated in your letter exactly how Council has 'implemented a range of productivity savings and reduced costs' and what exactly are the additional expenditures ratepayers are demanding, our position would still be the same. We strongly object to Council seeking a Special Rate Variation.

Yours faithfully,

31 July 2018

The General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment N**

I have just received the Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of my property by \$40,986 from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$212,000) to \$253,000, an increase of 16.2%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0031088, our next residential rate levy would increase 2018-19 by 19%. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely



[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 August 2018 1:23 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** Proposed Special Rate Variation

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment**

We have received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable land value has been maintained at the value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property [REDACTED] by \$17,000 from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$345,000) to \$362,000, an increase of 4.9%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-2020 rates, and also applying the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the residential rate charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0032574, our next residential rate levy would increase from \$1046.39 in 2018-2019 to 1179.18 in 2019-2020, an increase of \$132.79 or 12.7%. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council also applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 12.7% in one year.

Also bearing in mind that our Estate is run under a Strata arrangement whereby we pay Strata fees on top of our Council Rates, therefore PSC does not have the same responsibilities as a regular residential estate.

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 August 2018 9:20 AM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** rate increase

We wish to lodge our concern regarding proposed substantial rate increases.

As you would be aware many residents, particularly the elderly like us are already experiencing financial difficulties in electricity, water, health funds etc.

We ask that consideration be given at this time.

Thanking you in anticipation.

[REDACTED]

INVESTING IN SOME OF OUR  
community.

Sir

I HAVE READ THIS REPORT  
COVER TO COVER, SEVERAL TIMES.

NOT ONCE ON ANY PAGE DID I  
SEE KILLERTON COVE MENTIONED.

AS USUAL I FEEL YOU DON'T  
KNOW WE EXIST.

YOU NEVER TOLD US WE HAD BEEN  
POISONED BY THE R.A.A.F.

YOU DO LITTLE TO MAINTAIN OUR  
ROADS.

PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY FOR OVER  
50 YRS I HAVE PAID YOU  
RATES.

SCANNED  
SOLLY  
Amberg

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL Information Services	
08 AUG 2013	
File No.	
Action by	
<input type="checkbox"/> R.H.C.	

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL  
Information Services  
09 AUG 2018  
File No. PSC2018-02118-00  
Action by  
☐ P.H.C.

18/175632 (5)

5/8/2018

GENERAL MANAGER,

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL,

P.O. Box 42,

RAYMOND TERRACE. N.S.W. 2324

Dear Sir,

re PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION APPLICATION - ASSESSMENT...

We have received our rate notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note our rateable value has remained on our 2016 valuation but the charge based on that value has increased to 0.00303306 an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43% close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1/7/2017 the valuation of our property <sup>was</sup> increased by \$42000 to \$301,000 a substantial increase. Assuming Council will use this increase in calculating the 2019-2020 rates and applying the 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge to 0.0031088 thereby increasing our rate levy substantially and we believe this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified and we object to it. We are opposed to any move Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation. Council does not have any maintenance in our community a further reason for no rate increases.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Address]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 August 2018 9:57 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** proposed Port Stephens rate increases  
**Attachments:** PSC FLYER 1..pdf; PSC FLYER 2..pdf

PSC2018-02118

Port Stephens Council, the Mayor Palmer and the General Manager Wallis are empire builders - deluded, out of touch with reality - fancy proposing hefty rate increases in an environment where many local rate payers are struggling with increasing energy prices, grocery prices, school fees, you name it the price has gone up/ and where many of the local populace have fixed incomes or no income, wage growth for 15 years.

Questions: -

- What is the exact dollar impact, of 'a multi -year increase (up to 7 yrs) permanently retained in the rate base' spell it out, years one to seven? Kindly publish figures.
- What infrastructure has the 'community' asked Council for? Publish these community requests. Who asked for the new roadway between Magnus St. and the Marina in Nelson Bay? What is the benefit of this infrastructure to local rate payers?
- Why didn't Palmer go to the recent polls with infrastructure plans/rate increase proposals? Publish please.

In recent dealings with this Council requesting maintenance on medium strip outside my house, a stand of large overhanging gum trees on the medium strip, and street cleaning of tree debris, I found Council only prepared to send the street cleaning truck more frequently - nothing more. They can't/won't maintain what infrastructure exists. Vote of 'no confidence in Port Stephens Council' from me, all for big end of town and the tourist industry, too bad for the local rate payers!

[REDACTED] - rate payer



[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 August 2018 4:37 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118 Special rate variation proposal

Good Afternoon,

I am totally against such a high % of a rate rise.

Our family has lived in the area for more than 75 years.

How do you expect my parents and their sibling's to be able to afford such a rise.

We are encouraging the elderly to stay in their homes for as long as we can, so what you would like them to do is go without power, or go without food.

This is a generation who is a proud generation always pay for every thing or they would go without it.

Have you ever come home to your parent in heat exhaustion, or sitting in the cold with a blanket around them, not wanting to put the air conditioner on, for the use of power, **YES I have**

Pensioners do not get any pay rises like council staff. **I feel if the funds could be budgeted better.**

The young first home buyers do not need any more rates forced upon them.

I Know there is several new subdivisions on the table within the council. These have been there for **more than 18 months**. What is the hold up. This is a **way to get more rates**, Seems you need some decision makers within the council or needs someone to overlook departments so things get done ( work together?) Just get the searches done and the condition reports get them passed. Seems we have a large amount of council staff leaving and no proper handover for new staff and things start from the beginning again. **WHY?**

Also there are so many Retirement villages being passed at the moment are the homes being individually being charged rates. Or maybe these properties could be charged more rates. As they house so many homes.

Please consider the community not your pockets. Work budgets better. Look at other options.

We have enough homeless people this could lead to more.

Regards

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 August 2018 7:59 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Rates changes

RE PSC 2018-02118

I do not support any additional rates above the CPI indexation over the next seven years. As a Fern Bay resident in a strata community, we will have little to no benefit from any of the proposed undertakings that will result from a rise in rates.

As matters stand, we receive little acknowledgement, support and attention from Council, other than the delivery of rates notices and removal of waste, quite a substantial service for \$1700pa. Living so close to the council boundary area, we access services and networks provided by NCC more often. Whilst there is some degree of reciprocity between the councils, being on the borders of the two LGAs results in minimal attention from either body.

As PSC LGA is such a geographically diverse area, I do not believe many of the proposed suggestions would be necessary, sought nor welcomed by the ratepayers. As such, I do not support any of the proposed rate amendments.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

181176024  
(69)

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 August 2018 8:28 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-20118

No

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 August 2018 9:07 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-20118

No!!!!!! We can barely survive as is

> On 8 Aug 2018, at 8:28 pm [REDACTED]

> wrote:

>

> No

>

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 August 2018 11:06 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** re feedback PSC 2018-02118

To Whom it May Concern,

We would like to state our objection to the Special Rate Variation (SRV) rise in 2019 based on the results that Port Stephens Council have previously demonstrated with the use of ratepayers money. The rise proposed is too steep for too long a period and we do not believe that money has previously always been spent wisely or that the tendering process for the works done, is done in a cost effective and efficient manner.

As land owners in Medowie, we note that there is very little forward infrastructure planning in the current proposal put forward by council for the Medowie area. The planning for Medowie appears to be predominantly drainage works which we believe should have been carried out properly in the first instance, some of which (eg, Medowie shopping precinct) should have been part of the major development funding at the time of construction.

Importantly, the council proposal far exceeds CPI. In an era of flat wages and financial stagnation, our income would struggle to sustain such a steep increase in costs over such a long period of time (ie 7 years).

If this SRV is successful, how will ratepayers be assured that the money leveraged from the SRV will be fully transparent and tied to the projects outlined and not redirected to council wage increases, superannuation and project delays due to inefficient measures?

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 9 August 2018 8:26 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118

Hello,

I would like to provide feedback on the SRV proposal. We understand this would increase the amount of funds to spend on the massive wish list for locals, and the money needs to come from somewhere to pay for these items. However, we already pay two lots of rates and have sold two properties in the past two years due to the ever increasing costs of maintaining them with insurances, repairs and rates as well as repayments and other relevant expenses. These properties were purchased with the view to funding our retirement but have become so expensive to maintain that it just wasn't viable to sustain.

Whilst we also understand the need to collect rates, we feel it is unfair to further burden ratepayers like ourselves with such increases as proposed in the SRV. It would place a larger burden on us financially that is already very carefully managed and would impact our quality of life significantly.

We would not support this rise and note that we are already charged at paying \$3585.63 in rates to PSC this year alone, that equates to nearly one quarter of my annual wage. Please consider how this will negatively impact families like ourselves if you were to proceed, the increase of recent years has already had a large impact on our financial decisions to date. Council has inherited some bad debt from previous management, this is true, but it should not fall on some of the people to provide all of the request made by the entire community.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 9 August 2018 1:19 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** SRV - Duns Creek Road

To: SRV consultation,

Regarding Roads in the Enhanced Facilities and Services section, there is mention of some projects in Duns Creek and Woodville. We have the following input:

1. Woodville Street has already been tar sealed by a developer.
2. Whilst Forest Road and Iona Lane are mentioned, these are extremely low volume traffic streets. Duns Creek Road has a substantial accident record and much greater traffic volumes, including trucks, and should be prioritised higher than it is shown in the schedule.
3. The schedule does not say what work is actually proposed for Duns Creek Road. Is it tar sealing, or rehabilitation, or just continuing to grade the dirt road?
4. It is very unlikely that residents in the far west of the shire will support the rate rise unless tar sealing of Duns Creek Road is included and prioritised. This project has been promised for 30 years and never eventuates.
5. Council keeps approving more dwellings in upper Duns Creek Road but road infrastructure does not keep pace.
6. Ratepayers in Duns Creek get very little for their Council rates besides grading of Duns Creek Road about twice a year. We do not use the other infrastructure in the east of the shire, or even in Raymond Terrace, such as libraries, swimming pools, sports grounds etc.

regards

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 9 August 2018 3:39 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Feedback

Dear Port Stephens Council,

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. As a person living on a fixed income on Tomaree Peninsula, and knowing there are countless others in the Port Stephens LGA also on limited and/or fixed incomes, I don't support the proposed Special Rate Variation.

#### **Lowest rates?**

It is disingenuous to compare the rates charged in Port Stephens as a rural, industrial and coastal/holiday local government area with a big regional city such as Newcastle or even Maitland. Each have large catchment-areas with people flocking there to live, work and/or play.

Port Stephens with such a high rate of unemployed, disabled and retired people is attractive as the cost of living is more affordable than bigger centres. However with a lot of underemployed and homeless people in the area, raising rates will only increase "housing stress" as rents/Council costs increase this will push up the number of homeless people. They'll need help. And yet there are countless empty dwellings.

#### **Extra rates for absentee owners?**

I support the concept of charging more rates for properties which remain unoccupied for at least six months of the year (via measuring water/electricity/garbage bin usage. Why should residents subsidise infrastructure for investors, weekenders or those who eventually intend to retire here who keep their properties off the permanent rental market and push up the price for low-income households.

#### **Borrowing rather than raising rates?**

While yes of course we'd all like lots of new, shiny projects we must maximise efficiencies and the amount of grants received. It also seems that if some of these projects are actually needed rather than just wanted, at this time of historically-low interest rates perhaps the case can be made for borrowing to invest in some infrastructure.

#### **Population growth?**

Well it seems obvious that if more people are moving to the area, presuming they are living in new dwellings, then more people will be paying rates which will increase the total amount raised. Just adding certain infrastructure is no guarantee that more people will come.

#### **Sealing nearly all roads?**

While a great idea on paper, it defies logic since the existing roads are in such an appalling state. If we can't look after the ones we've already got why the hell would we seal even more? Then there's the ongoing cost of maintaining the new ones. Let's improve maintenance on the current road network before jumping ahead at great cost, for limited gain.

#### **Birubi Information Centre?**

Surely as a tourist hub surrounded by both Worrimi National Park and Conservation Lands it would make sense to liaise with the NSW Government to perhaps jointly fund/operate such a centre.

And wouldn't the Nelson Bay precinct or Shoal Bay make more sense as a location, or perhaps both?

#### **Car parking?**

Soldiers Point - As a seasonal holiday area predominantly served by a private marina-operator it seems ludicrous that funding should be spent on car parking there when the need is greater all year round by locals and visitors alike in Nelson Bay town centre.

As the population near Wanda Beach shops is increasing dramatically, with another seniors housing development and tourist accommodation refurbishment nearing completion, it seems appropriate to fix the parking situation behind and near Little or Old Salamander Bay shops first as locals often use the shops daily and visitor numbers swell on weekends and during warmer months.

Also the parking opposite the nearby Industrial Estate at Salamander Bay on Soldiers Point Road is abysmal. Just about every resident, worker or visitor drives past or needs to stop there. At times the pot holes are too large for normal cars to park there because of the damage done by trucks. And the timber posts which are supposed to guide drivers just get knocked over endlessly and it looks shabby.

Located on the edge of Wanda Wetlands the precious environment needs to be protected from road runoff and industrial and contamination etc.

### **Toilets?**

While toilets etc are needed at the beaches and parks mostly for use on weekends and holidays, it seems we need to focus on the area of greatest need is in the town centre of Nelson Bay where both locals and visitors shop. While tourists have more facilities near the Tourist Information Centre and Marina, there are few public toilets in town itself for the growing resident and tourist population.

### **More paths and cycleways**

Again like the roads, while footpaths are in such a poor state in so many areas why should we fund new ones? Fix the ones we've got first.

### **Tree planting**

Why pay for subcontractors when *Landcare* volunteers can do the planting and *Ngoika* volunteers can propagate the trees and work with council staff on specific revegetation projects.

### **Native Plant Nursery**

Why can't Council re-open *Ngoika* as a "retail" centre selling local-native shrubs and trees to members of the public from the area and to visitors alike? It would create some income and volunteers could continue in their roles.

### **Street lighting**

Perhaps a one-off levy could be applied.

### **Erosion Control**

We've know for over thirty years that global warming was going to happen and sea levels would rise, so this needs long term planning and funding arrangements not just ad-hoc repairs.

### **Heatwave refuges**

Equally we've known for decades that with rising temperatures the young, elderly and health compromised would need extra help coping with increasing frequency, severity and length of heatwaves. Community Centres and Libraries that are air-conditioned need to be opened on days over certain temperatures for people without air

conditioning to seek refuge. Special arrangements need to be made for Sundays and Public Holidays to deal with climate emergencies.

So in closing I support **Option One**, keeping rates pegged at 2.5% despite the current CPI being only 2.1%.

Cheers  
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 7 August 2018 10:48 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118

**NO SPECIAL RATE VARIATION**

Council fees here are already higher than many Sydney councils. Council must work within its means, if you can't afford it you can't have it. Your FAQ sheet says "community has told us is important". A statement like this is spurious and unprofessional, who in the community, in what numbers, when? Was the "Community" the developers, the councillors wanting a "Fact finding" trip overseas. Provide detail, if you can, not motherhood statements.

**NO INCREASE IN RATES PERMANENT OR OTHERWISE**

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 6 August 2018 6:22 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Firstly I'd like to thank the Mayor, Councillors and Council staff for conducting this extensive communication activity. The one that I attended at Medowie was conducted professionally and very informative.

I have read the information and make the following main comments

1. If not already included, the Council needs to consider internal cost reductions. From what I understand of the overall operating budget, something like a 10% cut in costs would largely deliver the amount required. Coming from a manufacturing career, it was given that we would cut costs at least by 3% per annum to compensate for yearly CPI increases including wages. I think any business needs to balance what is in effect a price increase with cost decreases of at least a similar order. This should be made very transparent as a total picture to any rate increase proposal.
2. There is a sizeable group in the community whom do not receive any wage increases, are self funded retirees (like myself), are on pensions or simply low incomes that would find any increases difficult. While personally in favour of at least the second option 6.5% I would find the increase somewhat significant.
3. I strongly believe that the cbd developments have not been at a similar rate in the past, so that Nelson Bay and Raymond Terrace have more infrastructure and facilities than many of the smaller towns including Medowie. Yet I see that under "Town centre and neighbourhood revitalisation" the 2 town centres above receive 13M and 10M respectively of a total 36M. That is 64% is given to those further ahead. I can't agree with that proposal. More of this total needs to be directed to Medowie and smaller towns as a "catch up". For example Medowie has no main street as such, no public amenities the than the Tardis, a playground with 2 main items only and no fence. I would vote for no increase if this unjust ratio proposed is maintained.
4. While any of the improvements can be seen as good, many in my opinion are not essential. Essential are items like
  1. safe access to schools, bus stops, parks, and main shopping area.
  2. public amenities in key areas like main street (if you have one), cbd, parks
  3. drainage to avoid flooding or inundation of residential areas (that were approved for that use by Council)
  4. street lighting
  5. line marking on town roads
5. understand that ongoing maintenance costs are needed for roads and parks, and agree
6. focus on upgrading major town roads (e.g. fairlands road in Medowie that still takes much of the northern and western residents to raymond terrace
7. some proposals like Art & Cultural centre, Birubi Info Centre, Nelson Bay Car park, depot relocation, Foreshore improvements, seem to be "nice to have" and expensive, compared to others that are more essential in my view
8. some improvements may be less that the ideal. For example on Ferrodale road near the public school, a footpath made of bitumen is on one side of the road. While not ideal, people in the area can use the one side of the road with a reasonable surface for walking and cycling. This approach could be used as a strategy to cover more areas quickly with one side of key roads as a safe access. Sure people would understand and agree with such an approach.

Thanks again for an opportunity to participate

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL  
Information Services  
13 AUG 2018  
File No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Action by \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ P.H.C.

TEL: [REDACTED]

MOBILE: [REDACTED]

8 August 2018

General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment 1**

I have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. I note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of my property [REDACTED] by \$41,000 from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$253,000) to \$294,000, an increase of 16%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0031088, my next residential rate levy would increase from \$767.35 in 2018-19 to \$914.00, an increase of \$146.64 or 19%. I believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

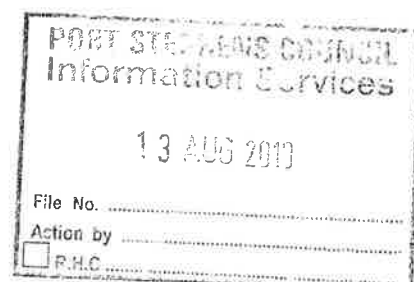
e-mail: [REDACTED]

TEL: [REDACTED]

MOBILE: [REDACTED]

02 August 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324



Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment N**

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property (by \$40,000 from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$255,000) to \$295,000, an increase of over 15%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge dramatically. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation and we ask that Council review and reconsider increasing the rates by such a drastic amount.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
3  
Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

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3 August 2018

PSC2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr. Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment No**

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased from 0.00296100 to 0.00303300, an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property by \$42,000 from the valuation of 1 July 2016 (\$259,000) to \$301,000, an increase of 16%. Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge from 0.00303300 to 0.0031088, our next residential rate levy would increase from \$785.55 in 2018-19 to \$935.75, an increase of \$150.20 or 19.1%. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

For this reason, we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

181177971

(80)

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 12 August 2018 10:23 AM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** NO to the Rate increase

To the councillors and managers that want to increase our rates further I say No, my finances are squeezed hard enough as it is and you have already unreasonably Increased my rates by \$100 over last year. Given that you provide nothing for me beyond garbage collection and do a poor job filling in potholes around Medowie's roads I don't care what grandiose designs you have for Port Stephens, I'm not funding them!

Sincerely PISSED!

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 12 August 2018 8:45 PM  
**To:** Mayor  
**Cc:** Councillor Support Executive Assistant; SwitchPC  
**Subject:** SRV CALCULATIONS.

Dear Mayor.

I've been a little confused over this proposal and have run my own spreadsheet. Am I missing something?

I have only calculated your Option 1 (assumed 7 year rate peg increase over 7 years @ 2.5%) and your Option 2 of 6.5% (my calculations detail separate columns in this option of 2.5% and 4%= 6.5%).

I agree with council's increase at 2.5% being 19% and for Option 1 of 55% .

However, Option 1, according to my calculations, provides council with a total additional income over the period of \$7,884,456m whereas the council SRV paper states 'Total estimate of funds raised \$30.9m'.

With Option 2 (6.5% over 7 years) I calculate the total income raised over the period to be \$23,148,979 not what the council SRV paper states as \$56.3m.

It appears to me that there is a substantial error in the council figures whereby the rate gain over the 7 year period has been added together, year on year, to achieve, in Option1, the stated \$30.9m. Option 2 compounds the same error to a figure of \$86,783,888 and then appears to subtract Option 1 (\$30,759,468) to arrive at the PSC figure of some \$56.3m.

I simply cannot reconcile the PSC SRV paper and its calculations with my spreadsheet although I can possibly see where a council accounting error has been made. This may have a severe impact on your infrastructure aspirations for the period.

Can you please, as a matter of urgency, clarify my calculations, as it appears to me council, under Option 1, will only achieve additional rate income of circa \$8m and under Option 2 circa \$23m.

Kind regards,  
[REDACTED]

18/186541

(8/1) B

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 15 August 2018 3:33 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:**  
**Attachments:** SRV.xlsx  
**Record Number:** 18/186541

Sorry about the confusion and thanks for your time this morning.

After a long and arduous trek I believe you and I are on the same page. I will support a 6.5% rate hike assuming the Rate Peg remains, as assumed, at 2.5%.

Should the Rate Peg increase over the seven year period then I would expect the increases proposed to be no greater than 6.5% in any given year. ie Rates increase per annum for 7 years at no more than 6.5%.

Happy?

Cheers,

Port Stephens Council Income Services
15 AUG 2018
File No. ....
Action by ....
<input type="checkbox"/> S.H.C. ....

10 August 2018

To: General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42, Raymond Terrace, NSW, 2324

Ref: PSC 2018-02118

Regarding: Special Rate Variation

This is to advise you that I reject the premise of the special rate variation on the basis that the council has failed to make a case for such an extreme increase in rates by offering only "nice to have" requirements as justification.

Even though it is common knowledge that impending court actions may give cause for emergency funding the mayor has not confirmed this claiming "confidentiality" as his reason. Confidentiality cancels the council's right to the rate claims being made by this SRV proposal.

I therefore accept none of the options being offered above the current plus annually approved level.

Sincerely Yours,



(83)

The General Manager

Port Stephens Council

P.O.Box 42

Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

File No. _____ Action by _____ <input type="checkbox"/> P.H.C.	15 AUG 2018
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11/8/18

Dear Sir,

Ref: PSC 2018 -02118 -SRV Proposal

This submission is to oppose a SVR for the rate Category Business.

Reason

There is already an unfair imbalance between the base rate of the various rate categories

- The base rate Business \$1,557 + 0.85130 cents in dollar C/\$
- the base rate residential \$184 - \$369 + 0.15135 - 0.30330 C/\$

Why

Changes in technology, websites and growth of mega shopping center competition means a small business can run from home, (planning regulations allow a 'home industry', 'home occupation', 'dual occupancy').

The demise of small neighbourhood 'main street' town center's is in evidence with many 'shops vacant' signs.

What would be fair

Introducing a new category for small business would help create a 'level playing field' to distribute cost sharing more fairly. My suggestion - base rate \$963 + levy 0.57732 C/\$ with small business set at UCV of 200k ceiling. Note: These are suggestions only, research is required.

Conclusion

1. Since the local Government was revised in 1993 there has been many changes to what is now a sophisticated consumer economy and changes should be adopted. How can a overseas base on line trader contribute to rate income at local level.

2. If a small business category was introduced, I would not object to SRV.

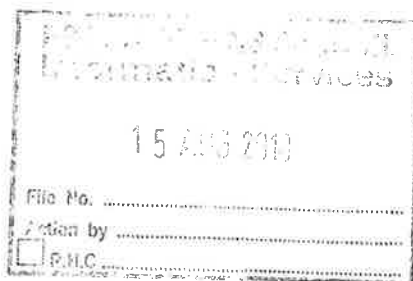
Disclosure

My family owns [REDACTED]

Could you please submit to Council and acknowledge receipt.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]



Email [REDACTED]

Mobile : [REDACTED]

Dear Mr Wallis

Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment No. [REDACTED]

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018 – 2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation rate base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has increased 0.00296100 to 0.00303300 an increase of 0.000072 or 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer General increased the calculation on our property *by* \$40,000 from the valuation 1 July 2016 2016 \$248,000 to \$288,000, an increase of 16.2%.

Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates, and applying also the maximum 2.5% allowed by IPART that would increase the charge from 0.0030300 to 0.0031088 an increase of 19%. We believe this increase is excessive and unjustified.

If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, the increase in our residential levy would be even greater than 19% in one year.

For this reason we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

01180150  
179111  
1/2 (85)

**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, 12 August 2018 10:36 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Dear Council,

I categorically reject and do not support in anyway the Council's Special Rate Variation Proposal. If I wanted to be treated this way I would live in Newcastle not Port Stephens.

Council states this will stimulate local economies, driving business growth, attracting visitors and enhancing our region for the benefit of all. Benefit of all? You mean a select few businesses whom no doubt this is all Council is really thinking about, not the general residents.

This rate rise will do nothing for the majority of the general residents except put even more financial pressure on our families. Electricity, water and other essentials are doing nothing but climbing skyward well above CPI, the last thing we need is Council to gouge us as well. Our wages are not keeping up, leave us alone.

It is hard enough now to break into the property market (i.e. have one's own home instead of renting) the last thing home owners need is even more financial pressure. It might be fine and dandy to increase rates on the retiree millionaires moving up from Sydney but there are a lot of local hard working residents just getting by to support their families.

If Council is so adamant on raising funds why don't you collect more from the sand mines you keep endorsing to dig up our pristine area, the developers you keep endorsing to build high rise buildings turning us into a Gold Coast and the developers dumping retirees into villages without funding infrastructure (hospitals/doctors etc) to support us all. Leave the residents alone, hit your mates up.

Sure we all want a gold plated community but it is hard enough now to budget let alone being slugged more on Rates. I am happy to go without the footpath (which you normally charge affected residents for anyway), the town centres do not look tied to me, sure Maitland town centre has had a huge uplift but look at all the development (new residents) that have arrived to increase income. I do not need a spruced up town centre and if the trading businesses would like improvement to attract customers, then get the funds from them, they are the ones that will see the advantages.

The residents whose homes flood every time it rains would have known this before buying and no doubt probably purchased in a flood prone area because that is all they could afford, why should I be paying to rectify their decision to buy in a flood prone area. If you are undertaking works to fix this issue then charge the residents whose property you are protecting, just like you charge the residents for a footpath that is installed on their street.

You talk about wanting to attract more visitors, for who's benefit other than a couple of businesses. I enjoy the holiday season because I love chatting to our visitors and seeing them enjoy our pristine area (until the mines have completely dug it up) and I feel privileged to live here but I do not see one cent from their visit. The major shopping centres will still be here as they are not seasonal, the Clubs will still be here as they are not seasonal, the small local coffee/cafe shops will come and go, the pop up shops will always be here during tourist season. I do not need any visitors let alone more. Like them but definitely do not need them.

Consultation, what a joke. I feel like I am wasting my time even responding. I have not seen anywhere that consultation has changed a decision. You are not putting the decision in our hands, you are just making it seem like we have a say. If the decision was really in our hands, it would be a vote with the majority ruling. Why do I say this, I have previously been consulted on prospective change and guess what, the change went ahead anyway. The best

part, I have implemented change and consulted staff but even after their submissions, the change went ahead as planned but staff felt they had a say. So, am I sceptical of your consultation? Definitely.

I cannot say how many people object to Council's proposal but I do know three residents that reject the proposal and are not providing a submission. Unfortunately, history has created this apathy and whilst I tried to encourage them to submit an objection they could not be bothered because it will be ignored anyway. Advantage Council.

I know this submission will not make a shred of difference, so I guess I can just cancel the kids sport to pay for your dreams. I am sure they will understand.

Yours sincerely



18/180161  
(86)

Port Stephens Council:

PSC 2018-02118

I wish to put forward a submission on how the Salt Ash Area could be improved.

When the local Fire Station was built, the Salt Ash residents were promised a BBQ area would be built in Lee Thompson Park. This has never happened.

Now would be a good time to keep faith with the local residents, and provide a BBQ area and covered seating as promised by Port Stephens Council in the park.

The Lee Thompson Park also requires some filling so this park can be used in all weathers. The Fire Brigade require this area for their practice drills but is not a year round thing because of the low area in after rain. It would be a great community asset to have this BBQ next to the local Community Hall with the Fire Station on the other side so it could be used by the hall users, the local fire volunteers and all the local residents.

There is a lovely covered children's play ground for the younger children, but something, for example, a practise cricket pitch, or a soccer practice net, basketball hoops, or goal posts for the older children would be terrific.

The Community Hall is kept in wonderful condition by a group of caring local volunteers and is a wonderful council asset, BUT, it is bounded by a park that could be so much better than it is, and at the front of the hall, facing Michael Drive, is the Wisconsin Mound which no longer has a fence protecting it from cars, bikes and people walking on it. It is a dangerous situation could easily collapse under the weight and lead to disaster.

I request the Council, strongly, to put some of the budget money into the BBQ area and fixing up the state of the footpath area, i.e the Wisconsin Mound, outside Salt Ash Hall and making this an area for the locals to be proud of.

[REDACTED]

(former long term, and still very interested, resident of Salt Ash and a member of the [REDACTED])

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 August 2018 7:50 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

We are Williamstown residents living in hell in the primary contamination zone, under enormous stress. Whilst we appreciate the reduction in our rates currently, the thought of yet another outgoing expense is horrific. Whilst we can understand that the council needs funds to increase the services and beautify Port Stephens, surely the money you are dragging from DA applications for everything is sufficient to cover.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 August 2018 8:23 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Dunns Creek Road

Dear Sir,

It is disappointing once again that Council choose to ignore the western boundary of the shire. The people of Duns Creek continually pay their rates and are required to suffer the poor and dangerous road conditions of Duns Creek Road where accidents are being register on a much more frequent basis. Previous commitments by the council to tar seal the road are once again put on hold unless we capitulate to the highest rate increases and then the safety of the Duns Creek residents are placed secondary to the sealing of carparks and road resurfacing activities which the majority appear to be focused on the East of the Shire.

I would request that the tar sealing of Duns Creek Road be elevated to be included in option 1. We are not asking that it be all done in 1 year but that it is done progressively on a continuous timeline.

Thank you for your consideration.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## Port Stephens Council – Proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV)

Submission by [REDACTED] residential ratepayer, Nelson Bay

### Consultation process

I commend Council for its consultation process on the proposed SRV. Council staff reached out early to recognised Community groups to forewarn them of the process and seek initial feedback. Following the Council decision to progress an application, there has been extensive public consultation, and Councillors and staff have made themselves freely available to explain and discuss the proposals. In contrast to the experience with some planning matters, a reasonable period was allowed for submissions, and then extended by a further work when it became clear that some groups, businesses and individuals needed longer.

I understand that it has proved difficult to engage the community in the consultation, and in particular local businesses. This is frustrating but is a reflection of a more general difficulty faced by all levels of government in obtaining community input – particularly on strategic policy development which can appear abstract and not immediately relevant. Part of the long term solution is to keep trying all available consultation techniques and channels, including by supporting community groups and business associations as intermediaries. But the other essential factor is that those consulted must feel that they have at least been listened to, and their input given mature consideration. The reluctance of many individuals, businesses and groups to engage largely reflects their view, based on experience, that their input is either not even considered, or ignored.

The consultation on the proposed SRV has arguably been the 'best yet' by Port Stephens Council, but that will only be confirmed if it can be demonstrated that Council has given proper consideration to the input it receives.

### Adequacy of information presented for consultation

Despite the commendable efforts mentioned above, the material presented by Council in support of the SRV proposal has been confusing. I accept that it is very difficult to explain Council's finances in general, and rating in particular, in ways that the general public can understand. This is partly because of the State Government's unconventional standards for Local Government finances, which differ significantly from those more familiar to businesses and households.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of the task, it is incumbent on Council to ensure that most ordinary ratepayers are able to assess the SRV proposal and form a sensible opinion as to whether it is in their own, and/or the community's interests. Feedback from individuals and community groups during the consultation period suggests Council has failed in this task.

Areas of confusion and misunderstanding include:

- Whether the proposed extra capital expenditure under each SRV option is just of the extra revenue raised from the relevant SRV, or of borrowed funds, using the extra SRV revenue to repay interest and capital on the loans? There seem to have been mixed messages on this issue. It is very significant, not least as the financial impact will depend on whether interest payments on any loans would continue after the 7 years of SRVs.
- Comparisons with other Councils. Which if any of the options presented would result in parity with similar Councils, or in Port Stephens having significantly higher rates than its

peers? The broad assertion in the Information Booklet (page 3) that we are currently lower-rated does not provide the answer to this important question.

- What the effect would be of any variation in the rate cap within the 7 year period proposed for the SRV – the material presented assumes 2.5% each year, but if this is varied by the State government (in line with inflation) would this flow through to different overall percentage increases on top of the SRV?
- Alignment of proposed new capital works with projects already included in the existing Capital Works Program 2018-28 and Capital Works Plan Plus, exhibited earlier this year as part of the Draft Strategic Asset Management Plan and overall suite of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents. It is not at all clear which of the existing projects would be earmarked for earlier delivery, or the extent to which completely new projects might take precedence?

### Affordability and Equity

Raising additional revenue by means of an SRV is inherently problematic and undesirable because it is a regressive, and therefore unfair, method. The burden of the additional levy falls disproportionately on those least able to afford it.

While rates are paid only by property owners, renters are directly affected where, as is likely, landlords increase rates to cover all or part on any rates increase. The impact of any SRV on renters must be a major consideration, particularly in light of recently published data showing Port Stephens to have by far the largest 'affordable housing income gap' in the Hunter Region.<sup>1</sup>

Some pensioners can claim a pension rebate of up to \$250 p.a. Some older residents also benefit from the exemption available to retirement villages (complex definitions but essentially over-55 communities where houses (whether owned or rented) are on sites licenced from a site owner).

Any SRV will be particularly difficult for those on fixed and low incomes, but some of these residents may have significant wealth (i.e. assets), particularly in the form of a high value home.

Any fair system of revenue raising should take into account both income and assets and find some way of ensuring that those homeowners who are 'cash-poor' but 'asset-rich' contribute more than those who are both cash-poor and asset-poor.

Council should explore the possibility of establishing a scheme to allow cash poor but asset rich homeowners to pay rates by means of deferred value capture, e.g. by assigning a capital sum equivalent to Council to be realised and paid on sale of property, or by a 'reverse mortgage' scheme which allows Council to take an annual revenue stream against a security on an individual's property.

This option should ideally be explored by the State Government for application throughout NSW, but in the short term Council should see if it can operate such a scheme locally. I understand that at some of the consultation meetings Council has hinted that some such mechanisms might be available?

How many pensioners currently take advantage of the \$250 rebate, and how does this compare with the estimated number of potentially eligible pensioners in Port Stephens? What steps does Council

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.theherald.com.au/news/local-news/5594960/the-upper-hunter-lga-is-the-states-most-affordable-for-renters-report-finds/>

take to promote the availability of this rebate? At the very least, if any SRV is approved, Council needs to much more actively promote this facility, as a way of mitigating the financial impact on low income households.

#### Comparison with other Councils

Another aspect of equity and fairness is the relative rate burden on Port Stephens households compared to those in other Council areas. It is not unreasonable to expect that households in similar financial circumstances should be paying a similar amount in rates wherever in NSW they live – or at least in areas with similar characteristics. To the extent that Port Stephens has a lower than average level of rates than other Group 5 Councils (as asserted on p3 of the Information Booklet) a good argument can be made for an increase to an 'average' level. Unfortunately Council has not provided information about which of the proposed SRV increases would achieve this result. It should do so before any decision on an SRV is made.

#### Residential v Business rates

A further dimension of affordability and equity relates to the relative share of rate impost paid by businesses (including farms) and residential ratepayers. Currently, as in most Council areas, business ratepayers pay a much higher rate than residential ratepayers, and no change is proposed in the SRV proposals. This means that businesses will face an even greater financial impact from any SRV

While some larger businesses may be able to absorb a significant rate increase, many smaller businesses may not. It seems perverse that a Council which claims to support and encourage small businesses would consider imposing very significant additional financial burden on them. It would be particularly ironic for small businesses in the existing town and local centres when Council is proposing that some of the additional revenue be spent on infrastructure to support revitalisation of these centres!

Consideration should be given to adjusting the formula for rates to ensure that businesses only face a similar percentage increase in their overall rate bill in \$ terms) as residential ratepayers.

#### Confidence in financial management

Most ratepayers will only be willing to accept significant rate rises if they can be convinced that Council can be trusted to soundly manage its finances. I note that in the report on the 2018 Community Satisfaction Survey tabled for the Council meeting on 28 August, 25% of respondents expressed little or no confidence in the way council is managing its resources, including assets and finances, with only 33% being confident or very confident (Q15).

Council has asserted that its financial management has much improved in recent years and the overall financial statements support this assertion. However, there are a number of outstanding questions over major expenditure and potential liabilities, including the Lagoons Estate drainage dispute, losses on the TreEscape (formerly Samurai) holiday park and lower than expected returns at the Thou Walla park, Soldiers Point.

Before any SRV is approved, Council needs to commission and publish independent assessments of these matters, both to give the community confidence that lessons have been learned and that past mistakes will not be repeated, but also that those responsible for any major losses are held accountable.

## Projects proposed for funding from any SRV

I had understood that SRV's could only be used for capital works and not current expenditure, but this appears not to be the case.

The material presented by Council lists 'increased services' proposed to be funded under the three SRV options. However, these lists include both recurrent expenditure (such as road maintenance, libraries, community services and events) and capital expenditure, with insufficient distinction drawn between these types of spending. The distinction is important no least because increases in current expenditure only provide a benefit for as long as they last, while capital expenditure can provide continuing longer term benefits (but also incur additional ongoing maintenance costs).

As already noted above, the relationship between the projects listed for SRV funding and those in the existing Capital Works Program (and Capital Works Plan Plus) is very unclear, as is the linkage between the projects and the overall vision for the future of Port Stephens as set out in the Community Strategic Plan<sup>2</sup>.

There is a growing awareness in the community that projects cannot always be delivered in the priority order that might be desired, largely due to the variable and unpredictable availability of grant funds, but also because circumstances and priorities change. However, there is also considerable unease about the way in which some major 'new' projects or projects well down the priority list have over the years 'leapfrogged' other projects which local communities have been patiently waiting for, often for years.

Council needs to be much more transparent about how it makes decisions about changing priorities, and the reasons why some projects proceed ahead of others in the queue. This must include a much clearer process of community consultation on how the income from any approved SRV is allocated.

Council should also publish detailed business cases for all major projects – too many of the large capital works projects undertaken in the 19 years I have been a resident of Port Stephens have been approved without any detailed justification or cost-benefit analysis. Decisions appear to have been taken solely on a 'nice to do' rationale – often conveniently providing benefits to a select group or specific locality – giving rise to suspicions of traditional political 'pork-barrelling' for electoral advantage.

## Conclusion

While I am personally sympathetic to an SRV to fund additional capital expenditure, I cannot lend unqualified support to any of the three SRV options proposed (Options 2,3 & 4).

I submit that Council should develop one or more further options, for lower increases and/or over a shorter period.

A lower increase of say 4.5% or 5.5% would strike a balance between affordability and extra revenue.

A shorter period would allow residents to assess the performance of Council in managing and spending an SRV, with a view to possibly extending it subject to satisfactory outcomes. An initial 1

<sup>2</sup> This vision is itself somewhat opaque, as submissions on the Integrated Planning Reporting Documents have pointed out. Specifically, there is major concern in the Tomaree community about Council's confused and contradictory 'vision' for the Nelson Bay Town Centre.

year SRV would expire a few months before the next scheduled Council elections in 2020, which could then be in effect a referendum on the SRV experiment.

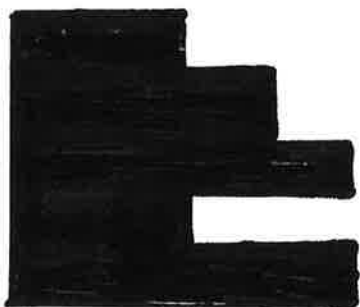
On the other hand I can understand an argument that a one year SRV does not provide sufficient time for the extra revenue to be used effectively or efficiently, and that longer term financial planning is desirable. On this argument, the 2020 Council elections would be an unfair test of an SRV.

A preferable option might be an application for an SRV for a five year period – expiring in mid-2024 a few months ahead of the 2024 election which could be a fairer test.

Whatever the percentage increase and term of any SRV, I submit that it should be conditional on the following:

- Clearer integration of the list of projects to be funded by an SRV with the existing Capital Works Program (and Capital Works Plan Plus).
- Commitment to greater transparency around major projects, including detailed business cases and public consultation.
- Investigation and if possible implementation of measures to address the impact of SRVs on asset rich but cash poor homeowners, including deferred payment plans etc.
- Investigation and if possible implementation of measures to address the disproportionate impact of SRVs on low-income renters.
- Investigation and if possible implementation of measures to address the impact of SRVs on small businesses, including possible adjustments to the relative share of rates paid by business and residential ratepayers.
- Commissioning of independent reports on Council's historical and ongoing financial management of its Holiday Parks, and of the Lagoons Estate dispute.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the proposed SRV. I look forward to the next stage in the process, including detailed publication of the results of the consultation and content of submissions. -I personally have no objection to my submission being published in full, and submit that in the interests of transparency Council should publish all submissions except those where the submitter expressly requests confidentiality.



18/180176  
(90)

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 August 2018 10:48 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118

Re proposed rate increase and proposed spending

Our towns on the Tilligerry Peninsula are shabby with disintegrating roads, park barriers, broken footpaths (where they exist) broken kerb and guttering ie infrastructure that is in desperate need of refurbishment, replacement

We are constantly told there is not enough money in the maintenance budget to deal with these repairs and yet this proposal is in large part about spending Millions on new facilities and gold plating existing

Come up with a plan to FIX the Broken Stuff FIRST and you may get support for a modest rate increase

In Lemon Tree passage the main bus route along Cook parade (shoulder) and Morton Ave (disintegrating road) are in urgent need of attention .....not even on your list ! ?

The Park Barriers in Cook parade, Kooindah and Rudd are in a constant state of falling apart and disintegrating Again not on the list ! ?

We need the obvious shabby infrastructure repairs to be prioritised first

Not interested in rate increases to fund gold plating Grand Park Designs

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 August 2018 1:27 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Hello.

I would like to submit a preference for option one (1) maintain.

I have chosen this option on the basis that, from my observation, Council lacks the adequate ability to effectively manage a continuous improvement process. This was observed from a community meeting when engineering was unable to advise what proportion of the current budget is proactive Vs Reactive maintenance.

It is basic Engineering Maintenance Management 101, that once this delicate balance is breached, there is no recovery. This is usually how Councils go bankrupt. Additional funding to Council is simply a waste.

Best Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 14 August 2018 2:55 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

I think that we, the Shire, are ready for a rate increase but that increase MUST be distributed EVENLY though out the entire Shire not just in the area that is known as "Port Stephens" as we, the Rate-Payer, want our share of the money that the RATES have been UPPED.

In the upgrade (Improvements) could the Caravan Traveller be considered as there isn't any suitable PARKING AREA in RAYMOND TERRACE and other local government areas for these vehicles to pull aside for a Cuppa – Buy a Carton of Milk, bread etc., or have a quick look around the towns before moving onto their destination. We have found that if we can't find a park within 2-3 blocks of the Main Shopping areas we keep driving to the next town that is RV friendly.

**QUESTION:**

Where has the **Information Centre** been moved to? It was frequented quite often when it was in Williams Street but the locals of RAYMOND TERRACE aren't able to refer strangers to anywhere central anymore as there isn't any signage for it anywhere!!

Regards  
[REDACTED]



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 15 August 2018 11:29 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Special Rate Variation Proposal

I would support the Option 4 proposal as long as it doesn't go to help The Developers of our shire to improve the info structure to assist their needs which I think should be taken into account when they dream up proposals. They should pay for their own and it not left to the easy target the rate payers. I hope the Council don't sell off their money making ventures that help keep the rate payer costs down as we know what happens to Airports and Toll roads when there in private hands. If there's money to be made our council should hang onto them as we know road tolls go up over 4 percent a year wether they are needed or not and airport charges are prohibitive to the average person, So I think the council should hang onto assets and maybe increase them if the money is available.

I would not like to see all or rate money spent at Nelson Bay Area as our poor old Raymond Terrace needs help with ageing roads, kerb gutters and no foot paths in most areas they all are in need of help and lots of trees that need to come down to save other assets.

One thing that stands out is the lack of parking area close to The centre of Raymond Terrace for passing caravans to have a look around and do a bit of shopping whilst travelling about. It would benefit some of our local shops in town also there is no dump points about in town for RVs

Regards [REDACTED]

**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 15 August 2018 9:13 PM  
**To:**  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Meeting on 16th August at Seaham Hall

Penny

Our names are \_\_\_\_\_ and we are residence  
 Had we been home we would have attended the above meeting to express our opinions and expectations of the deliverables by Port Stephen council not only as a consequence of increasing our rates but as a consequence of us paying our present and past rates.

**If we are to pay extra rates then the extra funds *should* be spent in our local area and *not* be spent in the Nelson Bay area.** A \$10 million multistory car park at Nelson Bay is not in our local area, and is of negligible if any benefit to those residence in West Ward and north of the Hunter River.

I have advocated for a significant improvement in attitude by PSC, the owners of Brandy Hill Drive, and RMS the responsible party for Clarence town Road and Seaham Road. The attitude that the status quo with respect to speed, road alignment, and creating a safe environment for residence and their children, particularly school children is OK, is in our view untenable. Let me put it this way; if an objective and quantitative risk assessment was undertaken on the speed, alignment, and personal safety infrastructure provided across these roads then outcome would be high to extreme. Why? Because it only takes one casualty for this score to be realised. What statistics collected by statutory authorities do not include are the near misses, the missed learning opportunities. The incidents where adherence to 40 km/hr when school bus light are flashing are ignored. Where unloaded trucks travelling at speed have all but hit the rear of a stopped school bus and careened across to the wrong side of the road for multiple 10s of metres. So lets have a start on making our environment safer by advocating on our part to RMS and supporting the following

1. A reduction of speed through all our residential areas ie Seaham Road and Brandy Hill Drive, and Clarence Town Road. (There is a view by quite a few in the community that Clarence town road speed reduction should extend from Woodville to Seaham)
2. A designated road crossing for our school children on Seaham road at the designated bus stop in the vicinity of Sophia Jane Drive (a high risk area for children accessing and alighting the school bus, and a low compliance area for through traffic.)
3. Redesign to achieve realignment and left hand passing lanes at the intersection of Clarence town road and Brandy Hill Drive,
4. Redesign of the intersection of Clarence Town Road and Butterwick Road

We are also supportive of the following long standing items, as articulated from the think-tank of Seaham and district locals that have come up with some suggestions of what Council could do with the extra rate revenue in our area:

- A shared pathway for bikes and walkers along Brandy Hill Drive.

94  
212

- The Brandy Hill Drive pathway to extend alongside Seaham Road and connect with the pathway at Brandon Park which goes to Seaham School. This would take children and cyclists off much of Seaham Road.
- A bus shelter for the school children outside Seaham School.
- Outdoor gym equipment for Seaham Park.
- A path from Seaham Shop to the Preschool to take bikes and pedestrians off busy Cross Street and Torrence Street.
- A path along the eastern side of Dixon Street to take pedestrians and bikes off the road and allow easier access for cars going to Still Street to drop off and collect school children from the main entrance of Seaham School.
- A zebra crossing (pedestrian crossing) outside the Seaham Shop.
- Seal all gravel roads.

It is acknowledged that all will not be achieved overnight but good business planning would develop both a funding and execution schedule that can be realised.

Our informal opinion is too little is done for this area of the Port Stephens Council's area of Governance.

We look forward to the future investments in our area that secure the safety and amenity of our residences.

--

Regards

18/180873

(95)

[REDACTED]

Dear Sir, Madam,

As a ratepayer and pensioner I think I pay enough for rates and am against any rate rises for any reasons.

Yours Faithfully

[REDACTED]

10-8-2018



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 16 August 2018 11:52 AM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** SRV - Special Rate Variations - OPPOSED TO

Please be advised I AM OPPOSED to a rate variation especially to cover parking at Soldiers Point. If the Council enforced the conditions on business there would not be a shortage of parking at Soldiers Point. The locked off private parking at the marina was always designated public parking when the Council allowed the small marina to be extended. The owners of the marina use it to charge boat owners a monthly fee to rent.

The Council need to look back at the conditions they put on that marina being extended and need to enforce these conditions. This marina gets away with too much and it is grossly unfair that residents are expected to pay extra to ensure extra car spaces for marina restaurants and the Council's Thou Walla resort. It is not on.

Also I AM OPPOSED to a rate increase to have sport facilities built in Nelson Bay. The sports facilities in Raymond Terrace are good and could easily be improved to allow a much better and enhancing sports stadium there. We do not need the extra traffic coming into the Bay and the people in the West of our Shire may want to take advantage of the extra business they would get out of this. If in the future we are to have a sports stadium there needs to be a referendum on where it should be situated in the whole of the Shire and not just placed where a few people think it should be.

In summary I AM OPPOSED to any increase in rates that will be subsidizing or totally paying for parking or sports stadiums. We have a senior population here and what we have for the residents is sufficient. Maintenance of roads and footpaths should come out of our rates ... maybe we need to sell some of those assets out of the Shire that our rates have purchased.

Kind regards  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 15 August 2018 6:50 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

I'm against any proposed rate rise above the CPI.  
We've seen enough Ribbon cutting.  
Council, like the rest of us should live within their budget.

Regards [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 15 August 2018 7:29 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

I am a self funded retiree on a fixed income not much more than the pension. I cannot afford an increase as suggested. CPI increase is what I would expect and budget for.


I have a son with 2 little children who live in Port Stephens.

[REDACTED] They cannot afford such increases. They have to budget!

All I expect from Port Stephens Council is to fix the roads, pot holes, kerb and guttering, footpaths, stormwater. I'm sure tourists will be happy with this also.

Quite happy with the sports grounds we have.

[REDACTED]



17-08- 2018

Port Stephens Council,  
General Manager,  
W. Wallis,  
Raymond Terrace.  
N.S.W. 2324

Dear Mr. Wallis,

**Re:** Special Rate Variation proposed Tilligerry projects list.

After reading the information documents provided by Port Stephens Council our Committee are wanting to express our concerns.

\*No equity across three Tilligerry centres-Lemon tree Passage, Tanilba Bay ,Mallabula. The list suggests that \$2 million goes to Lemon Tree Passage.

The other mention is a possible pathways development.

Other suburbs do not get a listing for projects except for roads and Mallabula Hall refurbishment.

\*\$1 million dollars each town is only fair.

\* Tanilba Bay Old Plaza site - that derelict building- is the next obvious extension for any CBD development whether shops or something else.

\*Tanilba Bay - Ave of the Allies improvements should be top priority. It has been muted as an important project for many years.

\*Tanilba Bay- Lloyd George Grove between President Wilson walk and Beatty Blvd- with the kerb & Guttering would provide land/ street definition.

\*Revitalisation / improvements should include street trees.

\* Whats the justification for moving works depot in RT and Nelson Bay?

Could these funds be better spent on other improvements.

Port Stephens ratepayers who will be the ones paying more each year if the changes occur will want to see equal some active projects in there local area.

Tanilba /Tilligerry Peninsula needs a more detailed whole area plan for to define projects before any future projects are decided upon if the special relates proposal is to go ahead.

We understand that this project list is only on paper and not definitely decided but the equity across Tilligerry Peninsula is not on this list.

Thanking you,



CC: Mayor R. Palmer, All councillors,

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 16 August 2018 8:27 AM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Cc:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Re: RATE RISE PROPOSAL

PSC2018-02118

I am part pensioner already treading water to stop me drowning financially with ever increasing price rises across the board especially power. I relocated here for the quiet lifestyle. I do NOT want a city environment. Why do you think that we need to build highrise, to go bigger, for pie in the sky sporting complex - because of why? The majority of retired residents cannot afford to fund this "stimulation of the local economy". Why should we? Any developments are the responsibility of investors and the business community surely. NOT pensioners heh! Let the big end stump up. We like our peaceful environment- that is why we are here. Rates and power costs are already crippling. If Mayor Palmer aspires to a citylike lifestyle, I suggest he and like minded Councillors MOVE !! [REDACTED]

Attention- The General Manager

Port Stephens Shire Council

Re- special rate increase proposals-objection

Dear sir/Madam


I object to any special rate increases and believe it is unfair as it appears you may have not considered any alternative means of funding in the proposal such as;

1. Restructuring of departments
2. Sharing of resources between Councils
3. Council amalgamation-
4. Self- funding initiatives- ie payment for use of the web/coffee shop installation site in libraries
5. Further release of land (more blocks more rates)
6. Community partnerships and grants ie tidy town/land care
7. The sale of unwanted or expensive assets ie under- utilized parks
8. The cutback of non- essential Council services.
9. There is no invitation for ratepayers to submit alternative ways for Council to raise revenue or make savings in the cost of services, nor any task force considered to manage such.
10. Apparently no statistical evidence was provided in relation to the "public demand" (which is part of the triggers for this proposal).

It appears to me that to comply with the spirit of section 8a of the NSW Local Government Act 1993, investigation and implementation of cost savings to the community must first be executed before any further rate increases can be sought after.

The proposal also does not detail how Council managed to find itself in this position in the first place and the community deserves an apology if there has been any unnecessary spending in the past.

Recommendation- that the special rate increase proposal program be disbanded and alternative means of funding for necessary projects be investigated with opportunity for public submissions for the generation of innovation and ideas that will serve the public interest.

  
rate payer

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 16 August 2018 4:27 PM  
**To:** Mayor; Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** SRV Feedback - Depreciation / Refurbishment Capital

Mayor & Councillors

Council cannot justify a permanent rates increase for its capital refurbishment/renewals program of projects.

It could justify a short term levy to make amends for the legacy of maladministration by previous administrations in not sustaining the asset base.

***Background***

Councils Annual Report 2015-16 Income Statement has a Depreciation and amortisation allocation of \$14.6M over a No-current asset base of \$854.5M

The ratio is 1.7% is well within in the right order in bench marking for like Councils and is applicable for long life linear assets.

This percentage clearly indicates Council has an appropriate level for funding its the refurbishment program of Councils assets, with either like for like or with modern equivalent replacements.

I also note that many of the projects proposed by Council in its SRV options are refurbishment projects. These projects should be funded by the annual depreciation allocation shown in Councils Income Statement.

Councils SAMP shows that Council has a easily quantifiable backlog of refurbishment works.

Refurbishment backlogs can only occur for the following reasons:

1. The CRC valuation is incorrect. The valuations should reflect the current costs of replacement.
2. The life cycle planning and scheduling of refurbishments is incorrect.
3. Councils productivity & project management capability is not competitive /competent
4. Depreciation funds have inappropriately been diverted.

The reason for the backlog explained to myself by Council staff is that this is a legacy issue ie funds diverted elsewhere.

IPART will look to the ***prudent*** and ***efficient*** spend of Councils asset life cycle planning and the appropriate use of depreciation funds. This is my first hand experience with QCA who are the Qld equivalent of IPART.

Contrary arguments currently being presented around increased project/labour/material costs are only valid if 1 or 3 above are occurring. It would be unlikely that the CRC is in error. Productivity issues if they exist are a management issue and the basis of a rates increase.

In my opinion the legacy cause is evidenced by funds being spent inappropriately on other Council interests.

As well known an public example; in the order of \$19M has been invested to date in Samurai / TreEscapes. For an asset that "If" it was performing Commercially would have a market capital value in the order of \$3M. Based on its current EBITDA performance it is a commercial liability and only has salvage value.

Of concern is that Council is now sinking a further \$3M of public money into this under performing business.

Even if this latest investment turns out to be commercially viable - the result effectively means \$19M of public money will have been written off. The equivalent of 20% of the funds being sort through the SRV proposal.

### **Conclusions**

The current backlog position is dollar limited if Council uses the depreciation allocation for its intended purpose going forward. Council should remove the value of the backlog refurbishment projects from the SRV's proposed permanent rate increase.

A time limited rates levy could be justified to fund the reduction in the current backlog to a more sustainable level.

Council should still seek a much reduced SRV permanent rates increase for its enhancement program of works.

The benefits:

- Greater likelihood of obtaining IPART assent - they will look to Council being both prudent & efficient in their use of depreciation funds.
- The long term SRV rates increase would be optimised down wards and reflect Councils and the communities need for enhancement capital expenditure.
- The public transparency shown to past poor decisions discourages repeating of these same mistakes.
- Locks in administratively sound commercial practices with respect to sustaining the asset base through appropriate use of depreciation funds.

Happy to discuss further



[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, 18 August 2018 9:25 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Dear Sir/Madam

The purpose of this correspondence is to protest in the strongest possible terms to your plans to increase our rates above the allowable 2.5%.

No doubt the increased revenue would be spent in the Nelson Bay coastal area as usual rather than the Raymond Terrace and rural areas where we are lucky to get any value for money anyway. Your list of intended infrastructure spending shows a continuation of this trend- you seem to believe that the public have an unlimited supply of funds, that is not the case, we are near breaking point with increasing cost of living imposed upon us by all forms of Government. Local Government needs to get in the queue and not try to jump to the head of the line- food and electricity are more important than tarring gravel roads and building car parks at holiday resorts.

Regards

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 19 August 2018 7:55 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Proposed changes with rates

Hiya,

I just wanted to provide some feedback regarding the proposed changes.

I agree no one likes paying more money but the reality is, if we want our town to improve we are going to need to spend some more.

I have lived here most of my life and would love to see some things created/updated/added. These are listed below. I know that you may not have control over all of these but I think they would make a big difference to the bay.

\*join the paths from salamander to corlette to nelson bay to shoal bay to fingal. At the moment you cannot push a pram or ride a bike from one to the other without having to walk on an unsealed road or busy road with traffic. For people in electric wheelchairs it can prevent them from getting around. It's also unsafe to walk with kids not on the pathway. I would also ensure dog bags and bins are scattered along this way.

\*have a bicycle rent a bike station at dutchies beach, nelson foreshore, shoal bay and Fingal Bay. We have some of the poorest transport options around here and we should promote bike riding more. Also for tourists, it would get them using more then just one section.

\*bbqs and public sitting areas in shoal bay. There isn't enough and in summer little beach gets smashed with tourists cause it's the only place easily accessible with this. Create sections along the waterfront or off the New park for people to bbq and use.

\*get the bus to promote more. It's hard to find the timetables and the routes aren't that great. Opal cards aren't sold easily in the pay so it becomes hard. Encourage pubs to have the opal cards and timetables printed at the front of the bars to encourage people to get home. Especially if you live in anna, boat or fingal.

\*remove the tomaree liquor license. The bays dining atmosphere is terrible and people don't open new things cause it's so restrictive. Sea breeze estate is so terrible now we have nothing there.

\*release a public statement about what the bay is missing for food eg: Spanish place, Mexican, Greek, Brazilian, BYO etc etc. express that we want to turn it around and become nelson bay next. Approach the bars and restaurants in Newcastle about opening a second one down here. If your drive 1hr to Newcastle, it's thriving. Take some of what they are doing and make it work here. Make it easier on them to apply etc. but ensure they know what the locals want. You could even do a poll on what food and bars are missing here. You specifically need some family friendly ones too, as a lot of them don't have spaces for kids to play and round around and parents to dine. The rsl is the only one with kid friendly spaces. Or Anna bay pub.

\*have more events, family friendly and less about spending money. Most of the events we have over the years like taste or the sea food, is about spending money on food and booze. Let's promote healthy activities like a bike ride from Corlette to nelson. Have stations on the way for people to get cards stamped, or complete challenges. Make a fun run like colour fun or ocean theme it cause we are at the beach. Do a dogs picnic in fly point park. Bring back the open air cinema once a month with 2 movies, 1 for kids and 1 for

[REDACTED]  
Raymond Terrace 2324

17 August 2018

Re Special Rate Variation

I have had more than my share of experience as a ratepayer and as an employee of local government in two States. Nevertheless I was surprised, not pleasantly, when I first read of the Special Rate Variation proposed by PSC.

I am not able to attend a community meeting regarding the proposed SRV so now for your consideration I 'have my say'.

AS A RESIDENT OF RAYMOND TERRACE I believe that more people in the PSC area are financially challenged than in most other Local Government districts in the Hunter. Yes, our rates may be in the low category, and so they should be for various reasons.

IPART - The first word of this acronym is the joke - "Independent". Are not the members of this tribunal appointed by the NSW Premier? Are not the salaries of IPART paid by the NSW Government? Is the NSW Government not the "mother" of Local Government? I perceive IPART to be a rubber stamp whose name is used in an endeavour to have citizens believe that a truly independent body has examined in a fair and just manner any proposal put to it.

THE ROLE OF COUNCILLOR includes to represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers and the local community. Let's have no more talk of this fabled (whole) community pressing Council for important (to whom?) and costly works.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT - I would also remind Council that it should seek the best possible value for residents and ratepayers, and consider social justice principles.

COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES from my viewpoint - The accepted trio of rates, roads and rubbish, followed by health, the safety of residents, support of fire services and the SES. Way down the list for councils with a surplus belong the creation of sport and recreation facilities, and investment and development both

of the latter being the ultimate responsibility of acknowledged qualified and experienced professionals in these fields.

BUDGET - why not be daring and try this method? Every budget item begins a NIL cost unless and until any cost against it has been fully justified. This may result in a surplus! When Councils see the need for more finances, instead of considering other ways of obtaining them, it is so easy to turn on the sitting ducks, the ratepayers.

I await with interest the end result of the exercise gauging the community's capacity and willingness to pay the proposed SRV.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 22 August 2018 4:13 PM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** Re PSC2018-02118, Proposal to Increase Rates

Attention Wayne Wallis, General Manager, Port Stephens Council

On page 13 of the Projects Overview - CAR-PARKS, under Soldiers Point, the amount of \$500,000, one off cost, is listed to provide formal car parking adjacent to Spencer Park to ease traffic congestion.

Spencer Park currently has adequate parking to meet the needs of the children's playground, tennis courts and public space. The Community Hall and Thou Walla Sunset Retreat have their own parking as has the Port Stephens Yacht Club.

The obvious parking shortfall and traffic congestion at Soldiers Point stems from the fact that Soldiers Point Marina currently operates without regard to the consent conditions, to provide a minimum of 17 additional spaces.

If Council enforced consent conditions there would be no need to alienate public space in Spencer Park for parking. When I see all the Marina parking spaces opened up to all the marina clients and businesses on a first come first served basis rather than being rented out to a few, I will believe Council is looking after the community interest.

In, again, proposing to alienate a section of Spencer Park, Council is again pandering to the business interests of one person to the detriment of the whole community. Soldiers Point Marina owns residential property adjacent to the current marina car park and across the road adjacent to Spencer Park which should be turned into car park to meet the marina parking shortfall.

No way should the community be asked to fork out \$500,000 to support the business interests of one company which consistently flouts consent conditions.

I have made no political donations.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Ph [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Date:** Monday, 20 August 2018 7:51 PM  
**To:** <council@portstephens.nswgov.au>  
**Subject:** rate rise submission objection

Dear Mayor i wish to object to your proposed rate rise because I believe that no one mentioned this before the last council elections, the council already gets a rate increase already by stealth the fact that the number of dwelling are increasing in number and also the number of apartments and separate dwelling in existing home sites by dual occupancy housing.

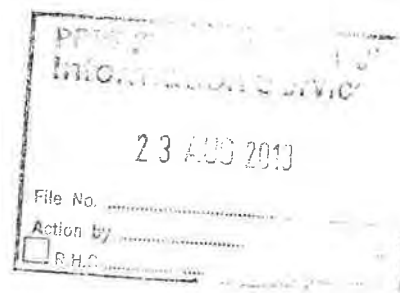
the Council could save a vast amount of money by doing your road building and repairs alone when you see roads in west ward alone i have seen some sections of the same road repaired many time some with road repairs taking 4 to 7 days and then back to the same repair very soon after.you calculate this cost of transporting materials equipment needed a gang 4 to 6 men generally to, and sometimes 3 traffic controllers, most inefficient this must costs millions over an extended time period, their are some sections of road many years old that do not fail, some sections of older roads must have been better built and better materials used.

the road outside my property has only been lightly patched over years but has many heavy vehicles over it in years when it rains water comes out of the centre of the road.

Do it right the first time and you become cost effective.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 21 August 2018 12:31 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

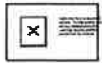
Feedback on the Special Rate Variation Proposal from [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] Corlette.

- Port Stephens council already charges rates that are too high. I do not support any increase whatsoever in Port Stephens council rates.
- Port Stephens council resides over a community of largely working class and/or retired people. This is not a rich area and the people who live here generally don't have huge incomes. The rate rises proposed would hurt a lot of the community. The resulting rates would be higher than places like Vacluse. Port Stephens is a not a wealthy place, don't tax us like we are.
- Port Stephens council would waste a majority of the extra revenue that was raised.
- There is no need for expansion of libraries. The year is 2018. Have you ever heard of the Internet? Libraries are about as useful as coal depots for steam trains or coach stops for horse drawn carriages. Close libraries, don't open more.
- It is outrageous that this proposal by council includes 7 years of compounding rate rises. A one off increase of say 10% for 1 year might have been justifiable. 7 increases of 5%+ each year for 7 years is nothing short of criminal.
- Council should seek efficiencies within its existing labour force rather than looking for more revenue. Currently it takes 10 men 3 weeks to repair 30 metres of gutter and pavement in Spinnaker Way – utter waste.
- Council should look to increase revenue by charging more for businesses to use council owned footpaths. Too many restaurants are using footpaths as free, or super cheap, dining rooms. Make these businesses pay a reasonable fee for using public land. I am talking thousands, not a pittance.
- Council should seek to increase revenue by enforcing parking limits. Also council could turn derelict parking like at Nelson Bay into affordable parking – ie. \$2 per hour. The revenue raised would more than cover the cost of refurbishment of the car park dying from concrete cancer due to council neglect.
- Council should look to increase revenue by policing and enforcing the ban of dogs on council beaches. Despite no dogs allowed signs, all the beaches in the Nelson Bay area are overrun by dogs – most not on leashes. Impose heavy fines on the owners of these dogs.
- Take a close look at the staffing in council and trim it. Too many fatcats not doing enough work. Sick of paying rates to fund them.
- The recent debacle of roadworks at the corner of Salamander Way and Town Centre Circuit are a perfect example of council waste. Some moron working for council turned a working intersection into a deathtrap, then council was forced to redo the intersection again and again. Do it once, do it right the first time, and save lives and money. Sack the person who designed the deathtrap intersection for incompetence.
- I have grave fears any rate rises would only serve to justify increase in the wages of the mayor and various council fatcats, with the remainder squandered.
- If town centre businesses want the town centres reinvigorated, make them pay for that. Why should ratepayers who never visit these town centres subsidise these businesses?
- What event management does council do? Most events involve a waste of ratepayer money. Spend less on events, not more.
- Spending \$2m on Karuah is a total waste of money given the town has been by-passed and is now a sleepy backwater. What return on this investment is ever going to be achieved?
- Provide a multi-functional cultural space in Raymond Terrace – this is a total waste of money and unnecessary.

- Whoever is charging you \$0.5m for BBQ shelters is making a huge profit. Get some independent quotes for the work. Council is paying over the odds for BBQ shelters and not getting value for money. The same applies for the proposed \$2m spend on public amenities.
- Council proposes to spend \$10m on cycleways that will be used by, at best, 100 bikes per day on average. The roads near these are used by thousands of cars per day. Spend money on the roads (which bikes can use too!) not on cycleways that don't get used and then need to be constantly maintained.

Regards

[REDACTED]



Virus-free. [www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 21 August 2018 4:11 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

I do not agree with a Special rate increase I believe we pay enough in rates as it is to cover these projects. Money is wasted in other areas that could well have been used for these other projects.

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 23 August 2018 12:18 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-2118 comments

**Importance:** High

Dear Ryan and fellow Councillors

As I stated at the Public Meeting, would like to know how the Rates will be applied and to what Projects. Who makes the final decisions, as it seemed that there was little accountability for what the Council decrees

1. What are the actions taken by the Council to fine-tune their **OWN** costs.
2. Can the Councillors and staff take a **Pay cut and hold their for the 7 years of Rate Increases**
3. What is the accountability for wrong decisions by Council, such as the Salamander Way debacle, the 1 Way at Magnus street, so traffic is still forced through Stockton st, The Road Paining of Koalas which cannot be seen by drivers, so signs would be more visible and have clarity. **Can the costs of each project be detailed.**
4. Who is responsible for the **poor state of our roads and also its repairs**, which are substandard. I had a Glass and bitumen road built at the entrance to our company, which had over 50 30ton trucks daily, and it has lasted over 40 years with no need for repairs, yet here we have repairs that do not last even a few weeks
5. Why does the Council need to relocate the workshops? What is the reason?
6. Why do we not get an additional charge to the companies that remove our Sand for selling on. How many Tons of sand are removed daily, and what is the Base cost?
7. What is the Councils Projected 10 year Plan and what is its cost and how will it be implemented.
8. The idea of having Holiday homes have **additional rates will then drive Investors away**
9. Height restrictions on dwellings should be reviewed on where they are to be constructed and not a blanket level

Happy to discuss my comments if anyone wants to listen

*Regards*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 23 August 2018 12:55 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

We object to the Special Rate Variation you are requesting.

We are a family of 5 with a mortgage and my husband and I both work. We live in Medowie and the proposed increases to rates in Option 2,3 & 4 do not provide enough of this funding to the Medowie community for us to directly benefit. Have you considered the current growth rates of the population in the Medowie community? Medowie deserves to have our facilities upgraded and improved. too There is a shortage of good quality park space facilities, and only 1 dreadfully neglected public toilet in the whole of Medowie..

The Bay area unfairly receives most of the proposed funding. I object to funding these projects when there are no special mention projects in Medowie apart from fixing some drainage ???

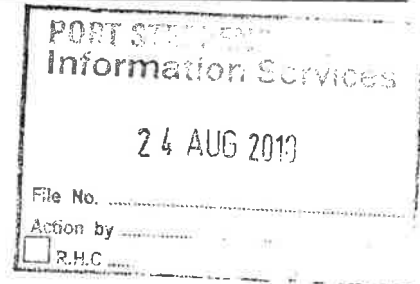
This SRV allocation of funds is out of proportion for the communities outside the Bay and with constant increases in the cost of living I feel the increases in council rates will place more pressure on families including us who are already struggling to make ends meet.

[REDACTED]

TEL: [REDACTED]

19<sup>th</sup> August 2018

General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324



Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment No.**

Having recently received our Rate Notice for the 2018/19 financial year, and also being made aware that Council is seeking to increase those rates by applying for a Special Rate Variation, we thought it prudent to voice our concerns at this proposal.

Our original Valuation of our property was \$210,000 (Valuation provided on purchase, and dated 2013 and used to calculate our 2016/17 rates) and this has increased substantially, showing as \$255,000 on the current (2017/18) Rate Notice – representing close to an 18% increase over the 2016/17 valuation.

Presuming that our Land Valuation increases again in the 2019/2020 period, and Council is approved for a Special Rate Variation, as proposed, then the potential increase in our rates could be excessive and unjustified.

We should point out at this stage that Council does not look after "The Cove" in the same way as they do other residential areas in their jurisdiction, as we maintain our own roadways, street lighting, curbs and drainage, and potentially all Council has to do for us is collect our garbage and recyclables weekly/fortnightly and provide the appropriate bins for this service.

Naturally, bearing the above in mind, we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 24 August 2018 10:21 AM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** RATE INCREASE

HI, AFTER AN HOUR TRYING TO FIND WHERE TO FILL IN MY SAY RE RATE INCREASE, I HAVE GIVEN UP.....WHY CANT YOU MAKE IT SIMPLE

I DO NOT AGREE WITH A RATE INCREASE....WE ARE PENSIONERS PAYING NEARLY \$2000 A YEAR NOW, WHICH WE CAN BARELY MANAGE

WE RECEIVE VERY LITTLE FOR THE AMOUNT WE ARE PAYING.... DO NOT NEED TO PUT GARAGE BINS OUT WEEKLY, WE RECYCLE MOST OF OUR WASTE  
DO NOT USE PLAYING FIELDS, SWIMMING POOLS ETC.

[REDACTED]

I am an active community volunteer and my comments are based on my experience and personal observation of Council for many years in these roles. My involvement includes:-

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Whilst I fully recognize the need for a Special Rate Variation, albeit my support not stretching to Option 4, I am confused as to how the project listings were compiled and unless that is addressed clearly in the revised Integrated Plans process (essential part of this application) than IPART would be similarly confused. My main question is therefore – What happens to the existing projects on the Asset Management Plan approved just a month or two back? They are barely recognizable and, for the most part, are completely missing.

Whilst fairness between Wards may have been a factor, Councillors represent and make decisions on the whole Shire and a set criteria for evaluating the projects should have been used so that priorities are set. Based on IPART decisions for other Councils, Port Stephens Council may be taking this over 7 years as a stretch too far. Given that potential outcome from IPART could be a reduction in years/options/projects, some kind of priority evaluation should be an important part of the next phase for the application.

#### MAJOR PROJECTS COMMENTS:

**P10-11 Town Centre and Neighbourhood Revitalisation** – Generally supported, particularly Nelson Bay which should be first priority

- Medowie – Question what the purchase of land open space to reduce flooding and release land means? Are we supporting more private developers? Medowie Town Centre revamp seems to be missing out. How much community consultation has there been about where this “centrally located open space” will be or has that only been consultation with developers and current Councillors?
- Raymond Terrace (\$13M) – at variance in cost with Nelson Bay (\$10M), the main tourism driver which needs attention.
- Lemon Tree Passage (\$2M) Why McCann Park? Does this have local support compared to improvements right along the foreshore reserve areas? Don’t understand how “John Street” comes into any “sense of town arrival”? Do you have the correct street name?

#### Community Amenities (P12-13)

Art & Cultural Centre – Do not support this at any cost or any option. Where has been the community consultation about this and why would Shire-wide residents patronize such a Centre when Newcastle is so

close. If a centre were to be developed, it should be an extension of the already successful Arts and Crafts Centre at Nelson Bay.

**BBQ Facilities** – This section should be including sun shelters for all BBQ and table furniture & play areas right across the whole shire.

Specifics:

East Ward is missing replacement of Roy Wood Reserve Corlette BBQs x 2 – the most popular reserve in the area & has old BBQs often out of service over summer.

Spelling correction: Should be George Reserve not Georges Reserve.

**Birubi Information Centre** – I seriously question the description. Without another access road, it will not reduce congestion. Without that road, it is essential that a pathway boardwalk link to the Surf Club be wide enough for a golf cart buggy system to operate between the 2 facilities.

**What's Missing (on a cursory Glance)**

Where is Scoping Plan for ~~PA~~ Abilities Park at Anna Bay? (Part of Works Plus – no mention here)

Where is Anna Bay Community Centre – Part of Works Plus – no mention here.

There are probably heaps of others. How were the priorities arrived at.... Other than trying to be "fair"!

**Public Amenities –**

East Ward: The \$2M needs to be increased to include the replacement of all the existing old amenities blocks on Tomaree Peninsula. Where are Conroy Park, East Bagnall, Fly Point (as well as Neil Carroll which is used by skateboarders) None have facilities for the disabled.

Central Ward: How does "relocation of an old amenities block" work? Instead of relocating from Ocean Avenue to Robinson Reserve (which should have had its own amenities block worked into the existing Birubi Aboriginal Plan of Managemnt) installation of one at Iris Moode Reserve instead.

Why is Council replacing the perfectly renovated (by the community) at Henderson Park, Lemon Tree Passage? Do not support this.

**CARPARKS (p13)**

Replacement of Nelson Bay Donald Street east carpark should be top priority for any rate rise – preferably with large retail space (left open if necessary if a sizable tenant can't b e found immediately) and 3-4 storeys of car parking spaces – with the exterior provided with landscaping opportunities. Under no circumstances should this be relegated to Option 3 & 4 only.

**Soldiers Point – Do not support** the taking of public reserve space at Spencer Park for parking. It is too far from the Marina to have practical use and would involve the removal of precious trees. Consideration of the land around the community hall being put to better use for parking should be considered. Very suspicious as to where this proposal came from. Makes no sense at all.

**DEPOTS (P13)**

Support the relocation of the Nelson Bay depot in particular as the current depot presents one of the biggest eyesores to the entrance area. Do not support its conversion to a sporting field space. Rather it should be converted to future Park and Ride location to cater for future demands on both Salamander and Nelson Bay shopping centres.

Medowie – There is no mention of the opportunity for the Medowie depot to include expansion of the adjacent plant nursery which could supplement Ngioka for plant supplies for Council and Landcare groups.

**DRAINAGE P13-14)** – Support improvements to drainage in Shoal Bay and also the key priorities elsewhere which should not be in Option 4.

**FORESHORE (P14)**

Fully support all projects in East Ward, particularly Conroy Park/Sandy Point Corlette. If funding is not allocated for this work, expect huge future additional costs. This was urgent 12 years ago!

A beach should be restored at Thou Walla west as part of any works, as this would increase the popularity of the Council owned Holiday park.

Little Beach boat ramp obviously needs urgent attention – constant complaints from boat owners thus affecting tourism. Our boating infrastructure is hopelessly inadequate on Tomaree Peninsula.

KING STREET (P14) As lovely as the street may be, without adequate drainage and flooding protection, anything spent there will be wasted. Fix the drainage issues first.

#### PATHS & CYCLEWAYS (P15)

Where are Nelson Bay and Corlette in this? Missing links galore. Which parts of Anna Bay are planned to receive attention? Is it the link between Boat Harbour and Anna Bay along Gan Gan Road for school children.

The \$2.6M entry (Options 3 & 4) for additional paths should be re-directed to fixing the missing links all along the Shoal Bay west to Soldiers Point foreshores which are by far the most used facilities right across the Shire.

STREET LIGHTING (p15) Should be a top priority.

#### SPORTS FACILITIES (p15)

Tomaree Sports Complex – Should be including a hydrotherapy pool as part of existing Aquatic Centre – high priority for the 40% of over 60 year olds who live here right now – and also for younger people with sports injury to heal.

Other comments included in consultation for Tomaree Sports Masterplan should be taken seriously, eg, insufficient parking. Support the replacement of condemned Soccer/touch amenities – should be high priority.

King Park Sports Complex – Move the \$3M to other projects except for a Masterplan. Pretty obvious this is in to try to make this all seem “fairer” and is a “classic wish list”! Use Sports Council funds which have been accumulated.

P16 – Enhanced Facilities and Services – If this means Option 4, need to move some of these projects to within Options 1-3.

Event Management – Fully support – Focus should be on Nelson Bay, the main tourist centre. New events will not happen without paid co-ordination as depending almost completely on volunteers is not workable.

Library & community services – Not fully supported. Consider duplication of services and overlap with State and Federal responsibilities. More use of local neighbourhood centres and their existing facilities.

Open drain management - Not fully supported. Whilst an increase in service level may have been identified, Community should also understand that the drains are important for filtering contaminants before they reach the ocean and rivers. The money may be better spent on providing more detention basins with plantings done to filter.

Sports facilities maintenance (P16-17) – Not fully supported. I’m sure they are all worthy projects but it seems to be a Councillor wish list and not clear about how the priorities for funding will be set and the costs are an unknown. Projects should not be superseding existing Capital Works Planning or Works Plus lists. The bank accounts of Sports Councils should be more critically observed to ascertain if funds kept on term deposits could not be used to get some of these projects happening.

Tree Management (P17) – Major concern with removal of so called “hazardous” trees without consultation and the focus for any additional position created because of this allocation should be on planting and replacement and more street planting. Damage to infrastructure is being overstated. More about some people not liking leaves! I would prefer this section was reworded completely. With our natural environment as our main strength compared to other coastal areas, all trees should be valued (as they are in expensive leafy suburbs)

P18-19 Key priorities – roads and carparks

Major work needs to be done by Council officers on marrying this wish list up with what is already not easily identifiable on the existing Capital Works and Works Plus lists in Integrated Plans (see my opening remarks) A proper priority evaluation system should be set up (as used to happen about 10 years ago in Council!) and stick to it! I simply don't have time to compare these lists with the SAMP! That should have been done already and if Council doesn't do it, than IPART will probably have a say!

#### **Unsealed Roads and carparks:**

The sealing of carparks in Tomaree Peninsula used by thousands all year round (and even more at holiday time) should be a higher priority than an unsealed road which services a couple of residents in more remote areas.

- Bagnall Beach Reserve 1, 2 & 3 Corlette - Priority should be given to the Dogs Off Leash Bagnall Beach Reserve as these are used by thousands each week and are constantly potholed and are a public disgrace. These should be in Options 1-3, not 4.
- Donald Street Carpark 2, Nelson Bay – Should not be necessary if priority is given to re-development of this whole site into multi-storey carpark replacement.
- Shoal Bay Carpark – Assuming this is the one adjacent the Shoal Bay Holiday Park and new playground, this should receive high priority because parking in Shoal Bay will limit further development as it's already totally inadequate. This should be in Options 1-3, not 4.
- Laidler Walk Reserve Nelson Bay should be sealed and expanded and directional signage added to encourage those who go out on all-day trips to use this area for off-shore parking. This should be in Options 1-3, not 4.
- Shoal Bay Tennis courts – large part should become carpark as the playground and picnic facilities are surely superfluous now. Shade trees should be part of any re-development (or planning done to retain any existing trees) This should be in Options 1-3, not 4.

Central and West Ward: Seem to have huge listings & look like a veritable “wish list” of current Councillors. A cross check should be made with existing Capital Works and Works Plus lists to identify what the real priorities are and tell us what's new and what's not.

Roads should be top priorities:

Given that the average % of funds to be spent spread across all 4 options is 24.84% for Roads (figure from Mayor 6.8.18) than the percentage of funds for roads should not be harboured in Option 4 and should receive a much higher priority. The pothole patch up team is a local joke and has been for years. The roads are not being correctly fixed and they need to be – starting on the high profile entry points into towns. Thankfully Church Street Nelson Bay is to start in September!

**ADDITIONAL REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION IN FINAL DOCUMENT:**

**Maintenance of our Parks and Reserves:**

This has barely received a mention in this proposal. The condition of most parks has gone down considerably over the last 10 years due to reduced service levels and stretching existing grounds staff to the limit. We have come to accept some sort of “new normal” for the condition of our parks, particularly those below Regional or District ranking. Parks staff do the best they can within the limited time/resources available. It’s just not good enough to have foreshore reserves with 90% weeds and unwatered. (I repeat again about the Customer Satisfaction Survey results.... If people got out of their cars and took a look at the “green”, they might not give them such a high ranking as being OK!) More grounds staff are needed (and less Managers!)

**Employment of Additional Officer for Volunteer Management – Parks/Landcare**

Directly related to the previous point is a concern I have that there does not appear to be provision for additional staff to service the potential new arrangement for volunteers in our parks and Landcare groups (Item 6 PSC meeting 28.8.18). Already existing Parks staff are taking on added responsibilities at Ngioka and there is a limit to how much they can do. They are good staff and should not be lost.

Council needs to consider redirecting more budget to maintenance and less to community service type activities which are often duplicated at the State and Federal levels.

Similarly the W H & S section at Council is completely “over the top” and makes for itself and everyone else a huge amount of paperwork. This may be required to comply with Federal/State legislation. Council needs to seriously challenge these requirements at a higher level so that the waste can be redirected to providing basic services to ratepayers.

**Additional Environmental Staff Positions:**

The organizational structure of Port Stephens Council is deficient in not employing sufficient environmental staff with direct on ground involvement particularly with assisting volunteers. Compared to other sections of Council it is quite damning to see that there are only 2 management positions under the Environmental banner in the Council organizational chart of 2018. It is even more disappointing that these staff report to a different Group General Manager. Which GGM will any additional appointment for “Tree Management” report to?

**Final Comment:**

Much has been said about the affordability of a rate rise to ratepayers. If they had been kept better informed of the true infrastructure backlog then Council would not have to be now “selling” the need for a rate rise – one which I believe should have happened back in 2015 when Newcastle and Maitland applied. The difference I see between what’s happened in those years between Nelson Bay and those areas is huge. We needed this rise long ago. However 7 years is a stretch too far and I only support Options 1-3.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

26.8.18

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 23 August 2018 6:13 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Dear Council

I wish to oppose the Council's proposal to apply for an SRV above the current rate peg as set by the NSW Government. My main reasons for opposing this proposal is as follows:

- It is not equitable as some wards/locations will benefit more than others.
- The proposed options 2, 3 and 4 have rate hikes which are too high, running much higher than CPI and wage growth and thus affordability of ratepayers, who are already struggling. The current rate peg (option 1) of 2.5% is 4% less than the proposed SRV option 2 at 6.5%. This increase is well in excess of community expectations.
- From reading the information booklet I cannot see any of the projects listed that would go beyond the expectations of what should be able to be funded through the prudential use of public money.

Has the council looked at other ways of funding specific pet projects, i.e. by a local levy, local fund raising or grants etc.?

In conclusion, even the option 2 (6.5%), let alone options 3 (7.5%) and 4 (8.5%), is a rate increase well in excess of current CPI and community expectations and the SRV options should not be pursued by Council. Also, please do not attempt to make up any shortfall in funds by increasing the number of rateable properties through high density and high rise development approvals, which would also be to the detriment of the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion on this important issue.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 23 August 2018 9:05 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** SRV

Dear Port Stephens Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. I have lived in, and am a ratepayer of Port Stephens. Like many in our community, I am on a limited income and do not support the proposed Special Rate Variation. I support Option One, keeping rates pegged at 2.5%.

Port Stephens is a much smaller community compared to the larger catchment areas of Lake Macquarie, Maitland and Newcastle. High growth new estates in these towns/cities demand more facilities etc. Today in the news Lake Macquarie's mayor, Cr Kay Fraser said that developers of the new estates help to finance the need for growth in infrastructure.

We are a cluster of coastal towns that support a transient tourist population during the summer months. We could use this idea to our advantage.

New estates have been and are being established. Developer's contributions can facilitate the need for improved infrastructure and facilities.

New estates provide more rates for council to utilise.

Drive in drive out tourist operators could be encouraged to walk through the town, spend some tourist dollar so that our visitors get to enjoy the coastal town and what it has to offer.

I would support the concept of charging more rates for properties which remain unoccupied for a large portion of the year. Investors in weekenders, holiday rentals and Airbnb's would fit in this category.

Re-open Ngoika to sell local-native shrubs and trees to members of the public from the area and to visitors alike? It would create some income and volunteers could continue in their roles.

Get on to all the cars that get away with parking illegally along the Nelson Bay foreshore. So many are not rear to kerb!

Let's improve maintenance on the current road network and parking facilities before jumping ahead at great cost, for limited gain. It seems appropriate to fix the parking situation behind and near Salamander Village first as locals including the new seniors housing development will use the shops daily and visitor numbers swell on weekends, holidays and during warmer months.

In conclusion, I support Option One, keeping rates pegged at 2.5%. Definitely not more!

Regards

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, 25 August 2018 6:44 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** pcs 2018-02118

My vote is NO. I don't trust that Council will spend the extra funding sensibly or fairly distribute improvements to the Council district. Anna Bay has been left out forever and I'm certain based on history that extra funds won't be coming here.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

181187969

(118)

1/4

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

25 August 2018

Port Stephens Council  
PO Box42  
Raymond Terrace  
NSW 2324

Cc: Tomaree Ratepayer and Residents Association Inc (TRRA),  
Tomaree Business Chamber  
Cr John Nell  
Cr Glen Dunkley  
Cr Jamie Abbott

## **PSC 2018-02118 - SPECIAL RATES VARIATION**

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I write to lodge my comments on the special rate variation proposal. I do so after reading all the literature provided by Council and attending a community presentation by councillors and staff.

I might add that I am a retired councillor from another coastal NSW municipality and can understand the dilemma faced by council. In that erstwhile role I was also heavily involved in the planning and conduct of an SRV for that council some years ago and can speak with some experience on the public consultation process.

### **Kudos First**

Firstly let me compliment Council on its extensive public consultation process for this proposal. Councillors and staff have made themselves very accessible on this issue and have been helpful in outlining the reasons behind the proposal.

### **Summary of My Response**

I accept the argument that PSC rates have lagged the average NSW rates and the existing rate peg of 2.5 % pa will likely not provide Council the funds to undertake some of the new projects residents have clamoured for. However, the lack of foresight in previous years and uncertain economic times now make a substantial rise in rates over the proposed long time period of 7 years a risky proposition for ratepayers and businesses in Nelson Bay.

I cannot therefore support options 2,3 or 4 as currently proposed. I am, however, prepared to support a rates rise with preconditions and for a different time period.

My objections and proposal are outlined in the following paragraphs.

## **Affordability Objections**

**Affordability - Residential.** The Tomaree area has a high proportion of self-funded retirees and pensioners (my family included) whose income is pegged or at best linked to the CPI. The quantum increases proposed are high by any standards and unanticipated when people decided to buy and settle here.

**Affordability for Renters.** While Council has hardship provisions for ratepayers, these do not apply to renters. By Council's own admission, rents will most likely rise when landlords pass on the rates increase. There is no provision for hardship that Council can apply for such residents (or business lessees). As a regular volunteer for [REDACTED] and a member of the [REDACTED], I have become acutely aware of the large number of local people battling to sustain the essentials of living and have to rely on charity. These people, many of them single mothers and the elderly, will be most seriously affected by substantial rent rises.

**Affordability for Business.** Council is well aware of the precarious nature of small business in Nelson Bay, demonstrated by numerous closed and closing shops. Sustaining small business in the area is extremely difficult and risky with the fluctuations of the tourist trade, compliance costs and competition from the big franchises and supermarkets. Local businesses have also had to pay a special town improvement levy for over 16 years, supposedly for a limited period, but as I understand, this was translated into a Council wide raise in rates around in 2007/2008. I fear that now these small businesses, which are so crucial to creating a liveable and attractive town centre, will be simply overwhelmed by the proposed SRV options. Ironically, part justification of the rates increases, the improvement of the town centres, would be undone by further shop closures. Beautifying a dead heart of town is pointless.

## **Objections to Seven Year Options**

**Property Revaluations.** Each of the Options 2, 3 and 4 propose an annual rise over a seven year period. That is simply too risky a financial proposition for residents and businesses. Properties are revalued every three years. The QV valuations lead to changes in the rates base. So in addition to annual increases on present values, these increases will almost certainly be exacerbated by revaluations of properties. Over seven years this could happen twice. I note the Mayor's promise, as I understand it, that a QV generated rise would not happen over the seven year period, but at the end of the period, the effect of two or more QV rises would kick in nevertheless. Thus presenting a further hit after the seven year period on top of the increased base. For businesses and non-investment property owners that is further bad news.

**General Economic Uncertainties.** In these uncertain economic times, it is highly likely that loan interest rates will rise (they are unlikely to fall further). People who have made decisions on mortgage loans and business loans based on current or recent rates will face difficult times. Improvements to the local footpaths will be of little interests to those facing foreclosure.

## Planning Objections

**Where Are the Business Cases?** While Council lists the projects that each of the options would allow to progress and these are said to be based on extensive community consultation, there is little evidence of the business cases for the larger projects or a clear set of priorities. For example, should Council be at all involved in the Anna Bay visitors centre for the dune operations? This is essentially a commercial activity and the construction of the proposed centre is highly questionable from the rationale of traffic improvements and environmental suitability with the likelihood of sand storms in the area. A business case, of course, assesses benefits (both objective and qualitative against a vision and strategic plan) against costs, over time (ie, lifecycle and future value based) against risks. I see no evidence of these evaluations.

**Integration with the Capital Works Plan.** There seems to be little integration of the proposed projects and the published Capital Works Plan. They should be as one.

**Lack of Vision.** This was raised by one resident at the NB Bowling Club forum. I don't think it was well understood as the response was, essentially, that Council has a strategic plan. They are very different. It seems evident from the patchwork efforts of expenditure on the Nelson Bay CBD that there is no comprehensive vision of what the CBD should be in 20+ years' time. Since arriving, I have noted a bit of work planned for Apex Park, the so-called improvements to Yacaaba St, possible provision of some more car parking (somewhere), and, notably, extending building heights to 10 storeys (again without a ghost of a credible business case). These are all signs of trying to complete a jig-saw puzzle without a box top and with pieces from different puzzles that don't interlock!<sup>1</sup> There needs to be a big picture for the future and a strategic plan with prioritized projects that contribute to that vision.

## SRV Prerequisites

I concede that an SRV is needed, but there are three essential prerequisites that are lacking the justify the case for one:

1. A clear vision of the future for the townships (at least Nelson Bay from my observation) to which residents have signed up to. This might require a charette process.
2. Integration of any projects within the Capital Works Plan as part of the overall strategic plan and local plans that are reviewed annually but adhered to unless changed circumstances justify variation. A cashed up developer with a great profit making idea does not constitute changed circumstances!
3. Transparent business cases for any substantial new projects that may be examined by residents. These business cases must be demonstrably beneficial to the agreed vision.

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<sup>1</sup> To support these opinions and observations, I have extensive experience in this area as a retired consultant on strategic planning and project development. Clients included state and federal government departments as well as large civil industry in Australia and the US, teaching project management, including business case development. Prior to this I directed large structural change projects within HQADF and the RAAF.

(118)  
4/4

-4-

### **Alternative Option Proposed**

Once the above prerequisites are met, a further SRV proposal might be put forward, but with options that span a maximum of three years (more the IPART norm). After this period, the community can evaluate Council's progress against the prevailing economic circumstances, before committing to any extension of the SRV for another three or four years. It also provides a good accountability period for the current Council.

Yours faithfully,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 26 August 2018 10:45 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Dear Sir/Madam

As residents of Port Stephens we DO NOT support the proposal of the Special Rate Variation. It is difficult enough trying to keep up with rising costs of home, health and car insurance, electricity, water etc., without the council looking at pie in the sky rises. This SRV proposal would drastically affect all low income earners, pensioners, retiree's and nursing home residents.

We place our support with Cr Giacomo Arnott in opposing this SRV.

Thankyou

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 26 August 2018 1:59 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Re proposed rate increase and proposed spending

I object to your proposed rate increases, we get virtually nothing for our rates anyway. i don't want to pay more rates, for projects i consider low priority...

We need to prioritise road fixing, the roadway at tanilba rd (between bay st, n mallabula rd) in mallabula is a joke, n it's been like that for 8 years, needs urgent work.

Everytime i ring up about rabbits, i get told to call back, it's not a priority, it's worse elsewhere etc, they used to at least come and lay calici baits and get rid of the rabbits, now they do nothing.

What about bushcare, landcare, controlling weeds, koala protection, controlling feral cats and dogs, limiting overdevelopment etc, these need to be prioritised, before your proposed town centre revitalisations.

That roundabout at avenue of the allies, n lemontree rd at tanilba bay was a total waste of \$700K - completely unnecessary.

When you get your priorities right, n stop wasting council money, get some efficiency into your council structure, i'll support a modest increase, but only when i see action/proposals in the rights areas...

[REDACTED]  
R  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 27 August 2018 8:48 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** SRV Feedback - Port Stephens Council

Dear Council,

I am currently not in favour of a Special Rate Variation (SRV) in Port Stephens.

For example, I note that various SRV proposals listed by Council included minimal infrastructure projects for the residents of Tanilba Bay who number approximately 2,500 people. Funding for SRV related projects appear to be disproportionately directed to other areas of Port Stephens, including *tourism hotspots* such as areas within Mayor Palmer's East Ward. It is not good enough.

I have variously made my feedback known via Port Stephens Council's online engagement hub <https://haveyoursay.portstephens.nsw.gov.au> and intend to contact IPART and the New South Wales State Government.

With thanks,

[REDACTED]

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18/187996

(122)

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 27 August 2018 9:31 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

I AM BOTH A RATE PAYER AND SMALL BUSINESS OWNER IN SALAMANDER BAY. MY BUSINESS IS IN ITS THIRD YEAR. I WOULD FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO SERVE IF RATES WERE TO INCREASE MORE THAN THE MINIMUM RATE. I LOVE THIS AREA AND PLAN TO RETIRE HERE. I HAVE NO PROBLEMS WITH THE ROADS AND AMENITIES HERE, HAVING LIVED IN OTHER COUNTRY AREAS AROUND AUSTRALIA WE HAVE IT EASY HERE. PLEASE DONT DESTROY WITH OVER DEVELOPMENT THE BEAUTY WE HAVE HERE.  
YOURS FAITHFULLY,  
[REDACTED]



18/187922

(123)

[REDACTED]  
23.08.2018

Port Stephens Council.

I am totally against the  
Council proposed rate rise.

Yours faithfully  
[REDACTED]

<b>PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL</b> <b>Information Services</b>	
27 AUG 2018	
File No. ....	
Action by .....	
<input type="checkbox"/> R.H.C. ....	

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 24 August 2018 5:18 PM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

The General Manager,

Dear Sir,

With reference to the latest land grab for public park space for car parking alongside of Spencer Park, Soldiers Point is appalling. This playground adjacent to the tennis courts and amenities block is very well patronised by young families living in the area and holiday makers staying at Thou Walla Retreat. To reduce the playing area for car parking is very dangerous as young children will be exposed to increased traffic movements.

The Soldiers Point Marina is very interested in acquiring car spaces for their patrons to use so they are close to their yachts, notwithstanding the gated car parking supplied by the Marina's owners, these gated spaces nearer to the Marina has been provided by the Marina for boat owners, so why don't they use these car parking spaces, which appear to be vacant most of the time? Is it the cost? Why should public parks be gouged to fill a need for private boat owners. ?

There is no traffic congestion around Spencer Park, the congestion mentioned is caused by the lack of car parking by the restaurants and Marina patrons. the lack of parking for the restaurants and Marina is their responsibility, not ratepayers.

Please consider my objections to this unnecessary land grab.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 27 August 2018 1:42 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Dear Council Advisors

I am against the SRVP as after listening to the present mayor, I believe these funds will only be used to assist developers. My family moved to port Stephens because we love it. We didn't move to Surfers Paradise.

Cheers

[REDACTED]



[Like us on Facebook](#)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

181189089  
(126)

The General Manager,

Port Stephens Council  
[council@portstephens.gov.nsw.au](mailto:council@portstephens.gov.nsw.au)

28 August 2018

Dear Mr Wallis

Re: Special Rate Variation Proposal - File PSC2018-02118

As a pensioner, I wish to object to the proposed rate variation above the pegged 2.5% on the grounds that anything higher will significantly affect my ability to pay my rates.

I totally agree with Cr. Giacomo Arnott that a lot of ratepayers in Port Stephens simply cannot afford such a rate increase of between 6.5% and 8.5%. Port Stephens, as a favoured retirement locale, have many on limited fixed incomes and such a proposal may push many beyond their capacity to pay.

Council derives rates from retailers and owners of rental accommodation and I fear that if these business people are forced into a situation where they have to increase their charges, they too will be forced out of the market and the many visitors they rely upon will seek other localities.

Please take my comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

## Answer to Q 15

I am on a super pension self funded a fixed income I get approx \$150 above a centerlink pension I get nothing from centerlink or any council rebates that a government pensioner get.

I can't afford any increase in my council rates that this council is proposing with the Special Rate Variation over a period of 7 years.

They have only been in for a short time and have a big wish list and at the meetings that I attended was said that the only way to fund these projects is with a massive rate rise over 7 years.

For town center revitalisation to attract more business to the C.B.D. they should be doing that themselves attracting people into their shops and not paid for by the general rate payers.

Birubi Information Centre and transport interchange for the dune & beach tours with the Woomi land council getting a fee from all that goes on the tours. They should be paying for it as what I have seen the Woomi name is across the top of it.

The CBD multi story car park was condemned years ago it is still standing now under the rate variation they want it rebuilt to the current standard.

and the list goes on forever.

The largest increase the council want over 7 years comes to a whopping 77% increase in my rates with the lowest wage growth this is madness.

The General Manager,  
Port Stephens Council  
[council@portstephens.gov.nsw.au](mailto:council@portstephens.gov.nsw.au)

28 August 2018

Dear Mr Wallis

Re: Special Rate Variation Proposal - File PSC2018-02118

The Soldiers Point Community Group (SPCG) wish to comment on Council's proposed Special Rate Variation Options.(SRV) and how this may affect, in particular, Soldiers Point.

We understand the Options are as follows:

- Option One: Maintain - Rate peg increase only at 2.5% per annum for 7 years
- Option Two: Enhance - SRV of 6.5% per annum for 7 years
- Option Three: Extend - SRV of 7.5% per annum for 7 years
- Option Four: Transform - SRV of 8.5% per annum for 7 years

Notwithstanding the affect these options may have on ratepayers, SPCG bring to your attention the attached SRV Information Booklet, Project Overview, where you will see mention of Carparks for Soldiers Point. (Options 2, 3 and 4)

However, on page 13 of the Projects Overview - CAR-PARKS, under Soldiers Point, the document shows the highly inflated amount of amount of \$500.000, as a one off cost to *'Provide formal car parking adjacent to Spencer Park to ease traffic congestion'*. (Options 3-4)

We comment that Spencer Park has adequate parking to meets the needs of the children's playground, tennis courts and public space, and that this space in no way should be compromised by the intrusion of car parking. The Community Hall and Thou Walla Sunset Retreat have their own parking as has the Port Stephens Yacht Club.

We suggest that traffic congestion is compounded at Soldiers Point by the lack of compulsory public parking for the Marina and patrons. The Marina is currently operating without regard to its former consent conditions to provide, on its own property, an additional 17 car park spaces as required for operation of its business premises.

**(See Appendix)**

These consent conditions dating back to 2011 seem to have been overlooked by Council.

We pose the question - is it fair and reasonable, amongst other things, to attempt to justify a 7.5% - 8.5% rate variation for Car Parking at Spencer Park, Soldiers Point when Council has received strong opposition to such a controversial proposal in the past and

We question whether it is fair and reasonable for ratepayers to bear the cost of \$500,000 for a questionable proposition to provide car park spaces at Soldiers Point when the Marina car parking in Ridgeway Avenue lies idle.

We feel it is unlikely that anyone would vote for such a high rate variation when there is no clear consensus on many projects listed by Council and no guarantee that any of these projects will be placed on Council's capital works programme.

In General:

We question whether it is fair and reasonable to request a rate variation of 6.5% to 8.5% when the present rate pegging is 2.5%.

We feel that a lot of people, especially pensioners, will be disadvantaged by such a leap in the rate variation and question why Council has not put forward consideration of a more moderate rate variation of perhaps 3-4%.

It has not been made clear whether the proposed rate variation will return to the pegged 2.5% after 7 years or whether the proposed increase will be extended beyond the 7 years.

It is also salient to look at the cumulative costs to ratepayers in this area. Port Stephens, as a favoured retirement locale, has many on limited fixed incomes but whilst the economy has been showing good growth, incomes have been relatively stagnant.

We agree that Council has growing demands upon resources but point out that with the increase in developer contributions and population growth, so too does the amount received in rates grow accordingly. We note that Council has successfully applied for various grants and subsidies and question whether many of the proposals reliant on a 7.5% - 8.5% rate variation, namely sporting facilities estimated to cost 6m, are absolutely essential when a mere 3m is to be divided between East, West and Central wards for urgent restoration projects.

Are we to understand that unless Council receives approval from the community and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for Options 3 and 4, ratepayers cannot expect any action to be taken by a Council, seemingly reluctant to address the longstanding urgent restoration of our foreshores?

Until some of these questions are answered, the Soldiers Point Community Group feel that Council should re-consider its variation proposals and perhaps attend to the outstanding maintenance projects from revenue received from generous grants, current rates and subsidies and from Council investments within and without Port Stephens.

Yours sincerely,

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**Appendix:**

Pages 1, 2 and 3 – Redacted letter from Port Stephens Council's Section Manager, Matthew Brown, dated 16 September 2011, regarding the Marina DA 2011-077. The letter states that the shortfall practically on site is 17.

A review of Council records and the car parking requirements as per the development consent history for Soldiers Point Marina has detailed that 28 spaces have been provided out of a total of 45 required by development consents. Therefore the shortfall practically on site is 17. To resolve any potential future compliance action, incorporating this existing car parking disparity into a future development design and consideration would be highly advantageous.

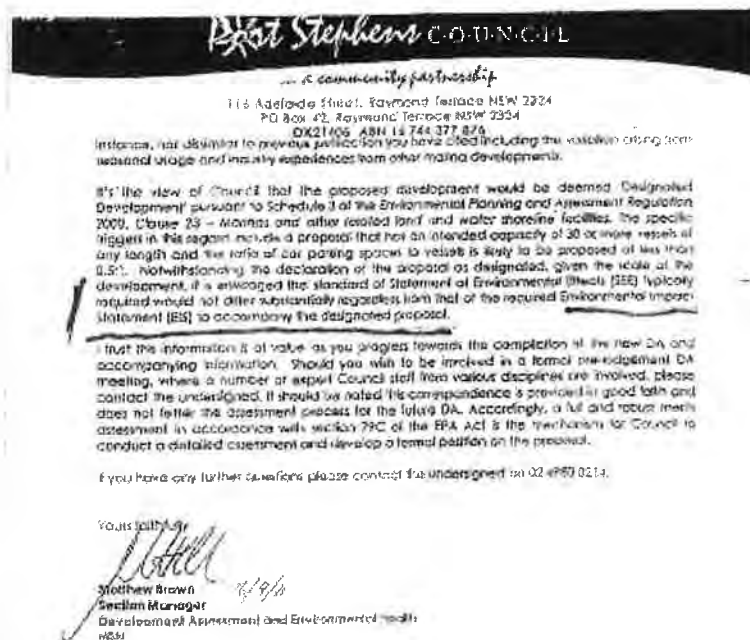
It is acknowledged that that development assessment process does not allow the consideration of the historical car parking deficiencies (arising from the non compliance of former

Page 1



Telephone: 02 4980 0255 Fax: 02 4987 3612

Email: [council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@portstephens.nsw.gov.au) Web: [www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au](http://www.portstephens.nsw.gov.au)



File SRV

28.08.2018

### Special Rate Variation Community Feedback

As a resident of Port Stephens for more than eight years I believe I have enough experience of my local area to make informed observations about the needs of our local area. I live in \_\_\_\_\_ on the Tilligerry Peninsula and it appears that Port Stephens Council considers that this town has not been considered worthy of support to generate business growth, attract more visitors, build our town centre or improve job prospects. As such I do not support a rate increase.

In looking at the proposed options, Tanilba Bay has been overlooked. Yes, there are provisions for Lemon Tree Passage and Mallabula and they are close but not at the town centre. To be a Town Centre I would have thought it would need to at least house a major supermarket? Tanilba Bay has a supermarket, a school, churches, two petrol stations, two doctor's surgeries, hairdressers, mechanics, restaurants, post office, newsagent, real estate offices etc. If you were to compare the facilities in Tanilba Bay with that of Lemon Tree Passage then consideration should be given to the real town centre on the Tilligerry Peninsula and that is Tanilba Bay.

- Tanilba Bay needs an improved **entry to town** i.e. the Avenue of the Allies
- The eyesore opposite the Kooindah Centre, once called a **Plaza** is enough to deter visitors and investors from our area.
- The main street of Tanilba Bay, other than the decorative entry is President Wilson Walk. Most of this street doesn't have footpaths. Children and families walking to the shops, school and Church do not have a safe footpath. Many times I see them pushing strollers on the road because the path is too rugged.
- Public amenities for Tanilba Bay parks especially the foreshore are in need, especially drinking fountains and beach showers at the Habitat end of the waterfront.
- Hopefully the school area will be included in the expenditure on pathways and bike tracks.

I appreciate your consideration of my feedback.

Yours Sincerely

---

**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 August 2018 8:17 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Application for Rate Increase ref # PSC2018-02118

Dear Sirs

Firstly may I express my thanks to the Mayor and the Councillors for giving their time to present material reference the application for the Rate Increase at the recent meeting organised by the TRRA at Nelson Bay Bowling Club.

Whilst I can appreciate the need for the Council to request a rate increase to enable funding of outstanding works, there are a number of factors that must be given full consideration before I would give my approval to such a request.

1. I sense that much of the Council's funding shortfall is due to past practices exercised by the previous Administration. Until the Council acknowledges that more effective controls have been established, which puts a stop to those practices, then I will have serious concerns as to the integrity of the spending of any funds, let alone increased funds.
2. I believe the Council has not spent enough time in evaluating the demographics of its rate-payers, particularly in the context of an ability to pay any increase. The Council appears to have spent time making comparative analyses of nearby Local Authorities, which may or may not have a similar demographic profile
3. I believe that the Council, in not providing me with a clear Vision of how the area will develop over the next 10 years, has made any decision more difficult.

In the context of 1 above, I have direct experience. Some years ago I was looking for funds to provide Exercise Equipment along the Nelson Bay to Corlette foreshore. One of the organisations I met was Landmark who were in the process of initiating the Vantage Estate development. The person at Landmark was very enthusiastic to the notion. He suggested that I make application to the Council to apply the funds that Landmark were placing in the hands of the Council to be spent in the local area as part of the condition placed upon them as the Developer. Given the scale of the Vantage Estate those funds were quite considerable. The funding I was requesting was covered, many times over, by the amount the Council received. Those funds were taken by the Council and spent outside the Corlette area. How many other local communities have not received the benefit they should if the then Council had operated in a more professional manner?

Reference point 2 above a number of comparisons have been provided in the literature and in the presentation material of how the Port Stephens rates compare with other nearby Authorities. Whilst the comparisons are interesting, I question the comparison of the demographics of those Authorities. Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Maitland and Cessnock all have thriving Industrial/Commercial sectors. I could envisage that the majority of the population are wage/salary earning. This does not compare accurately with the high percentage of the demographic in the Port Stephens area who are on fixed Incomes e.g. Pensioners.

In respect to 3, what is the Council's mid/long-term Vision on how they will develop the Communities to provide the opportunities for better living standards and better facilities? What is the context of any extra funding, provided through an SRV, to leveraging the future of the area?

In summary I do not agree with the Application being made by the Council. My approval will not be granted until I am satisfied that each of these 3 points have been met to my satisfaction.

I would appreciate an acknowledgement of safe receipt of this email.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 August 2018 10:59 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

This rate hike every year for 7years!!!! It's just too much for your average residents to be able to afford!!!!  
I understand the need to provide good services to the community but the majority of us can not cope with this type of budget blowout for our household income.

There must be a way to find money elsewhere. IE increase building /development permit fees for those just joining our community not slugging our existing community members so hard.

Regards

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 August 2018 11:54 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

I do not support the SRV's proposed.

Even at the "base" increase of pegging plus 4%, the increased rate burden to me and to many residents would be very difficult to accomodate. There is no point in having all these increased or enhanced facilities if I have to reduce my standard of living and quality of life to pay for them.

I would support an SRV of 5%, which would yield \$30.9m for maintaining the existing standard, and a further \$30.9m for improvement to infrastructure. Such improvements must be cost effective and not just politically based handouts to every town and village. Perhaps they should all have a business case put forward. It shouldn't be too hard to evaluate if \$2m on LED streetlights is worth the expenditure, or whether it is an outlay in the interests of the environment.

Council should completely re-evaluate its vision for Nelson Bay "CBD" and the surrounding residential area. I came here 8 years ago for the retirement environment for which I was prepared to pay in terms of rates and coastal cost of living - e.g. my home here cost me over twice my previous one when I worked. I supported the local Real Estate industry.

I don't want to financially support the tourist industry and its blitz on the area a few times a year but will tolerate it. But I will not subsidise it. If blow ins want temporary use of my town, it needs to be with my approval and they need to be willing to pay.

So revise the list of projects, give emphasis to infrastructure for the permanent residents (roads, footpaths, etc) and I will support a rate rise of the rate pegging figure plus an equal increase each year estimated at 2.5% for planning purposes. Set term 5 years.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 August 2018 12:49 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Rate rise

As a medowie home owner, i strongly oppose the steep hike in rates. It is one thing to bring us closer other council areas but this is too steep. We see very little of councils money. Our roads are the worst in the area and we shouldn't have to fund the rest of the shires projects and still be last on the funding list. I am strongly opposed. Fix the roads first then have a look at projects over the shire. Dont make Medowie pay for the bay and terrace! No steep rate hike that doesnt benefit us!

**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 August 2018 2:27 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project; Mayor  
**Subject:** SRV Feedback - Holiday Parks commercial performance

Mayor/Councillors

The agenda to increase rates via the SRV cannot be fully substantiated while Councils portfolio of holiday parks remains commercially under performing and poorly managed.

It is grossly inappropriate to expect ratepayers to continue to subsidise these entities. Council if it continues to operate these entities should have to:

1. achieve standard industry commercial parameters
2. operate and report to the community within "competitive neutrality requirements".

If it cannot achieve commercial levels of performance it should lease or sell its owned Park assets.

Why is Council performing so badly? Its poor commercial performance is not caused by the adequacy of its revenue, marketing, pricing or infrastructure. Whats fundamentally different to operations over its commercial neighbours and competitors is the governance of Council.

Council operates under the Local Government Act which prevents efficient and effective operations of commercial entities. The governance, management, procurement and IR arrangements are the primary reason why it cannot achieve an acceptable level of return.

Combined with not understanding or having the capability to manage commercial risk is the root cause of its failures to date in Parks.

Successful private sector operations, through their on-site managers, provide a personalised service. This attribute is a primary contributor to guest satisfaction and repeat business. Council cannot provide personalised service again due to its lack of flexibility.

The scale and scope of capital investment being reinvested in these parks as reported in councils Strategic Asset Management Plan is far in excess of that of commercial operations would see as prudent or efficient. The unit rates for investments proposed in the SAMP are higher than industry rates which indicates further over capitalisation.

In summary Council should not be seeking the scale of the current SRV while it continues to not address this under performing portfolio.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Standard Holiday Park Industry Parameters***

The following are standard industry parameters used by all lending institutions, resort brokers, the NSW Titles Office, the ATO and business

- The commercial value of the business = EBITDa x 9-10%
- Annual Return (EBITda) = 9-10% minimum
- Revenue to Cost (EBITda) Performance Ratio = 50%
- Minimum annual occupancy 57%<
- Ratio of valuation split between land & fixed asset to management rights for holiday parks = 50%

EBITda - Earnings before interest tax and depreciation.

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243

### ***Analysis - Crown Owned Parks***

- Based on the Annual Report 2014/15 these parks are undervalued eg 10% rate of return. It is nonsense to be claiming 15% and 18% rates of return
- Based on EBITda published in the 2014/14 annual report the Revenue to Expense ratios show these Parks are demonstrably cost inefficient. For example the cost ratio for Fingal Bay = 73% of revenue. Council is in effect loosing \$826,000 per annum on this site.

Given Council has to reinvest under its lease a % of operating profit this value should be published in the annual report and not used to cloud transparency of its operating performance.

### ***Analysis - Council owned Parks***

#### **Case Study - TreEscape**

Council since acquisition has invested in the order of \$19M in this facility. Council is currently investing a further \$3M on the premise of leveraging increased returns off the additional Federal Government \$3M investment into the Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary. Setting aside the Koala investment as a different entity - net Council will have effectively invested in the order of \$22,000,000 of rate payers funds into this park.

On the premise that the Park is commercial successful as a result of the attraction of being located beside the Koala Sanctuary its maximum potential net worth will be in the order of \$3-\$4M. No more.

This result is at a best case a write down of \$19,000,000 of public funds. This number is 20% of the \$100M shortfall Council is claiming it has in its works program per the SRV.

At best this historical loss indicates maladministration. Continuing to invest in a bad decision needs to be formally justified in Councils IPART submission for the SRV.

#### **Operating performance**

Based on my industry knowledge, TreEscape if it achieved at 57% annual occupancy should generate an annual revenue of around \$600,000. Council as a result should realise an EBITda of \$300,000.

The current operating performance where EBITDa is 0.5%, explained because of start up is non-justifiable economically.

Once depreciation is included it again means that the Park is running at a true financial and also an economic loss.

In the commercial environment, which also has to deal with start up challenges, the lender would for-close on your investment based on these numbers.

### ***Analysis of Pricing Performance***

TreEscape advertises accommodation starting from \$77 per night. Currently I have seen it on Booking.Com for \$64.

The short run Marginal Cost of a one night stay for your cabin accommodation is as follows:

- GST = \$7
- Minimum 12.5% booking commission based on \$77 = \$10
- Linen = \$18
- Casual cleaner = \$30
- Consumables = \$5

- Rubbish/waste removal = \$5
- Utilities (water, gas, electricity) = \$5

Sub-total = \$75

Council does not have on-site managers and will also incur call-out costs on occasion after hours in the order of \$60 minimum for a phone call alone. For the private sector these are a sunk cost. For a small park of the scale of TreEscape, with reasonably occupancy you can expect at least one per day.

Council should note that Middle-Rock still has high occupancy rates while Councils park is often low to empty. Slashing prices will not increase occupancy.

### ***Consequences of Councils poor pricing practices***

1. In effect Council is losing money due to its pricing practices.
2. Artificially lowering broader market prices. The non-economic pricing is also impacting on the market in that it is artificially creating a false expectations with potential guests on the value of accommodation. In effect lowering the floor price below true minimum value. Daily reports from booking

### ***The Ethics of Council***

Council should not be operating in commercial spaces where it is using ratepayer funds to compete with its own ratepayers, let alone on unfair terms. Parks owners operate with full commercial risk. Council parks do not.

Council is also the development approver, and regulator for many of the Parks functions. This is again an area of conflict of interest that is provided no transparency to the public.

Healthy competition in the holiday park sector is good for Port Stephens. All boats lift on a rising tide. However non commercial practices damage the whole market as well as the enterprise conducting them.

### ***My improvement recommendations***

If Council sees a strategic importance in retaining a holiday park land holding, it needs to publicly explain and report performance against its rationale, and also either:

- a) Lease the management rights and achieve a commercial rate of return on the land and fixed assets, or
- b) If self operated work with full commercial transparency based on Competitive Neutrality Principles (1992 Hilmer Reforms to which all States are signatories).

All the Parks at minimum should be operated under Competitive Neutrality Principles would have a full set of independent accounts and financial statements, pay Tax Equivalents, incur all the costs of that of an independent business operating at arms length from Council.

The each Parks full commercial performance, not just limited financials, should be reported in Councils Annual Report.

18/19/145

135

29<sup>th</sup> August, 2018

1/10

The General Manager  
Port Stephens Shire Council  
116 Adelaide Street  
Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

Attention: **Wayne Wallis**

re: **Special Rate Variation (SRV)**  
**PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation**

Dear Wayne

This submission has been prepared to outline my objections to the Special Rate Variation (SRV) proposed by Port Stephens Council

In particular this objection relates to the proposal to construct 90<sup>0</sup> parking bays along the Soldiers Point Road frontage of Spencer Park at a **highly inflated cost of \$500,000.00**. On 20<sup>th</sup> instant I had a telephone discussion with A from Council who stated that the increased parking here was requested by local residents. This statement is **totally incorrect** as the local residents strongly opposed this proposal that was put forward by Council staff as a suggestion to help solve the parking problems associated with the failed Soldiers Point Marina extension proposal. The Soldiers Point Community Group (SPCG) was vehemently opposed to the construction of these parking bays as it requires the removal of several substantial & some minor trees along that road frontage thus severely affecting the amenity of the park.

It is certified that \_\_\_\_\_ has not made any reportable political donations in the past two years.

This submission has been prepared by \_\_\_\_\_ of:

\_\_\_\_\_

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The intent of this submission is to lodge a formal objection to the proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV) advertised by Port Stephens Council & **more specifically the inclusion of proposed parking at Spencer Park in Soldiers Point Road, Soldiers Point.** This objection is based on the following:

- a. Existing parking facilities.
- b. Amenity of Spencer Park.
- c. Local Government Act
- d. Port Stephens Council's Urban Parks Generic Plan of Management

The objections proffered are based on the following documents:

- a. NSW Local Government Act 1993
- b. Land & Property Information Director General's Direction
- c. RMS Traffic Generating Developments
- d. Department of Local Government – Practice Note No 1 Public Land Management
- e. AS2890.5 On-street parking
- f. Port Stephens Council's Urban Parks Generic Plan of Management for urban parks. dated April 2004

Inspections of the available documents associated with the SRV appear to ignore the fact that there is substantial parking already available to Spencer Park along its three existing road frontages that total 200 metres.

## 2. SPENCER PARK

Spencer Park is bounded by Ridgeway Avenue to the north, Soldiers Point Road to the east & Resthaven Avenue to the south – *vide photo 1*. It is known as Lot 205 in DP27084. The park is listed as **community land** in Council's asset records & is categorised as sports ground with the owner being Port Stephens Council.

Spencer Park contains the following facilities:

- 3 tennis courts
- A playground equipment area
- Barbeque facilities
- A public toilet
- A charity bin

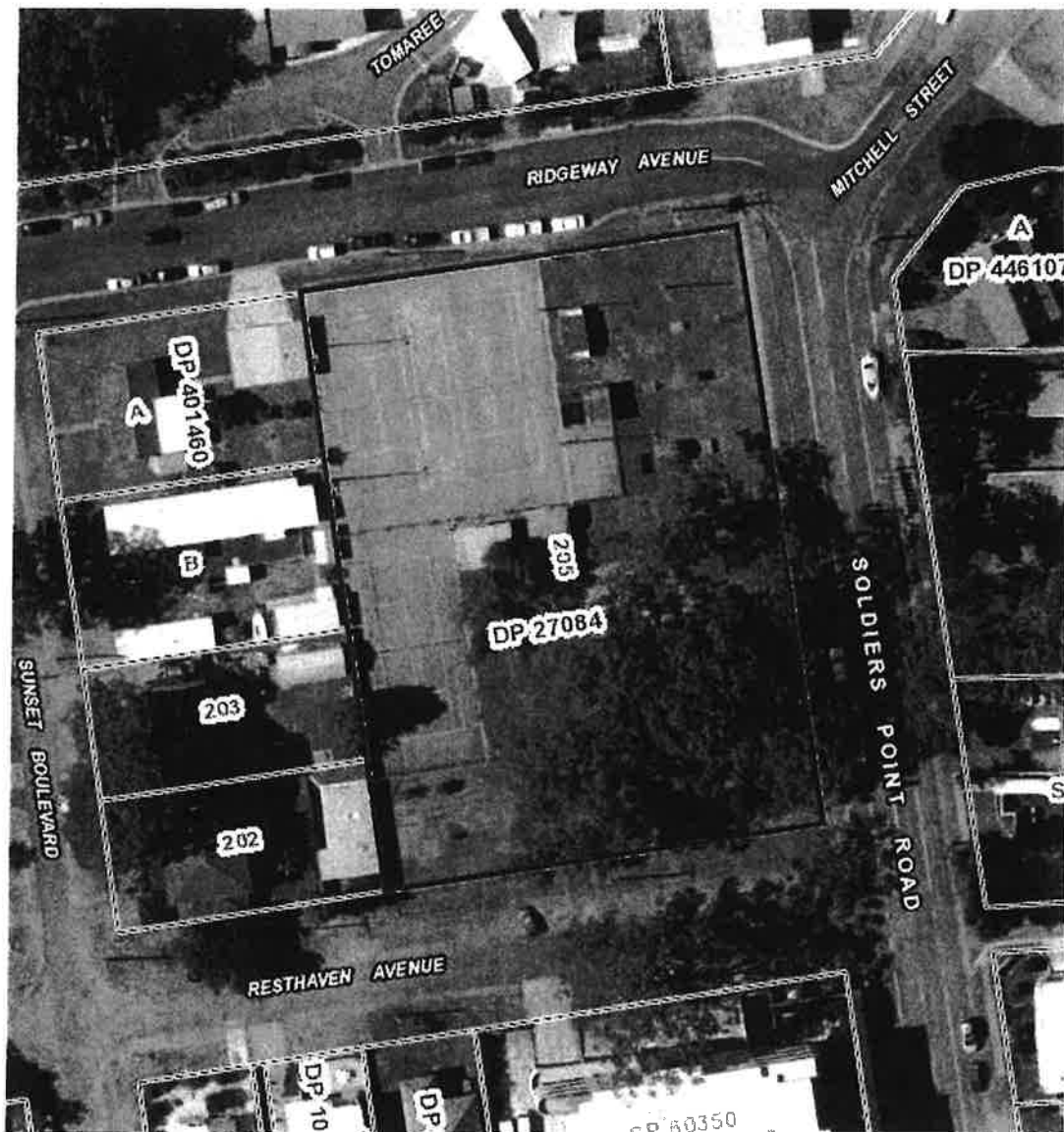


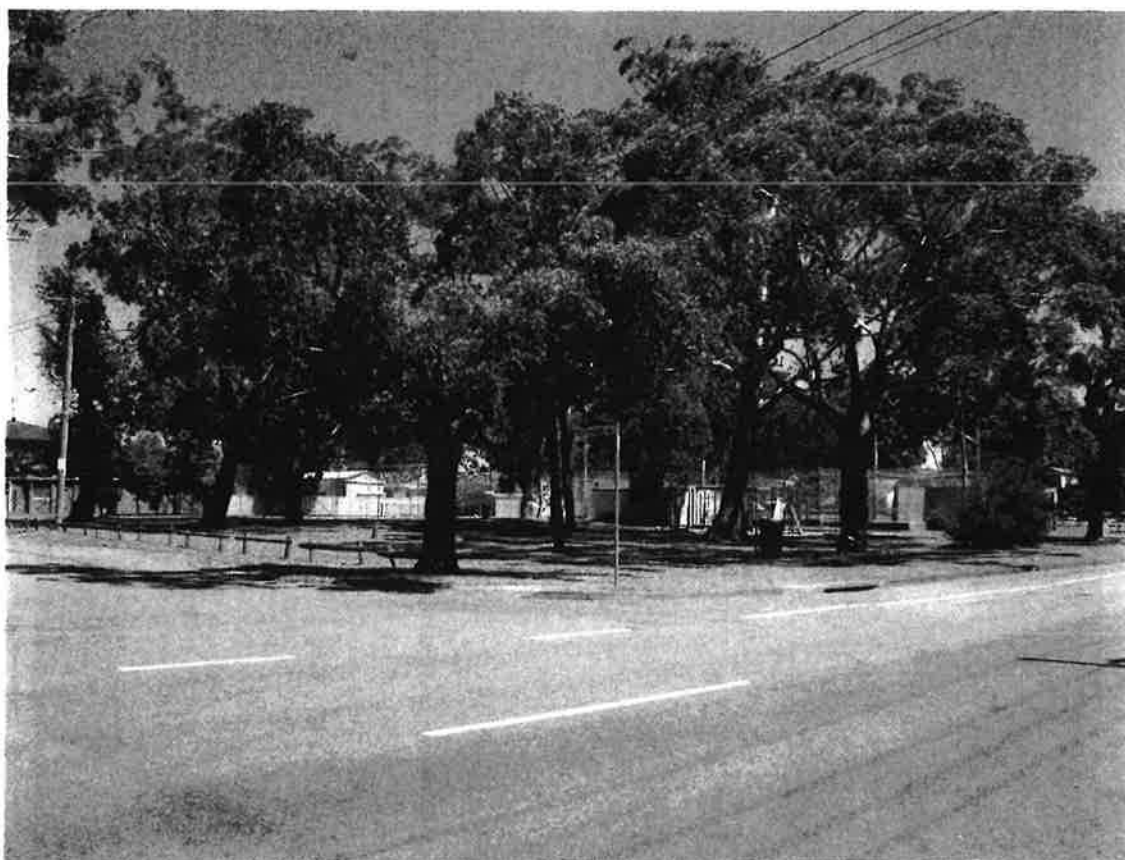
Photo 1 - Spencer Park

The park facilities are well used by the community. Koalas have also been observed to use some of the trees on the Soldiers Point Road edge of the park.

The existing parking facilities available to people using Spencer Park can be described as:

- **Ridgeway Avenue**  
Road frontage – 60 metres, available existing parallel parking spaces 9.
- **Resthaven Avenue**  
Road frontage – 60 metres, available existing 90° parking spaces 24.
- **Soldiers Point Road**  
Road frontage – 80 metres, available existing parallel parking spaces 10 (*taking into account the existing Australia Post mail box*).

This then equates to a total of existing parking spaces adjacent to the reserve as 43 which is more than enough to satisfy the peak parking requirements.



*Photo 2 – Spencer Park*

### 3. WIDENING OF SOLDIERS POINT ROAD

A proposal has been put forward to widen Soldiers Point Road along the Spencer Park frontage that provides an extra 18 parking spaces (*taking into account the existing Australia Post mail box*) set at 90° to the road – *vide photo 3*. **This proposal was previously put forward by Council officers solely as a means to overcome the shortage of parking spaces associated with the parking problems created by the Soldiers Pont marina & the businesses contained therein.**

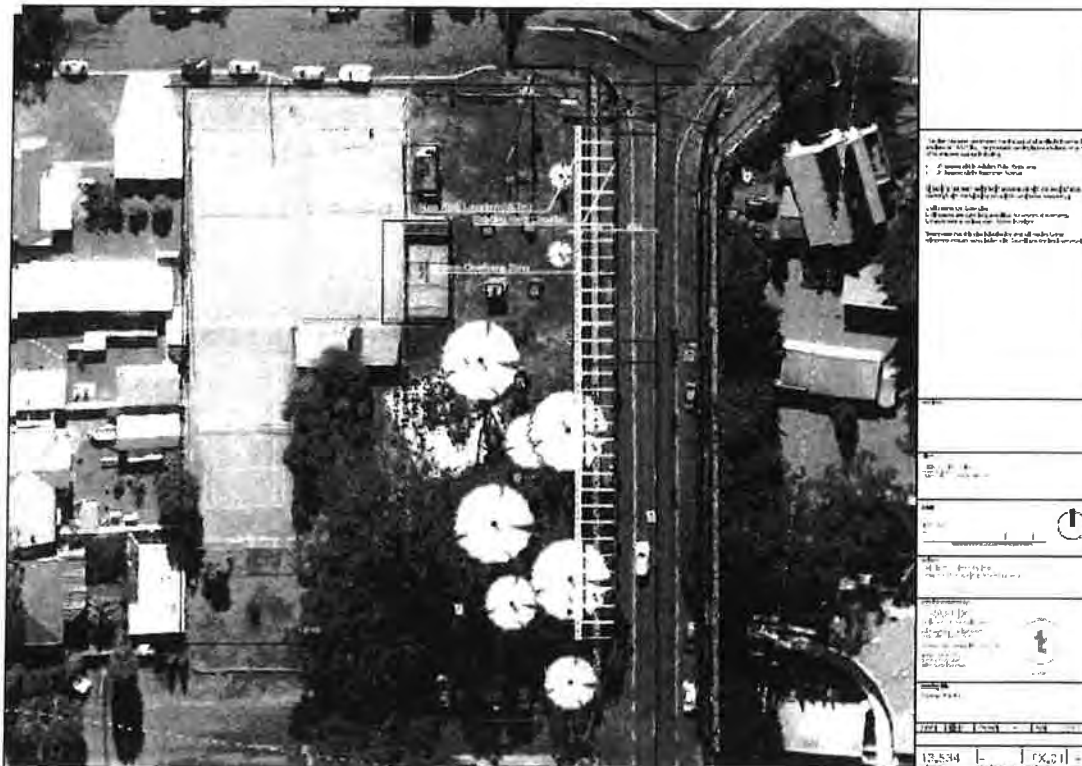


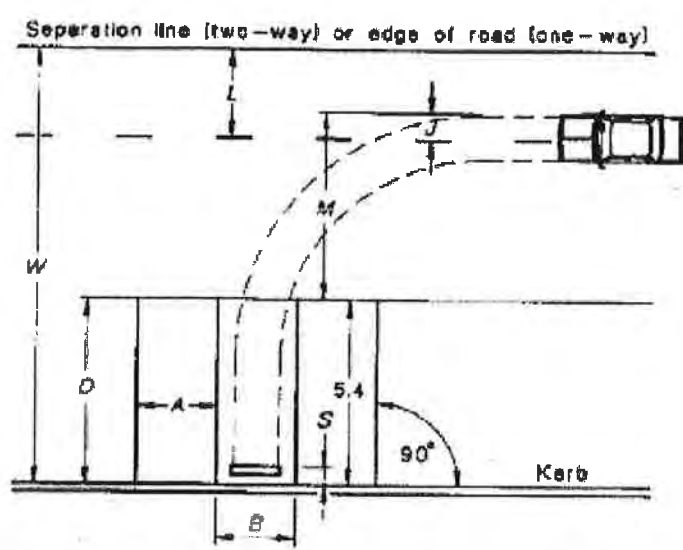
Photo 3 - 90° parking proposal on Soldiers Point Road

This proposal will required the existing kerb line to be moved 4.8 meters to the west so that the new parking spaces comply with the provisions of AS2890.5 "On-street parking".

Figure 2.5 of AS2890.5 (*vide following figure*) show that the kerb line will have to move 5.4 metres to the west but if a 600 mmm overhang is allowed for this dimension can be moved back to 4.8 metres, an examination of the photo 3 shows that the 4.8 metre dimension is the probable proposal. Allowing for the fact that the road pavement will have to extend a minimum of 300 mm behind the face of kerb the actual excavation for the road pavement will extend 5.1 metres west of the existing kerb line. As a consequence of this construction it will be necessary to remove 3 substantial trees & 2 minor trees from the eastern edge of the park, as previously said koalas have been observed in at least one of the substantial trees.

**The removal of the existing established trees will severely compromise the amenity of Spencer Park.**

135  
6/10



90°  
PARKING

Dimensions		Use category (see Table 2.2)			
		Low	Medium	High	Disabled
A—space width		2.4	2.5	2.6	3.2
B—space width parallel to kerb		Same as Dimension A			
D—lateral depth of spaces (Note 1)	D <sub>1</sub>	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
	D <sub>2</sub>	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8
	D <sub>3</sub>	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
M—manoeuvre space (Note 2)		6.2	5.8	5.4	5.4
J—allowable encroachment into adjacent traffic lanes (Note 3)		2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Minimum width required, kerb line to outer edge of a moving traffic lane = $D + M - J$		9.1	8.7	8.3	8.3
L—width of lane(s) for moving traffic:					
0-800 vehicles/hour (Note 4)		3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
800-1600 vehicles/hour (Note 4)		6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
W—minimum overall width required, kerb line to separation line = $D + M - J + L$ :					
0-800 vehicles/hour (Note 4)		12.6	12.2	11.8	11.8
800-1600 vehicles/hour (Note 4)		16.1	15.7	15.3	15.3
S—wheelstop distance:					
Nose-in parking		0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Rear-in parking		0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9

NOTES

DIMENSIONS IN METRES

- Dimension  $D$  is selected as follows (see Note 1)
  - $D_1$ —where parking is to a wall or high kerb not allowing any overhang
  - $D_2$ —where parking is to a low kerb which allows 600 mm overhang
  - $D_3$ —where parking is controlled by wheelstops installed at right angles to the direction of parking
- Formulae from which values of  $D_1$ ,  $D_2$  and  $D_3$  have been calculated are given in AS 3890.1
- Dimension  $M$  gives the lateral space required when manoeuvring into or out of a parking space. Roadway width limitations are dealt with further in Clause 2.4
- Dimension  $J$  is the extent to which a vehicle can be allowed to obstruct the adjacent moving traffic lane while manoeuvring into or out of a parking space. The value  $J = 2.5$  m is appropriate to traffic speeds of 60 km/h or less past the site. At higher speeds it is recommended that  $J$  be reduced by 1.0 m for each 10 km/h by which the speed exceeds 60 km/h, with a minimum value of  $J = 0$ .
- The quoted traffic volumes are one-way maximum hourly volumes, total of all lanes, during the times parking is permitted.

FIGURE 2.5 LAYOUT AND MINIMUM ROADWAY WIDTH FOR 90 DEGREE ANGLE PARKING SPACES



*Photo 4 – Substantial tree to be removed*



*Photo 5 – Substantial tree to be removed*



*Photo 6 – Substantial tree to be remove;  
koalas have been observed in this tree*



*Photo 7 – Minor trees to be removed.*

**OBJECTION:** The proposal to widen Soldiers Point Road to facilitate additional parking will require the destruction of two minor trees & three substantial trees, at least one of which has been observed to contain koalas on occasions.

**This act of tree removal will severely compromise the amenity of Spencer Park.**

## 11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT

As the existing pathway width on Soldiers Point Road is 4.0 metres the new kerb line will encroach onto Spencer Park by 800 mm plus a further 150 mm for the kerb width the road boundary will have to be relocated a minimum of 950 mm into community land. If a concrete footpath is to be provide immediately adjacent to the parking bays it will have to be 2.0 metres wide for front-in parking or 2.3 metres wide for rear-in parking (vide AS2890.5 cl 3.3). This has the potential of moving the road boundary a minimum of 2.95 metres into Spencer Park. If the Council elects not to move the road boundary there could be a problem with Compulsory Third Party Insurance & Vehicle insurance as there is a potential for injury or damage to occur on a public reserve & not on a roadway; this may also lead to insurance problems for Council.

Section 47F of the Local government Act 1993 states the following:

### **"47F Dedication of community land as public road**

(1) *Community land may not be dedicated as a public road under Section 10 of the Road Act 1993 unless:*

- a. *the road is necessary to facilitate enjoyment of the area of community land on which the road is constructed or of any facility on that land, &*
- b. *the council has considered means of access other than public road access to facilitate that enjoyment, &*
- c. *there is a plan of management applying only to the land concerned & provision of the public road is expressly authorised in the plan of management.*

(2) *Subsection (1) does not apply to::*

- a. *a dedication of land for the purpose of widening an existing public road, or*
- b. *a dedication of land for the purpose of other roadworks of a minor character, authorised by the plan of management applying to the land, in respect of existing roads, or*
- c. *a dedication of land for the purpose of a road that is the subject of an order under Division 1 of Part 5 of the Roads Act 1993".*

These principals are also stated in "Department of Local Government – Practice Note No 1 Public Land Management" and "Land & Property Information Registrar General's Direction - Action Affecting Public Reserves".

With the park fronting three roads there is no to need improve the access to the park so Section 47F Subsection (1)(a)&(b) cant' be applied.

Examination of the Council's document "Urban Parks Generic Plan of Management" dated April 2004 show that this document is a generic plan & covers the management of all urban parks in the Port Stephens Shire. As there is no specific plan of management relating to Spencer Park Section 47F Subsection (1)(c) prohibits the community land from being used as public road.

As Soldiers Point Road is 20.115 metres wide with 4.0 metre footpaths on both sides the carriageway width is over 12 metres wide. The road is a collector road that should be capable of carrying over 3000 vehicles per day. It is highly unlikely that this northern end of Soldiers Point Road will attract that volume of traffic so the existing carriageway is more that

capable of carrying the volume of traffic that utilises it hence road widening is not applicable. As there is no need to widen the road Section 47F Subsection (2)(a) can't be applied. Likewise Subsection (2)(b) can't be applied as there is no need to widen the road for traffic reasons & there is no site specific Plan of Management.

It is also obvious that there is no Ministerial Order applying to the Soldiers Point Road hence Section 47F Subsection (1)(c) does not apply.

As the existing parking along the three park frontages is more than adequate with the provision of forty-three existing parking bays the provision of extra 90<sup>0</sup> parking bays along Soldiers Point Road is not warranted. As the sole purpose for the provision of these bays is to satisfy a short fall in Council funding this proposed construction is contrary to the Section 47F of the Act.

**OBJECTION:** The proposal to widen Soldiers Point Road to facilitate additional parking is contrary to Section 47F of the Local Government ACT. The proposal to install 90<sup>0</sup> parking bays along Soldiers Point Road should be removed from the SRV.

## 12. URBAN PARKS GENERIC PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

In Section 3.1.1 of Council's Generic Plan of Management the following statements are made:

- **Dot point 10** – *"Parking & vehicular access within the sites should be managed to reduce public liability risk & environmental impacts. The development of car parks on the subject land is permitted but only where ancillary to the recreation, environmental or cultural use of the land of buildings & must be constructed in an environmentally friendly manner".*
- **Dot point 12** – *"Impacts on neighbouring properties should be considered prior to approval of any development".*

Dot point 10 states parking is only permitted where ancillary to recreational, environmental or cultural use of the land. The proposal to widen Soldiers Point Road & utilise a section for carparking is in direct conflict with this policy. It is not needed for any of those reasons & the destruction of significant trees is environmentally irresponsible.

The proposal is also in conflict with dot point 12 as no consideration has been given to the impact on neighbouring properties.

**OBJECTION:** The proposal to widen Soldiers Point Road to facilitate additional parking generated is in conflict with the requirements of the Generic Plan of Management & should be removed from the SRV.

### 13. CONCLUSION

It is the conclusion of this submission that the inclusion of road widening of Soldiers Point Road to facilitate extra parking adjacent to Spencer Park should be removed from the SRV for the following reasons:

- The proposal to widen Soldiers Point Road by the installation of 90<sup>0</sup> angle parking is in conflict with the Local Government Act & Council's Urban Parks Generic Plan of Management document. This proposal that has been put forward is **not in the public interest**.
- The construction of the 90<sup>0</sup> angle parking bays in Soldier Point Road will require the removals of three significant established trees; one of which is known to be used from time to time by koalas.
- The local community has, in the past, strongly opposed the proposal to reconfigure the existing parking arrangements in this location.
- The shortfall of parking at the marina should be resolved by the owners of the marina & not be funded by the rate payers.
- The proposal to provide 90<sup>0</sup> parking along the Soldiers Point Road frontage of Spencer Park should be removed from the SRV document.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 August 2018 4:10 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Cc:** Mayor; Wayne Wallis; Cr Giacomo Arnott; portstephens@parliament.nsw.gov.au  
**Subject:** Re: SRV Feedback - Port Stephens Council

Dear Council,

I am currently not in favour of a Special Rate Variation (SRV) in Port Stephens.

For example, I note that various SRV proposals listed by Council included minimal infrastructure projects for the residents of Tanilba Bay who number 3,156 people (as of the 2016 census). Funding for SRV related projects appear to be disproportionately directed to other areas of Port Stephens, including *tourism hotspots* such as areas within Mayor Palmer's East Ward, and not to Tanilba Bay, as shown in the SRV Investing in our Community brochure, issued by Port Stephens Council. At the recent TRRA meeting to discuss the SRV proposals it was allegedly suggested by the Mayor that pensioners and people struggling to pay their rates, may seek assistance to pay their rates by a reverse mortgage of their homes. I have since approached many retired persons in Tanilba Bay and the overwhelming feedback is that under no circumstances would they consider a reverse mortgage. It was also announced that the Pensioner Subsidy Rate was unlikely to change to help absorb any proposed rate increase. Many elderly continue to live without turning on their heaters/coolers to help stretch their pensions to manage day-to-day expenses. It is not good enough and this matter was recently discussed with Councillor Arnott who appeared to share our concerns. Council and IPART should be mindful that people in Tanilba Bay aged 60 years or more are significantly above the State and National averages. Many such persons are not connected to the internet and feel "left out" about providing personal feedback to Council.

I have variously made my feedback known and intend to contact IPART and the New South Wales State Government.

With thanks,

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 August 2018 4:44 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Rate Rise feedback.

I am a pensioner who is struggling to make ends meet. I choose option 1. Rather than the council having grand schemes to seal every road in the Shire, they should fix the shoddy roads that are already sealed. The council at the moment just has a bandaid approach to fixing roads. Potholes that are filled are only temporarily fixed and are soon back to their dangerous condition. Look at Tomaree Road for example. I have already paid rates for sealed roads in my local area so why should I fork out for road sealing in another section of the shire. Roads around the Polyclinic are also atrocious.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** wednesday, 29 August 2018 11:51 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Port Stephens Council Proposal for Rate Variation

Dear Sir,

We are writing in response to the Councils Proposal of Rate Variation.

As the owners of property in the Port Stephens Council, we do not fee any rate increase would be justified.

The population of Port Stephens is mainly retirees on pensions and families on basic incomes. Any increase in rates would inevitably put more financial stress on this group. The general cost of living eg electricity prices, rents etc are rising whilst pensions and incomes have not kept up with these increases. The Port Stephens area also has a high level of unemployment which is also on the rise.

A rate increase would also affect businesses in the area. Businesses currently pay 3 times more rates than residential properties. Council has always promoted that they are trying to increase business in the Port Stephens area. A rate increase would force business to reduce staff and increase prices to cover any rate increase. This in turn would lead to poor customer service and not promote Port Stephens as the great holiday destination it is.

Projects such as a new sports complex and relocating the Council depot cannot be justified. Infrastructure such as road, kerb and guttering, footpaths and the enormous problem of storm water issues should have precedence.

Council should not put additional debt over home owners and businesses as this would have a domino effect over the greater population of Port Stephens.

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2018 8:34 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I would like to express my opinion of the proposed Special Rate Variation Proposal.

I am totally against any form of rate increases for the reasons set out below:

1. Recent Inflation Figures (ABS) are:

2015/16	1.3%
2016/17	1.4%
2017/18	1.9%

2. Recent Wages Figures (ABS) are:

2015/16	2.1%
2016/17	1.9%
2017/18	2.1%

2015 Port Stephens Council Enterprise Agreement gives its workers wage rises of the following:

From 1-7-15 wage increase of 2.7%

From 1-7-16 wage increase of 2.8%

From 1-7-17 wage increase of 2.8% (minimum)

It can be easily seen that Port Stephens Council is increasing its workers' wages consistently above that of the average Australian workers wage. It is totally unacceptable to request additional funds from its residents who are struggling with low inflation/ interest rates and on fixed incomes with other costs like fuel, electricity, health cover increasing at alarming rates whilst Council is not showing any restraint itself. It should also be noted that part of Council Rates Component is calculated on land valuation (as assessed by the Valuer General) which have increased significantly over recent years thus giving Council additional funds.

Thankyou for giving the residents an opportunity to comment on this proposal

Regards

18/19/340  
(140)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2018 9:13 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal PSC 2018-02118

I don't think rates should go up Salamander Nelson Bay get the benefit of our rates we at Tanilba Bay don't even get our roads repaired properly

all that gets done is band aid repairs . If rates go up we would like to see more work done in this area. Our roads are beening narrowed so only one car can use it at a time the other cars need to go to the off side.

There is plenty of land to make the roads wide enough for two lanes also the edges are pot holed and dangerous.



Virus-free. [www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)

18/19/343

(141)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2018 10:05 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Hi

I have a great deal of difficulty in understanding why a council that is fit for the future needs this rate rise. If we were not fit for the future we would have been forced to merge. From what I can see this has little to do with the current projects but more about the mayors personal agenda to build more sports complexes and fields to attract people to the area this will not work. There appears to be very little understanding in council about destination marketing verse passing traffic when attracting people to sports complexes.

Furthermore this LGA has one of the highest mortgage defaults in the state this is only going to make matters much worse so it appear council has no regard for its residents at all and who they send broke.

This appears to nothing more than a money grabbing exercise to waste money on infrastructure that is not needed and should be stopped NOW.

Kind regards,

18/19/3/4

142

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 August 2018 3:55 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Yep, think it is a good idea for option 4 to provide more infrastructure for the holiday areas. I currently have 3 properties in the area.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 29 August 2018 6:55 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

To Port Stephens Council

I don't think council should be increasing council rates at this time, I think they should be looking at the vast amount of ratepayers money that has been lost at Thou Walls, Treetops, and Lagoon estates.

When they can sort out how to make the first two mentioned profitable not to mention the vast amounts of money already lost on these properties and the fiasco of Lagoons if these were sorted out council would not be asking ratepayers to pay more Regards

18/19/366  
(144)

The General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear Mr Wallis,

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation Application – Assessment No.**

We have just received our Rate Notice for the 2018-2019 financial year. We note that the rateable value has been maintained at the valuation value base date of 1 July 2016, but that the charge based on that value has been increased by approximately 2.43%, close to the maximum allowed by IPART.

On 1 July 2017 the Valuer-General increased his valuation of our property (144). Assuming that this new valuation will be used by Council in calculating the 2019-20 rates and applying also the maximum 2.5% increase allowed by IPART that would increase our next residential rates substantially. We believe that this increase is grossly excessive, unfair and unjustified.

We also believe that the Developers funds for The Cove development, paid to council have not been used in Fullerton Cove but have been used in other Wards by Council. We also note that there is nothing on Council's list for development in the Fullerton Cove area.

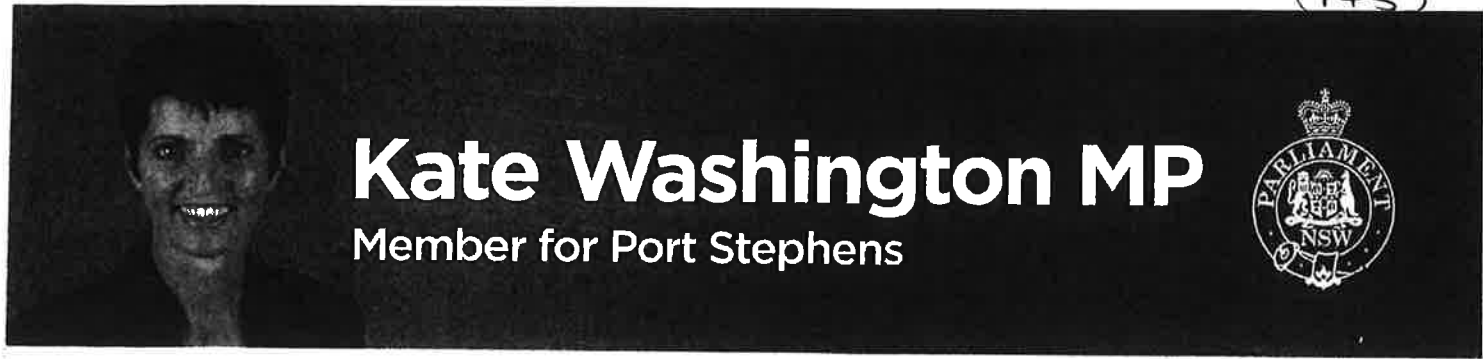
If Council applied a Special Rate Variation above the maximum allowed by IPART, then our rates would again rise significantly.

When you consider that the only service we receive from Council is garbage collection and twice yearly roadside collection, then any increase is unjustified. We pay for our own kerb and guttering, we plant, water and maintain our own nature strip trees, we pay for maintenance of our own road system including any required signage, we also maintain all street lighting.

For these reasons we are opposed to any move by Council to apply for a Special Rate Variation. In fact we should be receiving a reduction in our rate levy from Council for all the infrastructure that we maintain which would normally be paid for by Council.

Yours sincerely

181191696  
(145)



Mr Wayne Wallis  
General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

28 August 2018

**PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL**  
**Information Services**

30 AUG 2018

File No. ....

Action by .....

☐ R.H.C. ....

Dear Mr Wallis

I wish to make representation to you on behalf of

..... has contacted me about ..... concerns regarding the application of the rate reduction for properties in the Williamtown Red Zone.

..... advises that he operates a commercial property on Nelson Bay Road in Salt Ash. I ..... reports that the property operates as a mix of commercial and residential, for rating purposes it is considered commercial and is therefore excluded from the rate reduction offered to other properties within the Williamtown Red Zone.

..... advises that ..... business has been impacted by the Williamtown Red Zone through decreased sales, the conversion of the on-site café to office space and the reputational damaged to the suburb caused by the contamination.

Can you advise whether Council will extend the rate reduction to small businesses operating within the Williamtown Red Zone?

..... has also suggested that the commercial classification for properties be expanded to distinguish between small businesses and larger operators so that the rates applied to these properties better reflect the capacity of these businesses to pay.

Your consideration of this suggestion and any advice you are able to provide would be appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Kate Washington MP  
Member for Port Stephens  
Shadow Minister for the Hunter  
Shadow Minister for Early Childhood Education

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2018 5:01 PM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** Excessive rate rise

Dear Mayor,

We have completed the survey and wish to comment further.

We are appalled with the number of approvals for retirement villages in the Port Stephens area. The present construction at Salamander Bay is not in keeping with the residential nature of the area.  
How Council can consider this is totally beyond us.

It seems to us that the Council is hell bent on development at any cost regardless of the views of the residents effected.

In our view the influx of retirees should result in increased rate income sufficient to pay for any improvements over time.

Council should be encouraging sub divisions so the young people come to the area. Young families are more able to pay for services than old people who have retired.

We therefore strongly oppose the Special Rate Variation. A rate rise say 1% over the 2.5% would seem to us to be appropriate.

Regards

18/19/1988

(147)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2018 6:25 PM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Current Council rates. Special Levy.

Att. Revenue Team,

Assessment No

We have lived at the above address now for over (3) years in the COVE over 55's village situated on Fullerton Cove Road.

With us and others living in this community we pay the full COUNCIL Rates as applied to a residential block based on the unimproved capital value of the individual land area as unlike other over 55 complex's we own the land and dwelling.

As a community development of (220) houses we are responsible for all street lighting costs and ongoing maintenance of the roads & associated footpaths in our village area with a quarterly fee payable to our Community Association.

The only involvement by PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL in our community is the provision of a regular garbage collection.

This is unlike other residential blocks in our immediate area in FERN BAY/ FULLERTON COVE having the benefit of full maintenance services on roads, footpaths and street lighting at the same Council rate levy that we are currently paying.

Based on the above we would respectively object to any increase in the rates levy or the application for a SPECIAL RATE VARIATION on future rate notices.

Regard

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 10:27 AM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Council rates & Special Levy.

Attn. Revenue Team.

I am sending this on behalf of [redacted] / has she has no access to an email at this time. [redacted]

Assessment No.

I have lived at the above address for 2 & half years in the Cove over 55's village situated on Fullerton Cove Road.

I am currently paying full council rates as applied to a residential block based on the unimproved capital value of the individual land area as unlike other over 55 complex's we own the land and house.

As a community development of (220) houses we are responsible for all street lighting costs and ongoing maintenance of the roads and associated footpaths in our village area with a quarterly fee payable to our Community Association on top of council rates.

The only involvement by PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL in our community is the provision of a regular garbage collection.

This is unlike other residential blocks in our immediate area in FERN BAY/ FULLERTON COVE having the benefit of full maintenance services on roads, footpaths and street lighting at the same Council rate levy that we are currently paying.

Based on the above I would respectively object to any increase in the Rates Levy or the application for a SPECIAL RATE VARIATION on future rate notices.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 11:03 AM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** Rates

Att. Revenue Team,

Dear Team

We have lived at the above address now for over (2) years in the COVE over 55's village situated on Fullerton Cove Road.

With us and others living in this community we pay the full COUNCIL Rates as applied to a residential block based on the unimproved capital value of the individual land area as unlike other over 55 complex's we own the land and dwelling.

As a community development of (220) houses we are responsible for all street lighting costs and ongoing maintenance of the roads & associated footpaths in our village area with a quarterly fee payable to our Community Association.  
The only involvement by PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL in our community is the provision of a regular garbage collection.

This is unlike other residential blocks in our immediate area in FERN BAY/ FULLERTON COVE having the benefit of full maintenance services on roads, footpaths and street lighting at the same Council rate levy that we are currently paying.

Based on the above we would respectively object to any increase in the rates levy or the application for a SPECIAL RATE VARIATION on future rate notices.

yours faithfully

18/192324

(150)

31ST AUG 2018

E MAIL : COUNCIL @ PORT STEPHENS. NSW. GOVT. ALL

WE OBJECT TO A RISE IN COUNCIL RATES

The General Manager  
Port Stephens Shire Council

Special rate increase proposals- further objection (previous 28<sup>th</sup> August 2018)

Dear Sir,

I make further objection to the recent proposed special rate increases with the inclusion of the below table that shows possible alternatives/comments in finding ways to save money rather than spend more money.

Alternative	Comment
Increase the staff car leasing charge	Simple to implement
Staff reduction audits/outsourcing of services	New technology may have made some positions obsolete or outsourceable
Charge a fee for handling of complaints	Even a token amount would help and help to reduce unnecessary complaints
Sharing of resources with other councils	Savings in equipment etc and staff ie sharing of garbage services or road works with another council
Council amalgamation	Amalgamation appears to be one of the pillars for the NSW Government stronger Council program
Self funding initiative – ie user pay for library web, library/ tourist bureau coffee shop, auto pay barbeques, tourist bus parking fee.	Easily implemented
Increase land release or expansion of residential areas	Council has obligation to release land for the next generation- there should never be a shortage. More blocks more rates
Community partnerships-, churches, tidy town, land care	This will Improve community interaction and civic pride and lower the costs with volunteer labour
Sale of unwanted or expensive assets- ie parks, reserves	Unnecessary parks are a drain on resources and best sold.

Cutback council services-ie reduce library hours, reduce council hours	Reduced library or council hours will help lower the cost of wages. Council might meet bi-monthly instead of monthly
Increase rates for rented houses-	Landlords can make money on Council services and the rates cost might be treated as a tax deduction
Open government- all pay levels available for public viewing on the internet	May promote down pressure for wages

As stated in my previous submission, the special rate proposals program should be disbanded as soon as possible and instead a program for the investigation and implementation of savings in the provision of Council services by the actioning of a task force and public submissions, be initiated.

I believe that striving to offer the most efficient service complies to the spirit of Sect 8a of the Local Government Act in a more appropriate way than what you are attempting to do now (simply asking for more money). By innovation and new ideas, a better way forward for the community may be achieved.

Rate payer

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 2:15 PM  
**To:** SwitchPC  
**Subject:** PSC2018-02118

## ATE NOTICE ASSESSMENT

0th AUGUST 2018.

The General Manager,  
Port Stephens Council.

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter in response to the Propose Special Rate Variation being discussed by Council which will impact upon all rate payers within the Port Stephens Local Government Area.

I reside with my wife at the Fullerton Cove in an over 55s Gated Estate, called 'THE COVE'. All residents in the estate pay Council Rates similar to other Rate Payers within the boundaries of Port Stephens Local Government area.

In the estate we can almost be classified as being self sufficient. We pay to the our community management, a fee to a fund to look after our own facilities including The Club House, Tennis Court and Bowls Green, Roads, Pathways, Gardens, Lawns/open space, Street Lighting and fees to Hunter Water for there services.

Under the current situation, the only direct service, residents within 'THE COVE' receive from the Port Stephens Council, is a weekly Garbage Service. Other residents within the Boundaries of the Local Government area, are afforded far more services for their rates when compared to us. Considering this information, any Rate Variation based on our current Rates situation, will greatly impact on the balance between what we pay for services from Council compared to other residents and rate payers.

But as members of the Community we must support Community Projects to enhanced Facilities and Services which will improve the overall quality of life for all residents and visitors, but the Proposed Special Rate Variation must be tempered with the following:

- \* increase in population resulting increase in rate payers over the period.
- \* extra income arising from the increase population and rate payers
- \* businesses that will come to the area along with the increase in population

When studying what Council proposes to undertake with this rate Variation, one must fully support Option 2/2 (3) the 7.5% increase,.

\*\*\*\*\* I would like Council to also look at how they will implement such a rise and the impact upon people living in areas such as THE COVE. As detailed in this letter, we draw very little from our Council Rates when compared to other members of the Community. One has to be fair with their dealings with the Community with any increase to fees to maintain fairness.

Yours sincerely

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 1:34 PM  
**To:** Wayne Wallis  
**Cc:** John Maretich; Cr Giacomo Arnott; SwitchPC; Cr John Nell; Mayor  
**Subject:** Special Rate Variation (SRV) PSC proposed by Port Stevens Council

The General Manager  
Port Stephens Shire Council

Attention: Wayne Wallis

Dear Wayne

I am writing to express my objections to the Special Rate Variation proposed by Council.

#### SRA PROPOSAL

Firstly, for Council to propose to go down the road of an SRV it is signalling that there is no other option to avoid rate increases. I would contend that there are always efficiencies and productivity improvements that can be achieved in any organisation. A comprehensive investigation by Council to focus on these improvements is warranted in this instance. What is the warrant and priority of the projects listed in the SRV Proposal Information Booklet in regard to Council intensions compared to community expectations? Do we really need all the listed projects?

I understand the SRV Options are as follows:

- Option One: Maintain - Rate peg increase only at 2.5% per annum for 7 years
- Option Two: Enhance - SRV of 6.5% per annum for 7 years
- Option Three: Extend - SRV of 7.5% per annum for 7 years
- Option Four: Transform - SRV of 8.5% per annum for 7 years

I would contend that any proposal to increase the rates in the range of 4 - 6 % is a dramatic change that will disadvantage many people, particularly pensioners and other people on fixed incomes.

#### SRV PROPOSAL - SPENCER PARK SOLDIERS POINT

Secondly, I wish to lodge a strong objection to the inclusion in the SRV of a proposal to take some of Spencer Park on Soldiers Point Rd in Soldiers Point to install 90 degree parking at an estimated cost of \$ 500,000. If Council is in a situation where it is applying for an SRV because of cost pressures why would it even consider installing additional parking at Soldiers Point at a cost of \$ 500,000. What is the warrant for the proposed parking?

During the community objections to the proposed expansion of the Soldiers Point Marina, and in particular the lack of parking, it became known to community members that Council staff had put forward a proposal to install 90 degree parking on Soldiers Point Rd at Spencer Park in an attempt to solve the applicants parking problem. This information was greeted with great consternation by Soldiers Point Community Group who considered it was inappropriate for Council to putting forward a solution that took away part of Public Land and in the process diminished the community facility.

As the proposal to use part of Spencer Park was only floated to solve the parking problem associated with the proposal to expand the Soldiers Point Marina why is Council putting forward the project when public parking was not been issue? There is ample parking in the following locations. I am aware there is a shortfall in parking required for the Marina in it's current configuration. This is the responsibility of the owner and not rate payers!

- Ridgeway Avenue - 9 parallel parking spaces
- Resthaven Avenue - 24 90<sup>0</sup> parking spaces
- Soldiers Point Road - 10 parallel parking spaces

So the question needs to be asked if the only perceived parking need was in regard to expansion of the Marina why is it necessary to proceed now. Would the provision of additional parking spaces enhance any future DA application for the expansion of the Marina?

In addition, I would point out that the proposal to widen Soldiers Point Road to facilitate additional parking is contrary to Section 47F of the Local Government ACT.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. Council review the SRV proposal and undertake an investigation to identify efficiencies and productivity improvements to obviate the need to increase rates
2. Council review the SRV proposed projects and determine the warrant and priorities of projects based on community expectations and perceived need.
3. Council remove the SRV proposal to install 90 degree parking on Soldiers Point Rd adjacent to Spencer Park.

I certify I have not made any reportable political donations in the past two years.

Yours faithfully



30<sup>th</sup> August 2018

General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

Dear Sir

### PROPOSED SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

We would like Council to take this opportunity to review the current **Base Rate for Business** zoned properties in Port Stephens. This rate is currently significantly higher than the Residential Base and is therefore considered somewhat inequitable (currently \$1557.00 per annum versus \$369 for residential). Accordingly, it is considered an imposition on **business development in Port Stephens**.

On top of this is of course the high UCV rate for Business rated properties compared to the Residential rate eg .008513 v .003033 [ almost 3x]. Can this be justified albeit we understand that the range of services provided maybe higher for commercial properties?

We believe the high Base rate for Businesses has a particularly strong impost on Businesses that occupy small sites which can be demonstrated as follows:

- **A large "flat" charge is a regressive tax**, having greater impact on small businesses. The smaller the shop size, the larger percentage is being levied of the UCV.
- There is a particularly high vacancy rate in Nelson Bay Town Centre and Foreshore which is primarily small sites and could be for a number of reasons, but we believe that the Business base [ which forms a key component of the outgoing component of a tenant's lease] is contributing to the high vacancy level.
- The disproportionately high rates on these properties has further impact, as these **small premises are the incubators of new business in the area**.
- Businesses that could be occupying these spaces move out into residential areas (home industries) and operate with the lower costs.

Options that perhaps could be considered to offset the potential total rate revenue reduction in the event of the adjustment Business Base rate could be:

- Addressing the rating applied to Home based businesses.

154

2/2

- Ensuring all relevant Home-Based Business properties are being captured and they are being rating accordingly.

**We believe that this is an opportunity to review the Business Base downwards for Business rated properties in Port Stephens to a level more commensurate with the Residential Base.**

We would also like to say that we generally support the concept of increasing the overall rating for the LGA to achieve much needed infrastructure improvements as long as it is equitable to all ratepayers.

Yours sincerely,

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 2:44 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project; SwitchPC  
**Subject:** SRV PSC 2018-02118

The General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
116 Adelaide Street  
Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

Dear Sir

As pensioners living in the Port Stephens Shire my wife & I object to the Special Rate Variation that has been put on public exhibition by Council. This proposal has the possibility of being onerous on pensioners especially in this time of soaring bills. If the SRV goes ahead the Pensioner Rebate Grant should be increased at the same dollar value as the SRV increase.

We certify that we have not made any reportable political donations in the past two years.

Regards

30 August 2018

Assessment Number:

**The Port Stephens Council**

**Attention:** Revenue Department

We have been residents at the above address for two and a half years. The Cove at Fullerton Cove is a Torres Title over 55's Community Development.

The Fullerton Cove Community undertakes the provision and maintenance of all street lighting, provision and maintenance of roads, curbs and guttering, public walkways and signs and the provision of bridges and railings over the creek.

Residents pay fees to the Strata towards the maintenance of the community facilities which includes the upkeep of the roads, lighting and footpaths.

The Port Stephens Council provides a weekly garbage pickup and fortnightly recycle pickup for the residents in this community.

Residents of The Cove at Fullerton Cove are charged full rates by the Port Stephens Council for this garbage service. We are being asked to pay \$1648.43 for this service, which includes our pension rebate.

We believe the Section 94A payment to Council from this development was utilised to provide community facilities to the Fern Bay area rather than within the Fullerton Cove Development, which has had no monies from these funds.

While we understand that all residents have an obligation to support the Shire and the provision of facilities for all to enjoy, we would request a review of the rates for residents of The Cove Fullerton Cove.

In view of the Council proposal to increase rates for all residents, we would request a review be undertaken for all residents of The Cove, Fullerton Cove, with consideration of the financial support residents are currently making towards the up keep of this community, and the minimal service required to be provided by the Council.

We look forward to your consideration and response to our request.

Yours sincerely,

### Proposed Rate Rise for Port Stephens

OPTION TWO - ENHANCE 6.5% SRV per annum for 7 years Under this option, Council will apply for a rate increase of 6.5% for 7 years. This would equate to a 56% increase in 7 years time (including an annual rate peg of 2.5%).

I support a rate rise **if the proposed plans were changed to include Tanilba Bay and NOT Lemon Tree Passage**. There are so many projects that should be addressed in Tanilba Bay. I do not feel that our local councillor in anyway represents the needs of local people. To spend money on Lemon Tree Passage when basic services are so run down, under developed and neglected in Tanilba Bay would be a disgrace. I have listed a few of my concerns below.

### Some of My Major Concerns

1. **The Avenue of the Allies** is the main thoroughfare from the archways at both ends. It is in a disgraceful, dangerous and neglected condition. Every day I see women pushing prams, school children, and the elderly struggling to walk on the uneven gravel beside the road (people who do not drive). It is too dangerous to walk on the edge of the road because it is so narrow, just wide enough for two cars to pass and there is no footpath. This road leads to Coles and people walk beside the road every day. Earlier this year I watched the ridiculous patching of the edge of the Avenue of the Allies with gravel, the road was back to the same condition as before the patchwork job within a few weeks. When are we going to get an upgrade of this major street? Curb & guttering, proper lights, which are not blocked by the trees, a footpath for pedestrians and sealed from edge to edge. What has our local councillor done about this road – made promises and nothing else!
2. **Do something about the derelict old shopping centre site**. It is another disgrace. This was once the major centre of the town. The construction of Coles meant we have a fractured shopping centre – newsagent, post office and other shops in one part and Coles, the chemist, The Greater, and a few other shops around the corner. Yet another example of the total lack of planning and development of this area. What is council doing to develop our area – to me it appears like absolutely nothing. When I read about the proposed development of Lemon Tree Passage I am shocked and disgusted that our councillor and council have neglected what was once a pleasant place to shop and meet community members. Splitting the shopping centre ripped the heart out of what was a successful and pleasant shopping mall. I used to enjoy shopping now I can get a cup of coffee from a van parked outside the doors of Coles or have to walk back to Kooindah Centre. Not good enough – very bad planning
3. **A footpath being installed around the foreshore**. I am delighted that there has been some progress on the installation of a footpath from the barbeque & new playground opposite the community centre towards the boat ramp. Why has such a path not been installed around the entire Tanilba Bay foreshore to join up with the Tilligerry Habit boardwalk? Another example of neglect and poor planning. I walk regularly for exercise but cannot use the grass area along Peace Parade as it is uneven, has exposed tree roots and is too dangerous to use for exercising. I always walk on the edge of the road which is very

dangerous dodging in and out of parked cars. Why should I have to do this when the grass area between the road & the water's edge would be a fantastic place for a footpath? Where is the planning to extend the footpath all the way around the Tanilba Bay foreshore in the proposed councillor's plans?

4. **Bicycle paths and Exercise tracks in the Tilligerry.** I have used the bicycle path from Medowie to Raymond Terrace and was very impressed. Why do we not have these facilities on the Tilligerry Peninsula? Another neglected area.
5. **Erosion of the foreshore, particularly in Sunset Park** so that the heritage table and seat are not washed away. When I first came to this area I helped place rocks on the western edge of the park. There has been no erosion of these rocks. I have requested that rocks be provided to help stop erosion so that the heritage table & seat and to save the trees (22) on the northern side but every time a parks officer from council has inspected the site they say that it is too low a priority. I have photos of the heritage table surrounded by sea water – it will not be long before it is surrounded permanently by water. Another heritage object about to disappear.

Most people on Tilligerry Peninsula live, shop, attend school, work, play sport, attend church and use local businesses in Tanilba Bay. How can the development of Lemon Tree Passage benefit the community?

18/193019  
(158)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2018 2:48 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC2018 -02118Special Rate Variation

Dear Wayne,

We are writing to you to make objection to the proposed Special Rate Variation.

As residents of the Cove Village, Fullerton Cove, under a community title, we maintain our own streets, community parkland, swimming pool, bowling green and tennis courts. The only service provided to us from the Council is Garbage and Recycles Collection.

You will be aware, our Valuer General Valuation has been increased, therefore our rates will increase accordingly.

The services and facilities you provide to our community now and in the future does not warrant any increase, as this community mostly pays its own way.

We trust your council will understand our special circumstances and rate us accordingly in the future.

Yours sincerely,

18/19/3023  
(159)  
1/4

PSC 2018-02118 .

## SPECIAL RATE VARIATION PROPOSAL

### SUBMISSION:

I am a resident ratepayer of Lemon Tree Passage

I cannot address the problems of the whole of Port Stephens as the patch that I live in is the most important for me.

I have read the 23 pages of the proposal for the SRV.

I attended the meeting at the Lemon Tree Bowling Club on the second of August, 2018.

**WHAT COUNCIL IS PROPOSING SHOULD NOT BE ABOUT WHAT COUNCIL WANTS, ITS ABOUT WHAT WE THE RATEPAYERS WANT.**

**COUNCIL IS NOT LISTENING, TO THE RATEPAYERS.**

The one page hand-out supplied at the above meeting with the heading "Lemon Tree Passage" was very disappointing. It seemed very hurriedly put together, as it addressed **Birubi vehicle parking, Nelson Bay Depot refurbishing, etc**, etc. and seemed altogether inappropriate to be on that page. Unless that is if you are saying this is what council is really aiming for, and LTP will get **nothing** in the higher rates you are expecting us to pay.

Some very fancy trendy words seem to have been used in relation to some items proposed: e.g. "A sense of town arrival"! What on god's earth does this mean? I know what it is intended to mean but it is a vacuous concept. A better sense of arrival is well kempt curbing, clean facilities and maintained plantations, and not falling down buildings, or old couches left on the nature strip for years.

And so to the List:

**McCann Park improvements:** \$30,000 scoping plan has been announced previously. (Capital Works Program) This seems like a junket for someone! Why does it take such a large amount to make plans for a park that is bare ground and seldom used?

McCann Park **does not need "improvement"** Nothing happens on it. We don't want to change it. It's a Reserve! It's flat, its grassed. It was the old cricket pitch. It does not need money spending on it except to put in some extra feed trees around the edges for koalas!

**John Street** does not exist. This is an error on the part of the staff who put this together, and okayed it for publication! I suggest council get a bit more familiar with the place that they want to get money from our pockets to spend, and expect us to **agree to. swallow it without question.**

**Provide Main Street Vista:** Again, what in god's name does this mean? Why are there no details for this 'vision of a vista'?

We **have** a vista, its right to the end of Meredith Avenue, to the Marina. It's blue sky and blue water. If you mean to plant trees that may not get watered, or garden beds that the retiree volunteers-who weed and pick up rubbish in the existing and gardens have to water, we say NO to this, unless Council provide workers to do the job of maintaining same.

**Bike/ walking path , Footpaths:** YES, so that I don't have to see that lady pushing a wheelchair with an infirm person along the rough edges of the road again where there is no footpath!.

**We needed this much more than a new roundabout.** And the kids need a pathway for their bikes to get to the footy oval and the pool.

**LINE MARKINGS ON ROADS AND ROAD BLISTERS, TRAFFIC SIGNAGE, STREET LIGHTING ; YES OF COURSE WE NEED THESE,** and they should be there already, and not waiting in the wings for a rate rise.

### **BBQ FACILITIES**

After being denied the luxury of getting two new BBQ s for the shelter at Henderson Park for years and years, its unbelievable that Council see the need to do it now! It's particularly galling after being told only 3 – 4 months ago that Council Maintenance had it on good authority that there are plenty of spare parts available and Council will keep on sending someone out to fix them! This is not making sense.

**HENDERSON PARK SHELTER ROOF** Yes the roof of the shelter does need work, and this has been reported to council previously. This is JUST ongoing maintenance which should be getting done with our rates and not waiting until you put the rates up on us. More than anything else it needs proper **No Smoking signs and warnings of fines imposed to make it useable and pleasant for those who do not want the exposure to second hand cigarette fumes.**

**PUBLIC AMENITIES:** We have a toilet block which **has been refurbished not too long ago.** It's fine. It does **NOT** need knocking down and building again. A beach shower has already been installed. We don't need another one of those either.

### **JOHN PARADE**

This does not exist. However Johnson Parade does! It does not give us confidence when such basic lack of local knowledge makes its way into council documents.

**ROAD REHABILITATION:** What on earth does this mean. I understand road re-sealing, but how do you rehabilitate a road?

**DANIEL CRES. ROAD REHAB AND RESEAL:** Daniel Crescent is already sealed, albeit **badly.** the last 100 metres is **half a road width,** more of a lane really and not properly constructed. Needs widening and with kerb and channel. Two vehicles are unable to pass each other and the Rubbish truck just fits.

This road should have been built properly originally, and now it should be just up to council to run the maintenance with our rates.

**GIBBERS DRIVE:** Road speed humps must be repainted. Impossible to see in some lighting conditions.

**GIBBERS POINT RESERVE :** We have **never had a sealed car-park** and we do not want one. Its not a Park. Its a reserve. If it gets sealed people will want toilets, and rubbish bins, etc, etc.

We do not have something called **Old Wharf Park** in Lemon tree. Another error by your staff.

We have a Stanley Street in Lemon Tree., **not Stanley Lane**. Another error.

### **CONCLUSION:**

- We want our **current facilities kept up to scratch, repaired, replaced, in a timely manner.**
- We want **good walking/bike shared footpaths, tracks**
- We want **roads repaired or replaced** in a workmanlike manner, building them correctly, not just quick fixes.
- We want the **Shade Sail installed at Henderson Park as promised.** Greg Kable promised me personally that this would be done prior to the end of the financial year! It was promised again at a Council Meeting my husband and I attended a month or two ago.
- What guarantee will we get from Council that we will **see any of the improvements in our area** that council proposes if you put the rates up?
- We want to see the **results of this feedback** that Council have asked for.
- We are very **unhappy** that the Council depot at Nelson Bay is proposed be relocated at the expense of the ratepayers. What will happen to the old one? Rehabilitate does not quite answer it for me. Its probably valuable real estate to be sold which can be used for the costs to remove to Salamander. Why does it need moving at all? What are the plans for the old site?
- **Car-parks for Tourists** to Soldiers Point and Nelson Bay do little for us, the ratepayers, who avoid these areas during holiday seasons and only ever make occasional visits to those areas. We should not be paying for them. Let the developers do this.
- Give us gabons for **coastal protection** to the foreshore at Gibbers Point Reserve.
- **Tilligerry has been mentioned for paths** and cycle-ways , but no mention of from where to where! How can a budget be drawn up without plans? Its nonsense .
- We don't want more **sports facilities** which are used very little as it is.
- **Street Lighting** should be replaced as and when they fail, not as a total one off upgrade. Let's spend according to our means.
- **Event Management:** no mention of how many are proposed in a resource team.? A budget of \$0.5M ? Is this two people at \$250,000 per annum?? What about some numbers?
- **Library and community Facilities:** no static library needed for LTP. There is currently a

159

4/4

free book exchange in Meredith Avenue, run by volunteers. The twice weekly Mobile Library service is however, more than adequate. Some **Technology training** by TACE is available in the Free Library on Meredith Avenue LTP.

- **Tree Management:** Trees should not be removed just for the aesthetic value of some neighbours. We need habitat for wild life in old trees .

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**From:** >  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2018 4:17 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** psc 2018-02118

We wish to advise that we are NOT in favour of any rate increase – particularly because of the many assets held by the council.

Irrespective of any assets held or not held, we are retired people and have no income other than one pension (\$684). Increases of the magnitude proposed are considered outlandish and grossly unfair – for all aged persons in the community.

We select option 1.

Yours faithfully

Rate notice number

18/193028

(161)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2018 5:01 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

I would like to vote for **Option 2** for this proposal,  
We need to do some improvements better than what we are  
but be aware of pensioners and those who find it hard to pay rates.

181193035  
(162)  
1/3

**Lemon Tree Passage Parks, Reserves and Landcare Group  
355(c) Committee.  
Submission to Special Rate Variation Proposal**

Our volunteer group wishes to make comment on the choice of projects in Lemon Tree Passage, proposed to be funded with the Special Rate Variation.

The contributors to this submission recognise it isn't appropriate for us, as a 355c committee, to advocate either for or against a SRV. The intention is to provide feedback on the choices Port Stephens Council has made on projects attached to it's application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal.

Some projects have been on the Capital Works list since 2009 but are missing in the list of improvements to be funded by the SRV:

- Addressing the erosion in Kooindah Park was flagged as urgent in large reports from external consultants nine years ago. This lack of action has had a measurable effect not just because the salt water inundation has killed the grass in the park but in the loss of a significant number of trees (including koala feed trees). Trees have been lost on both the shore line and the roadside edge of the park. The scenario is repeated in most foreshore parks in Lemon Tree Passage (approximately 8 kilometres).



Kooindah Park  
from Google Maps 2010



Kooindah Park 10<sup>th</sup> August 2018



Tree loss in Rudd Reserve 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2017



Erosion Kooindah Park  
10<sup>th</sup> August 2018



Koala in dying tree Kooindah Pk  
17<sup>th</sup> July 2018

- The same projects appear in the lists of Capital Works in Council's Integrated Plans, year after year. It is unclear if these projects will ever be completed. Assets in obvious need of repair such as this shelter roof in Henderson Park, have not even made any list.

Despite Council finances being in surplus, the history of the maintenance of assets and facilities in Lemon Tree Passage parks reflects an emergency, reactive response rather than a planned approach.

There are serious concerns in the community that if new SRV funded projects become a reality they are at risk of adding to the maintenance backlog. According to its Strategic Asset Maintenance Plan, ongoing regular maintenance is part of Council's process. It's apparent this is not the case, even with small items.



Lemon Tree Passage volunteers are well aware of the poor condition of facilities in local parks and have advocated for many years for the backlog of maintenance to be addressed. For ten years we have responded to Council's request and submitted our annual Capital Works Priorities spreadsheet. Not one of these projects appear on the SRV list.

At every quarterly committee meeting a report on capital works in Lemon Tree Passage parks is provided to Council and the Councillors attached to the committee. Similarly, our reports to Council Parks Forums highlight maintenance issues.

As stated repeatedly in our submissions to IP&R plans on exhibition there is insufficient detail in the list of projects provided. The community can't agree on what projects are really important to them if they don't know what the projects are.

- The most obvious example of a lack of detail is the project titled "*McCann Park improvements*". \$30,000 is allocated in the current Capital Works Plus 2018 for a "Master Scoping Plan" for this project, so logically the project is extensive. There have been no details provided to the community, even though the project title has appeared repeatedly in Capital Works lists since 2009.
- The toilets in Henderson Park have recently been refurbished. Why are they on the list as in need of replacement?
- Henderson Park already has this shiny, new beach shower, so a new one is not required.



We suggest the money generated by an increase in rates would be better spent in Henderson Park to install secure rubbish bins that prevent rubbish dumping or to replace old park furniture. Our group has been pointing out the need to replace failed sea walls, rotten timber barriers, broken boardwalks and collapsing bridges and path edges in local parks for many years.



Roadside barrier Kooindah Park



Overflowing bins Henderson Pk



Sea wall Koala Reserve

Using local knowledge, members of our group have noted mistakes in the list of projects for Lemon Tree Passage distributed at Community Information meetings and on Council's webpage. These errors require immediate correction in order for residents to make an informed decision on how their rates will be spent in the future.

The following have a significant impact on both the total amount of real funds available and the final choice of projects for Lemon Tree Passage funded by an SRV:

1. The roads said to be "unsealed" (Gibbers Drive and Daniel Crescent), are already sealed, so what is the scope of works being paid for by an increase in rates?
2. Port Stephens Council seems to have mixed up the street names beginning with "John". For example, the only road project on the list (John Parade no 10-22) doesn't appear to need any work. Should it be Johnson Parade?
- The location nominated as the "town entrance" is incorrect - there is no John Street.
3. Old Wharf Park is in Salt Ash, not Lemon Tree Passage.

While acknowledged as a starting point, the list of projects put forward to be funded in Lemon Tree Passage, using a Special Rate Variation, fails to address the maintenance backlog, does not reflect the wishes of residents and has many basic errors.

If a rate rise is being justified by saying it's "what residents want that Council can't pay for", then Lemon Tree Passage Parks, Reserves and Landcare Group is keen to utilise our extensive knowledge to revise the list. In consultation with Council staff, Councillors and community groups we believe a new document could be produced that is correct, detailed and truly aligned with the local community's priorities and expectations.

Yours sincerely

Lemon Tree Passage Parks, Reserves and Landcare Group

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2018 8:09 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

I wish to vote for option 2

I live in Tanilba Bay which is wide enough for one car,. We have no footpaths or curbing & gutters and the drains flood every time it rains heavily, this floods the street and washes into our driveways.

I do not see in any of the variations money being allocated to enhance any of the single lane streets or providing proper drainage in our local area.

I appreciate & utilise the facilities provided along the waterfronts of Tanilba Bay and Lemon Tree Passage but feel additional rate income from everyone on the Tilligerry Peninsula would be better used on road and drainage improvements along with providing curbing & guttering.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2018 8:36 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** SRV

To Whom it may Concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. I have been a visitor to Nelson Bay for 40+ years, now live in, and am a ratepayer of Port Stephens.

I support Option One, keeping rates pegged at 2.5%.

As you are aware, Bay residents come from all walks of life. Many in the Bay though, are pensioners or low income earners. How do we afford another \$1000 a year for rates when the cost of living is always increasing!

Do the developers of the Port's new estates help to finance the need for growth in infrastructure?

How do the ratepayers trust the spending of Council if what we see is at times, ineffective.

Thirty year old trees on Spinnaker Way were cut down by Council, apparently because they were the wrong sort of tree to be near a pathway. Maybe that should have been considered and consulted before planting them in the first place. Sadly some that were cut down had no pathway near them!

Improve the maintenance on current roads -- many potholes in the roads are eventually filled, but are potholes again in just a few months. Is this because of the quality of the materials used?

Parking facilities and road changes need to be carefully planned -- parking at Salamander Bay Square and Salamander village are really not enough and are close to capacity now.

What will happen when the extensions are completed and summer holiday makers are here?

Money has been wasted on changed road intersections that clearly did not work. ( eg intersection at Salamander Bay near the BP petrol station)

It was against best practice and proved to be dangerous. Fix existing issues first!

Get on to all the cars that get away with parking illegally along the Nelson Bay foreshore. So many are not rear to kerb!

In conclusion, I support Option One, keeping rates pegged at 2.5%. Definitely not more!

Regards

18/193047

(145)

1/2

General Manager, Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42, RAYMOND TERRACE, NSW 2324  
srv@portstephens.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir

RE:- SPECIAL RATE VARIATION - PSC 2018-02118

I support SRV - Option 2 on the understanding that this additional money is spent on basic infrastructure and essential restoration work.

**TOWN CENTRE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD REVITALISATION - \$36 million**

It is difficult to support nearly half the additional money raise (47%) being spent on town centres and neighbourhood revitalisation. More trees, shrubs and flowers would really help plus ongoing maintenance. The funding of this area should be reduced and more outside gardening staff employed. PSC area would be greatly improved by street tree planting program.

**NEW PATHS AND CYCLEWAYS - \$7 million**

These service all of the community and I would support this expenditure (9%) or more on the understanding that it is not line marking on existing roads.

**RESEAL AND REHABILITATE ROADS - \$14 million**

The condition of secondary roads that are Council responsibility is not good. This proposal only allows for an additional \$2.0 million /ann. for seven years. Only 17% of the additional moneys is this sufficient. I suggest that additional funding is needed.

**SPORTS FACILITIES - \$9.5 million**

It would appear that existing sporting facilities in the area are reasonable. The recent expenditure by Council on sporting facilities has been excessive. To spend 12% of these additional funds on more sporting facilities appears high. I would suggest that the majority of this funding be redirected.

**MORE AMENITIES FOR OUR COMMUNITY - \$6.5 million**

This proposal includes a new Information Centre at Birubi that would require adequate staffing. I would suggest that an information shelter and pamphlets would be adequate.

The information centre should be built on the main road into town.

**LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - \$3.5 million**

This I would support in principle it is only using 4% of the additional funds.

**EVENTS IN PORT STEPHENS (\$0)**

No additional monies allocated in booklet - \$0.5 million/ann in Project details (\$3.5mil over 7yrs)

**DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS - \$5.5 million**

Only 7% of the additional funding has been allocated to this area and would question if this is adequate.

Councils are not businesses they are service providers. PSC has between 60 and 70 business units as part of its organisational structure. As part of your SRV assessment you should also independently review your structure and administrative costs. More external staff are required if it is Councils wish to introduce additional gardens in the town centres.

Regards

SEE ATTACHMENT for PROJECT DETAILS

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2/2

## PROJECT DETAILS from Information Booklet

		Option 2	Excluded	
<b>TOWN CENTRE REVITALISATION</b>		\$000,000	\$000,000	
Anna Bay		2		GENERAL – This includes additional gardens and more planting Street tree planning program required One off cost that would add addition load on existing maintenance staff
Fern Bay		1		
Fingal Bay		0.5		
Karuah		2		
Lemon Tree Passage		2		
Medowie		5		
Nelson Bay		10		
Raymond Terrace		13		
Seaham		0.5		
<b>NEW and IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE</b>				
Community amenities				
	Art & Cultural Centre		2	Should not be included - Newcastle has good facilities
	BBQ amenities	0.5		
	Birubi Information Centre	3		Relocate should be on approach to NB
	Mallabula Hall	0.5		
	Public amenities	2		
Carparks	Nelson Bay		5	The derelict multi storey car park need urgent action
	Soldiers Point	0.5		Disagree parking intruding into reserve not needed
Depots	Nelson Bay Raymond Terrace	10		Why relocate NB depot to Waste Transfer Station?
Drainage	Shoal Bay	2		
Drainage – additional			14	This a recurring annual cost (\$2 over 7yrs)
Foreshore improvements		3		INSUFFICIENT FUNDS CONROY PARK AREA ALONE \$6 to \$8 see Whitehead & Assoc Enviromental Consultants report 2015-16
King Street revitalisation		2		
Path and cycle ways		7		
Path and cycle ways - additional			2.7	
Street lighting upgrade		2		
Sports facilities upgrade	Tomaree Sports Complex	3		??
	King Park	3		??
<b>ENHANCE FACILITIES and SERVICES</b>				
Event management		3.5		This a recurring annual cost (\$0.5 over 7yrs)
Libraries and community services		3.5		This a recurring annual cost (\$0.5 over 7yrs)
Open drain maintenance		3.5		This a recurring annual cost (\$0.5 over 7yrs)
Roads	rehabilitation and reseals	2		
Roads – additional	rehabilitation and reseals		4	SHOULD BE IN OPTION 2
Roads – additional (2)	rehabilitation and reseals		2	SHOULD BE IN OPTION 2
Sports facilities maintenance		3.5		This a recurring annual cost (\$0.5 over 7yrs)
Tree management		4.55		This a recurring annual cost (\$0.65 over 7yrs)
<b>Total</b>		<b>95.05</b>	<b>29.7</b>	

Unless noted as recurring all costs are one off costs

**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 30 August 2018 9:49 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

## Port Stephens Council

### Re: Proposed SRV

#### PSC 2018-02118

I would like to make comment on some points of information provided in regards to the proposed Special Rate Variation application;

- On average residents are paying approximately \$1,000.00 per year for their base residential rates - we fall into this category, however adding on the waste management charges we are currently paying around \$1,540.00 per year.
- I have not seen mention about any increases to the waste management charges, but they rise every year - approx. \$80.00 in the last 5 to 6 years.
- Briefing note - SRV myths
  - Myth 1 quoting the most expensive option - \$1.70 per week in year one = \$88.40 per year; in year two \$1.86 = \$96.72 per year; \$2.78 per week in year 7 = \$144.56 per year. After seven years one would be paying an additional \$15.00 per week = \$780.00 or \$808.00 (SRV Residential Option Four – Transform Table) per year. When you add another \$550.00 (approx.) for waste management services we would be paying something like \$2,500.00 per year - heaven help us if/when land values increase.
  - It might only be \$15.00 per week additional, but how many other expenses will also "only" be \$15.00 per week additional in the next 7 years.
  - Myth 3 *"Council tells us they'll deliver all these projects, but once they get the money, they'll spend it wherever they like"* - " ... Council will need to report to IPART annually and will need to provide updates against the specific projects nominated to ensure monies are spent as proposed ..." – implies that funds HAVE to be spent on the specific projects, yet on page 5 of the Information Booklet it states "The identified projects may change over time dependent on ongoing needs such as community preferences and other funding sources." – this seems to be a bit of a contradiction?

There is to be a large increase to the number of households in Port Stephens – the over 55 lifestyle villages; eg Sunrise on Nelson Bay Road (& this is just one) with close to 200 dwellings approved - these villages are all advertised as "no council rates to pay". I realise the operator/owner would pass on a share of their council rates through the weekly service fee/tariff BUT my guess is that the council income generated by these rates - even if charged at business rates - would not be at all comparable to what the income would be for the same number of households paying average rates. These new households will be able to enjoy all of the new projects/amenities which are paid for by average rate payers &/or to be paid for by the SRV if approved - which of course as residents of Port Stephens they would be entitled to enjoy. But .... just doesn't quite seem fair that the average rate payer basically foots the bill?

165  
2/2

Approx. 40% of Port Stephens residents are unemployed or only work part time, assuming they are renters - any rate increase will be passed on to them via an increase in weekly rent ... according to Census 2016 figures the median rent for Port Stephens was \$305.00, in 2018 most rentals for 3-4 bedroom homes are advertised at \$470-500.00 (or more) per week ... how will they cope? If they are home owners; it's only a few years ago that Port Stephens was listed among the highest mortgage defaulters in the state ... with these proposed rate increases many could be forced into that situation again.

My partner & I, like many others are on a limited/fixed income, we have both been made redundant from our jobs in recent years (& the redundancy payments received were not at all large by any means). I have been fortunate enough to find a part-time position but my partner has not - he has been forced to access his superannuation early. We still have a mortgage & the only concession we receive is a low-income health care card which enables us to save some money on medication costs. I am concerned how we would afford the proposed increases.

In 2010 Council had a \$30 million infrastructure backlog which has now been reduced to \$14.1 million - achieved by improving internal efficiencies and continual improvement to processes - without any special rate variations. Well done!

I would support Option 1, keeping rates pegged at 2.5% despite the current CPI being only 2.1%, but I do not support Options 2, 3 or 4 in the special rate variation proposal.

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**From:** >  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 6:08 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Port Stephens Council

PSC 2018-02118

With this new rate increase it appears that no moneys will be spent in the Salt Ash Area over the next 7 to 8 years. Except maybe the horse fields on Richardson Road which is used mainly by people from outside the area.

I think this could be a good time to improve Lee Thompson Park with a covered BarBQ and seating area as promised when the Fire Station went in the park many years ago and never eventuated. Situated next to the popular childrens playground would be an asset for the Salt Ash Hall as many people who hire the hall for childrens parties ask if there is a Barbb available.

Also, there is a low area in the park which floods when it rains and it needs filling so the wonderful fire station people can train in all year round.

Something for older children to do would be good to and not a BMX Bike Track which , i think would create havoc in the park. Maybe basketball hoops or something similar.

The hall car parking area needs resealing as they are hole there and the surface is rough for the elderly hall users.

The fence around the Wisconsin Mound is now derelict and has been cut (which I reported to council last year) and people are walking and parking on the mound. So, it needs replacing. It may collapse one day.

I think a lot could be done with the park making it a place for people of all age to meet.

181193532

(168)

1/2

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 7:58 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Fwd: rate rise submission  
**Attachments:** rate rise.docx

PSC 2018-02118

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Date:** 22 August 2018 at 12:59:53 AM AEST  
**To:** [REDACTED]

**Subject: rate rise submission**

You can find the full paperwork for council rate variation application on council webpage or the special rate variation page. Council is suggesting 6.5%, 7.5% or 8.5% increase for town revitalisation. I include my submission....change the words I suggest.... get friends to write something different Due Friday 31st...can be submitted on line.

Briefly steve tucker is proposing to spend \$2 million dollars on Lemon Tree Passage ( clearly our town centre). There are a few roads in Tanilba Bay listed...not Ave of the Allies. Footpaths are mentioned.

I am suggesting that we are due for increased spending but it has to be equitable. I am suggesting \$1 million for each town (LTP and TB) with projects being ave of the allies ( everything lights, drainage, footpaths), Lloyd George drainage to tidy up Tilli Plaza and a community plan that meets the future needs by reserving the Tilli Plaza site for next shops. I also pointed out the importance of street trees...long lasting ones.

See my attachment.

PLEASE WRITE IN!!!!!!



I support a rate rise BUT it must be equitable. The current plan will tart up Lemon Tree Passage with banners!!!! and probably do other stuff from the Tilli Chamber of Commerce that been non functional for years but been revived for this process recently. Most people on Tilligerry Peninsula live, shop, attend school, work, play sport, attend church, **use local businesses** NOT in Lemon Tree Passage. Yet \$2 million is offered to be spent there as the Chamber does NOT represent here. \$1 million of those funds should be spent here thereby revitalising both urban areas.

Projects necessary here that should not wait 7 years or longer are-

- \*Full completion of Avenue of the Allies- footpaths, lights, drainage, safety improvements
- \*Tilligerry Plaza is an abomination from the developers but not enhanced in any way by council.....Lloyd George Grove needs to have drainage, kerb and gutter, pedestrian improvements. The state of the ruin should be of concern to council.

- \*Our `main' street is NOT Cook Parade but President Wilson Walk. It is pretty untidy with little overall planning having been done. It needs revitalisation!!!

- \*The future retail area of Tilligerry would be totally destroyed if the old plaza became a retirement village....two shopping centres with a retirement village between..lovely. There is need for a Tilligerry plan that recognises that land for future commercial expansion.

- \*Other councils when they plan to enhance their communities plan a street tree planting. This rate rise talks about taking out the big trees!!! but does not talk about street trees. Street trees have the ability to transform a neighbourhood because council has to do planning in every street deciding on width etc. The trees provide shade, a streetscape, delineate safe walking and play areas, inspire gardening. The current tree list does not allow this as you need trees that will last. There are towns in NSW who have nothing more going for them but their street trees and Port Stephens has neglected this for too long.

**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 8:51 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Dear Sir,

I object to the proposed increases to rates for the following reasons:

1. All works within the 4 proposals appear to be normal services expected by the community to be delivered within the current rate structure.
2. If we accept that many of these projects specified are due to carry-over from previous years, then:
  - a. This would explain why the Profit and Loss statements published by PSC showed a profit carried forward of:
    - i. 2016 – \$20.0M
    - ii. 2017 - \$22.7M
  - b. Assuming the average profit is therefore \$21.35M, over seven years this would generate \$149.45M accruing to the balance sheet.
3. Summation of the projects identified within the “Special Rate Variation Proposal” (SRVP) including option 4 amounts to \$172.75M
4. The shortfall appears to be \$23.3M over the seven year period.

Therefore I believe the projects identified can be funded within the existing rate structure whilst permitting increases capped by CPI, if the following are followed:

1. Continuing to seek Federal and State grants where appropriate
2. The Annual Accounts state that PSC has been able to secure Productivity Improvements that enabled the “financially viable” description during the recent Local Government review. It should be a target of PSC to achieve at a minimum 5% Productivity Improvements each year, that are reported to the Community annually.
3. Several of the projects identified within the SRV have been against the expressed wishes of local community groups. These projects should be removed from scope and would thus reduce the “apparent” deficit.
4. Improve the supervision of works, both operational and more significantly, pre planning. There has been too many instances of rework of poor job scoping and planning. Examples are:
  - a. Salamander Shopping Centre exit to Salamander Way (reworked 3 times – one of which was contrary to standard road regulations resulting in a serious accident)
  - b. Wanda Village (dangerous placement of pedestrian crossings and bus zones – rework awaiting a potential child fatality)
  - c. Opposite Salamander Shores building a centre-of-road safety zone that has the effect of:
    - i. Reducing an already narrow carriageway
    - ii. Destroying a cycle zone in both directions
    - iii. Destroying bus zone parking so that buses now halt traffic flow
    - iv. All done with no opportunity for Community input that has resulted in frustration and anger

Examples such as these have resulted in serious wastage of community funds. Additionally, quality of workmanship is poor, especially road repair, and results in further significant and repetitive wastage.

5. Tightening up Planning procedures, compliance with the LEP, DCP, State and Federal Regulations, and improved administration of Development Applications. With PSC taking a much more direct

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2/2

active role it would reduce and contain many unnecessary costs, both present and future. An example is:

- a. Spencer Park project in Soldiers Point. That is a response to non-enforcement of consents to a business that was required to provide adequate parking and has not done so for many years. Why should Rate Payers be expected to fund this lack of compliance. This case, that went before the Land and Environment Court, also highlights the fact that PSC has not sought litigation costs of approximately \$150,000, disclosed in the 2017 accounts, (I await the 2018 accounts for the balance of costs) PSC is again asking Rate Payers to fund their poor administration.

Failing to make up the shortfall using one or all of the above strategies, an outcome highly unlikely in my opinion, PSC could adopt the approach used by State and Federal governments, that is, to recycle assets. Two assets that have underperformed for many years have been the Thou Walla and Treescape Holiday Parks and should be sold to prevent further wastage.

When the nominated projects are analysed geographically it is evident that expenditure is not distributed across the communities or the three wards equitably. Therefore, the shire is asking some Rate Payers to cross subsidize others and it appears those areas with the least ability to do so are being asked to assist the more affluent.

Please consider the points I have raised above before seeking an approval for a Special Rate Variation, and I would like to be advised after PSC reviews all of the submissions, but before application, whether PSC proposes to proceed with the application for a Rate increase.

I also advise that I have not made any political donations during the last two years.

Yours faithfully,

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 9:09 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Dear Sir

I am writing to object to the proposed rate increases.

For a number of years now I have been told by councillors of the healthy state of our finances.

I have seen errors in planning of our roadworks:

Salamander Way shopping entrance, Wanda Beach shopping centre. We appear to have poor workmanship in repairing roadways.

Many years now we have had reported the outrageous amount of monies spent in litigation through poor planning and execution of process.

Staff should always be trained and apprised of all law, legislation and policy. Staff should be always supervised in their application of these.

Council states that they have had to rely on internal productivity improvements. This should always be on the agenda for a well- managed organisation. This must continue.

In our area there are numerous ratepayers who are on fixed incomes and have no further capacity to earn. An increase in rates as proposed would apply further hardship on them. I have seen people leave the area or relocate to different housing arrangements for economic reasons. I know of some whose family members contribute to the paying of their rates now in order for them to continue living here.

I do not see an increase in rates is justifiable or equitable.

I have not made any political donations in the last two years.

Yours faithfully

18/19 3070  
(171)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 11:33 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

To whom it may concern

I really do not a rate rise because where I live at Wallalong we will receive any benefits from it, to me all of the proposed work is in other areas, we need cycle ways and other infrastructure as well but because we are not a tourist destination we do not receive any thing. If you would like to discuss this with me do not hesitate to contact me and have a chat.  
PSC 2018-02118  
regards

18/193073  
(172)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 12:48 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

I say no to rate rise to council can stop miss managing money and start spending money evenly in all areas and not just in nelson bay or salamander.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 1:36 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Psc 2018-02118

I am against any rate increase above the minimum requirement. Reading councils proposals, I cannot find anything in there dealing with Tanilba Bay problems, you are talking about resealing bike paths when we are still waiting for kerb & guttering. My street floods anytime we have a decent rainfall, this is after it was recently resealed. Maybe these rate increases should be brought up before the next council elections. I don't expect any reply to this because I am still waiting for the last email to be addressed Jack Johnstone

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 1:54 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

I wish to advise that I am NOT in favour of rate increases in excess of the annual rate peg.

When the Newcastle council merger was being debated, the argument put by Port Stephens Council was that it was financially stable and did not wish to partake in the amalgamation for many reasons, but one of the major reasons was that we did not want to be party to the planned Newcastle Council special rate increases. Why then, only a year or so on is there a need to propose substantial rate increases here.

Port Stephens Council should continue to work within their means to provide services to the rate payers using existing rate increases. If the community wishes a substantial project and funds cannot be sourced through rates and government grants, then sell one of the many Newcastle building assets owned by Council to fund it.

There are many in our community who cannot afford such rate increases, as they come on top of increases to many other cost of living expenses faced by the elderly and lowly paid.

I see this special rate increase proposal as a lazy option for Council.

If this rate increase proceeds, I will have no other way to register my discontent except by no longer supporting at the next election, Mayor Palmer or those councillors' who vote for the proposal.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 2:16 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

To whom it may concern,

We are against any rise other than the minimum as we are only on the pension.  
Any rise greater than the basic, Would in the end meaning we would be forced to sell our home.  
And we do not feel that this is in any way fair.  
We also feel that the rates we pay are high enough as it stands,

General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Special Rate Variation Comment.

Dear Sir

With regards the Special Rate Variation Proposal we're opposed to any increases other than options one.

We feel that by increasing the rate higher than option one it would severely impact on those people who are least able to afford it, home owning people who live solely on the pension, self-funded retirees and young families that are doing it tough at this present time.

We're aware that you have a scheme that seniors can use to offset their rates until a later date but many people we've spoken to about this option are too proud to ask for help.

Somewhere in the Proposal papers it mentions how Port Stephen's rates are cheaper than surrounding Councils, great, you should be very proud of that achievement, keep up the good work by not increasing our rates more than Option One.

Yours faithfully

**From:** jay@portstephens.nsw.gov.au  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 2:58 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Proposed Special Rate Variation

Port Stephens Council  
[srv@portstephens.nsw.gov.au](mailto:srv@portstephens.nsw.gov.au)

## **PSC 2018-02118 Proposed Special Rate Variation**

I would like to comment on the above proposal. I am from a Residential Rates Household in Nelson Bay. Although it will hit the pocket nerve hard, I support Option 2 of the Special Rate Variation proposal. I reluctantly feel that is the only way we will attain some of the infrastructure we have been waiting so long for, and which is so important for the local community. I realise this Option will not be sufficient to accomplish all the infrastructure developments in the Wish List. I feel that this list should be refined to a smaller number of the projects most sought by ratepayers.

In relation to the Proposal:

1. I am aware that there are a number in the community for whom any increase will cause severe financial problems. It is important that hardship provisions be readily available for such cases. Because of the high rentals in Nelson Bay Township and their already raised Business rates there will be some businesses in the town already 'doing it hard' who will also be particularly affected.
2. It is important for fairness that the money expended in each Ward is proportional to the amount of money collected by the SRV from that Ward.
3. Council has been very successful in obtaining grant funding and as you have suggested it is important that this source of income-raising continue. Other revenue sources should be explored.
  - Sale of Council-owned unused property is an important means, but it should not be valuable community property such as the two recent waterfront blocks proposed, the loss of which would be greatly to the detriment of the area and the community. For example, I understand there is some land in Fingal Bay and I question if the former high school oval in Fingal Street Nelson Bay is also a candidate for residential development, or is it Department of Education? Even if the latter its development should, I would hope, bring in some revenue for Council ?

- Care is needed in extracting adequate Section 94 contributions from all developers and ensuring that there is a nexus between the development and the community use and area for which their contribution is used.

4. Careful monitoring, and if necessary hiving-off, of former loss-making ventures such as TreeEscapes and Thou Walla should take place, and further legal liabilities such as with the Lagoons Estate should be avoided, to convince the population that current rates are being well-managed and there **is necessity** for further sacrificing with the Special Rate Variation. Is the income from the Salamander Shopping Centre development going to be greater than the considerable expenditure on site preparation?

### **Preferred projects:**

1. In the East Ward we, and I believe many others including the Business Community, feel that the outstanding infrastructure need is replacement of the East Donald Street Car Park. It has been a blight on the community and town, appearance-wise, for far too long, serves a very reduced purpose and has harboured anti-social behaviour which has been a problem for the police, and led to the arrest of young people. Increased parking is recognised as the major need by the Business Community and many residents. It will become more crucial and urgent with the development and removal from service of the temporary car park on the corner of Yacaaba and Donald Streets. Relegating it to Options 3 and 4 is not appropriate.
2. Second in importance to me as part of the Public Domain Project is the extension of landscaping to all streets in the southern part and entrance to the town, which is very third rate, and will be greatly enhanced by this.
3. Third is the proposed work in Apex Park.
4. Of footpaths, the most important for development is that over Fly Point Headland between Nelson Bay and Little Beach. The pressure of use from pedestrians, cyclists, families with prams is equal to, or more than, that on the Bridle Path, at all times of the day and particularly in the weekend and holidays. It is an important addition to our tourist offering. At the moment the lined dedicated pedestrian section is rough and has a steep camber and there is a serious risk of an accident as drivers forget to slow down.

### **Reliability of Community Survey**

I believe that there could be a serious concern with the reliability of the community survey. There is no need to identify the responders of the survey unless they add their name and address to Question 20 to obtain more information. There is nothing to stop one person sending in an unlimited number of survey papers!! (Though mortally tempted I have refrained from sending in more than 1!!)

Council is to be congratulated for the number of community consultation sessions it has organised. It is disappointing that not many people avail themselves of the opportunity to take advantage of the information provided in them and express their views.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely



## **TRRA Submission on Port Stephens Council Proposal for Special Rate Variation (SRV)**

### **Introduction**

Tomaree Ratepayers and Resident Association Inc. (TRRA) seeks to represent the interests of ratepayers and residents on the Tomaree Peninsula. Port Stephens Council will appreciate that its proposal for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) is a matter which affects all ratepayers, renters of property, businesses and farmers in our community.

TRRA welcomes the initiative of Council to investigate the feasibility of an SRV. In our submission to the Draft Integrated Plans (April 2018) we noted Council's claims that many of the community's requests for improved infrastructure and services could not be funded from the current revenue base. We supported the examination of additional funding sources as a key priority, including the consideration of a Special Rate Variation.

TRRA has sought to assess the opinions of its membership and the wider community on Council's proposal for an SRV by:

- Holding a Public Meeting on 6 August which was attended by some 80 persons from its membership and the community at large
- Monitoring communications from members via email and Facebook.
- Analysis of members' personal submissions, where we received copies
- Direct discussions with members of the community including business operators
- Monitoring the local press
- Attending a meeting on this matter conducted by the Tomaree Business Chamber
- Participating in Council's consultations (roundtables etc.)

In this submission it is our intention to reflect the reactions and suggestions which emerged from these sources.

### **Council's Consultation and Communication of the SRV proposal**

TRRA commends Council for its communication strategy which was well-conceived and accessible to most interested parties. Useful documentation explaining the reasons for and details of the proposed options was offered.

There has been a suggestion that the consultations may not have reached those in the community who are least able to afford the increases. The less well off (often renters) did not appear to have been attracted to the formal consultation sessions. Similarly, we query whether the business community was aware of, or made sufficient comment on, the proposals which impact significantly on their interest group.

The title "Special Rate Variation" may not have conveyed the full consequence which is a significant increase in rates for all ratepayers if options 2, 3 and 4 are adopted.

Some deficiencies in the information presented were:

- The fact that the yearly increases in options 2, 3 and 4 included the 2.5 % pegged rate increase was not made sufficiently clear
- The intention that after the application of 7 consecutive increases including the rate peg, the increased rate base would be maintained permanently.
- The intention to fund projects with loan monies especially in the earlier years with interest and repayments being met from later rate revenues was not adequately explained.
- Hardship relief measures and concessions for pensioners and others should have been discussed.

### **The Need for a Special Rate Variation**

The Council in presenting its proposals for an SRV referred to increased pressure to provide enhanced services and facilities which could not be funded from future revenues generated from rates, if future increases are limited to the pegged increases.

TRRA appreciates that without a lift in revenue, many of the major projects and even some ongoing maintenance obligations, may not be deliverable. Relevant considerations are the fact that Port Stephens rate level is one of the lowest among Lower Hunter Councils. It is also relevant that our property-based rates of around \$40 million currently represent only 29% of total annual revenue. User fees and Charges (29%) and operating and capital grants, interest and property investment revenue (31%) generate most of the remainder.

TRRA and other members of the community quite properly query whether all other options for boosting revenue or achieving efficiencies in Council's operations have been explored. Council has responded to this by referencing its implementation of "a range of productivity savings and reduced costs across its operations over recent years".

Against this it is relevant to note that the 2018 Community Satisfaction Survey results show that 27% of respondents expressed little or no confidence in the way Council is managing its resources, including assets and finances, with only 32% being confident or very confident. At our Public Meeting concerns were expressed in relation to possible outstanding liabilities involving the Lagoons Estate matter and the business track records for TreeEscapes and Thou Walla resorts. Questions have also been raised in relation to the cost/benefit outcome of the recent council expenditure in and around the Salamander Shopping centre.

Port Stephens Council; has made much of the fact that the we have a lower than average level of rates when compared with other Group 5 Councils. More detailed information to demonstrate this situation is required perhaps along the lines of the graphs presented in the Mayor's presentation. Where does each option if implemented leave us in the pecking order? Council should state what its objectives are in this regard. Are we aiming to reach the "average" or to lift our rates to match the highest levels such as apply in Maitland?

### **The SRV Trade-off**

Ultimately the potential benefit in terms of delivering more of the requested projects needs to be balanced against the potential impact of rate increase options on affordability and the viability of business operations across the LGA.

TRRA in this submission does not attempt make a definitive judgement on these trade-offs but simply seeks to pass on the perceptions of concern and benefit which have been expressed:

## Affordability

Councillor Giacomo Arnott made a strong plea for consideration of the impact of the proposed increases on some segments of the community. At our Public Meeting his concerns were echoed by other speakers who were directly involved with volunteer welfare work in the community. Many of their clients are renters who can expect the landlords to pass on the increased rates. Others are younger people who may have stretched their capacity to the limit with mortgage finance.

Reference was made to the recent sharp increase in power prices, petrol prices, health insurance, food and housing, all contributing to a family budget squeeze. Wages have remained relatively flat over recent years.

At the other end of the spectrum are pensioners whose incomes are at best pegged to cost of living adjustments while Council's \$250 rate concession has not moved for decades. On the Tomaree, a portion of senior citizens have much of their assets tied up in their houses and are therefore asset rich and cash poor.

No details have been presented on the effect of the rate peg changing from the estimated 2.5%, should the peg increase to 3% (or even more if cost of living balloons due to future inflation and interest rates). 3% was the value assumed by Maitland and Newcastle in their approval for an SRV for the years following the first-year rate of 2.3% and 2.4%. Does this result in options 2 to 4 also increasing another 0.5%, or if the increase is fixed a reduced income will be received by Council to fund the proposed projects. This will have a compounding negative effect with the projects costing more and any loans (unless at a fixed interest rate) also costing more. Over a proposed loan/s period of 10 to 20 years this could result in a serious financial risk.

An article in the Sydney Morning Herald dated 31 August 2018 under the headline *THE ONLY WAY IS UP* offers a prediction on the trajectory of bank interest rates in the wake of the recent Westpac increase. Its conclusion is that "it is inevitable other major banks will follow its lead and raise mortgage rates". The article points to increasing funding cost both locally and globally as the reason for this prediction. As well as Council's debt-servicing, this more general trend will reduce the capacity of the average citizen to afford a significant rate hike.

TRRA submits that any loan should be restricted to a short to medium period and not long-term.

Council has drawn attention to a recent decrease in overall unemployment figures in Port Stephens. While these official statistics are a guide, welfare workers pointed out that in some localities unemployment was still a serious problem.

While there was limited comment made from the floor at the Meeting of the Tomaree Business Chamber, we are aware of concerns which have been expressed by individuals with long experience in the Tomaree real estate and commercial property sectors. Business rates for average land values are currently \$4451 per annum (compared with \$1048 for residential). The Council's tabulation of rate increases for options indicate the following increase for businesses after 7 years from the current \$4,451 to:

Option 1: \$5291

Option 2: \$6917

Option 3: \$7385

Option 4: \$7880

In the case of more highly-valued land which would apply to some properties in a centre such as Nelson Bay (say \$1m.), rates payable after 7 cumulative increases for options 2, 3 and 4 reach \$15,649, \$16,707 and \$17,825 respectively. It is acknowledged that for most small businesses these rates would be split across a number of strata titles, but the magnitude of the increase would still impact on their viability.

Many smaller businesses in Nelson Bay have been experiencing great difficulty in remaining viable, particularly with the expansion of the Salamander Shopping Centre and nationwide changes in the retail market. This is evidenced by the steadily increasing number of vacant retail and commercial premises in Nelson Bay (35 in a recent count). Rate hikes as proposed may well be a trigger for even more closures across our town.

Such an outcome would negate some of the reasoning behind the SRV which is directed to expenditures on public domain projects in our town centres. It is understood that the scale of the proposed increases arises from the combined application of the % increase to the Business Base Rate as well as the Commercial Rate. This may present an opportunity to offer a measure of relief.

TRRA urges Council to make further inquiries with the Business Community on the potential impacts of the SRV before proceeding.

Council has indicated a willingness to consider relief measures such as the level of the Pensioner concession. Another option mentioned was greater encouragement of those experiencing hardship to have their rate increases assigned as a capital sum to be realised and paid at the time of a sale of the subject property. This latter option is already available but we understand few ratepayers have taken it up. As with reverse mortgages generally, the concept is not popular in the community.

It is our understanding these relief measures are not available to renters. Does the Council have any plans to extend relief measures to those occupying rental properties?

The Affordable Housing Income Gap Report by Compass Housing (reported in the Newcastle Herald 21/08/2018) stated '...Port Stephens surpassed the 30 per cent of income benchmark deemed to indicate housing stress while Newcastle, Maitland and Cessnock were in the high 20s. Port Stephens renters are spending more than a third of their weekly income (35 per cent) on rent in the Hunter's highest proportional cost, reflecting a \$177 per week shortfall in incomes despite the suburb having the third-lowest median rent ahead of Cessnock and Maitland.' If investors are unlikely to be able to pass any rate increases onto their tenants, this may also have a negative effect of discouraging any further investment in the area.

**TRRA recommends that Council provide more details of the number of ratepayers and households which are likely to experience hardship and detail any relief measures it intends to put in place. Revenue implications of such relief measures would also be a consideration.**

At the most general level of analysis the point has been made that Council is proposing options for increase in rates which far exceed the recent trends in cost of living and wages. The logic of such a level of increase is thus difficult to justify.

### **IPART Decisions**

Council's SRV proposal will ultimately require approval by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, a state authority. IPART's Website provides a listing of SRVs approved in recent years which should provide some guidance as to the possibilities of having an application accepted, modified or rejected.

Our review of this list indicates that the majority of approvals are for SRVs which apply for periods of less than 5 years and for increases which are typically 6 % or less.

There have been notable exceptions for Lower Hunter Councils namely:

- Singleton - a permanent 7.3% increase including the rate peg from 1 July 2014.
- Cessnock City Council - Replacement of an existing SRV of 9.45 % with a one-off 9.55% increase including the rate peg
- Maitland City Council - 7 consecutive increases of 7.255% each year from 2014/15 including the rate peg to be applied permanently.
- Newcastle - 5 consecutive increases of 8% each year from 2015/16 including the rate peg to be retained permanently in its rate base.

The Maitland and Newcastle increases were calculated to generate a cumulative increase (including rate peg) of 63.2% and 46.93% respectively. The Port Stephens' proposal of Option 2, 3 and 4 will generate cumulative increases of 56%, 66% and 77%.

TRRA assumes that Port Stephens Council has already analysed these applications and the reasons for the IPART approvals. The results of this analysis would be of great interest to the Port Stephens community as a guide to what reasoning is acceptable to IPART and why Council chose the four options over a fixed 7-year period only. Council could also report to our community on the extent of ratepayer acceptance of these increases in our neighbouring Councils and the outcomes in terms of increased levels of service and enhancement of capital works/projects delivery.

### **Projects and Enhanced Services to be Funded**

TRRA welcomes the attempt to provide a proposed list of projects and services which could be funded under the SRV options, together with indicative costings.

In our submission to the Integrated Plans we noted 'Income based on rate-pegging is clearly insufficient to fund infrastructure improvements over and above asset maintenance. The other funding options of borrowings, grants and a Special Rate Variation (SRV) need to be considered seriously. **SRV ensures a known amount of extra funding to commit to the capital works 'wish list' but will need community support, which will only be forthcoming if there is a clear consensus on priorities.'**

However, a number of responses from the community call for a more clearly-stated vision for the future of Port Stephens as a local government area and for its various localities. This would necessitate **settled** Strategies for the towns and other employment centres such as Williamstown. It is argued that without this visionary framework it is not possible to identify projects and to assign them the appropriate priorities.

Information should be provided on exactly how the project lists and priorities were determined. TRRA believes that further community consultation is necessary to confirm that the lists properly reflect community needs.

TRRA recognises the council recently revised its Community Strategic Plan and revised its Integrated Plans to reflect this Community Plan. The published Capital Works Plan and the Long-term Financial Plan were prepared and adopted as a consequence of this process. Unfortunately, the relationship between the Capital Works Plan and priorities and the SRV projects list is quite unclear. The SRV projects list appears to be overly ambitious and most of the major projects mooted for large allocations do not have sound business cases. By way

of example, projects subject to this query include \$10m for Depot relocation, \$3m for the Birubi Information Centre and \$5m, \$10m and \$13m for Medowie, Nelson Bay and Raymond Terrace town centre upgrades.

A further consideration is the capacity of the Port Stephens Council to manage the ambitious list of projects and enhanced services which would come on stream over a relatively short time period. Final priority setting, design, documentation, approval, oversight of implementation and on-going management will require significant additional resources over and above council's current capacity.

TRRA appreciates that the community places a very high priority on upgrading of our road network. However, the proposition that the SRV would enable the sealing of all the roads in our LGA, should be carefully considered in relation to other project priorities, business cases relating to projected traffic volumes maintenance costs and the actual capacity of council to maintain those roads into the future.

### **Alternative Sources of Funding/Savings**

On page 4 of a recent Information Paper circulated by Council in a table showing the sources of its Operating Revenue 2016/17 the relative importance of two sources stand out:

- a) User fees and charges (includes Newcastle Airport and Holiday Park income) \$38m. (29%)
- b) Operating and capital grants, interest and property investment revenue \$40.8 m (31%)

When Council last made a bid for major rate increases TRRA recommended an alternative approach involving a significant audit of the holiday park business centre which at that time had some serious loss-making operations and a review of the financial arrangements relating to its investments in Newcastle Airport.

As a consequence, significant changes have reduced the losses from underperforming holiday parks and new contractual arrangements which yielded a useful dividend flow from the airport. The airport appears to be a growing asset and its expanding adjacent commercial and industrial operations would seem to offer enormous potential to generate additional revenue for Council.

**TRRA recommends that Council revisits Newcastle Airport, marginally performing holiday parks and property investments to ensure that their revenue potential is maximised.**

**We also urge Council to increase its efforts to secure grant funding from State and Commonwealth sources.**

**The land development and disposal/leasing activity based around Salamander Shopping Centre is a multi-million dollar Council undertaking which proceeds without a publicly accessible business case. TRRA requests that this business initiative declares its financial situation and potential to contribute to Council's revenue outcomes. What return are we receiving on the capital expenditure?**

## **The Way Forward and Conclusions**

Prior to Council proceeding with an application for an SRV, TRRA believes that Councillors and the public should be provided with the following information:

1. More details on the Council's assessment of the impacts of the options on residents, ratepayers and businesses
2. More discussion of alternative sources of revenue and savings
3. Details of hardship relief options under consideration for the less well-off members of our community and struggling businesses, together with an assessment of the likely costs of these measures to rate revenue
4. Details of the timing and extent of borrowing which will be necessary to initiate major projects, together with an assessment of the financial risks posed by future increases in interest rates and costs generally
5. Council's proposed processes and criteria for selecting projects and services to be funded from the SRV increased revenue. This would need to cover plans for further community consultation.

Council has requested community feedback on the four options outlined in the Information Booklet.

Having considered the range of public comment so far available to TRRA we believe that Council should adopt a less ambitious goal in terms of the extent and scale of the projects and augmentation of services. One option would be to nominate a small number of major projects which would make a big impact and attract strong community support. In the East Ward, an example would be the replacement of the Donald Street East Carpark. Under this approach it would be easier to prepare a business case (there would be many fewer projects to evaluate).

Under this approach it would be possible to raise the necessary funds with a lower rate increase option say Options 2 or 3. Consideration could also be given to a shorter period of cumulative increases say 3 or 4 years. At the end of that period the community acceptance of the SRV could be assessed and, if favourable, further applications could be made to IPART to continue or augment the SRV programme. This would also provide an opportunity to make a reassessment of the general economic conditions applying at that time, such as inflation, interest rates and wages growth.

Such an approach is quite common among the listed IPART approvals.

As a general observation TRRA considers that Options 3 and 4 with 7-year cumulative increases to be retained permanently in the rate base would be unacceptable to most ratepayers and could have serious negative impacts on businesses across Port Stephens.

A common community opinion is that the expenditure on projects in each locality should be proportional to the additional SRV revenue raised in that locality.

181193549  
(179) 1/2

PSC 2018-02118  
General Manager  
Port Stevens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

Dear General Manager

SPECIAL RATE VARIATION (SRV) PROPOSAL PSC 2018-02118

I support Option One and request that Council does not apply for any special rate variation.

It is difficult to provide feedback on Council's proposal due to the lack of detail provided in the information booklet. There are no costings for individual proposed projects – rather a round figure costing for like projects which have been grouped together. The list of proposed projects appears to be a wish list and includes some works not even included in council's strategic plan. Then, to quote the information booklet: "The identified projects may change.....".

I have witnessed the mayor restrict feedback by a member of the community at an information session (Nelson Bay Bowling Club 06 August 2018). The community member commenced speaking about the need or otherwise of \$9.5 million being spent on sport and recreation facilities. The mayor jumped to his feet and took the microphone from the speaker and advised attendees that he was tired of hearing feedback about this project and that there was a shed at the Nelson Bay sports facility that was in such bad condition that it was condemned. Well, I don't think one amenity shed would cost \$9.5 million and in any event, Nelson Bay already has two sports facilities that any other community this size would be proud of. At the same gathering, the mayor attempted to limit the time allowed for another councillor who was speaking against the special rate variation. So much for providing the community with information and listening to community opinions.

I had a query about council's claim that it is the lowest rated council in the Lower Hunter and phoned council to obtain some further information. I was advised that my request would have to be in writing so I sent an email. I received a reply that I would need to contact those other councils (Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, and Newcastle) if I wanted the information. Or, the advice went on, I could make a GIPA request. So much for providing information to support the claims council has made. I did manage to get the required information from Lake Macquarie and discovered that its Rate Yield based on its Rateable Land Value only exceeds that of Port Stephens by less than 5%. Hardly an amount that would justify Port Stephens increasing its rates by 55%, 66%, or 77%.

As one of its reasons for justifying a rate increase, council has highlighted that there is a very low percentage of rates going unpaid. There could be a number of reasons this is the case including proactive and effective collection methods. What does council want? Ratepayers who are unable to pay their rates? Wages have remained stagnant for some years, costs of living have increased, and people are doing it tough. I don't believe council has given due consideration to the affordability of a rate increase.

I would submit that council should consider returning to its basic and core business. Some people would refer to this as roads, rates, and rubbish. It is difficult to understand how council finds itself unable to provide funding for its core business activities such as roads and drainage projects included in the SRV proposal given its substantial reserves and real estate outside the Port Stephens Local Government area in its considerable property portfolio.

If council finds itself unable to provide for these basic responsibilities, I would further submit that council should consider selling parts of its property portfolio for real estate outside the Port Stephens Local Government area. It might also consider reinstalling parking fees in the Nelson Bay Marina precinct – this is one of the few methods of council collecting some income from the tourists. Council might also consider leasing its caravan parks which have been a financial drain for many years.

It is hard to believe that council has a workforce exceeding 600. It may be time for council to arrange for an independent review of functions and staffing.

Yours faithfully

18/193551

(180)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 3:26 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Ref proposed rate rises outlined.  
I agree with 2.5% pa or cpi whichever is greater.

Thanks

181193553

(181)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 3:29 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a resident of Tanilba Bay, I am against this Special Rate Variation increase, as we already have rate increases every year now and I do not see any of this money properly going to the roads in the area. Right now (2018) my total (including Waste management etc) rates are \$1333.00 (annual CPI increase \$30.00) after your SRV is fully implemented; \$2030.00 (annual CPI increase \$48.72). who can afford that. Maybe the richer residents.

I believe the funds already received and the future increases we already have (a percentage of the previous rates) should be better managed. I believe council works should not be carried on weekends ( if funds are a problem for the Port Stephens Council). Sorry but penalty wages left me about 28 years ago. (Maybe I a bit bitter, Sorry) The funds do not seem to be used where mostly needed, which is in the poorer areas of Port Stephens. In the past 17 years, since I have been here, I notice that some roads in the Tanilba Bay area have been poorly repaired or still not repaired at all. Lemon tree passage road between the golf course and the Oyster Cove turn off, Poilus Parade, Ave of the Allies, Tanilba Ave (road and tree clearing) and from the new round about on Lemon tree passage road to the Mallabula turn off. When a road repair is done properly, they still leave a pot hole right next to the repair. This leaves an entry point for water to enter under the repair and degrade the repair. So the repairs do not last. And I noticed recently, new better repairs have been done on the Lemon Tree Passage road but still they have left potholes right next to the new repair again. The funny thing is where those new repairs have been done, it is not by far the most dangerous potholed part of the road. Check the large bend between the Tanilba Bay golf course and the Oyster Cove turn off. That has been a dangerous bend for years.

I guess it doesn't really matter what I say, things are the way they are, and the funds have to come from somewhere. As someone said in the Examiner how do we know after this 7 year period, another SRV is not submitted.

Sorry, I have finished complaining.

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 4:05 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PAC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Firstly I would like to introduce myself .I have lived in the Tomaree Peninsular, owned a business in the Nelson Bay CBD for nearly 25 years .Paid rent, employ local staff and currently own 2 commercial properties in Nelson Bay. Have been a member of community and sporting groups and

I wishes to draw your attention to the different options .The fact that infrastructure as listed will occur only if certain options are adopted.

Who in council decided/formed this list and how was it decided?

An example is if option 2 is adopted car parking at Soldiers point can occur. Yet Nelson Bay CBD parking can only be addressed if option 3 is adopted.

The parking in the Nelson Bay CBD is a much higher priority. I believe the soon to be released Nelson Bay CBD and Foreshore Strategy will support this and Elected Councillors themselves support the urgent need to address parking in the Nelson Bay CBD.

Community and Business groups like Nelson Bay Now have also addressed the fundamental importance of parking issues being addressed in the CBD directly with council. Especially as there are over 30 vacant shops in the CBD and parking has been identified as essential to addressing this issue.

Yet the community is being asked to support rate increases for infrastructure projects that some how are out of step with community wishes and what most would deem essential.

This does appear to be a carrot and stick approach to the business community and general community at large. i.e. if we the community don't support the larger increases, the essential infrastructure projects won't occur. I believe strongly that it should be tackled the other way around .With major projects tackled first within the first few options then minor projects taken on if higher level options are accepted by the community.

I believe this would gain support for higher option rate increases by the rate payers to occur.

In relation to the rate increase's there is little detail on specific infrastructure projects and cost. Whilst rate increases maybe necessary to fund projects, this should be shared more evenly.

There is unfair burden on properties zoned commercial. Which is a des-incentive for business's to open in the CBD. A reduction in the base rate would help reduced this unfair burden on commercial rate payers.

I feel if these issues are addressed the community would be more likely to support a higher level of increases to their rates.

Thank You

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 4:16 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** SRV - Assessment No. 416925

We are aged pensioners living in a gated lifestyle community for the past four years.

In the period July 2015 to July 2018, our aged pension (upon which we are totally dependant) increased at the CPI rate by 5.67%. In the same period, our Port Stephens Council rates increased by 10.21% - **almost double the rate of inflation**. In our latest Rate Notice was a document indicating that Council now wishes to apply to IPART for an SRV for an undisclosed amount over an undisclosed period.

I would be interested to know why council finds this necessary and why the SRV rate and period of application has not been published.

In our own instance, being in a gated community, I would also be interested to know what council thinks we get for our money. We receive no funding from council to maintain our roads and/or footpaths but have to pay this ourselves. If our swimming pool needs repair or normal routine maintenance, the cost of this comes out of our pockets. Similarly, maintenance of our tennis courts, bowling green cost council nothing - even our street lighting is at our expense !! We have no need for child minding centres or libraries - we are past child rearing age and have our own library. In fact about the only thing which council does to justify the rates we are required to pay is the weekly garbage collection service and even then the garbage bins are very rarely more than a quarter full. This then equates to \$135.42 per month - a service which previously we were paying around **\$9.80 per month** for before council compelled us to use its own service.

We do not, in my opinion, receive very much in the way of value for our rates. I would be happy to be proved wrong, but in the meantime I have to say that we are utterly opposed to any move by Council to apply any form of Special Rate Variation.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 4:18 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** SRV Feedback

Hi

I cannot support any of the options that include an above "the peg rate" increase of 2.5%.

My reasons are:

1. The term of the SRV of 7 years is way too long.

There could be many unexpected changes to the financial status of the council and the ratepayers over his extended period.

Eg. The peg rate could rise. Mortgage rates are already on their way up as illustrated by Westpac. The effect of these would negatively impact the ability of rate payers to pay the rates thus reducing Council's income and much suffering to ratepayers and renters.

2. Market forces mean there can be a great deal of uncertainty around taking out loans of up to 20 years.

3. The list of projects do not appear to closely match those identified during the Council's public consultation.

4. The level of precise costing of the projects is lacking.

5. Those on fixed incomes will struggle to meet the increased rates as project in options 2, 3 and 4. Pensions and income from term deposits are rising at best at inflation.

At a personal level what little discretionary income I currently have as an aged pensioner will be soaked up by the SRV. This means no take away coffees, take away food and dinners out. I am sure I am not alone in this and local businesses will be hit. A double whammy for them considering the huge extra amount they will need to find to remain in business.

Please revisit the options provided and come up with a lesser rises over a considerably shorter period with much clearer cost/benefit analysis of the projects to be undertaken.

Regards

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 4:22 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

Port Stephens Council-- I am totally opposed to any proposed rate increase . The previous Council ( approx 10 yrs ago) fought hard & voted on a yearly rate increase each year pegged to the cost of living .

As a Pensioner on a Fixed Pension, I would not be able to live on your proposed rate increase.

Council must already appreciate the number of Pensioners in the Port, & is targetting retirement development to take advantage of this growing number of residents which will be a financial advantage to Council coffers.

I propose you step back, & start to look at your vast amount of revenue from the Aeroport, investments & your retirement developments etc.

Your claim that rising costs will be impacting on services for residents-- perhaps the services would not be so compromised if revenue is contained to services & not so much development that has become contentious.

AS YOU DECRY YOUR RISING COSTS,SO DO I ON A FIXED PENSION.

Thankyou

18/193569

(186)

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 4:26 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** SRV

We consider the proposed increase should be Option 2 ie 6.5 per cent over 7 years and by so doing it should be sufficient to decide if the extra income is being used judiciously

Pensioners should have their rebate increased to ameliorate the extra cost burden

Attention should be given to addressing the inequality of contribution in payment of rates between owners of their own home, and those residents residing in Over 55s establishments, caravan parks, and other related retirement homes, as all are able to access the facilities provided by the Council. It would appear that residents in their own home are subsidising the others, as well as visiting tourists.

It is my personal view that resident ratepayers only should be provided with a free parking sticker (as in Sydney's Northern Beaches region) and all others pay for parking

Best wishes in finding a solution which the majority of the community can accept

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 4:48 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

**Re: Special Rate Variation proposal**

I would like to reluctantly support a modest rate variation but first would like to make the following comments.

Many pensioners will find any increase a heavy financial burden.

Most of the portfolio of works put forward by the Mayor is of a refurbishment nature.

My understanding is that depreciation should finance the refurbishment of all Council assets, yet we have a backlog. Why?

It seems that funds have been wrongly diverted into pet projects and miss-managed, like Treescapes, into which nearly \$19 million has been poured.

Yet the value of the facility is only a fraction of that amount. Another pet project hardly justifiable for the numbers that use it is the Men's Shed at Raymond Terrace.

Of course the current Mayor and Councillors can't be blamed for past actions, but I think Council should have come clean on the real reasons for this SRV proposal.

My other concern is that the smorgasbord of works outlined in the various options seem to be arbitrarily selected.

I can't see why the most urgent major works can't be identified, costed and a single recommended rate increase applied to cover them.

Having said that, faced with making a choice, I would be comfortable with **Option 2 Enhance, with an SRV of 6.5% over 7 years.**

Council should also consider the effect of any rate increase on businesses. There are 34 vacant shops in Nelson Bay.

Clearly it is difficult to run a small retail business and higher rates will add to the burden of costs.

Figures I have to hand show the commercial rate is 2.8 times larger than the residential rate and the commercial base is 4.2 times larger than the residential base.

Using an example of a \$200,000 unimproved capital value, residential is \$952.20 and commercial is \$3,181, meaning the commercial is 334% of the residential charge, which is exorbitant

To help reduce the number of vacancies, Council should seriously consider reducing the business base amount.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 4:52 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** SPECIAL RATE VARIATION - PSC 2018-02118

Good afternoon,

I would like to lodge our objections to the Council Special Rate Variation.

The proposed Rate Variation will increase rates for a seven year period, and

- there is no indication whether there would be any further increase within that period
- any CPI or base rate increase within the period would be on the rate plus Special Rate Variation amount, thus increasing my rates substantially
- there is no indication the rates would reduce to their original base at the end of the seven year period

Council should learn to live within their current budget – ratepayers DO NOT NEED EVERYTHING DONE NOW. New projects should be phased in over a period of time, and funded from within the Council budget.

If there are any proposals to update the various CBD areas, the CBD rate payers should carry the cost. There is no benefit to residential ratepayers in updating the CBD areas – increased patronage brings lack of parking and destroys the village atmosphere. Why not charge parking for the numerous tourist coaches which clog our streets?

Council should consider sale of unused/under-utilised/ surplus assets.

Council rates in Nelson Bay are already more than 25% higher than rates in Sydney, and the proposed Rate Variation will only make them higher.

I have not seen a list of projects Council wishes to spend the extra money on to enable comment on each proposed project, and these should be published before any decision is made on a rate increase.

There are a large number of retired people living in this area who can ill-afford a rate increase as proposed. Pensioner rate payers receive a reduction in their rates, whereas self-funded retirees receive nothing.

I am free to provide further comment if required.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Friday, 31 August 2018 5:04 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

I am a long-term resident of Port Stephens. I have read your proposal for years of rate rises in order to perform 'enhancement' and other feel-good packages, provided the ratepayers are willing to fund you all above and beyond our normal cost of living rises.

YOUR ENTIRE PREMISE OF PROVIDING EXHORBITANT EXTRA MONEY IS OUTRAGEOUS!!!

Many of us have been paying PSC to perform your core business such as drainage and guttering and street signs etc. These are the very least you should have been providing as a matter of course. Most of the items listed are such basic things that you have left me absolutely furious.

I ABSOLUTELY DO NOT AGREE WITH ANY OF YOUR SPECIAL RATE VARIATION PROPOSAL.

Just do your jobs on the \$millions you are already paid in rates.

## Special Rate Variation Proposal – Port Stephens Council

In 2009/10 Port Stephens Council threatened ratepayers that it would not spend the money it said was required on the following:

- \$1M on Clarencetown Road,
- \$615,000 on sports asset management,
- \$230,000 on library books and multimedia items,
- \$140,000 on community halls
- \$63,000 on cemetery maintenance
- \$15,000 on Medowie before and after school care, and child care centres

It said to do so it would need to apply for a rate increase above the then prescribed rate cap of 2.6% per annum, over four years which would have resulted in a cumulative rate rise of 22.85%.

This followed these previous successful applications:

2000/01, 5.5% for 10yrs + 3yrs

2003/04, 7.13% - 3yrs

2006/07, 9.96% - Ongoing

2008/09, 5.3% - Ongoing

The Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association opposed that proposal in a strongly worded submission to the then Minister for local Government, the Hon Barbara Perry. The Minister agreed with TRRA's contention that:

- Council did not present a proper business case to support the increase
- Did not canvass all the alternatives available
- Did not consult properly or gain the support of the community.

The Current proposal sounds all too familiar. Dissatisfaction with the 2.5% Government rate peg available, which is above the inflation rate of 2.1% and will result in a 19% cumulative increase anyway over seven years. Council will grudgingly "maintain existing service levels" for that amount.

The alternatives proposed are a 56%, a 66%, or a cumulative 77% increase in rates over the next 7 years. It seems that the Council is once again abrogating its responsibilities to provide basic services within its means. Wage earners have had to survive the last 8 years with no increase, and some have gone backwards against the CPI, with power prices doubling during that period.

Since that last proposal was rejected the Council has managed to survive and provided most of the basic services without going over the rate peg. However it has spent all the section 94 fund contributions from developments that were supposed to fund revitalizing the town centres, facilities and community amenities on new Surf Clubs, big Mens Sheds and a recreational "club with no beer" in Raymond Terrace.

Ordinary ratepayers have had to find reductions in unnecessary expenditure to balance their books in this environment to survive, we would all like to have access to a 77% increase in expenditure over the next seven years too but based on the last seven years, that is unlikely. Council will have to face the same realities before making this impost on its ratepayers. I do not support this proposal to make an application above the rate peg.

31<sup>st</sup> August 2018

The General Manager  
Port Stephens Council  
PO Box 42  
RAYMOND TERRACE NSW 2324

**RE: Special Rate Variation Proposal**

Dear Sir

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Special Rate Variation Proposal.

First of all, thank you for the opportunity to comment, the detailed information provided, the time allowed to comment, and the community information sessions; allowing you to compile views from the PS community.

I support **Option 1 - Maintain**, for the following reasons:

- 1) Council has offered the PS community only one pathway to funding the nominated projects; a rate rise. Other options should be explored with the community; eg. reduce costs; asset sales; development of Council land, etc, none of which have been "discussed" with the PS community.
- 2) The proposed project are intended to "stimulate the economy"; whereas demographics show that the PS population has grown by 13% over the past decade, and there is no reason to suggest that growth will decline in the future. Therefore, the economy (and Council rates) will grow accordingly over the next decade. Council's presentation to the community made no mention of "forecast growth" and the corresponding "forecast rate revenue" associated with such growth; and the prospect of projects being funded as population grows, which will also "fill empty streets".
- 3) Further to points 1 & 2, I don't understand why (as part of the community presentations) Council did not provide a 10 year historical Income & Expenses summary (trend), along with a forecast 10 year Income & Expenses summary based on demographic forecasts.  
Before asking for "more money" it is incumbent upon Council to demonstrate that they have been wise with the money already provided to them, by showing changes in Council revenue, delivery and costs and the specific projects and initiatives undertaken by Council over the past decade; eg. attrition. If this can't be done, then it suggests that there may be opportunities to reduce costs or increase revenues that have yet to be explored.
- 4) Looking at the 2017 Annual Report, actual revenue was \$132M, whereas budget was \$119M, and the "operating result" was double the forecast. This shows that, financial performance and results can be substantially higher predicted. Therefore, why is Council so downcast about being able to fund future projects without a SRV?

Further, it is not uncommon for large businesses to be able to reduce costs by as much as 10%, as costs can (and do) escalate out of control as time rolls on. The maximum SRV (transform) seeks to raise \$118.9M over 7 years; or \$17M per year. A 10% reduction in expenses (based on 2017 results) would generate \$13.2M, or 78% of the proposed SRV-transform-tax.

Reducing costs can deliver substantial results without detrimentally impacting rate payers.

- 5) The SRV proposal contains no analysis of forecast hardship that would be imposed by a SRV, and how Council aims to address such hardship, which is a concern given that the objective of the SRV is "for the benefit of all", yet 30% of the PS population is over 60 years old.

Should SRV-transform be adopted, a property valued over \$500k would incur an annual SRV-tax of between \$1000 & \$2000. What % of the over 60 age bracket have the capacity to absorb (without impact to their lifestyle) such an increase? As above, first look at cost reductions and other revenue generating options before further taxing rate payers.

6) At the 04Aug **community presentation**-discussion at Medowie:

a) it was stated that Council will have to make a detailed submission to IPART that includes the cost savings that Council have made, thus justifying the need for a SRV. If Council can make such a submission to IPART, then why didn't Council present that information to the PS community as part of their community engagement process?

b) it was stated that, for the proposed cost of "projects to be funded", a fair distribution of funds across the 3 x Wards has been applied. It beggars belief that the SRV Information Booklet did not provide a summary that demonstrated the distribution of funds across the wards.

Similarly, to present at Medowie and not have a summary list of projects that are proposed for Medowie, with the total cost summed, is ridiculous. When Council wants support from the community, why make it so hard for the community to "get a handle" on what is being proposed? The approach adopted by Council is so **inefficient**.

The whole SRV proposal is premised on "giving the community what they are asking for". Well, for a long time now, the community has been asking for professional information (eg. the SAMP) **sorted by town** ... so that it can be aligned with (and reconciled to) the town strategy.

I agree with the statement that the SRV is a "hard sell" ... I think made harder by Council not providing relevant "summary reporting" to engage residents. As said, *everyone wants to know "what's in it for me? ... or my town?"* + people want fairness & transparency. Yet, the information is almost everything but that, which is not to say that it is unfair, rather that it is too hard to show that it is fair. Yet, Council could eliminate many concerns simply by providing more relevant information in a **format** that can be *readily absorbed by all residents*, relevant to the area they know, ie. where they live. It's not rocket science.

c) it was stated that the expenditure of SRV funds must comply with IPART rules, and that the expenditure must be applied to the projects submitted as part of the SRV submission.

Yet, it was also stated that the nominated projects could change, based on the desires of each community within the LGA.

Council can't have it both ways. Either the projects are locked in, or they are subject to change.

If IPART are going to assess Council's ability to "deliver the projects", it makes sense that the projects have some level of agreement (with the community) prior to the submission.

I suggest that Council should align the "proposed projects" with each Town Strategy before making any submission to IPART. Obviously this requires establishing a viable Town Strategy with each town within the PS LGA, and having that Strategy endorsed by each Town community.

Given the projects are *to be delivered over a 10+ year period* (the fine print) how will the project delivery be prioritised? Before going to IPART, Council should be transparent with the PS community about priorities & timelines of the proposed projects.

7) At best there is partial alignment between the Medowie Strategy, the proposed projects for Medowie in the information booklet, and the SAMP. Whichever becomes the "master document" (which the others can refer to) a change in format is required; ie. move from Word tables to Excel spreadsheets, so that priorities (timelines) and costs can be easily accounted for, communicated (in particular to rate payers) and assessed.

8) The proposed \$2m (one off cost) for Public Amenities is to be spread across 12 projects. What is the proposed split across each of these 12 x projects?

Similarly, a \$2m (recurring annual cost) is proposed for Additional Drainage. Does this mean it is \$14M over 7 years, to be spread across 9 x projects.

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- 9) The proposed \$9.7m (one off cost) for Path and Cycleways applies to 7 x projects, yet there are 17 x projects listed in SAMP [Attachment 3: Capital Works Plan Plus] but it is difficult to reconcile these two lists.

Why isn't Defence paying (100%) for the \$2.5m cycle way to Medowie as part of their looking after the needs of their staff & families? Do Defence pay "developer contributions" to Council as part of the current \$1B RAAF upgrade? If so, how much?

When I was \_\_\_\_\_, I was advised by Developers that "cycle-ways are easy" implying that, as part of their community contribution for major development projects, cycle ways could be delivered as part of the project. If that is the case, why is a SRV needed to fund cycle ways given the amount of major developments proposed for Medowie and the PS LGA?

Further, while there is a Cycle Way Plan for PS, would it not be beneficial to have the specific cycle way projects costed and prioritised within each Town Strategy, so that SRV projects are not subject to change (as per point#6).

- 10) Similarly for the proposed Sports Facility and Road projects; without a proposed timeline and cost (sorted by Town) how does Council expect the community to make a sensible contribution?

Of course everyone wants more to be spent for the benefit of their town, so the *potential project* list will always be endless. However, in its current format, it is **difficult to differentiate** when projects will be delivered given that a *10+ year delivery timeline* is proposed, when compared to the funded SAMP projects [Attachment 2: Capital Works Program 2018-2028]. For example, *Public Amenities for One Mile Beach* is part of the SRV (Option#2) + it is scheduled for 2015-26? Is that the same \$200k project?

Is it correct to say that no new cycle ways are scheduled until after 2030, even if the SRV is approved?

How does the community reconcile the \$14m for funded SAMP projects over a 10 year period [Attachment 2: Capital Works Program 2018-2028], averaging \$1.4m per year, reconcile with the 2017 Material & Contracts expenses being \$39.8m; ie. is the annual capital works expense typically 3.5% of M&C work?

While the SRV Information Booklet is a **good start** as to which projects are being prioritised (once funding is available) I submit that, despite the effort that has been expended, the approach to first ask rate payers to pay appears to be *lazy and problematic*. Perhaps providing info in a community friendly format (as detailed above) would change that perception. But, the *easy option* appears to be ask for more money. All the community has been told is "Council has implemented a range of productivity savings, reduced costs" which equals "financially stable"; without any detail as to what those measures were. In other words, "trust us, we only have **one solution**; raise rates", in perpetuity?

If Council can't live within its means, then the solution is not to make it even **harder** for every rate payer *to live within their means*.

And the basis for this SRV solution? A *simplistic comparison* of rates comparing Port Stephens to other LGA's.

*Comparisons are odious<sup>1</sup>: a practitioner's view of why comparing councils is a flawed concept*

As a local government practitioner charged with establishing valid measurements of performance and reporting to Council and the community, the question of **validity of data** is an important component of accurate, open and transparent communication. This paper is based on the experience of the author with one Council – Port Stephens in NSW.

Source: <file:///C:/5%20MPA%202018/PSC%20Public%20Exhibition/2018-08-02%20Special%20Rate%20Variation/source/477-542-1-PB.pdf>

“Accurate, open and transparent communication” requires “validity of data”; but so too it requires the data to be presented in a format that allows it to be absorbed and understood by the intended audience.

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There may be many reasons why one LGA has higher rates than another. So, to simply say, “ours are low, we need to lift them” so we can “be like them” makes no sense at all, unless you define further define the differences and understand what “like them” means.

Maybe:

- PS has low rates, historically, because it has invested well and used assets to off-set high rates? [to the advantage of rate payers, making PS affordable and attractive place to live]
- consistently low rates has caused assets to deteriorate to the point of needing higher levels of capital expenditure.
- Council’s staffing levels are too high, or the priorities for staffing **don’t match** the communities priorities resulting in a greater call for the projects identified.
- revenue can be generated via other means.

Hopefully Council can present the PC community with data and information that helps the average rate payer to get from “maybe” to “certainty”; ie. we know.

I submit that the starting point is a well defined **Town Strategy**, that incorporates all the elements that I have highlighted [priority, cost, timeline] allowing each Town community to be engaged in the development of their town over the next two decades; absolutely knowing that they are getting access to a fair distribution of projects and services.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, 2 September 2018 3:05 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018 - 02118

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a response to the proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV) debate.

As a member of the business community of Raymond Terrace I find it difficult to accept that the Options 2 – 4 will truly result in those projects that have been forecast as being achievable. To save a long winded response I will attempt to put my thoughts into dot points:

- If we cast our mind back 10 – 12 years there was a special business levy that was to provide / fund Economic Development with the Raymond Terrace / Heatherbrae. Since the inception of that levy there are few if any local businesses who have seen any true result. There was a period where Council partly funded an Economic Develop person who unfortunately struggled with multiple masters (Council V's Business Chamber). The Business Chamber folder many years ago, yet the levy remains in place (absorbed into the general rate, I believe)
- What else has happened in William Street Raymond Terrace in the past 15 – 20 years?
  - New banner poles installed – which are totally underutilised and when asked can they be used by varying business the general response is no if they have any branding or advertising other than Council
  - Cigarette butt holders
  - New garbage bins
  - On a positive not the gardens within the roundabouts are very well maintained by the outdoor staff
- During the amalgamation debate the public was told time and time again that the Council was truly self-sufficient with funding and everyone else only wanted to amalgamate to get the cash reserves. Where are those cash reserves now when they are needed for all of the infrastructure backlog that is apparent by the social media advertising of Council
- During the last few months of Councils tenure before the final decision was handed down by the State Government regarding the scraping of forced amalgamations, how much money did the ward Councillors and Mayor dish out to "pet projects" to make sure there were no funds available if a forced amalgamation was to take place. And how then did Council vote to themselves (Ward Funds) further cash reserves after that point.
- Unfortunately I have not been able to ascertain (without undertaking a lengthy exercise) the split of funds and projects between the varying wards under any of the Options. Is there a summary available (not a table of projects, but a simple summary of both one off and recurrent costs on a ward by ward basis under each of the options?)
- I feel that we should be letting our new Councillors settle in for another 12 months and then look if we need to do more in asking people for a rate rise during a very hard time for many.

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 16 August 2018 9:46 AM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation Proposal

1. Fix Foreshore Dr and add cycleway/path beside it 2. Kerb and gutter Anna Bay 3. Completion of Dual carriageway to Newcastle via Airport 4. Moderate rate increase 5. Pathway along Sandy Point Road from Harvey Norman to Corlette Foreshore 6. Increased parking at Salamander shops 7. Land purchased back from Mambo Wetlands as a high priority 8. Increased parking in Nelson Bay to cater for high volume tourist traffic 9. Increased facilities at Tomaree Hospital 10. Increased Police presence in Tomaree Peninsula 11. Green waste bin

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**Sent:** Monday, 3 September 2018 7:12 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

Dear Sir,

My comments on the rate rises. I am not in agreeance with any rises other than maintaining on the option 1. We are mere pensioners and only just make ends meet as it is.

We struggle to get our road graded at regular intervals as we sit back and watch so much money going into Nelson Bay area. The Shire stretches from countryside to the sea where the greater population is, but give us a fair go. Thank you for the new stretches of bitumen road that we have between Raymond Terrace and Glen Oak, but we need so much more done. Don't raise the rates any more than the normal yearly rate rise, but spend the money fairly.

Thank you. Yours sincerely,

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(195) 1

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 16 August 2018 1:33 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** Rate Variation

Mr Palmer and Mr Wallis,

Thank you for your recent letter pertaining to a special rate variation.

I note that some state government organisations have, in recent years, gone through amalgamations and mergers in order to increase the efficiencies of their services, improve customer service and minimise the administrative red tap. The Roads and Maritime Services is just one example.

Learning from these bold moves and applying this same thinking to a local government context, what action has PSSC taken to increase efficiencies and minimise administrative costs prior to proposing a special rate variation. I would see special rate variations as a last resort after such independent assessments have taken place and any unnecessary levels of management have been adjusted. What assurances can you give the rate payers of Port Stephens that PSSC is operating most efficiently.

This email is not a slight on PSSC current practices, its feedback possibly reflective of the thoughts of many rate payers.

Kind Regards

181196814  
(196) 1/4



Port Stephens Council  
Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

6 September 2018

[wayne.wallis@portstephens.nsw.gov.au](mailto:wayne.wallis@portstephens.nsw.gov.au)  
[srv@portstephens.nsw.gov.au](mailto:srv@portstephens.nsw.gov.au)

Dear General Manager

### **PSC 2018-02118 Special Rate Variation - preliminary submission**

#### **Introduction**

The Shoal Bay Community Association (SBCA) will reserve our final judgement on the rate increase proposal until we receive the October/November Council update, including projects deemed important. In the meantime, we would like Council to take account of the following observations.

Council in SRV forward planning says that it would be fair to split the income from rate increases equally between the three wards. We take issue with this formula because East Ward has by far the highest number of visitors, the highest rateable land values and the greatest need for infrastructure improvements. It should therefore be entitled to the a larger proportion of SRV earnings.

SBCA has three major areas of concern:

1. Foreshore beach erosion
2. Inadequate stormwater drainage, mentioned in [8]
3. Accessibility to Shoal Bay and Fingal Bay by vehicles and pedestrians

Other concerns include:

4. Inadequate amenities for high annual tourist numbers
5. Degraded precinct foreshore facilities
6. Limited space in front of the precinct shop fronts
7. Precinct pedestrian pathways
8. Inadequate parking facilities

### **1. Foreshore beach erosion**

Shoal Bay Beach is an iconic beach, popular with both locals and tourists. However, beach erosion, from east of the Holiday Park to the boat ramp is a major concern. There is no plan for the type of sand replenishment provided in years past. Already part of the footpath adjacent to the only road to Tomaree Head is being undermined. There is a clear and present danger that, should we experience another east coast low and storm surge, not only the path but the road could be undermined, which would have a devastating effect on residential access and businesses reliant on tourism. In a worst case scenario the Shoal Bay Road opposite Shoal Bay Avenue has the potential to be eroded cutting vehicular access.

### **2. Lack of stormwater drainage**

This is an issue well known to Council, due to the regular flooding of parts of Shoal Bay residential district, and is addressed in the proposed rate variation.

### **3. Accessibility to Shoal Bay and Fingal Bay by vehicles and pedestrians**

Fingal Bay and Shoal Bay experience high tourist numbers, yet are serviced by a single road threatened by erosion. Urgent action is needed to provide alternative access and three options have been identified.

The simplest option, in the Department of Lands and Port Stephens Council 2009 TPG Waterfront Master Plan, is to relocate Shoal Bay Road behind Harbourside Haven and Shoal Bay Holiday Park from Harwood Avenue to Government Road.

Another option is to extend Austral Street through Marine Drive and the Austral Street fire trail to the junction of Government Road and Sylvia Street/Marine Drive. This alternative would also create better access/egress from Tomaree Hospital.

The third option is a link road to Fingal Bay, which would exit Nelson Bay Road just after the Gan Gan turnoff and cut across Tomaree National Park before joining Marine Drive to Fingal Bay.

#### **Pedestrians**

Foreshore pedestrian access from Anzac Park to Shoal Bay, also addressed in the TPG Report, provides for construction of a boardwalk between Beach Road and Shoal Bay Road to allow access to the village, obviating the need to cross Shoal Bay Road. We support this proposal as the current access used by pedestrians presents an accident waiting to happen.

#### **4. Inadequate amenities to cater for high annual tourist numbers**

Tomaree Headland has over 250,000 visitors climbing to its peak each year and thousands more who walk to the headland. These figures increase during events like the State and National titles in Stand Up Paddle Boarding, Dragon Boat racing, fishing competitions and ordinary boating activities.

The Shoal Bay East amenities (beside the boat ramp) have two toilets for women and one toilet and a urinal for men, both with one tin basin. There are no showers or change facilities. This is totally inadequate for the number of potential users. Shoal Bay beach and village also generate many thousands of visitors each year. To cater for these numbers Shoal Bay west amenities have four toilets for women and two for men along with a double urinal and one basin. Like Shoal Bay east, this is totally inadequate for the number of potential users.

#### **5. Degraded precinct foreshore facilities**

As shown in the above picture Shoal Bay foreshore can be heavily used. The grassed area is in a state of disrepair with multiple varieties of grasses.

The pathway is too narrow (approx. 120mm) for wheelchairs, prams and kids bikes, and is constantly covered in sand, making access difficult for mobility-impaired residents.

Parts of the path precinct are being undermined by beach erosion: last year erosion caused a platform with table and chairs in Shoal Bay to collapse onto the beach.

#### **6. Limited space in front of the precinct shop fronts**

The limited space in front of the Shoal Bay precinct shop fronts is also addressed in the TPG report with a proposal for creating a one-way traffic system along the foreshore. The SBCA also proposed this to Council at a 2011 presentation.

#### **7. Precinct pedestrian pathways**

The space gained by making the road one way would allow for street café culture and wider pedestrian pavements

The one-way system could be introduced with the realignment of Shoal Bay Road behind Harbourside Haven.

## **8. Inadequate parking facilities**

Space is always a problem, but there are areas that could be looked at to formalise parking including Beach Road alongside Anzac Park; the site 15-17 Government Road, that could also double as a stormwater sump in case of severe flooding (see [2]); and the unused cricket patch at the entrance to Tomaree Lodge.

If Council is to win the support of the community it must first address the aging infrastructure and accessibility for persons of all levels of mobility (including those using mobility scooters) such as footpaths and cycle ways. We do not believe rate increases should be used to fund expensive and non-essential projects like information centres, public domains and sports complexes. Proposals such as for the depot relocation should be accompanied with information giving the rationale and reasons for the relocation.

Yours sincerely,

Cc: Mayor and East Ward Councillors

7 September 2018

Port Stephens Council  
srv@portstephens.nsw.gov.au

### **Port Stephens Council Special Rate Variation Feedback**

Council has stated that income raised through the SRV would be split evenly between the three wards. A more equitable solution would be to split the income generated from the rate increase in two and then divide 50% equally between the wards and 50% in ratio to the rates generated in each ward. This would give more benefit to the area with the highest rateable land values that has the highest number of income generating tourists that in turn generate the need for infrastructure upgrades/improvements.

#### **East Ward has**

Footpaths in need of urgent construction due to the potential of injury/death to pedestrians, mobility impaired cyclists who currently have to walk on the road. These include:

- Foreshore drive between Sandy Point Road and Port Stephens Drive
- Shoal Bay Road between Beach Road and Government Road
- Tomaree Road in Shoal Bay

Roads that due to erosion, storms fire and accidents have the potential to isolate communities due to lack of alternative routes these include:

- Shoal Bay Road in two places preventing access to the village and Tomaree Lodge
- Marine Drive preventing access to Fingal Bay

Shoal Bay's economy that is threatened by the Shoal Bay beach erosion, urgent action needs to be taken to prevent further degradation and damage to vital infrastructure.

Stormwater drainage system to prevent further flooding of properties and damage to infrastructure.

New amenities and foreshore facilities that need to be constructed due to the age and decrepit condition of the current facilities and their incapacity to cope with the hundreds of thousands of tourists each year.

The debilitated state of the Shoal Bay Precinct combined with narrow footpaths and lack of parking are having a negative effect on the viability of businesses in the area.

I, and many others I have spoken to, will reserve our judgement on the rate increase until we receive the updated council proposal in October/November including projects we deem important as stated above and not items such as Information Centres, Public Domains, Sports Complex etc. that they deem not important.

Yours sincerely,

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**From:**  
**Sent:** Sunday, 9 September 2018 3:59 PM  
**To:** Special Rate Variation Project  
**Subject:** PSC 2018-02118

To Council Members,

We have never seen a levy that has never come back off – please leave our rates at the level they are thank you

