

The General Manager,  
Lismore City Council  
Lismore

Dear Sir,

I write to express my opposition to any increase in the SRL on property owners in Lismore.

I have owned premises and operated a business in Lismore since 2004.

During this time I have not seen any of the special rate levy spent on the CBD. If any has been spent it has been minimal. Yes some beautification has taken place but not enough to attract people to our town. What is Council doing to attract businesses to this town. We live in a beautiful spot but nothing is done to brighten our town so that people actually make great comments about it. The greatest publicity we have had in recent years was to be named the town with the worst Christmas tree and decorations on it.

Considering the amount of levy collected by Council each year our CBD looks dull and drab in comparison to other towns I have visited in NSW. Nothing is ever done to brighten up the CBD. Surely it is not too much to ask that some brightly coloured seasonal flowers be planted in the CBD as other towns do, which makes it a pleasure to visit these towns. If you don't want to plant seasonal flowers then surely you could plant shrubs that have colour. There are many of these types of plants around.

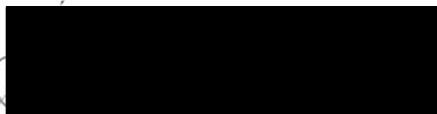
Our levy is spent on many other things which we are told bring money into the town. Well only certain businesses in town benefit from these events.

As most of this levy would be contributed by the CBD it is about time that some of it was spent on the CBD. I am aware of the footpath upgrade. But when will we see it.

I am totally against any increase in the special rate levy by Council.

You are increasing rates at a time when businesses are trying to recover from a natural disaster and when business all over Australia is struggling and many are closing down is irresponsible of any Council. Small businesses cannot continually be rated and taxed and get no return on the money collect by such means. It is going to take quite some time for businesses to recover from the floods and the costs involved in rebuilding and you are expecting them to fork out more money by increasing rates.

Yours Faithfully,



4.8.18

RECEIVED  
- 1 SEP 2017

25.8.2017

Brent McAllister  
Lismore City Council  
P.O.Box 23A  
LISMORE 2480

Dear Brent,

**Re: Special Rate Variation and other.**

I attended the meeting at the workers club and could see that there was a lot of concern and little support for the levy on property owners [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] s?

I came to Lismore as a young man in 1992 due to family issues (wife's family). I am a Sydney-sider from a background with over 150 years of progressive thinkers and hard workers, a successful family who also had a social conscience BUT using their own money to assist the down and out when they saw the need. I have done the same myself many times.

In my time in Lismore I have seen it change from a buoyant, healthy regional town to one that is struggling economically. I believe that a strong economy equates to a healthy and mostly happy town. What are the biggest issues for the modern man? Security, financial health, physical health etc. We have a community of financially stressed people.

I believe that Federal and State governments neglect rural areas badly with money being constantly poured into the major cities.

A friend (an accountant) and I recently had some Chinese food and a bottle of wine one evening in my office and watched a webinar. The essence was that Australia is only surviving because of mining and migration which is not sustainable and not good for the fabric of our society.

**LISMORE:**

1. About 15 years ago we lost some major government departments.eg: ATO Obviously a vote catching matter for other areas. There was a mass exodus of public servants and house prices plummeted.
2. Ballina became the main airport destination

3. Physical attendances at SCU has dropped dramatically due to online, new campuses at Coffs and Tweed, The campus is an expensive white elephant.
4. [REDACTED]
5. Rail gone
6. No population growth
7. Too much big business...Bunnings, Office Works, 2 supermarkets grew to 7 (2 Coles, 3 Woolworths, 2 Aldi) They don't need to make a profit...just think the Coles- WW battle. Opening in opposition like the Masters fiasco.
8. Online shopping and services
9. A huge improvement to the Pacific Hwy bringing the Gold Coast shops and businesses etc. about 1hr closer.
10. Mechanisation of macca farms reducing seasonal work
11. Many farms have become lifestyle properties
12. We have lost the uniqueness of the area in terms of it's natural and cultural flavour. We are just like any other town.
13. The Council and the University have become involved in activities that affected existing business eg: gyms. Let business run business!
14. Overspending on infrastructure eg: Aquatic Centre, beautification of a dying CBD and more.
15. A high spending council over catering for the community. We have no significant growth to justify this.
16. Council red tape for making it difficult for business and development. Remember it is 75% of the "working" population that actually foots the bill.
17. About 65% of the population receiving some form of social security (not me/never have)
18. No drive to attract major events, sustainable business and a healthy economy
19. The flood, yes a big short term problems (I farmed for many years, drought, flood etc.. I had to wear it no handouts) But, businesses have closed because they were only just surviving before the flood, not essentially because of the flood.

What we need to do:

1. Lobby Federal and State hard
2. Bring awareness to business and community that a regional area is actually a better lifestyle option.
3. Get migrants to the country as part of their package/requirement. Go out and attract/target them, Business migrants are fast tracked if they go regional.
4. Look at what we have, the river, the climate, the proximity, the infrastructure. Could Oaks Oval become a stadium for a major events? Look how the Tropical Fruits brings people and is that not because of a small group of people with a concept that was developed.
5. We have excellent communications and transport so why can't we induce business?
6. Stop making [REDACTED] with the rate/tax payers money. And, by the way where is Goonellabah? Rous Road? Woolworths complex, Coles Complex or maybe Aldi??? Grossly bad town planning.

7. Has Lismore Council been active in luring the Ski Jump that was targeting Lennox Head? Something like this could be a life saver for the local economy and lead to a fresh start for Lismore.

I have owned my complex for 20 years. When I bought it at age 40 I had a young family. It produced good income, enough to pay outgoings/ expenses, a heavy mortgage and give me a profit. Now 20 years on I barely make enough to pay the expenses and pray that someone will appear and buy it from me before I can't even do that! One of my properties elsewhere has a UCV 2.57% higher than my Goonellabah property and the rates are 85% less. Interesting?

I hope this is food for thought.





18 November 2017

Dear Lismore City Council,

Re: SRV

As per the request from the Lismore City Council the Lismore Chamber of Commerce & Industry engaged in a consultative process with the business community over the last number of months seeking opinion and recommendation from its' members in regard to the SRV.

This process was actioned by conducting a poll to members and further direct engagement in the Business community.

- 10th of August a meeting was facilitated by LCCI where Stephen Nelson and Rino Santin presented to businesses the potential variations and impacts of the SRV. Of the 34 participants, (members and general business community) there was a unanimous vote against the permanent increase of the SRV, (31 against, 2 for, 1 abstained).
- 28th of August LCCI issued a poll to its' members asking: *"Do you agree with the proposed increase of \$120,000 to create the new Business Special Rate Variation (SRV)?"*

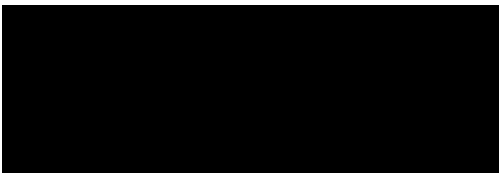
71 respondents - 60% voted no (against): 40% voted yes.

- As at the 31st of August LCCI received 46 letters from both members and the business community stating that they are not in support of the permanent SRV

In representation of our members the LCCI submits that the majority response has been against any proposed increase or for the permanent increase of the SRV to be applied.

In representation of the broader business community who are also consulting with the LCCI, their view is that they are also against any proposed increase or for the permanent increase of the SRV applied.

Regards,



Deborah Benhayon on behalf of LCCI Board & Members  
President  
Lismore Chamber of Commerce & Industry