

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Not approving the SRV would breach the Local Government Act re Intergenerational Equity. Further, our members and residents predominantly want quality services and facilities from Council. Those opposing the rise will certainly protest vehemently if local amenity is reduced. Many new Australians are only too relieved to have left Money is also needed for sorely required topics like a Master Plan for Pennant Hills, and a cycle network

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Very definitely yes

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes - and they are not good

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes - Council fully communicated Our Trust has a recommendation regarding a change to the headline % which would be a fairer representation, and be less confusing for the public

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Very definitely Online and many area in person consultations. Council wrote on paper to all addresses

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

There were extra provisions made for hardship voted on by Councillors The large majority of the Community are supportive and value Council's work, facilities and services. This is notwithstanding a vocal minority who are very happy to take but not to contribute, despite wealthy means. Some local groups have not engaged in good faith. There have been suggestions that Council has not engaged enough or justified the rise (despite themselves helping host a local consultation!), simply because they want Council to be broke, and not complete projects they don't like, such as new sports facilities.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Very reasonable. Council has checked the affordability. Compared to the sacrifices made in generations before who were on much lower incomes, no public health provision, no foreign holidays, and weatherboard houses - there is no excuse re intergenerational equity not to pay. No-one locally has campaigned against the average \$3000 per household gain from Stage3 Federal Tax cuts. But \$500 increase at most in rates generates rancour. Our contention is that the peg does not reflect real inflation on Council's basket of goods

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The provisions for people in financial difficulty, or asset rich/cash restricted are very fair

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Yes - they will positively consider applications by those with difficulty

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Very comprehensively

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Hornsby Council has lost the contributions from the changes in Council boundaries. (Epping) We would like money back from Hills Council, though politically this will not happen. We are very au fait with Council budgets. The issues are not about efficiencies, but about the sharp inflation in energy, trade labour and building materials. Complaints from some quarters about "consultants" are ridiculous. We don't want to have to engage expert staff permanently who are only required for a limited period.



3 March 2023

Dear IPART

Pennant Hills District Civic Trust is a local community organisation operating since 1983, focussed on the amenity of Pennant Hills and the local district.

Please find our responses to specific aspects:

**1) Council have justified the SRV**

The Trust is convinced that the Council's "basket of goods" including disproportionate energy and civil works costs exceed what the peg has delivered.

- a) We have done the calculations, and if the increase was done in one "shot" in 2023, the amount above the IPART peg would be a one off 12%.

We would make the point that IPART might reconsider the rules on the required headline % to publish, vs having to publish 31% vs 12% generated a lot of rancour.

It is hard to explain to the general public:

- i) The peg which is not decision relevant for the consultation since it's automatic.

- ii) Four years of compounding to 2026 putting the figure into 2026 nominal money

The 31% conveys an impression of inefficiency, incompetence, unaccountability and arrogance which we think has driven rancour in the public discussion.

Financial experts let alone the public struggle with money compounding concepts.

- b) The vast "silent majority" of residents value the local amenity we have, good services and facilities and a thriving neighbourhood. They don't want to expend effort engaging, but they will be voluble if service and facility quality diminishes.
- c) Reducing Council budget in real terms is a recipe for unaccountability, as the answer to everything that is not delivered is "no funding"
- d) We are confident that the "lost riches of Atlantis" are not hiding in plain sight in some purported "wastefulness" of Council, that would otherwise amazingly bridge this kind of funding gap.

- e) Our Ward is represented by one Green, one Liberal and one Labor councillor. All have supported the rise. I attach a link to a passionate endorsement by the Greens in a Liberal majority Council. Councillor Ball (Greens) got the highest number of votes of any Councillor at the last election, and is a former committee member of our Trust (we are non-partisan and pride ourselves is finding common ground across the political spectrum on the local issues we care about). Councillor Heyde represents a Ward which covers some of the southern side of Pennant Hills.

[https://1drv.ms/b/s!AoAbP\\_3BXrQBgdQtJi-BKDjSyC8yCw?e=AV7H2Y](https://1drv.ms/b/s!AoAbP_3BXrQBgdQtJi-BKDjSyC8yCw?e=AV7H2Y)

## 2) Affordability

- a. The Trust is fully comfortable that the Council has addressed the issues of hardship and arrangements for people who are asset rich and cash restricted. This included even further amendments made on the night at the Council meeting where the SRV application was approved.
- b. Ability to pay exists for local residents. Anecdotally, the loudest voice on local groups in Facebook against the rise, is the local expert in dining out, a cost which one can estimate vastly exceeds their retiree discounted Council rates every month. No-one on social media has attacked the Federal Stage 3 tax cuts delivering typically \$3000 or households vs this oncost of \$300-\$500 p.a.
- c. The noisy few detractors do not seem aware of the concept of “intergenerational equity” in the Local Government Act. Every resident benefits from capital assets funded by the generations before, and we take the example of groundworks or public toilets built in the 1950s now looking to be renewed. Those people lived in far humbler dwellings than we do now, and didn’t have Medicare – they had to save and pay for their treatment, yet they sacrificed and “paid forward” as we should do now. The “sacrifice” today is if anything highly advantageous for the community of 2023 – there is certainly no inequity.

## 3) Very Adequate Community Consultation

There was widespread publicity about the many consultation sessions available, including online, including Council contacting every household

[https://1drv.ms/b/s!AoAbP\\_3BXrQB4XB5WykVzqRugrgo?e=6sYfFX](https://1drv.ms/b/s!AoAbP_3BXrQB4XB5WykVzqRugrgo?e=6sYfFX)

PHDCT publicised to our membership, including this online video explanation. The Trust received compliments and not a single negative response.

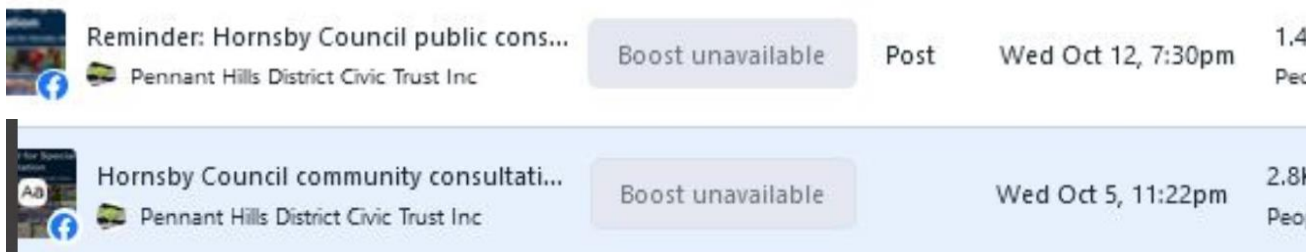
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Our Trust hosted the Council for a solid two hours of presentation and questioning, attended by The Mayor, the GM, the CFO and other Council management. Joint hosts were the Westleigh Progress Association (WPA) and Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust who publicised to their members.




Although attendance was modest as evidenced by this photo  
Our Facebook Stats indicate that approximately 4200 people saw that the event was happening via FB alone.  
The most ardent local detracting voice declined to attend, despite living 300m from the venue.




I attended a second similar meeting at the Pennant Hills Hotel primarily aimed at the Westleigh Water Board Association. Note the presence of the Mayor, diverse Councillors and Council Management to answer the questions.

A show of hands was taken after the Council GM's presentation and there was unanimous support for the full increase of the SRV. Per the post and response below, the silent majority are supportive.

◀ Search

◀  **Westleigh Water Board Alliance** ...  
Martin R Dargan · 5 Oct 2022 · 🧑🏻


Thank you all for turning up last night for our meeting. A big thanks to council staff and councillors who made themselves available. We all look forward to seeing resolution on the draft master plan and then turning soil at Westleigh Park.





👍 Like      💬 Comment

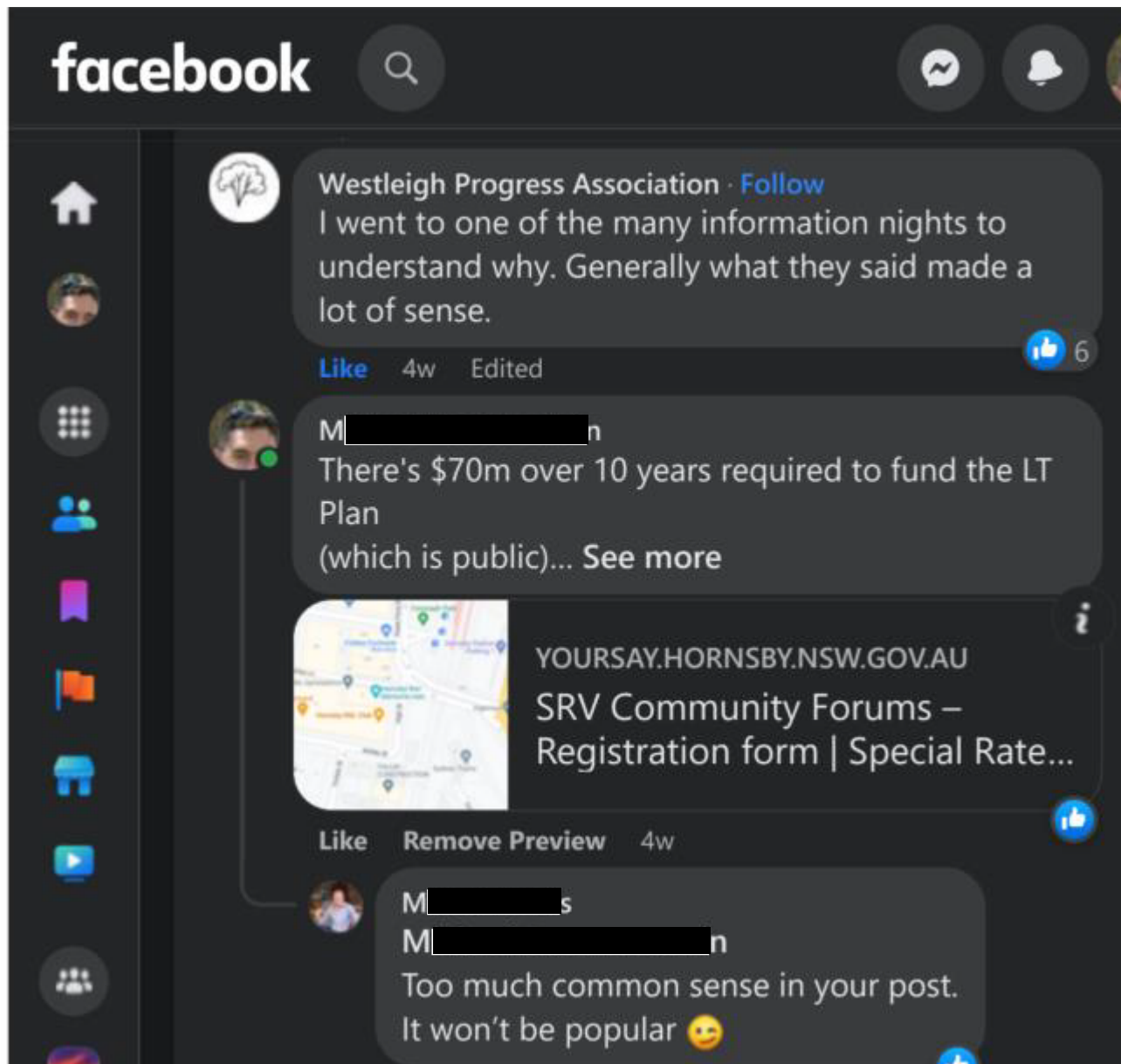
👍 22

**Top comments** ▾

 R. [redacted]  
Thank you for giving all our local sporting groups and WWB members etc the opportunity to attend.

20 w   Like   Reply   2  

We note there was vibrant discussion on multiple local Facebook groups which our Committee vigorously entered into – one example below.



Best Regards,

**[redacted], President**

Pennant Hills District Civic Trust Inc

Mobile: +61 447 552 383

Web: [www.PennantHillsCivicTrust.com](http://www.PennantHillsCivicTrust.com)

Email: [President@PennantHillsCivicTrust.com](mailto:President@PennantHillsCivicTrust.com)

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 23 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The average increase of \$350 is unaffordable for most pensioners, especially in addition to the rises in the cost of living. Young families are stretched to the limits with mortgage rate increases and the costs of food etc. Single people just won't be able to come up with the funds.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No need has been established, just a wish list. Non essential projects should be deferred in place of the rate rise.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No they have not. Some alternatives would be to Rescope projects, defer non essential projects, implement better financial management and increase efficiencies or savings, reduce wastage and reduce overall costs.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, however the result is misleading and deceptive as it uses an average rate across Hornsby Shire.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. Advertised mainly on council's website and has not adequately informed the public or truthfully represented the potential impact of SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Community feedback was ignored. HSC received over 2000 submissions showing 95% were against the SRV. Public forums have clearly shown that the community does not have the capacity or the willingness to pay. Community engagement outcomes clearly show this.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The rate hike is not reasonable given the current economic circumstances with mortgage rate increases and an increase in the cost of food and living in general.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Given the current economic circumstances, HSC has not adequately considered the community's ability to pay

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

A \$50 assistance for pensioners is not adequate.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

It is incredible that Council would deem it fit to increase the rates at a time when all households are suffering from increased mortgage repayments, high fuel costs and high electricity bills. We would urge Council to rethink this disastrous plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, it has not! In the rural areas of Hornsby Shire, there is very little evidence to justify this huge rate increase. The only service we receive from the Council is garbage collection. We expect Council to prioritise essential core services such as parks, local roads, garbage collection. Defer non-essential projects until funds are available. This is common sense.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

We have not received any alternative to the rate rise. Council reinforces the spurious claim that the community supports the expenditure. At the final well attended public forum at the Hornsby RSL most community speakers were opposed to the SRV. Council's explanation did not satisfy the community members present. Council claims that once explained the community was satisfied. This was not the case. Only two very conservative community groups were in any way supportive.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

In our opinion, no. Using the average rate is misleading and deceptive. The average of rates across the shire is quite misleading and skews the result and hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners. The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rated households lower the average rate across the shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates. Advertised mainly on Council's website which most ratepayers don't read. Council held 4 public forums of which two were poorly attended. Council's pamphlet used in the mail-out provided a very positive false impression misleading the reader. Most speakers at the Hornsby public forum were opposed to the SRV. The General Manager Head did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council totally ignored the community feedback. Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable at all and the SRV should be rejected. The SRV will be on top of the cost of living pressures that ordinary households are experiencing. Increases in food bills have featured prominently on the national media. People are having to make expenditure choices not seen for generations, e.g. do we buy food or pay the rent? Inflation is currently running at almost 8%. Council's proposal for 31% is outrageous. House mortgages are now hovering at around 6%. Households and families are stretched to the limit. This rate increase could be the impost that forces them out of their homes with banks calling in their loans. The proposed increase in the pensioner concessions rate of \$50 is nothing short of insulting. The average pensioner SRV increase of \$350 is unaffordable for most pensioners. Council has lost touch with the plight of the community and has a complete disregard for us. Council MUST focus on core essential services and DEFER non-essential expenditure projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council has a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire. They want more money for their self-inflicted financial problems with no consideration for the additional financial burden and hardship and stress on the families, households and local businesses. They need to get themselves in order and prioritise on the core and essential services and defer non-essential projects for another time.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Whilst Council's hardship policy at first glance seems reasonable, I can only imagine the stress of a ratepayer who finds they cannot afford the rate increase. It is hard to believe that Council will treat hardship cases with compassion. The final paragraph of the Hornsby's Hardship Policy says: 14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate



advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates. This shows how compassionate Council is to its ratepayers. It is bullying people instead.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Please consider that this will greatly impact our quality of life as we are already critically struggling with cost of living pressures juggling the demands of raise a very young family. Please consider that rate increases that are this aggressive are very demanding and damaging to average middle income earners like ourselves and we are very vulnerable with trying to struggle raising our young family and keeping afloat in the current economic environment.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. The council needs to budget within its means and prioritise only essential projects and defer non-essential ones. There is a gross wastefulness of funds on engaging consultants to do council work for them.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No it has not. Council keeps saying that the community supports the expenditure but we do not!!! At the final public forum that had great attendance at the Hornsby RSL almost all of the community speakers were opposed to the Special Rate variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes we received a letter. However this was quite convoluted and confusing way to communicate the real dollar amount increase we would be paying and skewed the result and hides the true cost to a single dwelling residence like ours when they used the average rate. The rate communicated was based on the unimproved capital value of the land in which the building stands and so home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rates household lower the average edge across the shire they are therefore deceptive in and misleading in the true rate rise for single dwelling home owners.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. This has been advertised mainly on council website which no one goes to, and they held 4 public forums which two of which were poorly attended. Almost all speakers at these were opposed to the SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has clearly ignored community feedback as we are strongly opposed to the SRV proposal. In these times of extremely challenging rising cost of living, wage stagnation, increase mortgage rates we cannot afford a 31% increase in council rates. We are a young family, with our son just 8 months old, living in Arcadia NSW, and more than 60% of our wage goes to paying our mortgage currently. We have very little left to pay our bills and live, and the proposed rate rises will cost us an extra \$700-\$800 per year which we just cannot afford with a young family in this economic climate.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The STV will be in addition to already very high cost of living expenses we are facing. Our mortgage is already very much sensitive to rate increase being quite high as first home buyers, our grocery and living expenses are increasing in this inflationary environment and our income has decreased with us having a new baby to care for. We simply cannot afford any rate rises and this alongside all the other living expenses increasing would put us in serious risk of needing to sell our property to survive. Inflation is sitting at just below 8%, Hornsby Shire Council SRV increase of over 31% over the next several years is outrageous and very unaffordable. It is a seriously stressful situation for us as we love our home but already are really struggling to afford our home with the sharp successive increases in mortgage interest rates. On top of this, we just got a letter from the Valuer General saying that our property land value has more than doubled within the space of 3 years - we plan to object as this is not reflective of our property value. However this is further highlighting how big of an impact the rate rises are having on us when they are adding \$610,000+ per annum to our property value that they base the rates off. Council must reevaluate non-essential spending on projects that are not a priority. They have lost touch with the plight of our community.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

We are shocked that the conclusion has been drawn that we have the capacity to pay the rate increase when we clearly do not and are truly struggling in this current economic environment. We can hardly afford to eat out, let alone pay an additional \$700-\$800 per annum with a new baby and reduced income and high cost of living pressures.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

This is not a hardship plan that will be feasible or fair. They are wanting to charge sky high interest rates meaning more

hardship than support for struggling families like our own.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not t that I've seen

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, limited postal mail

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Ignored a previous consulting engagement advising over 80% if rate payers opposed.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Poorly timed and accelerated increase during a period households are suffering. This is not the time to prioritise major uplifts if they require community funding. Delay this by 2 years.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Disregard as majority won't be able to afford it

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Pointless

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not to my knowledge

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Haven't seen this

Author name [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 20 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not,

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not to my knowledge.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

I have not seen any communication by council regarding increases in rates .I fear that we will be paying over and above for many years. Council listened to the majority.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No it has not.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has total disregard for comments made by the voters.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Just a money grab.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

None.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

To council blah blah & blah cannot be trusted.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 21 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

My final comment: This proposed special variation should be summarily rejected in its entirety. This is not the time to impose any special increase, particularly given the overwhelming response from the community who are opposed to it. The Council must return to the basics of managing within their means - just like most responsible well run businesses and just like most households. In other words - if you cant afford you dont spend it. The Council and its management need to take a good and long hard look at themselves and come up with ways to live within their means.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council Has Not demonstrated a need for increasing rates. This is not the time to increase rates. The Council must focus on: 1) increasing efficiencies, reduce wastage, improve productivity and contain overheads. 2) Deferring non essential projects. Stop wasting rate payers contributions on projects such as the bike track between Beecroft & Cheltenham which is still under construction along the Crescent. Absolutely ridiculous! 3) Improve the financial management by establishing budgets with cost containing initiatives, as would be the case in most properly managed businesses.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

The Council has not in my opinion pursued with conviction any serious attempts to avoid the rate rises under this submission

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Feedback from the community was overwhelmingly opposed to the proposal from Council. Yet, Council has in essence ignored the feedback and pressed on with its submission. This is truly insulting to the hardworking rate payers.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed rate variation is totally reckless and unreasonable. The proposed. 31.05% increase is completely out of step with the reality of managing costs in this current environment. The Council is behaving in a reckless and monopolistic manner. The Council are operating in a vacuum and not seriously acknowledging and acting in a responsible way to reduce cost pressures on households.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council has lost touch with the mood within the community. The Council is fully aware of the sentiment within the community as per the recent survey which overwhelmingly opposed the Special Rate Levy. This Council with its administration must be held accountable. It has lost touch with its community of rate payers. The Council must revisit its plans and deliver a budget and long term plan applying the disciplines of responsible management by eliminating wastage and deferral of non essential programmes and capital works.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Its rather a moot point. No special rate levy = no need for additional measures to address hardship cases.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

The Council has not to my knowledge sufficiently explained and quantified the improvements and cost containment strategies it has realised historically or for the future.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

It is unbelievable that Hornsby would waste tens of thousands of Rate Payers' money to run a bogus "Survey" about ramping up Rates and then, in the face of a clear NO vote - choose to ignore the people and push for its own short sighted agenda. Someone should be made accountable for such disgraceful waste of Public monies.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why werent these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Hornsby has the reputation of making unilateral decisions 'behind closed doors' and this is no different.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Hornsby has no regard for restrained spending but looks for 'Social experiments' and other fanciful projects to waste Rate payers money.

Author name [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

We were married and moved into our newly built house in Thornleigh in 1970. Still happily married and living in the same house after bringing up three children, our family has made an immense contribution to Hornsby Shire, Sydney and Australia. Hopefully both of us still have a few more years to contribute. Our annual rates already exceed \$2100 and will exceed \$2800 under the proposed SRV. We do not receive any rate relief from Council and fund ( just ) our own retirement. A responsible government organisation should not propose increases of this magnitude in the current economic circumstances of soaring inflation, very high levels of household debt, very low levels of consumer confidence, rapidly rising interest rates and dire economic forecasts for Australia and internationally for the next few years. People and organisations, public and private, are tightening their belts and making sacrifices to try to get through these troubling times, which economic forecasters say will last for the next 3-4 years ( the same time frame as the proposed SRV ). We are in our twilight years but imagine the angst this proposed SRV will cause to young homeowners on top of soaring interest rates. Hornby Shire Council though does not want to tighten its belt like the rest of us. Council and its consultant have misread or ignored the prevailing and future economic climate. While some ( very far from all ) of the aims of the proposed SRV may have merit in different times, Council should heed the current and prospective economic climate and the advice of most economic commentators and ditch the proposed SRV and get on with delivering normal services to its community at affordable rates.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

In my view, no.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

If the alternative is to continue to provide normal services to ratepayers at an affordable cost, no.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

All ratepayers I have spoken to are vehemently opposed to the proposed SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

i am not aware of any Council action in that regard.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Council paid consultants to consider this. Consultants more often than not come up with results wanted by their employer. Current and prospective economic conditions have been either glossed over or completely ignored by the consultants and by inference Hornsby Shire Council.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Again the consultants were paid by Council to consider this. A community's capacity to pay is largely determined by current economic conditions. Tables and graphs presented by the consultants say little about current soaring interest rates, very high levels of household indebtedness, skyrocketing rental rates, very low consumer confidence levels and dire economic forecasts for Australia and internationally over the next 3-4 years (the life span of the proposed RSV ). If the consutants and Council felt that ratepayers were willing to pay the exorbinant rates increases proposed under the SRV, they must have spoken to a very small percentage. Not a single person I have spoken to in Thornleigh is in support of the proposed SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The only change to Council's approach to hardship is a token increase in the rates concession to eligible ratepayers. Those of us with limited means, the large majority of ratepayers, are asked to put up and shut up, an approach which apparently Council is comfortable with even in these dire and continuing troubling economic times.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Council took pains to ensure it followed the rules.



Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

With the growth in high rise unit developments over the past decade in Hornsby Shire, the concomitant growth in Council revenues, which far outstrip costs, and rapid technological change, there would be something terribly wrong if Council could not demonstrate productivity improvements and cost containment.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 20 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
said it all already.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Not honestly. They have not advised that Valuer generals change to property values that they use to calculate the rates in their advices.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They omitted to tell the community that new property values by the Valuer General, which is used to calculate rates, would also increase rates by some 8.5%. I was only told this after I called the council on receiving my new property value which increased by some 70%. The council will increase this by a max 8.5%, so they do NOT need the extra increase as I am sure I am not the only one with such an increase in their property value. By getting this special increase and the increased property values, the increase is way over 12%. They will also slowly increase the property value for their calculation of the next few years also increasing rates.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Totally unfair and unconsumable and dishonest by not including the valuer general increases as well.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. With increased interest rates and cost of living, the community will struggle to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I have seen 1st hand what the council has been doing. They have just finished installing new drainage and gutter in my street. There were none. It has taken them over 6 months to complete, the workers get a 9 day fortnight and half of them stand around doing nothing all day. How can they increase productivity there? Also the amount of potholes and worn roads is unacceptable. Stop green projects and stick to roads, and rubbish and other important problems.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

A RIDICULOUS PROPOSAL.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

NO

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

NO

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

NO

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

FEEDBACK IGNORED

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

IMPACT IS DEVASTATING WHEN COMBINED WITH INFLATION

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

NO CONSIDERATION.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

UNAWARE OF PLAN.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

UNAWARE

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

UNAWARE

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Sunday, 12 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Dear Sir, I am writing this letter to express my deep disappointment and frustration with the recent large land rate increase of 3.6% by Hornsby Council. As a property owner in the region, I believe this increase is unreasonable and unjustified. The substantial increase in land rates will have a significant impact on my financial situation, and I fear it will result in a disproportionate burden for property owners in the area. Given the current economic climate, many residents and businesses are already facing financial hardship, and this increase will only compound their difficulties. I understand that local councils are responsible for providing essential services to the community, but I believe that this increase is excessive and not in line with the ability of property owners to pay. I am also concerned that the increase will lead to further inflation in the housing market, making it even more challenging for people to afford a home in the area. I urge IPART to consider the adverse impact that this increase will have on property owners and to reconsider the proposed increase. I believe that a more reasonable and equitable approach is necessary, one that takes into account the financial situation of property owners and the current economic climate. I would appreciate a prompt response to this matter and an opportunity to discuss this issue further. I look forward to hearing back from you soon. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not it continues to waste money. Never respond to polite emails.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Polled rater payers , 63 5 did not agree to the rate % increase

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

no

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Polled community and did not listen. They had made up their mind before hand

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Going ahead regardless of the major against the unfair rate increase

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

unfair given increased cost of living

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

nil

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

not really, I don't think they have thought about it

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

unsure

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

They spent money on stupid things. Green signs everywhere and refuse to advise how much it has cost the rate payers. Email unanswered. As an experienced management consultant, I offered to do a efficiency and effectiveness survey to reduced costs on a Pro Bono basis Two Emails also unanswered.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
HSC have shown more concern with the trees in the area than the ability for residents to pay their rates.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Disregarded the community

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Coupled with the recent land value, the proposed rate rise is far greater than 31%.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

No consideration

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Havent seen it.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Dont know

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Havent seen them

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The proposed increase is outrageous, particularly when cost of living is through the roof and interest rates are ever increasing. Please show some compassion to the community who are all suffering including pensioners and young people who are trying to make a start in life and in some cases, are having trouble feeding their families.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted

by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Sunday, 26 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Good morning I'm a resident of Dural in the Hornsby Shire and I am opposed to any rate increase for the following reasons:- 1. They waste money, two examples are right to park in Ruddock Park Westleigh where there was no need for an update yet millions of dollars of been spent and wasted on the park. 2. Secondly Galston swimming pool it needed a new roof, yet they completely demolished the complex and now after probably two years the work still, interesting the same contracted has been contracted for these two projects. 3. The third reason is that staff are paid too much money, as an example, my understating the general manager annual salary package is \$500,000.00. 4. What council needs to do is to restructure itself may need to reduce the number of staff, they need to re-classify staff so we don't really need a general manager on half \$1 million a year we could have a manager as we used to have a Shire Clerk and probably under \$200,000 a year. These measures would and any other cost savings would help reduce the need for any rate increase. 5. Council needs to work within its budget it's no good ratepayers some more money when it's not necessary port ministration isn't it needs to increase our rates. Hornsby Shire Council ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the year ended 30 June 2022 6. Points of interest. Why would they have borrowing costs when they have \$128 934 000.00 in cash and investments. They spend \$48 million of the \$103 million from ratepayers and still they need to spend nearly \$2 million dollars on consultants. Only 1.3 million is spent on road maintenance, this would be less than the executives salaries. Land values have increased by up to 80% therefore council will receive increases in rates. Reduce library services, only a small percentage of ratepayers use libraries as most information is online, made libraries users pay. [REDACTED]

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No It seems that the poor management of Hornsby council and instead of cost cutting and better management, simply hit the ratepayers for extra rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No It seems that the poor management of Hornsby council and instead of cost cutting and better management, simply hit the ratepayers for extra rates.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, however, ignored survey results, best if an administrator was appointed to run Hornsby council.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No It seems that the poor management of Hornsby council and instead of cost cutting and better management, simply hit the ratepayers for extra rates.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored survey results, best if an administrator was appointed to run Hornsby council.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Terrible. Cost of living pressure as interest rates continue to rise, cost of living, petrol, food, insurances, etc. The last thing people need is a council rate rise because council is poorly managed,

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council ignored survey results, best if an administrator was appointed to run Hornsby council.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No comment

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No comment

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



No comment

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Saturday, 25 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council has not convinced the residents of this need. Despite extensive community opposition, council is determined to seek an enormous increase over 4 years. Information provided and consultation forums were lip service in my view - I did attend one forum. Council did not listen to our views. Council is not currently delivering core services and should be focussed on this rather than wanting extra funds for new initiatives. Council constantly blames a 2016 boundary adjustment with Parramatta Council for their own mismanagement of their funds. In my experience Council does not equitably use their funds in different parts of the Shire. Core services in the area between Old Northern Rd and Galston Gorge are very poor and requests for improvements are ignored.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council has provided no other options for improved delivery of services. Their position is that the only thing that will enable better services and new initiatives is an enormous rate rise for residents.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Council did provide information about this but it was misleading in my view. Increases will be compounded year after year so the actual cost to ratepayers will be much higher

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

In my view, this was lip service to be able to state that residents had been consulted.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Feedback from the community was ignored. The \$50 reduction for only pension card holders is pitiful in my view. No thought given to the wider community, self funded retirees etc.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Council has not thought about the reasonableness of the impact of this special variation. They have not listened to feedback from ratepayers and have decided that the same increase for all is the only option. Inflation and cost of living increases over the last year or so are significant for ratepayers with no end in sight to further increases. Council has decided to ignore feedback from residents.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council has not considered community capacity and willingness to pay. Extensive community opposition to the SRV has been ignored. It is unrealistic for council to impose this extra burden on the community to make up for their mismanagement of their funds. Proposed new initiatives should not be undertaken at all.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Another pitiful response from Council - \$50 reduction in pensioner rates only for pension card holders was not well received at the forum I attended with ratepayers stating this was a very low amount and what about everyone else. It should be noted that Council intends to charge interest on unpaid rates at the maximum amount allowed. Council has not provided additional hardship options if this SRV is approved.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Please don't increase people's burden for this difficult time. Everyone are hit hard by the increase in cost of living, interest rate, energy bills , food.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby council did not clearly established the need for this special funding. And the timing for this special funding is in a particular difficult time for inflation. We all should cut back spending instead of increase spending to fuel inflation.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This proposed special variation hit hard during this difficult time, inflation is skyrocket.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers' money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers' behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and

cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

I honestly dont think that they have. While they have listed roughly four groups (parks, trails, etc) of allocation of the funds in the upcoming years, it was so general and frankly disappointing to see them grab for more money for the generic reasons like updating bike trails etc when they have had an exponential growth in units/apartments that would entail a huge amount added to their revenue.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

The thing that is most upsetting is since last year they were aware that most peoples land value in their shire went up by several hundred thousand dollars and they made sure to reach out and seek an SRV BEFORE the new land valuations were sent out. I find this act was one of greed since they knew to try to get an SRV in the works before we all realised that our rates would go up with the land valuation and be less likely to protest their request.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Not in the slightest. They sugarcoated it by highlighting that the average rate payer would only pay a minuscule amount more PER WEEK (between \$2-\$3, I cant remember the exact amount) FOR THE FIRST YEAR ONLY, by the way. By breaking it down to weeks (although I feel like they wouldve broke it down to the hour if they thought we wouldnt notice), their goal was to minimise the idea of what this rate would look like 4 years from now. Theyve minimised how hard it will hit us.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

There is one council member that has tried to keep people updated on FB, she it least tries. But not everyone is on fb and to be honest , even though she tries to make it clear, it is still worded in such a way that most wouldnt understand.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Look, they tried to act like they cared what their community thought, but while most of us have made it known we were against the SRV. A huge majority, in fact. They passed it anyway. Our opinions never mattered to them.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Considering that we have had our interest rates increased several times now, that most people are struggling to stay with their heads above water, that the councils General Manager is on something like \$425k a year one of the highest paid GMs in all of the councils, that people go to bed and wake up in fear, the word reasonable isnt a word that I would readily use. Insensitive? Greed? Being bullied? Those would be a more accurate representation of words for how most are feeling regarding the SRV.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. As I stated above, I really dont think there was much consideration put forth toward how this would affect the rate payers.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I dont recall seeing or hearing the councils outlined plan. My question is how will they handle it if we are all considered to be in hardship?

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Probably But I will say that some of the documents exhibited are so full of legal jargon that Im not sure anyone who isnt a lawyer would understand what theyve stated.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I take their cost containment strategies with a grain of salt. We arent s[REDACTED]d, though they treat us as such. - The, at least six changes to the design of Storey Parks layout after the project was started (lets just rip up all the pipes and start again because Ive changed my mind. At least a half a dozen times.) - Most of us still havent gotten over the Quarry. Taxed for years to dig it out, paid an absorbent amount to do so, then their minds changed and instead of CHARGING trucks to dump the fill back into

it they PAY them to do so. - Ah, and who can forget the great bungle we had trying to get Berowra a pool? In fact there was a beautiful citizen of Berowra that actually raised a large amount of money from the community via fundraising for the pool and that money was given to council; never to be seen again from what I've heard. It was before my time, and probably yours, and definitely the current councils, as well. What I'm saying is that we have a history of council not doing right by us. Yet someone is voting them in, not me, not his next time but someone still trusts them.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers' money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

My family is already struggling with high costs of living. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers' behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.





Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No need has been established. This is just a wish list. Council should defer non-essential projects

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Alternatives have not been canvassed. They should: - rescope projects - defer non-essential projects - implement better financial management - increase efficiencies or savings, reduce wastage and overhead costs

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes but it is misleading as it uses an average rate across the entire shire.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No as it was advertised mainly on Council's website and has not adequately informed the public or truthfully represented the impact of SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Guidelines were not followed by the council in their own community engagement plan. They did not demonstrate that community concerns were considered in the final decision.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It increase in unreasonable in the current financial climate.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. i don't think they have considered it at all. I personally would struggle.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

a paltry \$50 reduction for pensioners. I'm not a pensioner and would struggle to pay. How is this fair to all?

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes - but no information on what the average is.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. Just a pamphlet in the mailbox. One short consultation event.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

No observed action or acknowledgment of concerns.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

With recent interest rates increases this will create more hardship and loan defaults.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Supermarket shop is now roughly doubled since 2020. The community has less capacity to pay for the proposed rate increases.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

A meagrely assistance for pensioners.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Should be sent to all households.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I have understood that Council was to have oversight of the running and improvements of Hornsby area. Looking at what has happened here, it is my opinion that Council has lost its direction and is now operating irresponsibly toward its rate payers, to whom they are answerable. At the meeting we attended at the Hornsby RSL, it was obvious that no one was impressed with the smoke and mirror show that was performed to sell this rate increase. People far more qualified than I stood up in the short time we had and were able to pull apart the lack of clarity and obvious bias that was presented as facts. Any wonder why there is a lack of trust towards our councillors.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Simply put... Council has created a "WANT" list over a "NEEDS" list to then create an artificial shortfall in their budget and expecting the residents in Hornsby to foot the bill of their pipe dream.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No one from council has shown me any alternatives to the current rate rise. If there was an alternative available I'm sure 99% of rate payers would be very eager to view it.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The council has not communicated the "full" increase clearly. As of today I have not received a dollar value to show me how much my rates will rise. As with any billable transaction, be it with business, private or council, it is only logical that it would be shown clearly within any agreement. As we all understand dollars and cents clearly.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby community has not been engaged in an open and transparent manner. As this decision has a long term and an irreversible impact to all residents of Hornsby, all residents need to be made aware of the "real impact" without having to dig for it themselves. No one with a job and family commitments has time for that.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I am yet to hear or see any negative feedback via the council from the community on this matter. To say there was none would be an absolute lie. I have received a call from a marketing group asking for my feedback on my view of Hornsby council. The person asking the questions agreed that the majority of people called had a low trusting of the current council.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The impact of the rate rise to all families is going to impact them needlessly as the benefit will be very minimal if at all. I personally view this as an unnecessary and unreasonable to pursue this pipedream any further.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Knowing the current state of finances all over Australia, I do not believe anyone in their right mind would be wanting to be paying more for their rates.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

In my opinion.... That is not a plan, but only an insult.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 21 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

unsure how much of this is due to the previous gutting of the council area and partial merging with Parramatta, how much due to good intentions and how much due to being out of touch with the area. I generally oppose most complaints/nimby attitudes. However, considering Council has just spent money doing unneeded upgrades @ Ruddock park that shut down the park during the christmas school break when 1) more children needed access in holiday period 2) little work was done due to timing over holiday period 3) costs did not need to occur if budget is currently constrained I am leaning against this being justifiable

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Unknown to me

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

unknown to me

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, as this was unknown to me, suggesting it has not been trying to communicate since I was given plenty of information and contacts by council (emails and phone calls) about park upgrades in hornsby and westliegh but without some recent community notifications via au nextdoor.com I would have no idea about this.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

unknown to me, suggesting it has been insufficient since I was given plenty of information and contacts by council about park upgrades in hornsby and westliegh but without some recent community notifications via au nextdoor.com I would have no idea about this.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I am unsure how much the rate increase is proposed, since nothing I have received from council, but if something I saw suggesting \$350/year increase it would depend on how often this is occurring. Annually will quickly overwhelm the many pensioners in the area I would assume, but depending how often would be ok for my household and overall I appreciate the services we receive from council This line ive seen is important "Inflation is currently running at almost 8% . Councils proposal for 31% is outrageous."

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

unknown

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

\$50 pensioner discount i saw somewhere. The fact they no they need to address hardship does highlight that this may be excessive The final paragraph of the Hornsby's Hardship Policy says : 14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates. This shows how compassionate Council is to its ratepayers. It is b[REDACTED]g people instead.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

no idea

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

ive seen nothing

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Saturday, 25 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council has suggested a "wish" list of suggestions for increasing rates however they are not currently providing core services and they need to concentrate on these basics and stay within their budget as we as residents also need to do. There was major opposition to these proposals at the community forums but Council chooses to ignore residents opinions and feedback.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council has not provided any alternative options and continue to push for this increase even so many residents are genuinely struggling financially in these tough times for many.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

To a certain extent Council did advise me as a resident rate payer, HOWEVER Council has conveniently not mentioned the COMPOUNDING effect of these increases which will hit hard for four plus years.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

To a certain extent, most likely the minimum they were required to do to push their proposal rather than state a more inclusive view of their proposal plus other options that rate payers could consider. Community forums were held only in the evening making it difficult for many to attend.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has totally chosen to ignore rate payer feed back, again pushing their own agenda. Offering government pensioners an additional \$50 discount is a "joke" and ignores the plight of many residents who may be self funded retirees, etc.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I believe Council ignored this point and just pushed their agenda.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has not made any effort to consider rate payers ability to absorb such increases, which represent way above inflation, in a time when costs of living have increased dramatically. Community forums overwhelmingly rejected this proposal.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

It appears that a \$50 rebate was offered to pensioners and absolutely nothing else. Council has also stated that unpaid rates will attract the highest level of interest allowable, which, for those in difficulty will only make things worse.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

This is to express my strong objection to the proposed 31.05% increase in rates for our community. I believe this increase is excessive and unfair to the tax payers of Hornsby. As a member of this community, I feel strongly that any changes to rates should be discussed and approved by the tax payers and local community members. This proposal was made without sufficient consultation with the people who will be affected by it. I urge the council to reconsider this decision and to seek input from the community before making any further changes to rates. Furthermore, I am concerned that this increase will have a negative impact on the local economy. Higher rates will put a strain on local businesses, especially those that are already struggling due to the current economic climate. This could lead to job losses and a decline in the standard of living for many members of our community. In light of these concerns, I strongly urge the council to reconsider the proposed increase in rates. I believe it is important to work together as a community to find a solution that is fair and equitable for all residents. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This is to express my strong objection to the proposed 31.05% increase in rates for our community. I believe this increase is excessive and unfair to the tax payers of Hornsby. As a member of this community, I feel strongly that any changes to rates should be discussed and approved by the tax payers and local community members. This proposal was made without sufficient consultation with the people who will be affected by it. I urge the council to reconsider this decision and to seek input from the community before making any further changes to rates. Furthermore, I am concerned that this increase will have a negative impact on the local economy. Higher rates will put a strain on local businesses, especially those that are already struggling due to the current economic climate. This could lead to job losses and a decline in the standard of living for many members of our community. In light of these concerns, I strongly urge the council to reconsider the proposed increase in rates. I believe it is important to work together as a community to find a solution that is fair and equitable for all residents. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

This is to express my strong objection to the proposed 31.05% increase in rates for our community. I believe this increase is excessive and unfair to the tax payers of Hornsby. As a member of this community, I feel strongly that any changes to rates should be discussed and approved by the tax payers and local community members. This proposal was made without sufficient consultation with the people who will be affected by it. I urge the council to reconsider this decision and to seek input from the community before making any further changes to rates. Furthermore, I am concerned that this increase will have a negative impact on the local economy. Higher rates will put a strain on local businesses, especially those that are already struggling due to the current economic climate. This could lead to job losses and a decline in the standard of living for many members of our community. In light of these concerns, I strongly urge the council to reconsider the proposed increase in rates. I believe it is important to work together as a community to find a solution that is fair and equitable for all residents. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

This is to express my strong objection to the proposed 31.05% increase in rates for our community. I believe this increase is excessive and unfair to the tax payers of Hornsby. As a member of this community, I feel strongly that any changes to rates should be discussed and approved by the tax payers and local community members. This proposal was made without sufficient consultation with the people who will be affected by it. I urge the council to reconsider this decision and to seek input from the community before making any further changes to rates. Furthermore, I am concerned that this increase will have a negative impact on the local economy. Higher rates will put a strain on local businesses, especially those that are already struggling due

to the current economic climate. This could lead to job losses and a decline in the standard of living for many members of our community. In light of these concerns, I strongly urge the council to reconsider the proposed increase in rates. I believe it is important to work together as a community to find a solution that is fair and equitable for all residents. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Sincerely, [REDACTED]

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 20 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

In my opinion council has not clearly established the need for an SRV. They need to learn to live with a reasonable budget with deferral of "nice to have" non-essential expenditure.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council has not made any alternatives they may have considered available to the ratepayers nor have they made any reference to the windfall they will receive in the recent astronomical recent increase in Valuer General's land valuations which have gone up by over 80% since 2019.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Council did communicate average expected rate rises but failed to take into account the windfall they will receive from increased VG valuations which have just gone up by 85%!!!

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has clearly ignored the overwhelming majority (85%) that oppose the SRV application.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

- SRV is not necessary and puts additional cost of living pressure on the ratepayer which is exacerbated by already rising inflation, interest rate hikes, energy bills, and a potential economic recession. - Council seems to have lost touch with community and is budgeting excessively beyond reality.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Ratepayers capacity to pay has been ignored. The recent increase in VG valuations of 85% will place a huge burden on ratepayers who are already struggling with increases in energy bills, inflation, interest rate rise, etc.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I am writing this letter to express my deep disappointment and frustration with the recent large land rate increase of 3.6% by Hornsby Council. As a property owner in the region, I believe this increase is unreasonable and unjustified. The substantial increase in land rates will have a significant impact on my financial situation, and I fear it will result in a disproportionate burden for property owners in the area. Given the current economic climate, many residents and businesses are already facing financial hardship, and this increase will only compound their difficulties. I understand that local councils are responsible for providing essential services to the community, but I believe that this increase is excessive and not in line with the ability of property owners to pay. I am also concerned that the increase will lead to further inflation in the housing market, making it even more challenging for people to afford a home in the area. I urge IPART to consider the adverse impact that this increase will have on property owners and to reconsider the proposed increase. I believe that a more reasonable and equitable approach is necessary, one that takes into account the financial situation of property owners and the current economic climate. I would appreciate a prompt response to this matter and an opportunity to discuss this issue further. I look forward to hearing back from you soon. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I, ON BEHALF OF MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS and ALL RESIDENTS IN HSC, ask IPART to fully analyse HSC application for SRV. Something's really amiss in how they use our money. HELP!!!!!!

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Shire Council (HSC) has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates. In fact more questions are raised. Being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, HSC proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. They now want a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. They have not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. They weren't these assets maintenance expenses addressed in previous year's budgets?. They must focus on existing core council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No! As a matter of fact, they HSC appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing us ratepayers to pay the higher rates. They must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. They must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise the benefits. They must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across the shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. They must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion; such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers. Federal & State government grants, development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate. As an accountant, I cringe when I see/hear budgets not properly applied to what they are intended to in the first place. Who knows what's going on in the Council. I'd love to be a fly on the wall when they deliberated on this MASSIVE increase. I mean, how did they come to the humungous figure of 31.05%

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

NOOOOO! HSC spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents REJECTED this MASSIVE rate increase. A clear message that rate payers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants' report. Therefore, HSC clearly IGNORED the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I believe HSC ignored thousands of our negative feedbacks before they voted on this MASSIVE increase last November before they applied to IPART. It's an absolute waste of our money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. WHERE IS THEIR PRIORITY! This is a massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a large sample of respondents. SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT IN THE COUNCIL I JUST WISH I KNEW WHAT IT WAS!

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living nowadays. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants' struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable rates will be severely negatively impacted. HOW CAN THEY JUSTIFY the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, most specially during these harsh economic times. MAKES ME WONDER IF THEY (COUNCILLORS and HSC BUREAUCRATS) ARE REALLY WORKING FOR US OR ONLY FOR THEMSELVES and THEIR COHORTS?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. THEY HAVE NOT SHOWN ANY CONSIDERATION AT ALL. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, HSC has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge permanent 31.05% SRV increase over four years. This compounds further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. HSC ratepayers must not be financial impacted by special initiatives that cater only to specialised segments. HSC reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for us ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on our behalf. PLS DON'T IGNORE OUR PLEAS! We

are counting on IPART to fully assess HSC's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I am not sure if HSC has even bothered showing how we should address hardships that may be caused by this SRV.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Rates are likely to continue rising without the need for a special variation due to the NSW Valuer-General's land valuations. The Council's application is above and beyond this rise and does not appear to take its impact into account.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The Council has not established the need for a different revenue path as it has not analysed all of the options available for re-scoping its revenue needs. For example, Galston Aquatic Centre is undergoing major reconstruction shortly after having undergone major refurbishment calling into question Council's governance, prudence and efficiency of its capital works programme.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, the Council has not canvassed alternatives to the rate rise. For example, it has not consulted the community on re-prioritising its capital works programme by deferring or re-profiling its capital assets expenditure plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

As reported in local media outlets such as Dooral Roundup (February 2023: 23), "Hornsby Shire Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to extensively consult the community on a special rate variation of 31.05% over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of approximately 2,500 respondents rejected the massive rate increase." Yet Council has ignored its customers (ratepayers) and proceeded to lodge a special rate variation. Given that under IPART's new 3Cs framework for the water sector, utilities are required to put customers front and centre of their plans and services, Council should be held to the same standard and be required to heed its customers expressed preferences.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No need has been put forward by the Council, just a unfunded wish list of unnecessary projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, things like deferring non essential projects has not been considered.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, but misleading as they use a shire wide average rate.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, advertised mainly on the council website, no adequate advertising in other mediums.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

No indication community concerns were considered in the final decision.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Given the current cost of living pressures, the rate rise is not viable for the community.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

No consideration to the capacity of the community to pay the proposed rises.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

A mere \$50 offset for Pensioners, nothing for others on low income.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 10 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
This will add to existing cost of living pressures and make life considerably more difficult.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not to my knowledge.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I fear the Council does not care about the community or its views.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This is an unreasonable and outrageous increase. Interest rate and cost of living rises have been crippling for self-funded retirees like me. This is a massive increase which is not justifiable in my view.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

No evidence this has been even considered.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

[REDACTED] e.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not to my knowledge.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

More must be done. If these measures were adequate, this massive increase would not be contemplated.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Hi, I think its a disgrace that Hornsby Council have decided to ignore 87% of their constituents, whom voted against the proposed rate increases, and subsequently have pushed ahead in seeking approval for the increases. In a period where we're seeing increases to cost of living, interest rates, rents etc, it seems utter madness that they would put further financial pressures on families living within their boundaries. It seems plenty of other councils don't see now as the right time, yet Hornsby do. Yes, rates will need to go up at some stage, but why not simply delay the increases and put some non-urgent projects on hold for the time being to enable families some reprieve. Regards, [REDACTED]

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 1 - Has the council clearly established the need for and purpose of the different revenue path for the council's General fund? No. Council proposes expenditure as usual yet contracts work out to private consultants which is more than employing people in house Essential projects should be prioritised and defer non-essential projects, just like we have to with our household budgets Workflows to establish efficiencies, productivity and savings need to be undertaken

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 2 - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise? No. Not enough representatives from the rate payers were able to be present to hear the proposed changes and provide feedback

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 1 (Criteria 2). Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms. And the total increase in the dollar terms for the average ratepayer of by rating category? Yes it did. Yet the context behind the increase was confusing and misleading

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness? No. You'd have to have the time to review the website. I certainly don't. Due to a busy working lifestyle I don't have time to attend public forums either. I received a mail out. Yet what I read on the mail out at the time didn't convince me that the high increase was directed towards the right projects.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation With the ever increasing rise in costs of living, interest rate hikes and increased rents, this rate is unaffordable at this stage.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation. This increase is in addition to all the other increases in the cost of living we are experiencing at the moment Inflation is 8% at the moment. A lot lower than the projected 31% increase Council should project the increase of funds to align with inflation and reassess projects accordingly

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay Whilst their commissioned report says the community has the capacity to pay and are willing to pay the community I live in 100% tell me they aren't able to accept this increase in rates

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan I'd prefer to see a list of projects identified from most critical to least critical, shared with community members. I think the community members should be asked surveyed and asked to respond so they can vote on what projects should go ahead within the current rate of inflation budget.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not before they put forward the proposed special variation

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Unable to comment



Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I am totally dissatisfied and

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No just s[REDACTED]d their proposal.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No just steamrolled it and ignored initial community consultations. HSC think the community is a bottomless bucket to pillage. Basic economics says you cannot have everything.. opportunity cost, so council has to deprioritise priorities, defer projects,

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Average rate has little true meaning. Rural vs urban rates. High density vs residential. Council is deceptive without full disclosure.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Simply NO. Website exposure is very limited access for the busy everyday ratepayer .

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

HSC totally ignored the 87% negative community response to their proposal. ie the community was prepared to accept fewer local government initiatives and projects. Council members should be made to cover the cost of the survey if they totally ignore the result.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

HSC totally ignored current economic conditions where the community has to cut their spending, prioritise spending,

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

No real consideration especially pensioned, single parent families, and large families with fixed commitments.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Pensioners \$50 rebate. Very generous- NOT

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

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Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

?

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

In my opinion they haven't outlined the purpose for these extra funds in any great detail.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No I don't think they have checked into any alternatives. The council needs to check all avenues of cost/ saving. We should not be paying for there misgivings.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

There was a percentage amount put forward with no total dollar increase put forward. The increase is substantial and will hurt everyone in the future.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

I'm not aware. We had one flyer put forth and it wasn't easy to grasp.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I do believe that even though everyone is against the proposal , the council passed it anyway. Which is the democratic process in action.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

An increase of between 30 to 34 percent in 4 years is unreasonable we have families under enormous stress already with rates rises, fuel prices and such. A normal rate rise is exceptable and though never welcomed expected.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I don't the community has the capacity to pay this rise. And definitely are not willingly wanting to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I really don't know . I think maybe we will find out when we are there.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

They sent us something but I don't know if this was the ip&r document. Maybe there is a copy in the council chamber's ?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

There was proposed costs but like all great council projects it will all blow out of budget and we will be paying again just like the Quarry fiasco or Storey park.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Hornsby Council has lost touch with the Hornsby community, with excess budget & spending and no concept of the pressures they will put ratepayers through.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council has not demonstrated the need for increasing rates. Do NOT increase rates. They should implement better financial management to budget within their means. They should prioritise essential projects, defer non essential projects, seek State & Federal Govt grants.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

With the increase in land valuations, the Council will get an increase in funds, but they have ignored that !

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Not that I am aware of.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Not clearly.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

There seems to be none at all.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The SRV increase will put additional cost of living pressures on households, already suffering with inflation, interest rate increases, energy bills, etc.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

There seems to be NO consideration at all.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Saturday, 25 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No it has not.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The average of rates across the shire is quite misleading and skews the result and hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No it has not. Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has ignored the community feedback. Council received 2,235 submissions so far of which 95% were against the rate variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable at all and the SRV should be rejected. Inflation is currently running at almost 8% . Councils proposal for 31% is outrageous.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, I found out about it from the uproar in the community on Facebook.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

[REDACTED]c.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Unreasonable, we can no longer afford holidays, and many others are worse off.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

[REDACTED]c

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

[REDACTED]c

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, they are targeting works which are a would like to have not a actual need

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No I provided many suggestions all of which were ignored or not responded to

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Not that Im aware of

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. They had made their decision ahead of any actual consultation. They gave the impression to the community they were interested in consulting with us but it was all smoke and mirrors

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Nothing Im aware of

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

People are already struggling with 0wages growth, high inflation and escalating mortgages.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

They failed to consider many people are on fixed incomes

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Not aware of the plan

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Dont know

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Unsure



Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

To quote from the Special Variation Application Form Part B: If the need for the expenditure is not required to meet a financial need, the council should provide evidence of the community's desires for the services or assets to be funded by the proposed SV and its willingness to pay for them. Has the Hornsby Community been appraised of the Council's proposed non-essential projects? Are they available to the public? I have not been able to find them. For one, I am overwhelmed by the size of the Hornsby Council application, some 190MB of documents containing several hundred pages of bureaucratic mumbo jumbo. IPART has the power to exercise some common sense over the money grab by Hornsby and other NSW councils in this time of financial hardship for the NSW population. IPART is requested to reject the Hornsby Council's SV Application and limit their rate increase to the already approved rate.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council HAS NOT demonstrated the need for increasing rates. Do not increase rates. Ratepayers' money (General Revenue) must be spent on Council's 'core' essential services. Councillors need to set aside their non-essential future projects and focus on maintaining only the essential services pending reductions in inflation and the cost of living. Any projects deemed to be essential need to be prioritized. Support for these essential projects should be sought from the state & federal government. Like any big organisation, Hornsby Council needs to live within its budget by implementing better financial management through increased productivity and a reduction in wastage.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

In these times of high inflation and the ever-increasing cost of living charges (home loan interest rate increases, forecast energy bill increases and rent rises), Hornsby Council needs to consider its responsibility to the wellbeing of the residents for which it is responsible. The requested SRV increase is too high and will place additional cost of living pressures on residents. Councillors need to set aside their non-essential future projects and focus on maintaining only the essential services pending reductions in inflation and the cost of living. In seeking such a high SV Hornsby Council has lost touch with the community with the current difficult times. Does Council need more money from ratepayers to fix Council's financial problems, with no consideration for the additional financial burden placed on its ratepayers?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

To the IPART Administrator,

I have been involved in numerous community groups and projects since I moved to the Hornsby Shire Council about 25 years ago. These include school P&Cs, community hall committee, a men's shed and other voluntary organisations.

All of my dealings with Hornsby Council in any of the roles have been very disappointing. So much so that I now avoid having any dealings with them.

On numerous occasions Hornsby Council have demonstrated poor financial management by financing projects that were not required or had little benefit to the community and refused to support those that were requested by the community.

Over many years the Council eroded the Cowan Community Hall Committee down until it had little or no control. On numerous occasions they insisted on replacing or renovating areas that were in good order while ignoring the committee's request to repair other more critical items. The Council also introduced an accounting system that effectively obfuscated any funds previously controlled by the Committee.

Hornsby Council paid in excess of \$60,000 to connect a toilet block to the Cowan sewerage system after the block had not been used for more than 30 years, and which has not been open or used since. There are many other examples where Hornsby Council has mismanaged funds. It was widely reported that Hornsby Council spent \$600,000 for the design of the "New Gateway and Suburb Signs for the Bushland Shire". Even if the signs are desirable, they could hardly be considered essential and funding of such items while also attempting to raise rates is not characteristic of an organisation that has good financial management. Any justification of a rate increase is negated by their past mismanagement of funds.

The current cost of living is very high with interest rate increases and wages frozen. The Council should find methods to cut costs, rather than increase rates.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?  
nothing at all

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers' money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers' behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.  
it is not clear at all nor justified

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

n/a

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The council just don't seem to understand that the average rate payer cannot afford this rise, and that the community does not support it. They need to be more efficient, prioritise only essential projects and cut back or stop the unnecessary ones. They can supply all the facts & figures they want, (from biased consultant that want repeat business), but they can't justify the overwhelming negative response from the community against this very outrageous proposed rate increase. I sincerely hope that IPART has more compassion for the average rate payer than Horsby council does, and rejects Councils proposed rate rise.

Regards [REDACTED]

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No! I would like the council to get its priority's right and budget within its means. They need to concentrate on the essentials such as local roads, waste collection & parks and defer the non-essential services until they have an excess of funds. This could be achieved with better financial management and efficiency. They want to spend money on projects that they can't afford due to their own lack of financial responsibility and then make the rate payers pay for it. They say they are being efficient by reducing staff, but they then have to hire sub-contractors to do those jobs, and this ends up costing a lot more in the long run. They need to increase efficiencies, productivity and savings and stop wasting the rate payer's money. They often over order and outsource jobs that could be done in house had they not reduced staff. They wasted approx \$400,000 on trying to justify this absurd rate rise. They claim they need the extra money from the SRV to pay for the maintenance of Westleigh & Hornsby Parks, yet these won't even be completed by the time the SRV comes into effect and \$100M plus is needed to complete them, despite the \$90M already given by the NSW government. I wouldn't be surprised if they hit the rate payers for another SRV to pay for these in the future. They need to stop spending money that they can't afford to its not rocket Science. Just as I must not live beyond my mean, the council must do the same and stop their grandiose plans that the average rate payer couldn't care about and fix the potholed roads instead. The council does not have full community support on many of the projects it claims the rates payers want (which they justify by using questionable surveys). The community just wants the basics for now and not an increase to their already stretched budgets.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, it has not! Council keeps saying they have community support for the SRV but I'm yet to talk to any rate payer that supports it. I saw an overwhelming majority reject the SRV at the meeting I attended and the one I watched online, yet the council keeps saying the community is supportive. They were unable to give a satisfactory justification of the SRV to those present at the meetings even though they claim that once they had explained their reasons the community was supportive. This is clearly not the case. 95% of submissions received by council were against the SRV and they haven't shown us any alternatives to the rate rise..

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

They showed their proposed rate rises in Percentage terms, but in my opinion, they did not show the dollar rise for the true average rate payer. The rates are worked out on the unimproved capital value of the land on which a building sits. If you have many residents in an apartment building who all share in the cost of the rates, this skews the results compared to the average owner-occupied single dwelling (which is by far, the most common form of ownership for the shire). I don't believe the figure they mentioned of the average rate increase of \$2.07 per week in the first year is accurate. I live on a 5-acre parcel (mostly unusable bush which is zoned C3) and my rates will rise over \$4 per week in the first year, more than double the "average" rate. And to add salt to the wounds the Valuer General has just upped the value of my land by almost 70% so another windfall for the council. I expect the increased valuations will be fairly uniform across the Hornsby Shire, so the council are already in line for a huge revenue increase, so no need for an SRV!

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it has not! I have spoken with many local residents who are totally unaware of the proposed rise. The majority of residents don't know anything about it. It was mostly advertised on the council web site which most residents don't generally browse, and of the 4 public forums, 2 were very poorly attended, proof that the public were unaware of the SRV. They only received 2235 submissions (of which 95% were against the SRV), so this small number of submissions is surely proof that many residents were unaware of the SRV. It's such a passionate subject (when you are talking an extra 31.5% increase) that I would have expected many more submissions.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council have completely ignored the feedback from the community. 95% of submissions were against the SRV yet the council

have not looked at any other options other than to go ahead with their unsupported SRV.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The amount Council is asking for is a totally unreasonable and unaffordable increase. At 31.05% It is much higher than the inflation rate (which is currently less than 8% and expected to start falling) and as far as I am concerned is an exorbitant amount that will put undue pressure on already stretched finances. The cost of living has gone through the roof, with huge increases in fuel, energy, food & services and constant interest rate rises (with several more already forecast by the reserve bank), yet our income is stagnant. And council wants to increase the rates by 31.05% instead of the 13.31 forecasted amount, an extra 17.74%. This is not fair & reasonable. How do they expect the rate payers to afford this? The SRV is not reasonable and must be rejected!

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

In my opinion, Council has lost touch with the real issues within the community and have a complete disregard for our wants and needs. There has been little consideration on what impact this will have on the average rate payer and the hardships this will cause. They commissioned Morrison Low to determine if the rise was affordable. How on earth can we accept this as justification that we can afford it. They are being paid by the council and would want further business in the future. I highly doubt their findings were true and unbiased. You don't bite the hand that feeds you. The affordability should be done independently by IPART not the councils chosen consultant. I was certainly not contacted by Morrison Low (nor has any one I have spoken to), so how do they know what I can afford. It's ludicrous. The community's willingness to pay was shown overwhelmingly in the 95% of submissions against the SRV. The community at large are not willing to pay. The Council have not considered what their rate payers actually want. We want them to stop all unnecessary projects, focus on the essentials and stop wasting our money, not ask for more.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Whilst Councils hardship policy at first glance seems reasonable, I can only imagine the stress of a ratepayer who finds they cannot afford the rate increase. It is hard to believe that Council will treat hardship cases with compassion. The final paragraph of the Hornsby's Hardship Policy says : 14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates. This shows how compassionate Council is to its ratepayers. It is b[redacted]g people instead.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

The documents were so large and complicated that the layman would not read through them. I don't recall being notified by council to see their documents prior to lodging with IPART. Council know that the average person is not going to go looking for and reading through hundreds and hundreds of pages of hard-to-understand spreadsheets, charts & documents.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

They have b[redacted]d the average rate payer with their facts and figures. It's just too complicated for the average rate payer to understand.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Council completely disregarded the survey of the residents were over 80% of the respondents rejected the special levy

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO. The Council has stated they need extra funds but has NOT shown details

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No they carried out a survey of the residents re the special levy. Over 2500 residents replied with over 80% of the residents rejecting the Councils proposal

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes they did show a requested rate increase for the next four years

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Over 80% of 2500 residents that replied to the Council survey rejected the proposed increase

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Despite the overwhelming rejection by the residents that voted (80%) the councillors voted to still apply for the special levy

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Not reasonable in this economic climate of higher interest rates and rapidly increasing costs of everyday items

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

They are living in a dream world. Peoples capacity to pay at the moment is nil

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council did NOT address this aspect enough if at all

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

They were exhibited via the internet

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Did not do this adequately

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 10 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

We wish to lodge an objection to Hornsby Council's proposed SRV for the following reasons: General While a number of Councils proposed initiatives may have merit, they cannot be considered urgent, and in the present economic climate when there is so much pressure on households, we believe many should be delayed until the economy stabilizes. Some 95.14% of the approximately 2500 respondents to Councils request for feedback on their proposals rejected the massive increase. Specific We live in the semi rural suburb of Arcadia. We have no footpaths, no street lighting, and roads that are badly broken up not from local traffic, but from buses and cars going to and from Northholm Grammar School, a school which has grown from 270 students when it was first opened in 1983 to many hundreds today, but without any improvement to the local roads. It is impossible for 2 buses to pass one another without both buses driving on to the verge and consequently breaking up the road edges. Land values in this area have recently increased exponentially, which in our case will see our rates rise by over 80% even before any SRV, but without any improvement in, or additions to, our services. Yours sincerely, [REDACTED]

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Hornsby council has showed clear disregard for mortgage holders who are trying to also keep up with steadily increasing interest rates. Such an egregious rate hike as proposed by Hornsby council will force some mortgage holders to sell their properties, relocate further away from work/friends/families to more distant (and more affordable) suburbs and even evict tenants, further contributing to the current rental supply shortage we are facing.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No need has been established at all. Hornsby council should defer all non essential projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Hornsby council has NOT canvassed alternatives to the rate rise. In particular such alternatives as implementing better financial management, reducing revenue wastage, deferring all non essential projects and re-scoping current projects.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes but the result is misleading as it uses an average rate across the entire of Hornsby shire and generates a false equivalency.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Absolutely not. Simply advertising on the councils website is not adequately informing the public of such an egregious rate increase.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Hornsby council did not follow guidelines in their own community engagement plan and has showed no consideration of concerns about the community regarding this rate increase.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This rate hike is absolutely unreasonable given the current economic climate post-Covid and recent drastic cost of living increases.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Hornsby council has not at all considered the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The only assistance Hornsby council has offered is a paltry \$50 reduction.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 21 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO. There is no need for a Special rate Variation. The Council instead need to implement a better financial management. Too much money went to private "consultants" and contractors. Increase efficiency, productivity and savings.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

NO. The sensible alternatives to a rate rise are: - Do not spend funds that are not available. Defer projects to when the funds will be available from savings. - Do not waste funds in consultants for hypothetical projects. - Improve efficiency (reduce the cost of services) and productivity (get more delivered services for the same cost). The Council does not seem to have considered any of these. Increasing the rates without improving efficiency and productivity is just too convenient but very unfair to the public and so unethical.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

It did it in a misleading way, using the average rates, which are lowered by the reduced levies paid by apartment owners. These lower rated dwellings lower the average rate across the Hornsby Shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount. The proposed increase in rates (31%) is way above the already high inflation (8%) and will be passed on to apartment renters, further increasing inflation and creating social and affordability problems.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

NO. Most residents are unaware of the proposed special increase in rates. I had to search "Special rate Variation" on the Hornsby Council website to find information. Most of the public is opposed to the SRV. I own a unit in the HSC and strongly oppose the SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The Hornsby Council did not consider the opinion of the community. I understand that 95% of the 2235 submissions received by the Council were against the rate variation. The recent increases in interest rates and overall inflation have pushed living costs at the limit of affordability and such an increase in rates will certainly impact the life of average and low income citizens. Pensioners will be badly affected. The proposed \$ 50 pensioner discount (if home owners) is small compared to the proposed SRV increase and these renters will be hit with the full rate increase, plus agent fees. UNACCEPTABLE!

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Totally UNREASONABLE at this difficult time and should be rejected. Inflation is currently around 8%. Mortgage payments have increased by 30-40% and keep increasing. Food has increased more than 8%. Salaries and wages have not. Such an increase in rates would be unacceptable at this time.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. If the Council had any consideration of the community's financial capacity and burden at this time, it would immediately rescind the rate increase proposal. It is very obvious that many citizens are already financially stressed due to the substantial increase in mortgage repayments and to the food and fuel price rises. The Hornsby Shire Council's Hardship Policy totally disregards citizens, inflicting the harshest penalties to those who cannot afford the rate increase: "14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates, Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates". Not even financial institutions adopt such a harsh policy at this difficult time.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The council intends to adopt draconian policies that people will utterly dislike and reject. The Hornsby Shire Council's Hardship Policy totally disregards citizens, inflicting the harshest penalties to those who cannot afford the rate increase: "14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates, Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates". Not even financial institutions adopt such a harsh policy at this difficult time.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I have not seen the relevant IP&R documents. The "Strategic Plan" in the Hornsby Council's website noticeboard shows a

wishlist without any budgeted cost ("Building a sustainable and resilient community"; Planning for the future"; ... "Improving our technology"...) to justify the proposed rate increase.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

The HSC application to IPART submitted on 8 December 2021 is generic and inconclusive. It does not contain any financial data on costs and budgets, which could clearly show how the productivity improvements can be quantified. No clear future plans other than a wishlist. Where supposed to detail the future plans to improve cost efficiency, the HSC GM instead just complains about past cost runouts. The application does not adequately support the need for a special rate increase. It should also be noted that the application was sent in Dec 2021, whilst the dramatic effect of prices and interest rate rises on the cost of living have been experienced starting from after mid 2022.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Do not allow this to go ahead. This proposed rate rise could be what pushes many families over the edge. No doubt everyone is feeling the pinch of the RBA's mortgage rate rises, and the insane increases to cost of living. Our family certainly is! All council needs to do is delay some of their big 'nice-to-have' projects for a few years and give their ratepayers a little breathing room. They don't need to increase our rates - at least not now. I don't think it's business-as-usual for many, if any, families or businesses in our community. So why should it be business-as-usual for council? A little belt-tightening is needed. Not just [REDACTED]g it back on us.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council surveyed the community well before Australia found itself in these unprecedented and treacherous financial times. They asked the community for a wish-list of sorts. What things would we like to see in the Hornsby Shire? There were no constraints given. There was no mention that they'd need a rate rise to pay for these things. See what happens when you ask a child what they want, with no parameters. Now council are using that exact wish-list against us and effectively saying these are the things you said you wanted and we need to pay for them, so here's a rate rise!. I'm sure people would have answered very differently had we been told we'd need a rate rise to pay for the things we want. It almost feels like council are blaming the residents! It is an appalling marketing tactic. It is trickery and so disrespectful treating residents this way. Especially when you've made no effort to show where you are trying to make savings for the good of the community. Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

As stated above, they are adamant that they will push forward with all the planned projects and applying for this special rate variation to help pay for it all. Through all the marketing spin we have been sent regarding this rate rise, Council has not demonstrated in any way, shape or form how they too are making hard decisions how they are tightening their belt given the current financial landscape. We have not been shown how Council is planning to draw back spending on some nice-to-have things, to ensure that the basic needs of the community are met. In times like these, spending should be on core requirements of the community. Council should not be pushing forward with new projects or work that could be delayed for a couple of years. Council's own figures show that they will not go into deficit until 2026 under the current spending arrangements. This gives council at least two years to delay the rate rise, while pulling back spending on non-essential projects/works. It may also give time for inflation to settle down and wages to catch up. Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, they did do all this. But using averages that include a huge number of apartments that pay much lower rates than houses, skews the results for the majority of houses in the LGA. And we've all just received HUGE increases to our land valuations which will further impact the rates we have to pay.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

They spent \$81,000 of ratepayers' money promoting the Special Rate Variation. This included adverts, postage, translation services, venue hire. This did not include the cost of the engagement consultants Morrison Low. I made a GIPA request to know how much was paid to Morrison Low and I was denied this information as they claimed it was commercial in confidence. We have a right to know how much of OUR money was spent on this useless exercise. It was all smoke and mirrors. People's questions were not answered. The lay person struggles to understand all this and when it is cleverly packaged in neat marketing spin, they were able to skirt around the hard questions. Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents

rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Their survey resulted in an overwhelming majority of ratepayers saying they do not support the application for a rate rise. An overwhelming majority (86.29%) of the responses DID NOT support Council applying for an SRV, with 8.85% as partially supporting, and 4.20% indicated support for Council applying for an SRV. Yet they completely ignored this result and voted unanimously to go ahead with the application. I've spoken to many people who witnessed the council meeting when it was voted on, and it was a well-rehearsed show to make it look as though they cared but had no other choice. They do have another choice. Delay the big projects, the new projects. Put them off for a few years - we don't need new dressing rooms at sporting facilities, we don't need new toilets where existing toilets are sufficient, we don't need new cycleways JUST YET. This is not the time for this kind of work. Morrison Low also misrepresented the mood at one of the face-to-face community meetings. Almost everyone at the huge event were livid at the proposal. People were explaining that this would be what breaks them, what would take the roof from over their kids heads. Homes that they busted themselves to get a deposit for. Many working two jobs now, just to keep up with mortgage repayments. Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This is a wildly inappropriate time to be raising rates. The world is in a financial crisis Inflation is through the roof and mortgage interest rates are increasing at a rate not seen before. All the while, wages have been left behind. Families are struggling to make ends meet and keep the roof over their heads. Hard decisions are being made on a daily basis Through winter, many families couldn't heat their homes as they couldn't afford their electricity bills. Some families are foregoing kids sports and swimming lessons, as the cost of living has become exorbitant. Hard decisions are being made about what expenses have to go, what needs can't be met, just so mortgage payments can be made. Very soon, many families won't be able to make those repayments and will end up losing their homes. Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. They have COMPLETE DISREGARD to the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Even after the overwhelming majority of respondents saying they do not want this. They don't care. This is evident in pushing forward with an application regardless, and pushing forward with projects that could easily be delayed a few years to give ratepayers some reprieve during these financially treacherous times. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The hardship plan only looks after the elderly and pensioners. It does not look after the majority of respondents in the 41-50 age bracket who are struggling to make ends meet. Couples who in a lot of cases are now both working two jobs just to pay their mortgage and bills, while hardly seeing their kids.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 23 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The council put out a survey last year a have your say on what you would like the council to prioritise. This a would be nice list. These are non essential projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No it has not! They have not looked at increasing efficiencies or savings they reduced waste or overhead costs. For instance they have spent around \$100,000 putting in two electronic sign boards in Hornsby Mall replacing perfectly good notice boards that were already there.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

They did but the average rate payer cost is misleading. Hornsby shire is made up of a diverse number of dwellings including apartments, traditional housing blocks and rural land. The cost of this special rate rise will impact many families living on suburban blocks. For instance my rates are already close to \$2000 per year for a 699sqm block, this land size is not unusual in this shire. This is far above their average rate they quote of \$1200 give or take a few dollars.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it has been mainly advertised on the council website. The public has not been adequately informed not the real impact of the rate rise explained.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The council did not follow their own guidelines nor demonstrate that the community concerns were considered. No one I have spoken to wants this rate rise and yet the council have gone ahead anyway. Apparently they know best!

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The impact on rate payers is considerable given the current economic climate. I am a self funded retiree, I will get NO concessions In regard to paying my rates which I calculate will be close to \$3000 per year by the end of the time given the latest value of my land according to the valuer general.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Hornsby council have given no regard to the communities protests on their ability to pay. They continue to insist that this SRV is necessary to deliver services to the shire. I will stress again that they need to consider reigning in unnecessary projects.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

They have only offered assistance to pensioners of a measly \$50.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

When participating in the councils survey last year on what projects we wanted the council to consider none of us guessed that the only way we would see this wish list is if we paid more in our rates. I understood it to be a survey of what the council would prioritise and deliver within their current budget. I feel we have been duped and I can assure you no one is happy with the the current priorities. They have a history of not listening to their ratepayers. The amalgamation of councils where Hornsby gave away part of c ward to Parramatta when it was clear that Kuring-Gai council was not going to join with Hornsby shire has been a huge disaster for us financially. Why should the ratepayers have to pick up the pieces for a bad decision?

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 21 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The application is not necessary for Hornsby Council to continue to provide the services expected by the Community. In making this application, they are not representing the community who elected them, in fact, they are acting against the large number of submissions they received from that community pointing out that we do not want what they are planning. Hornsby Council has received windfall income increases due to land revaluations of around 55%. They do not need to make further impositions on the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The Council has not established the need for additional funds to carry out its normal services to residents. Its justification is based on ambitious development plans that are not necessary nor desired by residents. Council's plans for use of the additional funds will make Hornsby and surrounds a very undesirable place to live. In the three years 2019-2022, the valuation of my property has increased by 55% and from conversation, I believe that is common for the district. Therefore, Council has already had a windfall funding increase of 55% over three years. How can it possibly justify needing another 30+%?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No other alternatives have been presented to residents/ratepayers.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The Council did communicate the total increase in both dollar terms and percentage terms and the amount is frightening especially to the many residents of the district who in retirement and therefore living on a fixed or dwindling income. My own income/expenditure ratio is very finely balanced as I am living on my Superannuation. The increase proposed by Hornsby Council might force me to move out of the district. Such a move away from friends will place additional stress on my mental health.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Council received a lot of responses to its announcement so I guess there was an appropriate variety.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council totally ignored the responses to its request for comment. A very large proportion (close to 90% I believe) opposed the SRV, but Council has gone ahead oblivious to the responses of residents. The general feeling amongst those I am in contact with is that Council has lost its way and is blinded by its big ideas of Commercial development, development that residents do not want.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This increase is totally unreasonable. Combined with the valuation rises of 1.55%, the SRV will result in a 105% cumulative rate rise by 2027. There is no evidence that Council has considered: \* the large number of retirees living on fixed incomes or relatively slowly increasing pensions \* the socio-economic situation of a large number of residents - recent immigrants, students, etc living in high rise unit blocks

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I do not believe that Council has taken any consideration of either willingness or ability of the community to pay. No comment has been provided on those issues.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council's hardship plan is a feel-good motherhood statement. Its whole application depends on the definition of the very vague term "ratepayers who are experiencing genuine financial difficulties". What does that mean? Having the rates increase at their proposed rate will reduce my standard of living by eroding my savings faster than ever, but can I prove "financial hardship"? probably not, so the whole plan is meaningless.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I cannot comment on that. It would appear that due process has been followed other than totally ignoring community feeling.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council is not interested in productivity improvements or cost containment to avoid raising additional funds. They are focussed on major commercial developments that will make them feel like stars and will ruin the community experience for residents.



Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

This council is pathetic! Their [REDACTED] ideas are totally out of touch with what rate payers expect! From the out of touch mayor to the councillors that we have are completely useless! Get them to prove productivity gains from what we currently have to pay in rates let alone value for money! Give me a break! They are incompetent and should be turfed out of their jobs!

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Absolutely none! 87% of respondents said no to the increase

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

87% of respondents dont need a rate increase right now!! They dont listen and waste so much of our rates on unnecessary stuff!!

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. They are an irrelevant bunch of [REDACTED]! They waste so much money on irrelevant processes and projects its bordering on criminality

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Havent seen anything online or pin post

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No idea. They havent sent anyone a thing in the post to ratepayers!

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Productivity improvements? Give us a break the current council is p[REDACTED]c!!!

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Hornsby Council must cut back or postpone non-essential projects to better times, focusing instead on "core services" to preserve community pride and satisfaction. Good financial managers do not budget for a new car if they do not have to the money to pay for it. We expect Council to budget within their means. Council have certainly not addressed anywhere in this application or taken into consideration the astronomical rise in land values which equates to, in my case, a 44.85% rise in rates for this year. How is the average ratepayer going to handle the financial stresses already, and then on top the financial burden of a SRV, this is criminal. Will those in the Council who are implementing this SRV going to refund the ratepayers the expense of the consultation and marketing fees that were wasted when they were not going to listen to the ratepayers anyway. This is also criminal and hopefully IPART can take into consideration the extra funds Council will already be receiving from land value increase. In our rural area our fire brigades are all volunteer and they do 100% of the work required for bush regeneration and backburning, Council does not contribute to this at all.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No not really

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not to my knowledge, everything is quite complicated and nothing has been addressed so the public can understand, they note that the business community has better understanding of this

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

After reading the material, I was only aware of the online/council website information, was not aware of any other information they said .

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council have totally ignored and disregarded the community's rejection of the SRV. This is a massive slap in the face to a significant majority of rate payers who were represented. It was an absolute waste of ratepayer's money on an extensive community consultation that went nowhere. I think this clearly shows Hornsby Council wasted ratepayer's money on supposedly "consulting" the community and shows their lack of allocation of funds, if they were not going to take into account the community's views and therefore I have no faith in how they will handle extra funds coming in. Can clearly see that Hornsby Council only decides how they use the funds without informed consultation from the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The SRV proposed is not reasonable the impact on affected ratepayers would be a burden to ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially during these harsh economic times, and even harsher to come. Families are already struggling with high costs of living, large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates, and rising. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Land valuations on properties have just been distributed and since 2019 - 2022 there is a 44.85% increase on my land value, therefore this equates to higher rates to be paid, since the rates are based on current land value. Then Hornsby Council wants to add another 31.05% increase over four years, this is just greedy and madness by the Council. I feel this is an important fact that IPART should take into consideration.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay is nil, they are basing the "willingness and capacity" to pay based on previous years, but have not based it on the current economic situation. Although they do have a hardship policy, there would be an interest rate applied to late payers. On top of increase in land valuations, SRV and late payment interest the financial capacity to the community would be huge and Council have not addressed these.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The Council noted they have a hardship policy, but then eventually late payment would incur an penalty interest rate, the ratepayer would never be able to catch up on payments and Council has not taken this into consideration.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

yes

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has explained the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies, to which I highly disagree. None of the improvements are earmarked for the rural suburbs and surrounding suburbs where I live, they are all focused on the Pennant Hills area, which I don't go into. So Council has not addressed the improvements so the whole of the Hornsby Shire will benefit, only a small percentage will benefit. In our area ratepayers don't get anything for the ratepaying money, no footpaths, no road repairs (badly in need), no maintenance. The improvements should be equally shared throughout the Shire, but sadly it is not. Over 12 months ago asbestos was dumped on the bushfire trail near our property, we alerted Council a few times to this dangerous dilemma, and still to date nothing has been done by Council to remove this dangerous material, which is near home dwellings. Clearly shows Council does not prioritise essential projects, but squanders the money on non-essential projects.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Sunday, 26 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council HAS NOT demonstrated the need for increasing rates as per the following reasons 1) Ratepayers' money (General Revenue) must be spent on Councils 'core' essential services. 2) Prioritise essential projects (not wish list), defer non-essential projects, seek State & Federal Government Grants, as alternative sources. 3) Implement better financial management to budget within your means. 4) Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The SRV carries a high impact on taxpayers at the worse possible time. The combination of the rate increase along with revised land valuation is likely to result in a severe increase impacting all taxpayers in the council As each household tightens their belts and prepares to make sacrifices, the council intends to impose this SRV contrary to the expressed wishes of the community as clearly demonstrated in the Community Survey Reports. We expect our council to reflect the same fiscal prudence we do. Council has lost touch with the community, budgeting excessively, with no money. Council wants more money from ratepayers to fix Council's financial problems, with no consideration for the additional financial burden placed on its ratepayers.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The purpose of the different revenue path seems only to be to satisfy HSC's DESIRE to redevelop centres around Hornsby and Pennant Hills railway stations in a manner which includes VAST increases in residential occupation using tower blocks. Inspection of public materials provided by HSC shows that this is very "developer dependent" and already shows associated traits of flashy features, dubious claims and minimal attention to improvement of traffic and pedestrian flows which already show themselves as issues BEFORE any increase in population due to the development proposed. In this sense it is not a NEED but a DESIRE expressed by Council [and particularly by the present Mayor].

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not realistically. In recent years, we have had rates increased by "special contributions", including those to fill Hornsby Quarry [for questionable benefit to most ratepayers]. I don't recall any specific publicity about increasing efficiencies, either proposals or achievements. How does a Council who employ professional managers find itself in the position of needing such a programme of exceptional rate increases?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

HSC's communication DOES state the full cumulative increase but attaches that number [31.05%] to the statement "including the annual rate peg set by IPART", immediately defusing its own responsibility. Council's communications rely on using the average of rates. This is unrealistic but produces a favourable number. Hornsby Shire is an area of diverse usage and occupation styles. Since rates are based on UCV, the increased densities permitted in the last decades mean that an increasing proportion of rate payers share the cost of rates for a given site. It's curious that the essential "need" for the SRV is to fund increased population densities in tower blocks where ever more people will share the rate based on UCV. Council sends individual rate notices and so has the capacity to advise individual rate payers the exact consequences of the SRV proposed. They have chosen not to do this.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

It will be easy for HSC to argue that its strategy was "appropriate" but rate payers would have a strong argument against, based simply on its ineffectiveness. As with HSC's plan for redevelopment of the "town centre", very, very few have any knowledge or idea of the SRV or why it is proposed. The few who know about it see it just as a way to secure rate increases in excess of the normally permitted boundaries.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

IPART will already be aware, from the Engagement Outcomes document submitted by HSC, of the ratepayers' overwhelming LACK of support yet there has been little or no action taken by HSC in response to this feedback. One might assume that the large number of councils who have applied for SRV feel individually confident that their numbers justify their applications and, indeed, their need to take feedback seriously.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Continued publicity about cost-of-living increases makes this a difficult time to embed escalating rate costs. Though the percentage increase appears a relatively small number, it is applied to a large sum of money, meaning increases in the hundreds of dollars, even after concessions. Given that energy price increases of this amount of dollars has attracted significant concerns at the Federal level, the proposed SRV increases should similarly be described as unreasonable.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Given that there has been little conciliatory action by HSC in response to the ratepayers' feedback, one can only conclude that HSC has given little consideration to the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Indeed, HSC has declared that it will "adopt the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates." To me, that simple phrase answers this question completely!

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

HSC will give pensioners \$50pa discount. Woo-hoo!!

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

This is a matter of fact - yes, or no - and should be answered and substantiated by HSC, not me as a ratepayer.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Most modern corporations are expert in producing convincing statements which are, on analysis, empty. HSC is no exception. A team of independent financial experts should audit the data for any reasonable conclusion to be made.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Saturday, 18 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Proposed increase is excessive and will severely impact families already struggling with cost of living increases. Council can terminate programs that are not its core responsibility to save costs.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, council has wasted rate payers money in a number of areas. Installation of suburb signs was unnecessary waste of rate payers funds and shows council is not addressing priorities of roads and rubbish.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. Council has not looked at reducing costs or cutting programs outside its area of responsibility.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has ignored community feedback. Over 80% of respondents against the increase.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Increase is unreasonable and will severely impact families already stressed by mortgage rate and cost of living increases. Council needs to learn to live within its means

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has ignored community response. Over 80% against the increase.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Will not provide effective relief and families will suffer as a result.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Na

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has not addressed potential to cut costs by termination of programs outside its core responsibility.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 13 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I fully support the decision. The process was transparent. We were consulted. The logic is sound. The decision is in the best interest of the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes - this was done very well.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

This was excellent.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Feedback was excellent both face to face and digitally.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Perfectly reasonably go over the financial circumstances.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

We were all consulted very well.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Yes this was very clear.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I had access to the required documents.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

This was outlined in the public meeting I attended.



Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Sunday, 19 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I am very supportive of the SRV, as are most of the silent majority in the Community I would make the following points: - the 31% headline figure over 4 years, is equivalent to only 12% incremental above the peg, if it has been implemented as "one slug" in one year. "12% incremental" would have got far less rancour from even the few people objecting, many who don't understand the mathematics of compounding (I engaged with them on social media, including an ex-Councillor, and this conceptual gap became clear) - We "get" that inflation on the Council's "basket" especially on energy and construction has gone up in price. We don't want to go backwards. - we don't think that the Council is woefully inefficient and there are "savings". If people think that, it should happen separately from any SRV. - we are happy to pay to enjoy good services locally. Conversely, we don't want Council excuses by being able to say they're not properly funded. We want proper funding with accountability.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

100%. And I think the peg is too low given the Council's "basket" of purchases There is a case that Hornsby Council got "short changed" in the Council boundary changes through losing Epping, that we had just funded very heavily, and now receive no cross funding, now the development has happened. But this is a political decision beyond Council control.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

The Council has liaised very energetically both online and with many public meetings. I want to note the loudest voices against a rate rise did not attend meetings to have the discussion with the Mayor, CFO, GM and Councillors who attended- in one case a mere 300m from their house here in Pennant Hills.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Very clearly. I would also submit that the SRV rules which produced the 31% increase which Council had to defend, led to confusion. IPART should strongly think about the concepts in "incremental" and "compounding" in how the SRV figures are to be explained. 31% was staggered effect with 4 years' compounding, and INCLUDING the peg

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

The Council followed an exhaustive and comprehensive consultation policy

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I am in support of the Hardship clauses where there is a real affordability problem

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

- There is not an affordability problem in this area over \$500 a year, and we are satisfied that Council will be pragmatic with those with real hardship. - We also note that no-one objecting is complaining about the typical \$3000 Federal tax cuts per household. - We also note on social media that the loudest voices, are also experts on local dining, far from going hungry, they just don't want to contribute. - We are also conscious of intergenerational equity. Example. The people in generations gone by who paid for the facilities like public toilets needing upgrading didn't even have basic medicare, and there were far fewer people to tax. In this context, many of the complaints about affordability are disgraceful - they haven't minded using facilities that others have passed down. If we think we can't afford anything now, there will be no time in the future when we're not running down and consuming the capital contributed by past residents.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I checked that Council had done the research on local income figures, indicators of financial distress, measures for older people on fixed incomes, and the Councillors and Mayor introduced clauses to take care with accommodations for those in difficulty.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The Hardship plan is being reviewed, and what is already in place takes care not to "put anyone on the street" Note the discounts for retired people, notwithstanding that many of them have done very well in capital value with house price rises and the advantages around superannuation.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

This was very clearly explained to me by the CFO and GM in the public meeting they held locally

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 16 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Council has failed to consider the impacts of its projects. No consideration has been made for maintenance on an ongoing basis nor has it had community support on many. I believe that the short comings are far worse than in the application. Previously all council reports stated the ongoing cost impacts against community benefits, support and budget impacts. This reporting style has been abandoned as it would have prevented many of the projects. Councillors have put there own wishes against considered responsible decision making. I encourage Ipart to reject the application on the basis that it doesnt meet the criteria for a SRV application and referral to the Local Government Association for investigation of councils fiscal management.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it hasnt, very broadly says it cant fund core functions. Caused by excessive spending on Unprogrammed works at the bequest of councillors

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No evidence that they have attempted to other than to blame the failed council mergers

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes but they have failed to identify the effect increased property values would have on top of the increase. Hornsby has an average 69% increase in the last VGs assessment.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

I dont believe so , certainly not on the scale used for the previous SRV for Hornsby Pool

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They appear to have totally ignored that 86% of people opposed the increase and proceeded with the application.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Being a family area I believe the impact on will be significant with little to no specific benefits. Interest rates and generally increase in food and services have consumed any ability to pay.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

No consideration was given. The Mayor stated at one public meeting in general terms that if sections of the community found it unaffordable then they may have to find a area that was more affordable.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Yes they have but no policy extension to those people not on public welfare.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes to my understanding

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No productivity gains or cost cutting has been stated to my knowledge. The application is strongly lacking in any cost minimising and highlights excessive spending in numerous areas. Legal , consulting, staff costs and policy formation that arent core council responsibility.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I am also greatly concern that the council is also trying to change our property to flood zone when in the last 21 years we have never been flooded. The models that they are using our outdated and should be checked by seeing the sites.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; - has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. - being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. - has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why werent these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? - must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; - appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. - must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. - must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. - must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. - must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

In one way it did, however, using the average rate is deceptive and misleading. It hides the true rate rise. The average of rates across the shire is quite misleading and skews the result and hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners. The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rated household lower the average rate across the shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

- Council sent letters of the meetings which arrived the day of the meetings making it not possible to attend. Forum where very poorly attended as result. - Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. - An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). - Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

- Council ignored the communitys rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. - An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. - A [REDACTED] to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

- Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyones quality of life. - Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. - How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times? - Council MUST focus on core essential services and DEFER non-essential expenditure projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

- Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. - Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. - Councils reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. - The community is counting on IPART to fully

assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I do not believe the council as documented and shared this with Rate payers in detail

Author name [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers' money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers' behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and

cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Nil

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Council is simply on a money making exercise. Their 2nd biggest expenditure is on "Consultants" Hornsby council has not established a need or a list of projects that would be unable to proceed without a SRV. They just have a wishlist! They have not looked at other alternatives first. Remember this is the council that spend 1 million on a failed waterclock and imposed a quarry levy for years on the residents

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council has NOT! not tried increase in efficiency or savings Not tried implementing better financial management Not tried reducing the general Managers salary

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, but misleading as pushing it as "cost of a cup of coffee" Used an average rate across Hornsby shire

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. Advertised mainly on councils website. When holding public forums, limited it to 100 participants

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Hornsby council got plenty of negative feedback, but pushed forward with the plan anyway, not addressing any of the community concerns in the final submission

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This special variation rates rises is totally unreasonable in the current economic circumstances. Hornsby council is mostly middle income apartment dwellers Hornsby has a high rate of retirees and pensioners on fixed income

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Hornsby council is mostly middle income apartment dwellers Hornsby has a high rate of retirees and pensioners on fixed income

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Just \$50 to assist pensioners!

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Hornsby has tried to bury us in paperwork



Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Saturday, 25 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

In my opinion the council has NOT demonstrated the need for increasing rates. The council must spend ratepayers money on councils 'core' or essential services. In the information to the ratepayers, which was not very extensive, there was no need to increase the rates on such essential services. The council provided only a wishlist of projects, which were not essential and, in the current climate of inflation, interest rises and overall reduction in real income, unethical, unnecessary and ill conceived. These proposed 'projects' do not provide real benefits for all ratepayer in the shire. The council should first canvass better financial management, better use of resources, reduce waste (which is plenty) and seek other means of financial support through grants or alternative sources.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

To my understanding it has NOT, nor has it communicated any effort, if taken, to us ratepayers.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

In my opinion it has not, since it failed to communicate the cumulative effect of the SRV together with the increase in rates due to the variation in property values, as established by the Valuer General. The council has also NOT established the effect in monetary terms, the SRV will have in the scheme of general income developments of ratepayers, self funded pensioners (who are not enjoying reduced rates). The information provided did NOT show any real dollar values on our rates for example and how this would relate to the current rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

As far as I can see it has not. I am not aware if the many tenants of the large number of apartment blocks are aware that any rate rises at this level will ultimately lead to a substantial increase in their rents.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The council totally ignored the feedback and decided to proceed with the application. We have never been informed about the reasons and the process by which the council (and the political parties behind them) decided to ignore the ratepayers feedback, nor have we been officially informed by the council that they decided to ignore the feedback and proceed with the SRV.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The SRV is simply too high. Neither will incomes nor values of superannuation funds, from which self funded pensioners derive their income, nor business incomes in the council area increase by the same level over the same timeframe. The SRV and its cumulative effect will have a substantial impact on the living standard. I run a micro business in the council area and will have impact both on the business cost (the landlord will pass the SRV on and thus may make the business not viable) plus I will have a rate level (after application of the SRV + rate increases based on the property value, which may be as much, based on our income 2021/2022, be as much as 20 - 25% of our annual income. This would mean that we would have to close the business, sell the house with all associated cost and establish somewhere else after living 30+ years in the shire.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

As far as it is evident, the council did not make any undertaking to such effect. We have never been canvassed by the council if we could afford such astronomical rates. (see also question 1).

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

This was very vague and did not address how the council would deal with it. Since it is not in the council's interest to grant any hardship concessions, any application to the council would be met with a biased view. The council failed to establish how and in which timeframe it would deal with such applications and which criteria would apply any determination.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation

period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I can not answer this, since operating a business leaves little time to review such documents and information. Rates have risen over the last 5 years at a steady rate and therefore it is not clear that and if the council has undertaken any cost containment strategies. In my opinion the council has budgeted excessively with NO money. The council wants more money from the ratepayer without offering real benefits and without any consideration for the financial burden placed on its ratepayers.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers' money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A [REDACTED] to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers' behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and

cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 13 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
See all of the above

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The Council appears to base the need for the additional funds on a supposed demand by the rate payers for extended services as desired in a survey. I note that this survey asking people what they wanted from the council, was presented to the unsuspecting public akin to a Xmas wish list and was treated by the public as such. At NO POINT was it even hinted that these 'demands' couldn't be met just by a re-priorisation of the existing rates, but instead required additional funds. 6 months later and the council asks for additional funds to satisfy that 'urgent' demand they themselves went looking for in such a manner I find this approach in creating a demand whilst hiding the resulting financial costs as unethical, bordering on fraud!

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not that I am aware of. No scaling down, no deferment of additional services, no re-priorisation of existing or additional services.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No comment

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No comment

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The council has gone through a token exercise of allowing feedback, which as expected was extremely negative (95% of responses). Other than a small compensation for a selected part of the constituency, no resulting amendment to the overall proposal. It did in no way consider scaling down the rate variation, nor does it seemingly consider deferring the rate variation in light of the deteriorating conditions in the wider economy .

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Apologies for stating the obvious, but here it goes.. The Australian rate payer have seen a close to 10% reduction in purchasing power due to post-covid inflation. I am not aware of anyone, salary earner, welfare recipient, pensioner, or other, of having increased their earnings anywhere near that level. As such that marks a drop in the standard of living for most residents in the Hornsby shire. For the average family that typically results in 'belt tightening'. Hornsby council is going the opposite way. To inflict additional pain on the rate payers at this point in time with that rate variation is obscene.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The economic pain is caused to everyone ! Singling out particular groups for consideration seems to miss the point here.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

See above

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No comment

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No comment

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Saturday, 25 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

HSC intends to spend nearly \$18 million on cycleways and footpaths from the SRV. The founding study to this plan specifically excludes large areas on the LGA without a valid reasons. Some of these excluded areas such as Glenorie currently has NO footpaths where residents are forced to walk on the road.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Whilst the average increases in rates have been communicated, no information has been provided to allow ratepayers the opportunity to calculate their own individual rate impact. The recently published VG valuations show a significant change in valuations which could result in rate increases well in excess of the "average".

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council have not taken into account the significant negative feedback from the community to the proposed increase. In the current economic climate with high inflation and cost increases this is a time for all service providers to respond to the community needs to take an appropriate path to providing essential services at an appropriate cost to the ratepayers.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The prospect that average rates will increase significantly above inflation over the next few years is totally unreasonable.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council have not provided a convincing response to the question on willingness to pay these significant rate increases.

Feedback from the community indicates that the community is not willing to pay significant increases when comparable councils such as The Hills Shire Council enjoy average rates lower than Hornsby, and they are not applying for SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

This is totally inadequate. The small discount is not available to self-funded retirees who rely on modest fixed incomes. Other hardship provisions usually result in the payment of deferred rates out of the settlement from the eventual sale of the property.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

There has been little evidence that the council has considered cost containment strategies such as shared services. For instance, adjacent LGAs are conducting waste management services identical to HSC without any attempt to share facilities

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 13 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I, and so many others, are appalled by the arrogance displayed by the council. We reject totally the SRV.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

I do not think so. The Council has floated a huge number of 'projects' some councillors would like to push, regardless of the need or the cost. The Council cannot afford all of these, so it wants to levy a huge increase in Rates, regardless of the opinions of the rate-payers or of their financial situations. The recent survey of ratepayers showed that over 95% of them were opposed to this increase, but the Council has ignored this rejection and pressed on. I am totally opposed to the increase. Council must live within its means, just the same as the rate-payers have to.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Probably. The increase is huge.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Well, Council ran a survey, which showed that 95% of rate-payers were opposed to the SRV, but the Council seems to have ignored the wishes of the community.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The survey showed that 95% of rate-payers were opposed to the SRV, but the Council seems to have completely ignored the wishes of the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Completely UNreasonable. A massive increase in rates, for projects we, the ratepayers, do not want.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The Council seems to have completely ignored all the protests from the community (95% of responses).

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No provisions or outlines have been supplied that I know of. The level of arrogance is outrageous.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

The Council did letter-box their proposal. It seems that the Council has approved the idea, despite the community's rejection of it. I am not aware of any public meeting.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No information was provided in their circular. It does not seem that 'cost containment' has been considered.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Saturday, 25 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I am yet to see any compelling reason presented by Hornsby council to justify a "Special Rates variation" over and above the regular Rates variation. All information I have found indicates that Hornsby Council expects to be in Surplus for 2022/23 and while they do suggest there are some upcoming capital expenses it is not clear what these are, or why they cannot be postponed.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

As a Ratepayer I have been presented with no compelling case for this Rate increase. Even looking around Council's website there is little explanation to why this rate increase is needed. I also note that in the 2022-2026 Delivery Program document that the 2022/23 Budget Summary indicates a \$2,908,000 surplus, so no indication there that they are cash strapped:

[https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/cm9\\_documents/Hornsby-Shire-Council-Attachment--Delivery-Program.PDF](https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/cm9_documents/Hornsby-Shire-Council-Attachment--Delivery-Program.PDF)

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

As a Ratepayer I have not been advised of any alternative options to this Rate increase, and I am not even clear on why this Rate increase is required. I do note that on page 24 of the LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN DRAFT 2023/24 2032/33 there are some major Capital expenditure bumps to \$92 Million in 2025, and \$79 Million in 2029 so presumably this is why they need the rate increases - but even going to page 43 it is not clear what these Capital expenses are about?

[https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/cm9\\_documents/Hornsby-Shire-Council-Attachment--LTFP.PDF](https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/cm9_documents/Hornsby-Shire-Council-Attachment--LTFP.PDF)

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes I have seen the total percentage increase - noting that this is an eye-watering 28% increase over 4 years. Dollar terms I can work out, in my case that would be around \$514 per year, while I acknowledge that Hornsby Council imagine we all have money to burn, unfortunately this is not the case, and that is not something I can immediately budget for, particularly against a background of increasing interest rates, rising energy prices, and stagnating wages.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

As a ratepayer I have not received much information (particularly on alternatives to the rate rise). The information I have received is mostly vague motherhood statements like: "Address Councils projected operating deficits over the next 10 years to ensure the continuation of current services." "Allow Council to maintain and renew assets in line with its Asset Management Strategy and Plans." "Deliver currently unfunded strategic initiatives to address actions in 35 adopted Council strategies." But considering their financial plan for 2022/23 has a projected \$3 million surplus, there is little hard data on what is going to cause these deficits or on what these "unfunded initiatives" are.

[https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/cm9\\_documents/Hornsby-Shire-Council-Application-Notification-Letter-2022.PDF](https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/cm9_documents/Hornsby-Shire-Council-Application-Notification-Letter-2022.PDF)

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council's response has been largely delusional in this regard, most feedback I am aware of has been raising concern about the rate rises, whereas Hornsby council's response has been along the lines of "we are so delighted our Ratepayers are in support of this rise". Looking at Hornsby Council's submission to IPART, I note that while they claim a "positive response" to "Media engagement" this metric of this "positive response" is not explained. The "positive media response" also contrasts sharply with the Survey results, that show 86% of respondents were against the SRV increase. I also note that Hornsby council have re-interpreted their question "Have you read the available information about the SRV on Your Say Hornsby?" to be "they understood why Council needs to apply for an SRV" Reading the information about the SRV provided by Hornsby Council it did not adequately make the case for why the Council needs to apply for an SRV, and this is evidenced by the 86% "no" result

[https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/cm9\\_documents/Hornsby-Shire-Council-Attachment---Community-Engagement-Materials--SRV-Community-Engagement-Summary.PDF](https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/cm9_documents/Hornsby-Shire-Council-Attachment---Community-Engagement-Materials--SRV-Community-Engagement-Summary.PDF)

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Given that most Ratepayers are already tightening our belts due to high Inflation, High interest rates, and ongoing wage stagnation, it is hard to see such a high rate increase as reasonable. Also bear in mind that recent revaluations of property are also likely to increase the Rates we in addition to this 28%

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. There has been no consideration of Hornsby ratepayer's ongoing ability, or willingness to pay increased Rates, especially given the current economic conditions of high interest rates, high inflation, and ongoing wage stagnation. As already noticed despite



claiming a "positive response" to this rate increase, most quantifiable indicators are that ratepayers are against it.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Reading Hornsby Council's submission, the hardship plan appears to be the No mercy, pay later, you will accrue debt if you can't pay approach. Having previously experienced Hornsby councils "mercy" when I overlooked a Rate payment, and the first I became aware of it was when a Debt collector contacted me (no reminder notices, or attempts by Hornsby Council to contact me) about 3 weeks after the Rates were due, I have absolutely no confidence in Hornsby council's ability to care about any Ratepayers suffering hardship as a result of this excessive rate increase. <https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/sites/de>

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Probably, who knows? As a ratepayer I have not received much solid information about it though. But looking through the documents on IPART website now, I am failing to see a compelling case for this increase.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

They claim over the last 10 years they have "implemented several cost containment strategies which has resulted in Council delivering an average of \$6.2 million in annual ongoing costs savings and revenue improvements" good on them, they have done their Job so far. The rest of the document contains nothing in the way of Practical cost saving measures, but rather is more a blather of management speak along the lines of "measured approach is being developed that will be structured and provide a realistic program and approach to service reviews" then there are "Horizontal reviews" and "high level reviews" then "key areas being targeted to use technology" (does this mean they might use computers?) and a magic "Framework for Continual Improvement Program" and "Strategic Alignment and Prioritisation" - I'm sorry but if they aren't already doing this stuff, then they are failing in their job. So I see no evidence of any real effort to restrain costs beyond what would normally be expected by mere competent management.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers' money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers' behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and

cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Social responsibility for young families who are stressed by huge increased costs due to COVID and the world economy is my chief concern. For once, older ratepayers have to speak up in defence of the younger generation. That's why I feel so strongly about this! Please protect the vulnerable. Please reject the HSC application for an SRV.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO Hornsby Council has NOT clearly established the need for and purpose of a different revenue path for the Councils General fund. They need to focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area. Council is fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, yet have proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. Land values have increased substantially and therefore rates will increase automatically. BUT added to this HSC wants to increase the rates 31% above the government allowable rate hike.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

NO Hornsby Shire Council needs to prioritise the essential services and leave the 'wish-lists' for a few years. Council has not indicated they have considered alternatives such as increasing efficiencies, increasing productivity or savings, reducing wastage, and reducing overhead costs.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes. And this is a grave concern. Many families in the shire are in difficult financial circumstances with many suffering particularly from Mortgage stress. The rate increases mentioned will dramatically impact upon the lives of many of our families. It is a time for the Hornsby Council to stick to basic services and make alternate savings.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

NO Council has ignored the community sentiments expressed through feedback to the proposed rate increases. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report. Council has completely ignored the anti SRV feedback - in effect wasting many thousands of rate-payer dollars in the process.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Hornsby Shire Council has totally ignored the community's rejection of their proposed special variation. This is a massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Council cannot justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, especially during harsh economic times. There are many young families in the shire who are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large, fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be even more severely impacted.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

A special discount for Pensioners has been mooted. Fortunately, most seniors in HSC are well established. It is not an area they 'upgrade' to in their advancing years. The HSC won't be handing out lots of discounts. It's the young mums and dads we should be considering. They have a lot to lose, and our area needs them to keep the area vital.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Hornsby Shire Councils reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I could find no indication of productivity improvements and cost containment strategies outlined by Hornsby Shore Council's proposal either for preceding years or for the proposed special variation period.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
Thank you for working with us. At this financially challenging time this is most appreciated.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Yes they have attempted.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No they have not - or at least have not made a well rounded thoughtful effort.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes however it did not address the real needs of the community.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No - the public have done more to raise awareness than the council.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

There has been little action that takes into account community feelings.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Not reasonable - many other alternatives.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

This was not considered at all. It was quite disappointing.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The hardship did not outweigh the challenges.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I'm not aware of this

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

It explained but from a one sided perspective.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

No

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Not reasonable

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Not reasonable

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No plan

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers' money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers' behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

n/a



Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

n/a

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 16 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The increase by the council is unreasonable. The massive increase in land valuations is going to increase rates. The further increase to rates to people like myself I receive a Services Australia Health Card which is not recognised by the council. The increase in rates is going to increase my financial hardship. I see a massive amount of waste by Hornsby Council - they need to advise the ratepayers where they are cutting back, or are they?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not to my Knowledge

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The community rejected the proposed special variation The council ignored the feedback

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed increase is too high adding increased pressure to families Council is not detailing how they are tightening their belt. Council needs to be more savvy in how they are spending ratepayers money

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

As mentioned above the Council is not recognising all concession card holders and in my opinion increasing the financial burden

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I don't think they have adequately explained their cost saving plans

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

In IPART's own 2020 review of the Local Government Rating System, IPART made the very important point that although rates are commonly considered a fee for service, they are in fact a form of TAXATION (my emphasis). As both the Federal and State governments have repeatedly stressed, in a time of huge rises in the cost of living, now is NOT the time for increases in taxation. In fact, quite the opposite. It is singularly inappropriate for Hornsby Council to be seeking to increase tax, imposing yet another great stress on ordinary citizens, already struggling with not only general large cost of living increases but also rapidly increasing interest rates creating significant mortgage stress. What now should be taking place is Hornsby Council ought to be taking stringent measures to contain their own costs. As we are all having to do. Now is not the time to continue with wish list projects, which while probably creating nice amenities, are not essential. I would love to install a pool in my back yard, but if I do not have the money to do so, I have to do without, I cannot simply tax my neighbours to do so. I again stress that when combined with the hugely inflated valuations recently advised by the Valuer General, council rates are about to double. Double. There is no circumstance under which such a massive cost imposition upon as yet unaware citizens can possibly be justified. I urge you in the strongest possible terms to reject this inappropriate SRV. Please. I live in Cherrybrook and have paid rates to Hornsby Council on this property for 40 years. This is my first such submission and I am appalled it is needed.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not. We expect Council to prioritise essential core services such as parks, local roads, garbage collection. Defer non-essential projects until funds are available. This is common sense. Needs to budget within its means and implement better financial management. Council proposes expenditure as usual. Claims to have reduced staff but then contracts works out to private consultants at a price in excess of employing in-house staff. Council wants to fund a wish list established when it conducted 6 rushed consultation studies when establishing its future plan for Hornsby Council. Council claims that community surveys have set Council's priorities. Community groups have long questioned the validity of Council surveys. Increase efficiencies, productivity and savings. E.g. Council is said to over-order and over-specify concrete for many works resulting in additional cost than warranted. Wasteful use of General Funds by engaging consultants to do Council's work. E.g. Cost of public consultation for rate rise was \$82,000 approx. Council would not reveal cost of employing the consultants who determined that Ratepayers could afford the SRV. It is rumored that the total cost of the SRV application is around \$400,000. Council claims the rate increase will be used to maintain both Hornsby and Westleigh Parks. These will not be anywhere near completed when the SRV comes into force. These Parks need an additional \$107M to complete. Council does not have the funds to finish them. Will Council be asking for another 30% rate rise in four years to complete them because the NSW Government is unlikely to provide another grant similar in size to the \$90M Council got for the two Parks.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Basically no, it has not. Council reinforces the spurious claim that the community supports the expenditure. At the final well attended public forum at the Hornsby RSL most community speakers were vehemently opposed to the SRV. Council's explanation did not satisfy the community members present. Council claims that once explained the community was satisfied. That is not true.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

In one way it did, however, using the average rate is deceptive and misleading. It hides the true rate rise. The average of rates across the shire is quite misleading and skews the result and hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners. The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rated households lower the average rate across the shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount. What is also now apparent since land valuations have arrived showing a massive 90% increase over the 2019 valuations, council has stayed silent on the fact that, applying the SRV will DOUBLE most residents rates. Not increase, DOUBLE. Almost everyone I have spoken to has not yet realised this devastating cost about to hit us all.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it absolutely has not. Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates. Advertised mainly on Council's website which most ratepayers don't read. Council held 4 public forums of which two were poorly attended. Council's pamphlet used in the mail-out provided a very positive false impression, misleading the reader. Most speakers at the Hornsby public forum were strongly and vehemently opposed to the SRV. The General Manager Head did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function. Council documentation mentioned that Council was expecting increases in waste management costs. The cost of waste management is not paid for from the rates pool of money. A separate waste fee is charged for this service. Household pay for any increase incurred

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community feedback. Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation. In these inflationary times with sharp rises in monetary terms of mortgage repayments and cost of living. This rate increase is a travesty. Even with the proposed additional \$50 pensioner discount, on average the SRV will still add an additional \$350 to their rate bill. If renting the pensioners will be dealing with increases in rents to absorb the rate increase. Consultants Morrison Low determined that the rate rise was affordable. Was this because they were being paid by Council? Council claims the loss of rate revenue is because of Eppings amalgamation with Parramatta (thanks to Hornsby Councils mismanagement) is a causal factor in needing the SRV. No mention of the plethora of high-rise buildings that has occurred in recent times which have increased Councils rate base. Hornsby Council made a pretence of community awareness. Yes submissions were invited and some 2,500 were made (including mine), overwhelmingly rejecting the idea of a Special Rate Variation (SRV). Yet at the November Council meeting, the councillors blatantly disregarded the strong feedback from their own constituents and voted unanimously to proceed with the application for the SRV. What part of listening to your own constituents were they missing? What was the point of making a show of pretending to seek community feedback and then simply ignoring that?

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable at all and the SRV should be rejected. The SRV will be on top of the cost of living pressures that ordinary households are experiencing. Increases in food bills have featured prominently on the national media. People are having to make expenditure choices not seen for generations, e.g. do we buy food or pay the rent? Inflation is currently running at almost 8% . Councils proposal for 31% is outrageous. House mortgages are now hovering at around 6%. Households and families are stretched to the limit. This rate increase could be the impost that forces them out of their homes with banks calling in their loans. The proposed increase in the pensioner concessions rate of \$50 is nothing short of insulting. The average pensioner SRV increase of \$350 is unaffordable for most pensioners. Council has lost touch with the plight of the community and have a complete disregard for us. Council MUST focus on core essential services and DEFER non-essential expenditure projects. As already mentioned, when combined with the massive (and frankly insupportably inflated) land values attributed in the recent notices of valuation received from the Valuer General (to which I have objected most strongly as their method is deeply flawed), rates will double. There is no circumstance in which that can be regarded as "reasonable". In IPARTs own 2020 review of the Local Government Rating System, IPART make the very important point that although rates are commonly considered a fee for service, they are in fact a form of TAXATION (my emphasis). As both the Federal and State governments have repeatedly stressed, in a time of huge rises in the cost of living, now is NOT the time for increases in taxation. In fact, quite the opposite. It is singularly inappropriate for Hornsby Council to be seeking to increase tax, imposing yet another great stress on ordinary citizens, already struggling with not only general large cost of living increases but also rapidly increasing interest rates creating significant mortgage stress.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire. They want more money for their self-inflicted financial problems with no consideration for the additional financial burden and hardship and stress on the families, households and local businesses. They need to get themselves in order and prioritise on the core and essential services and defer non-essential projects for another time. Disappointed with the Morrison Low report commissioned by Council which basically says the community has the capacity to pay and are willing to do so. Obviously the report reflects the councils desire for that outcome. Public forums clearly indicated that the community does not have the capacity or willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Whilst Councils hardship policy at first glance seems reasonable, I can only imagine the stress of a ratepayer who finds they cannot afford the rate increase. It is hard to believe that Council will treat hardship cases with compassion. The final paragraph of the Hornsby's Hardship Policy says : 14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates. This shows how compassionate Council is to its ratepayers. It is bullying people instead.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I honestly do not know. If they have council is keeping it a big secret. Certainly they have made no genuine effort to make the public aware on this.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Again I am utterly unconvinced the council has explained let alone demonstrated beyond doubt they have made any improvements in productivity and cost containment. We have mentioned several instances above where indeed we know council has hidden real costs such as in contracting out work rather than direct employment. I have deep personal history of the

poor cost and process management of Hornsby Council. I was Treasurer of the Epping Creative Centre, a community centre under the auspices of Hornsby Council, from 2011 to 2017. The Centre was allowed to use the building and manage not only activities conducted within that old former residence but to manage all maintenance and facility improvements. We had the capacity to raise our own funds from allowing various community groups to use the facility in return for a nominal facility usage charge, and from those funds to maintain and improve the facility. Then along came Hornsby Council, again pretending to consult with the community, and in essence took over our carefully accumulated funds despite huge community resistance. We were in no doubt that had we had the resources and energy to fight this we would have been able to establish that activity by Hornsby Council was not only immoral but illegal. Very thankfully, following the redistribution of that part of Epping to Parramatta Council from Hornsby, Parramatta immediately reinstated our ability to manage the facility and manage our own funds. This was an instructive process. Staff of Hornsby Council were arrogant, inconsiderate, ignorant and self-important. I could name names but will not at this time, it is not important. What was important was the admission by at least one such person that they were instructed to raise funds by almost whatever means. The staff of Parramatta Council could not have been more different. Considerate, reasonable, approachable, positive. Indeed an example of the difference between the two councils can be found in the simple process of paying rates! I own a property in Epping as well as Cherrybrook so can quote direct relevant experience. Paying Hornsby rates by phone takes nearly 4 minutes and insultingly a credit card surcharge is then added. Several steps along the way are repetitive and not needed. Parramatta rates in contrast are the essence of simplicity, contain no repetitive steps, and no insulting credit card fee, and take 1 minute 37 seconds. Less than half the time. What this anecdote suggest is that Parramatta are vastly more efficient than Hornsby, and noticeably more user friendly. That small experience sums up my broader experience of both councils. What that then suggests is that far from a well-documented history of productivity improvements and cost containment by Hornsby Council, a great deal more work needs to be done by them to even begin to meet that vital criterion.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

As mentioned in my responses, no clear, concise, broad ranging communication has been made to the community at large. I am only aware of this now this morning 01/03/2023. This submission closes on 03/03/2023. It took a fellow resident to bring this to my attention not the council that sends me a rated notice each quarter! The inability or negligence in this process to communicate to the rate passing community is incredible. This is not the way to work out solutions by dismissing the community and their input. This will seriously affect residents ability to afford normal living standards in the area. There must be further solutions/ideas discussed apart from raising rates. Were better and smarter than this!!

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

I am completely unaware of this possible change to rate charges. No publicity, or may I say clear publicity or communication to rate payers. Unless there is consultation with the community we do not understand or know what the council is trying to achieve.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Again no clear communication on this is shown easily to community

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Again no clear, concise, broad ranging communication to the community. I found out by a resident handing out a flyer highlighting this situation. A resident with a flyer! Not the council!

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Again no clear, concise, broad ranging communication to the community. I found out by a resident handing out a flyer highlighting this situation. A resident with a flyer! Not the council!

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Again no clear, concise, broad ranging communication to the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Again no clear, concise, broad ranging communication to the community.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Again no clear, concise, broad ranging communication to the community. No idea what the council has regarding these points. I haven't been asked!

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Again no clear, concise, broad ranging communication to the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Again no clear, concise, broad ranging communication to the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Again no clear, concise, broad ranging communication to the community.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Saturday, 25 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

This rate increase is abusive and an insult to the people of Hornsby Shire. From the very beginning the council and the councillors are not forthcoming and honest with the residents about the rate increase and all they have to do is to prepare for this review. They even hire an external consultant (using ratepayer's money) to design strategies to charge ratepayer more? Excuse me, if you are so poor, in private sector, first thing you do is to cut back these expenditures and 2nd thing is to cut wages of management.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, it hasn't. In all the information package we as resident received, the council advised these funds are for special projects. There is limited information about what kind of special projects are, and why such amount of funds are required. Council also failed to explain to residents the consequences if less funds or no funds provided. It is never clearly, and adequately presented to resident why council cannot operate without these funds. Are these projects essential to the function of the council, or just "nice to have". And we are left with the impression none of these projects are essential such as rubbish collection, road repair or maintenance of any public facilities. In the era of huge costs of living blow out and high interests, council failed to advise the resident what benefit these increase can provide at the expense of residents sacrificing other life benefits they can manage themselves.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Clearly No. Residents were never offered any alternative. The rate increase has been pursued as the only way from council's perspective.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Not I am aware of, the increase in dollar value was only mentioned for the "first year" there will be like less than \$10 per month (not exact) and never provide to residents a clear matrix with the increase in both percentage and in dollar value, for the period earmarked for increase. Other than the total of over 30% plus increase, we know nothing else.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. A most effective way is to put these information on the council rate notice they send to every household every quarter. Instead they just send letters which will go unnoticed by most residents.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Very poor. I have contacted 3 councillors of my local ward via email 3 times during the consultation time and before they voted for the increase. 2 of them replied none at all and one did reply with generic message acknowledging the receipt of my email and concerns, and advise me to go to the public forum set up by the council to as Q&A but never answered my questions about the urgency of the increase and why cannot part or all of these projects wait when the economy becomes better.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

With the increased costs of living, high interests rates, possible concession this year, every other government agency is trying to assist the residents to lower the pressure, the Hornsby council totally ignores these critical issues happening and proposing an oversized increase at this rate? There is no justification of the increase of this size and at this time at all from the information we have been provided. Council has lost touch with the plight of the community and have a complete disregard for us.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

There is no analysis presented to the residents why the council believe the residents can afford to pay. Moreover, the rate to be charged is based on the services to be provided.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

These are not special to this increase and are always available when a resident is unable to pay. In my view it is not relevant.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not aware of.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

This is again not highly relevant. The increase of productivity should have no connection to the rates charged to the resident. Instead, they should explain how they would keep their unnecessary expenditure down .



Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Council should reduce spending on non essential services the same as normal households do when budgeting to meet changing demands, however they have indicated they will continue to fund all services and projects regardless. Council are employing the services of outside consultants to replace the work formally done by in house staff at a much greater cost. Council have not new transparent on the actual costs of the consulting work undertaken to determine that rate payers will be able to afford the rate increase. Council advised the special rate increase is needed to maintain Hornsby and Westleigh Parks but these arent even finished and wont be ready by the time the proposed rate increase comes into affect.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Again, no. They claim residents understand the need to the rate rise and are ok with it despite the overwhelming response at public forums held be the council from residents being against it.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, but this is affected by units because residents in units that share the rate cost for that one parcel of land. The cost to single dwelling lots of far greater. Council needs to explain the cost that will be incurred for units and single dwelling lots.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, Half the public forums had low attendance so results should be discounted from those Low attendance events. Council also advised the cost of waste would be increasing but waste is charged separately and is not taken from the rest of the rate funds

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has disregarded the feedback of which more than 95% of the 2235 submissions were against the rate rise. Again, the consultants engaged by council to determine if resident could afford the rate rise are paid by council so seems to be a conflict of interest.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

We now spend over 60% of our income on our mortgage and now this rate increase would amount to an additional \$900 per year for us which is an unreasonable increase when families are already heavily burdened in the current cost of living crisis. We make choice about what to spend our money on as a family and many things have been put on hold while we focus our spending only on the essentials, but council cant do the same?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Again, the report by consultants is at odds with the public forum responses and the 2235 community submissions of which more than 95% were against the rate rise. This consultant report was paid for by council and so they chose to follow its recommendation because its in the councils interest..

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Buy offering \$50 concessions for pensions, thats not much use for them or the rest of us. The hardship policy states that overdue rate payments will incite the highest interest rate available to the council to charge residents - this is not compassion.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not. We expect Council to prioritise essential core services such as parks, local roads, garbage collection. Defer non-essential projects until funds are available. This is common sense. Needs to budget within its means and implement better financial management. Council proposes expenditure as usual. Claims to have reduced staff but then contracts works out to private consultants at a price in excess of employing in-house staff. Council wants to fund a wish list established when it conducted 6 rushed consultation studies when establishing its future plan for Hornsby Council. Council claims that community surveys have set Councils priorities. Community groups have long questioned the validity of Council surveys. Increase efficiencies, productivity and savings. E.g. Council is said to over-order and over specify concrete for many works resulting in additional cost than warranted. Wasteful use of General Funds by engaging consultants to do Councils work. E.g. Cost of public consultation for rate rise was \$82,000 approx. Council would not reveal cost of employing the consultants who determined that Ratepayers could afford the SRV. It is rumored that the total cost of the SRV application is around \$400,000. Council claims the rate increase will be used to maintain both Hornsby and Westleigh Parks. These will not be anywhere near completed when the SRV comes into force. These Parks need an additional \$107M to complete. Council does not have the funds to finish them. Will Council be asking for another 30% rate rise in four years to complete them because the NSW Government is unlikely to provide another grant similar in size to the \$90M Council got for the two Parks. Criterion 1, Question 2. Has Council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise? Basically no, it has not. Council reinforces the spurious claim that the community supports the expenditure. At the final well attended public forum at the Hornsby RSL most community speakers were opposed to the SRV. Councils explanation did not satisfy the community members present. Council claims that once explained the community was satisfied. This was not the case. Only two very conservative community groups were in any way supportive.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Basically no, it has not. Council reinforces the spurious claim that the community supports the expenditure. At the final well attended public forum at the Hornsby RSL most community speakers were opposed to the SRV. Councils explanation did not satisfy the community members present. Council claims that once explained the community was satisfied. This was not the case. Only two very conservative community groups were in any way supportive.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

In one way it did, however, using the average rate is deceptive and misleading. It hides the true rate rise. The average of rates across the shire is quite misleading and skews the result and hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners. The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rated household lower the average rate across the shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it has not. Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates. Advertised mainly on Councils website which most ratepayers dont read. Council held 4 public forums of which two were poorly attended. Councils pamphlet used in the mail-out provided a very positive false impression misleading the reader. Most speakers at the Hornsby public forum were opposed to the SRV. The General Manager Head did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function. Council documentation mentioned that Council was expecting increases in waste management costs. The cost of waste management is not paid for from the rates pool of money. A separate waste fee is charged for this service. Household pay for any increase incurred.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community feedback. Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation. In these inflationary times with sharp rises in monetary terms of mortgage repayments and cost of living. This rate increase is a travesty. Even with the proposed additional \$50 pensioner discount, on average the SRV will still add an additional \$350 to their rate bill. If renting the pensioners will be dealing with increases in rents to absorb the rate increase. Consultants Morrison Low determined that the rate rise was affordable. Was this because they were being paid by Council? Council claims the loss of rate revenue is because of Eppings amalgamation with Parramatta (thanks to Hornsby Councils mismanagement) is a causal factor in needing the SRV. No mention of the plethora of high-rise buildings that has occurred in recent times which have increased Councils rate base.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable at all and the SRV should be rejected. The SRV will be on top of the cost of living pressures that ordinary households are experiencing. Increases in food bills have featured prominently on the national media. People are having to make expenditure choices not seen for generations, e.g. do we buy food or pay the rent? Inflation is currently running at almost 8% . Councils proposal for 31% is outrageous. House mortgages are now hovering at around 6%. Households and families are stretched to the limit. This rate increase could be the impost that forces them out of their homes with banks calling in their loans. The proposed increase in the pensioner concessions rate of \$50 is nothing short of insulting. The average pensioner SRV increase of \$350 is unaffordable for most pensioners. Council has lost touch with the plight of the community and have a complete disregard for us. Council MUST focus on core essential services and DEFER non-essential expenditure projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire. They want more money for their self-inflicted financial problems with no consideration for the additional financial burden and hardship and stress on the families, households and local businesses. They need to get themselves in order and prioritise on the core and essential services and defer non-essential projects for another time. Disappointed with the Morrison Low report commissioned by Council which basically says the community has the capacity to pay and are willing to do so. Obviously the report reflects the councils desire for that outcome. Public forums clearly indicated that the community does not have the capacity or willingness to pay. Whilst Councils hardship policy at first glance seems reasonable, I can only imagine the stress of a ratepayer who finds they cannot afford the rate increase. It is hard to believe that Council will treat hardship cases with compassion. The final paragraph of the Hornsbys Hardship Policy says : 14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates. This shows how compassionate Council is to its ratepayers. It is bullying people instead.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

This is a submission by [REDACTED] (HSC Ratepayer) to IPart in respect to the application by Hornsby Shire Council for a Special Rates Variation they propose to levy on the ratepayers.

My address is [REDACTED].

### Criteria 1. Question1

***“Has Council Clearly established the need for and purpose of a different revenue path for the Council’s General fund?”***

- No, in the HSC presentation to ratepayers at Hornsby RSL, the Mayor stated that the increase was not just needed for special projects (“Special” rates Variation) but fundamentally for ongoing day to day council running expenses. Given that the council knows years in advance what its rates income is going to be, it should work within its known (and fair) rates income and budget responsibly. It should not take the easier/lazier option of taking an SRV at every opportunity (which it does) and passing its poor budgeting consequences onto ratepayers. We have enough of our own budget problems, especially in the current circumstances, without having to manage the councils too.
- Council has not shown that it manages costs responsibly. There were no staff number or cost reductions during the pandemic, no one was let go, despite a drastic reduction in services (no library, no sporting expenditure, no swimming pool, construction projects halted), but the same staff levels, when I wrote to them and asked why, they said “its easier to keep them than trying to recruit them again if things pick up”. Many people, myself included, lost their jobs during covid, but it seems to have been business as usual for the council, because they are a monopoly and can largely do as they please.
- Council asked us “what would you like to see in your electorate” - they gave us a wish list. And now they have locked that list away as “ratepayer must haves”. There was no indication that this would contribute to a 31.5% rates increase. If they had asked us for a “must have” list, they would get a more conservative, and realistic response.

**Criterion 1 Question 2. Has Council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?**

- No, it has simply said to us “we have to do this, there is no other option, no plan B” The “consultation” has been unilateral, not bilateral. They don’t actually listen to community feedback and act on it. They ignored the 95% of respondents who oppose the increase. The community is not satisfied with the consultation process, and the council’s complete absence of response to issues raised. The consultation process has been a box ticking exercise on their behalf. Their minds were made up 12 months ago, they have effectively wasted our time and our money (more consultants fees to spend on top of the \$6million spent last year) and have only paid lip service to the consultation process.

**Criterion 1 Question 3. Did the Council communicate the full cumulative increase of the special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?**

- Yes it did.
- But it used “advertising style tactics to disguise the extent of the increase by saying 2 dollars per day or week, rather than \$800 dollars a year.
- They have also not factored in the increase in ratable values (land value) which will compound the increase enormously for many ratepayers, myself included. A percentage increase on a percentage increase.

**Criterion 2 Question 2. Has the council’s community engagement Strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?**

- No, as far as I am aware it has only been publicised through their website, plus a brochure in the mail. I imagine the website doesn’t get too many visits. It’s an issue that needed to be in the local press and social media to reach the 55,000 ratepayers in the LGA.

**Criterion 2 Question 3 Please comment on the action taken by Council to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.**

- Council ignored community feedback. Community received 2235 submissions. 95% were against the rate variation. I have yet to see any action coming from the council resulting from community feedback I only see lip service.
- In Phillip Ruddocks summation at the council/RSL meeting (I was there) he said *it may be hard, but you will just need to “suck it up”*. *For those of you suffering hardship there are hardship payment provisions, (delayed terms, or a pensioner discount) available for you to pursue*. This sentiment was thoughtless and uncaring. There will be thousands of ratepayers struggling to make ends meet at the moment, and they won't qualify for hardship payments/terms, but Mr. Ruddock effectively ignored that demographic completely.
- Consultants Morrison Low determined that the rate rise was affordable, how would they know? And surely there is a conflict of interest in their opinions. They showed in the council meeting (where inexplicably they ran the meeting for the council) that they and the council are one.

**Criterion 3 Question 1. Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers at the proposed special variation.**

- Inflation is currently running at about 8%. My mortgage payments are going through the roof, our wages are flat, so our real disposable income is going backwards. Very significantly. And council choose this time to ask us ratepayers to bail them out because they cannot budget themselves. And they do this by asking for a 31.5% rates increase, plus in my and many peoples cases a substantial increase in my land value which also drives rates up.
- Do we buy food or pay our mortgage, or pay our rates? These are the kind of choices we have to make.

**Criterion 3 Question 2 Please comment on the Council's consideration of the communities capacity and willingness to pay.**

- I don't understand the Morrison Low report commissioned by Council which basically says the community has the capacity to pay and are

willing to do so. How do they know this? They are consultants being paid to say whatever the council pays them to say.

- Public meetings show that the community does not have the capacity to pay. Lower income (young families) attendees at the meeting said they may be forced to leave the LGA if this proceeds.

# HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

## RESPONSE FROM DOMESTIC RATEPAYER

I and other Hornsby ratepayers understand and appreciate the excellent job that Hornsby Council undertakes on our behalf and can appreciate that recent and forecast cost increases challenge the Council's financial resources. **However, the request for approval of rate increases of the size and timing the Council proposes is entirely unacceptable.**

Hornsby ratepayers are today being forced to meet the challenges of rising mortgage costs, inflation and costs of living. They are forced to respond by economically modifying their patterns of consumption and/or by working harder or longer. The Council must do the same.

The current initiatives of the Council which are being put forward to ratepayers to justify the proposed increases are substantially lacking one element – a recognition by the Council that ratepayers are currently experiencing this unprecedented financial stress. Monetary authorities predict that this stress will continue without real wage increases during the period in which the Council proposes to levy significant cumulative rate increases.

In all the documents to which the Council has drawn the attention of ratepayers, there is scant mention any effort by the Council to review and modify its normal operations and economise in order to cope with cost pressures. For example, headcount is expected to remain constant and strategies which prioritise improvement in efficiency and output from existing staff are not planned.

Of course, rates will need to be eventually increased in line with inflation. But the timing of the present initiative and request for exorbitant annual increases is ill-considered and mis-timed. **Now is not the time for increased pressure on ratepayers who are already struggling.**

I ask the Hornsby Council to reconsider its proposals in the interests of the ratepayers it serves.



## SOME SUPPORTING OBSERVATIONS

- I have read
  - the Council's letter to ratepayers,
  - the on-line document titled "Hornsby Shire Council to consult community on proposed Special Rate Variation",
  - the Hornsby Shire Council Asset Management Strategy 2023/24 – 2032/33 (the "AMS"),
  - the Hornsby Shire Council Long Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2031/32 (the "LTF"),
  - the Climate Wise Hornsby Plan 2021.
- I understand and commend the Council's desire to operate under conditions of a balanced budget
- I appreciate the relevance of most, but not all, of the Strategic Initiatives on page 37 of the LTF. They are probably necessary, but I will need much further time to read all of the supporting documents. In any case, detailed assessments of that sort are the responsibility of our elected council representatives.

I would wish to see that each of these initiatives has been rigorously costed, and the final planned outcome effectively determined in terms of cost/benefit to ratepayers, enhanced community and social outcomes, and return on expenditure.

- I have read the "Climate Wise Hornsby Plan 2021" and I am concerned that the Council is committed to achieving carbon neutrality but has not published a separate financial cost budget to achieve this particular objective. I do agree with those sections of the plan relating to bush fire and flood mitigation and related disaster recovery strategies arising from any source. These should be normal Council responsibilities regardless of the Council's carbon neutrality aspirations.
- The Council's Strategic Initiatives should be extended to include strategies such as:
  - Head count reduction and efficiency improvement
  - Strategies for service maintenance at a 10% reduction in operating costs
  - Strategies for use of technology to reduce expenditure and improve efficiency of operations
  - And many more regarding subcontractors, purchasing and associated issues.

In other words, the Council should be doing what any other commercial organisation operating in a competitive market must do in times of financial stress – it must find ways to increase efficiencies, contain costs and still meet ratepayers' expectations.

Hornsby Council must reconsider its intentions. It should review operations and expenditure patterns to achieve the maximum efficiency and return from every dollar spent.

- Hornsby Council must modify its view that the solution to its financial concerns lies in seeking further recoveries from ratepayers – **especially at a time when the ratepayers are undergoing similar financial stress.**



**WEST PENNANT HILLS NSW 2125**



Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I am appalled that the Council spent considerable funds in October 2022 to advise rate payers of the survey, inviting responses and no doubt reading them. But it seems they had no intention of taking notice of the overwhelming negative response they received. This result leads me to believe that the survey was only to allow the Council to profess that they had engaged in appropriate consultation.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The Council has not clearly established or explained any different path for the Councils General Fund. They state in their four-page letter the prime reason for the increase is to secure long term financial stability and maintain our assets. To require such a drastic increase simply confirms that they have not been properly husbanding the finances of the Council for a long time. They state that residents in the Hornsby Shire LGA traditionally pay lower rates. Is this the reason that the Council now finds itself in financial trouble - due to these many years of failed stewardship? They are only able to claim that internal and external factors have emerged, putting us under financial pressure. They do not explain what these factors are. Did their prior financial management not see this coming? Repetitively, they shift responsibility for the situation back to ratepayers for the high priority initiatives you have told us are important. Ratepayers are now asked to rescue the Council to allow it to maintain the status quo by paying rate increases more than double inflationary levels. Responsible commercial organisations, when faced with times of financial stress, normally reduce headcount, initiate actions to reduce operating costs and eliminate non-essential activities by prioritising only those capital projects and other activities that they can service with available funds. Hornsby Council is planning none of the normal, but radical, steps needed to rescue themselves from financial stress.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

The communications I received from the Council do not explore any alternatives to a rate rise. They do commendably state that they intend to operate on a balanced budget. They also say that headcount is expected to remain constant. This alone is a concerning statement as my experience in business is that all organisations accumulate ineffective and needless personnel who should be weeded out. There is no mention of curtailment of inefficient activities or measures to gauge efficiency and restrict managers from employing external labour assistance which bypasses any headcount data. I am in favour of Bushfire Risk Mitigation and Community Development programs, but for a Council LGA in Australia, special projects such as climate change adaptation and mitigation are problematic in being likely to make much of a difference to any global climate change concerns. This must fall into the nice to have but we cant afford it category.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The Council did provide information on annual and cumulative increases in the Rate Peg and the Proposed HSC rating increase, as well as the average annual rates likely to be experienced by rating category. If I am asked to pay more, I like to be told precisely in dollars how much extra not averages of the effect on typical ratepayers. Averages cover a range of possible outcomes and are easy used to support a particular point of view.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

I knew little about the SRV and its extent until I received a letter from the Council around 15 October 2022. I had difficulty in meeting the Councils deadline for submission of comments by 8 November 2022. There was only one Rate Payers Forum scheduled in that period of around three weeks. All rate payers have many issues that compete for their attention, and the documents to which the Councils letter referred (the Long-Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Strategy) are lengthy and complex, and in some areas require financial knowledge to understand.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I am incensed at their reaction. While 2,235 submissions are a relatively small proportion of rate payers, not every ratepayer understands the implications of the documents received or are sufficiently adept at penning a response to the Council. However, the 95% negative response is an incredibly strong reaction by ratepayers to the SRV. I also understand that in some of the venues where public debate was heard, the overwhelming response of the attendees was against the rate rise. Hornsby Council has let all rate payers down by promptly voting to proceed with the 31.05% increase program. It appears that they were committed to heading down this path regardless of the community response. If that is so, why did they bother with a survey they could ill-afford, except to appear to have done the right thing?

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Two aspects of the proposal are unreasonable. The TIMING of this proposal is ill-judged. Australia is transitioning from a lengthy period virtually no inflation to a period of high inflation by recent standards, and when monetary authorities are predicting that real wages are likely to continue to lag behind inflation for some considerable time. At the same time home mortgage interested rates are increasing dramatically. The populace is being forced to make decisions about priorities and to curb their expenditure on even basic commodities. If proper financial management had forecast the pressures now facing the Council earlier, it may have been able to introduce the SRV in a climate more able to accept it. The SIZE of the SRV and its compound effect over four years is staggering. In every year it is double the rate peg and much higher than expected inflation. As a self-funded retiree with a rapidly dwindling reserve, I am faced with prioritising my expenditure, and husbanding it closely no matter what priorities I may have had in the past. The Council should have linked their rate increase movement to inflation which would therefore have been more palatable to most, but of course would still have only yielded possibly a four-year compounded figure of around 25-26%. But I can understand that Council would not like this particularly if inflation is eventually brought under control. At this stage the effect on ratepayers is staggering and the SRV should not be permitted to proceed.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. By electing to proceed with the rate variation they have shown no consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. I can only conclude that the urgency of the need for additional funds outweighs all other considerations. This is not a good sign.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

There was no mention of this directly in the correspondence received from the Council. I understand however that the Council's Hardship Policy includes the provision "As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates". This is hardly compassion. T

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

The Council has not drawn my attention to these documents and their availability (if they are so available). I received no reply to my submission to them on 11 November 2022.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I am not aware of what the Council may have included in its application to IPART. In their only written communication, they have advised rate payers Hornsby Shire Council is well regarded for our careful and prudent financial management. In the Long-Term Financial Plan, they recommend to Apply a freeze to Councils approved Full Time Equivalent headcount where appropriate, with no new positions to be created unless offset by an equivalent position". Also, they propose to Maintain cost increases to modest levels and to continue financial improvement initiatives (the development of business improvement plans). Such programs should not be recommendations they should have been ingrained into all aspects of the business for years. Note that the Budget Summary (Liquidity Result) in the LTFP appears to show the Council starting to go into cash deficit from 2024/5 and in the year ending 2007 the deficit is \$3.8 million. This is only 3.2% of the expected rates collected of \$119.8 m. if this is so, why should rates have to be increased cumulatively by 31.5% by this date? (I may well have misinterpreted this table, all the more reason why ratepayers should have been provided with a simplified cash flow forecast of all items both before and after the SRV).

**Subject:** SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Date:** 2/11/2022, 10:34 am

**To:** [REDACTED]

**BCC:** [REDACTED]

Dear Council,

I have reviewed the information about the Special Rate Variation, and submit the following:

- I note and understand Council's desire for increased funding - it is consistent with the pressures currently being felt by everyone in the community.
- **However, I object to the quantum of the variation proposed.**
- Firstly, because it does not take into account the capacity of the community to make increased payments.
- In particular, in response to war induced inflationary pressures which have caused a drop in real wages, everyone's capacity to provide funding has recently reduced (less income available after paying for essentials).
- In addition, the RBA has dramatically increased interest rates specifically for the purpose of achieving demand destruction sufficient to crush inflation and kill off inflationary expectations. There was a further increase yesterday and "the board expects to increase interest rates further over the period ahead". Note that they will keep increasing interest rates until they achieve that objective, even if this induces a recession and the extreme hardship which would accompany that (such as some people losing their houses).
- Note that the RBA expects inflation to peak at 8% but is determined to bring it back into the 2-3% range as quickly as possible. The RBA's central forecast is "for CPI inflation to be around 4.75% over 2023 and a little over 3% over 2024".
- That is, the national requirement is to tighten our collective belt, and if we don't do it of our own accord the RBA will impose enough pain to ensure that we do. Unfortunately the pain tends to fall on the weakest and most vulnerable (especially anyone who has recently bought a dwelling and hence still has a high mortgage).
- In this context it is inappropriate for Council to undermine the actions of the Reserve Bank and act in a way which adds to rather than subtracts from the inflationary spiral. This will only exacerbate the resulting hardship as interest rates keep increasing.
- Clearly in this situation Council is obliged to ensure that any increases are less than the nominal CPI, so as to be supportive of the national priority as pursued by the RBA, namely to crush inflation and inflationary expectations.
- Given the current vexed global environment it is simply the wrong time to be pursuing increases well above inflation. Unfortunately, this means that it won't be possible for Council to do all that it wishes and some services may need to be cut and other measures deferred. The appropriate time for a Special Rate Variation would be after the current crisis has passed, although I would accept that this is very frustrating given that Council is obviously very keen to progress a range of measures. However, the severity of the current crisis is only just starting to be felt due to the normal lags in the system. That is, many people will struggle as we move into 2023, and there is a real risk of recession as the full impact of the RBA's measures flow through the economy.

Thank you for considering my comments, and for your efforts in explaining the proposal and reasons for it. However, as noted I believe that it would be inappropriate to proceed at this time.

Regards

[REDACTED]  
Mobile:

Email:

Address:

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Tuesday, 21 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
I have attached my objection lodged with Council, dated 2 November 2011.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO Council has NOT clearly established the need for and purpose of a different revenue path for the Councils General fund. In the documentation there was reference to a desire to increase funding to provide additional services. However, all I could find out about these additional services was that they were what the community would like (presumably based on some survey, but I have never seen the survey). There is a BIG DIFFERENCE between what people might say they would like Council to do when answering a survey, and what they consider necessary even if it involves rate increases.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

NO Council has NOT canvassed alternatives to the rate rise. There was a vague reference about possibly having to cut some services (eg Library opening hours) if they did not get the rate rise, but no detail. In particular Council did NOT address lower more reasonable rate rises. There was just a comparison between the standard IPART adjustments and the full SRV being sought. Rather than discuss options and trade-offs, the Council information gave the impression that they were just "going for broke with an ambit claim, and were deliberately avoiding canvassing alternatives.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Councils proposed SRV is not in any way reasonable given the current economic circumstances, as I explain in my objection to Council dated 2 November 2022 (copy attached herewith). In particular, at a time when the RBA is rapidly raising interest rates to PREVENT an inflationary spiral from getting out of hand, Councils proposal pours fuel on the fire by seeking increases ABOVE THE UNDERLYING RATE OF INFLATION. They are directly undermining the action taken by the RBA. Given the current economic circumstances, which are resulting in enormous hardship for many in the community (catastrophic increases in mortgage repayments and looming recession and job losses), a SRV proposal in excess of 30% over 4 years is simply reckless and indifferent to the REALITY of the financial circumstances which the community is confronting.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. My main criticism is Councils total disregard, in the documentation that I have seen, of the communitys capacity and willingness to pay. I understand that there was a consultants report (which I have not seen) which suggests that the community can and is willing to pay. This is completely at odds with public feedback which is dominantly opposed to the proposed SRV. Common sense dictates that in the CURRENT circumstances, where we have seen the most rapid increase in interest rates on record, and the most rapid fall in house prices on record, and consensus of more to come and severe economic hardship for many, the community could not possibly have a capacity and willingness to pay. In particular, one has to be careful of averaged data. The hardships now being confronted do not fall evenly across the community, but fall unfairly on those who are most vulnerable, including anyone who has debt or whose job is at risk (most people).

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

SUBMISSION REGARDING HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL REQUEST FOR SPECIAL RATE VARIATION.

Dear IPART,

In my capacity as a resident and ratepayer of Hornsby Shire, I recently received the Hornsby Shire Council '**Proposal for a Special Rate Variation and Draft Long Term Financial Plan**' letter dated 18 October 2022.

The fact that HSC sent all ratepayers this letter at this time, detailing proposed rate increases (**more than double the IPART Forecasted Rate Peg**) is in itself an indictment, demonstrating just how insensitive and out of touch they are with everyday Australians and the current financial strain we are bearing now and into the medium term future.

Now is certainly not the time to be robbing us, or for HSC to go on a spending spree using unearned funds extracted from the hapless ratepayers of our shire.

For HSC to request a SRV rate hike of more than double the fair rate peg increases set by IPART completely ignores the unavoidable financial pain that we are being told by our government that we must face, including:

- \* Gas price increases of 40+%
- \* Electricity price increases of 56%
- \* Sharp (unpredicted) rises in the cash rate = interest rates
- \* Flatlining of wages predicted for years to come
- \* Increasing petrol prices
- \* Child care cost burdens
- \* Inflated prices for consumer items, particularly housing and food
- \* Possibility of a recession.

Secondly, the sentence '**HSC is well regarded for our careful and prudent financial management**' is a total fabrication designed to cover the horrible truth - financial incompetence and mismanagement.

- \* **The Hornsby Quarry fiasco** which resulted in all rate payers being slugged a 'special rate payment' of \$400- each to cover their incompetent management of the CSR deal.
  - \* **The Galston Equestrian Centre**, built at a cost (over a decade ago) of **\$6.3 million** using S94 funds (mostly from the Waitara unit blocks). It served an estimated 300 people, and per chance the HSC GM [Ball] happened to live in Galston & his two daughters were equestrian champions! It is now valued at \$3.2 million, a DECREASE of 50%!! Surely this must be the only parcel of land in the Sydney metro area that has lost so much value? Another example of HSC's incompetent financial ability.
  - \* **The 'Water Clock'** A Mick Gallagher [mayor at the time] folly which has cost millions of dollars, does not work and continues to this day to bleed council funds for repairs & upkeep.
  - \* **The Hornsby Pool** which failed due to insufficient upkeep, a decision made by the council & documented in the minutes.
  - \* **Inappropriate high rise development** as defined by senior government planners, RFS, Phil Koperberg et al.
  - \* **Asquith Community centre.** Conveniently located close to the station. Sold to developers.
  - \* **Pocket parks in Hornsby.** Sold to developers, against the protests of residents.
  - \* **Brooklyn Pump-out scandal.**
  - \* **CWA building Hornsby.** Demolished despite having significant historical architectural value, documented by experts in the field.
- These are just some of the disasters perpetrated by Hornsby Shire council.

The HSC letter claims they need this outrageous rate increase for things like footpaths, public toilets, sports grounds, stormwater, protecting bushland etc. So what do they do with the rates we already pay?!

The truth is that HSC work with the following definition of consultation: 'This is what we are going to do, and now we have told you!'

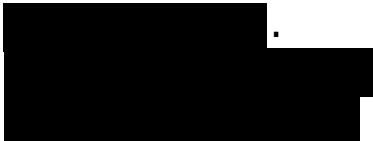
What HSC really need rather than an inappropriate rate hike is an investigation into their affairs by ASIC.



**If Hornsby Shire Council is no longer a viable entity, it needs to be divided up and the parts added to adjoining councils.**

**IPART, please,** we, the residents and ratepayers of Hornsby shire need IPART to **refuse this outrageous proposed rate 'tax'** by HSC, (especially at this difficult time) and direct them to work within the IPART forecasted rate peg!

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
Please refer to attached letter.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Hornsby Shire Council has treated the community consultation as 'tick & flick', (again)! It has completely ignored the wishes of the community as shown in the results of the community consultation, where the overwhelming majority of submissions rejected the SRV. As a former Hornsby Council Mayor stated to me regarding my question on the community consultation, 'We have to do it - its mandated' What he also meant was that they were under no obligation to take the community's wishes into action! This action of council NOT ACTING on the results of community consultation is against the intention of the legislation. Councils need to be mandated to ACT on the results of the results of community consultation. IPART need to enforce this criteria.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The request by HSC for double the IPART suggested SRV at this time completely ignores the financial stress that households are currently experiencing. {See attached letter for details}. HSC is completely out of touch with the needs and problems faced by its ratepayers. HSC has a history of mismanagement and money wasting (See details in attached letter).

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. They have brushed aside the issues relating to the communities capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

It's a drop in the bucket and does not help resolve the financial pain which their SRV (if granted by IPART) will cause to the vast majority of its ratepayers.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes? HSC are aware of the documents they need to provide to IPART and the community for consultation that is not the issue! The issue is that THEY COMPLETELY BLINDSIDE THE RESULTS OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION. Tick & flick!!!

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

It's a load of [REDACTED]rs. Page after page of bureaucratic m [REDACTED]o in an attempt to justify the unjustifiable.

Saturday, 25 February 2023

RE: Hornsby Council proposed rate increase.

Dear IPART

I am writing to you in relation to the proposed rate increase by Hornsby Council which they intend on tabling a submission to yourselves for an approved rate increase of 31% over four years.

As a rate payer of over 20 years, I do not believe this council deserves increases of this nature and I will table below why.

We have been residents of the M [REDACTED] Hornsby for 20 years since it was built in 2002 and in the last 4 years the council decided to remove our road access which was formally Florence Street in favour of a shared zone in line with the railway bridge over pass construction.

This shared zone has created nothing but access issues for our building **(which never existed prior)** with cars illegally dropping off people to the station, illegally parking and pedestrians walking in front of vehicles **(A young boy bounced of the side of a car 2 years back because parents were treating it as a mall)**

We have asked council at in person forums and several times in 4 years by way of petition **(attached below)** to resolve this issue and on every single occasion this falls on deaf ears.

<https://www.change.org/p/hornsby-shire-council-fix-the-florence-street-hunter-lane-shared-zones>

It's now at a point where access to our building is increasingly hard daily and Emergency vehicles even have trouble accessing it as our fire control room is at the rear of the building.

There is even NO signage telling people how to access hunter lane via this shared zone so that we have trouble getting deliveries to the building and when an ambulance can't pick up patients from the doctors' surgeries in our building.

We have approached the council on several occasions, we have also had meetings with the local member [REDACTED] where he has stated to me personally **"you're the only one complaining about this"** or **"This is a council issue take it up with them"** which is not true I have letters from residents of this building dating back to 2018.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] are happy to spend 3.5 million dollars of rate payers' money building an indoor cricket facility in Waitara oval not to mention the money spent on re surfacing that oval when it was not required and there is plenty of other sports not getting required money and this was only done because the [REDACTED].

[https://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/council/noticeboard/news/Work-begins-on-\\$3.5-million-indoor-cricket-centre](https://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/council/noticeboard/news/Work-begins-on-$3.5-million-indoor-cricket-centre)

I will now table why the council does not deserve this rate increase because the contractor appointed to rebuild this railway bridge and the shared zone went broke and additional funding had to be obtained by the state Govt in Order to finish the project.

As per my petition we have provided them an alternate road solution to this problem which was ignored by State member for Hornsby and Council.

During the daily blockages of this shared zone with cars illegally stopping in a no stopping zone or parking in a clearly labelled no parking zone I have yet to see a ranger issue a single infringement in relation to this and a raft of other offences in the mall which is all revenue that is not being collected.

Instead, they decided to spend 4.7 million dollars of rate payers' money on refurbishing the library **(which is being taken down as part of their master plan)** so this in affect is a waste of money again.

<https://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/council/noticeboard/news/hornsby-library-opens-a-new-chapter>

and another **90 million** dollars on Hornsby and Westleigh Park which we do not need extra parks in this area.

<https://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/council/noticeboard/works/major-projects/westleigh-park/frequently-asked-questions/content/how-much-funding-has-been-allocated-to-westleigh-park>

The most recent waste of money by the council has seen the stairs on the new bridge painted to reflect rainbow colours (see Photo below) and the article.

<https://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/council/noticeboard/news/Hornsby-Mall-to-be-reinvigorated?fbclid=IwAR1pnQu0dwxMnHHF8zdLsnUPibfrDjS6gdkoQI6JsVVGLi9u1t8UNug0YJI>



Now does this look like a responsible council that should be granted a rate increase when they are simply not capable of getting the basics right? We have asked them time and time again to deal with this issue and it's ignored with the member for Hornsby saying it is a council issue yet seems to have no problems in chipping in money or posing in photographs below where they not only ruined access to our building but wasted more money painting it to make a road look like a playground **(Despite the backlash of the community when it was posted up on Facebook)**

<https://www.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/council/noticeboard/news/pre-2022/work-will-soon-begin-to-reclaim-Hunter-Lane>

As a rate payer Stephen Head, Philip Ruddock, Matt Kean, and various other councillor's and local Govt elected people have been contacted about this issue for several years and All we have had back in return are excuses as to why it can't be addressed.

During January 2019 [REDACTED] personally said to me “ **Do not go to the ombudsman office on your complaint to the shared Zone I promise I will get money to fix that mall and your lane way**” this did not eventuate and the last time I raised this with the minister he told me “ **I am not doing anything about this as it will create political issues**” but as you can see above he has no issue in approving 3 million dollars + for a cricket centre YET Ranger baseball club at Roafe park not only

needs a new club house to share with the AFL club they also need new Baseball nets as the current ones are beginning to rust.

If ANY money was to be approved by yourself than this should be table as mandatory for the council fix these issues properly once and for all instead of making long term residents suffer because the council is not capable of doing its due diligence.

They claim to welcome community feedback but as soon as it does not align with there views or narratives then you are ignored.

The most recent council rates announcement where they offered public opinion and held meetings around this 86% percent of the electorate rejected the rate increase with many sighting that the current way the council is spending rates is not financially responsible.

These are my reasons for council not being approved for the money as they simply waste it, and I am sure going forward this will be more of the same and as a rate payer I am appalled at the performance of this council and the sheer arrogance when dealing with rate payers.

I am happy to discuss any of this at any time.

Regards

██████████

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

From: Matthew Sent: Tuesday, 28 February 2023 5:17 AM To: IPART Subject: Hornsby Council Rate increases - Submission to Appose. Hi IPART I have tabled a submission apposing the recent rate increases by Hornsby COUNCIL for several reasons I have attached a letter which covers my points. If anyone would like to contact me to discuss this, please do not hesitate.

Regards [REDACTED]

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Edward Bennett Oval and Park [ *EBO* ] :

*New York State (?) .. and Canada (?) .. in the Hornsby Shire . . . . .*

*" a place to relax " , restore and revive . . . . .*



## 1.0 Introduction

- An upgrade is considered overdue, especially because the toilet block and fencing have been in place for around 40 years.
- Changes require recognition of the following main parameters :
  - utility ( i.e. overall benefit to people and families, not just organised sports );
  - ease of access;
  - ease of maintenance;
  - deterrence of vandalism (trees / toilet / fencing); and,
  - improved harmony with bush surrounds.



## 2.0 *Specific 'as is' concerns*

### a. Condition of Oval Surface

The surface has deteriorated and is weed affected, despite diligent restoration work by Council.

I understand that a Soccer Group funded top soil renovation and facilitated its supply 12 months ago.



It appears that such top soil may have been very poor quality.

Can restitution be sought if applicable?

### b. Organised Sport Free Sundays; and /or

organised Sport Free Saturdays once a month during the winter season

*EBO* is over-used, including during night training during wet periods.

The soil needs regular rest, literally (!).

### c. Additional time between organised sport matches on Saturdays

Insufficient time is allocated between matches to enable traffic to subside.

#### Summary

Greater acceptance of the full range of family and people use is necessary.

*EBO* should not be considered only as an " *organised sports venue with subsidiary diversions* ", for players who are bored between matches.

Thus the Master Plan process is commendable - and needs to be set in the context of

" *a place to relax , restore and revive* . . . . . " .

### 3.0 Feedback on Proposals

Attachment 1 (Page 10 ) contains some details of walker activity, previously submitted to Council .

The data suggests no viable business case for a number of the items (3.2 ; 3.3 ; 3.4 ; and, 3.5 ) below - for either the short, medium or longer term.

#### 3.1 Water Harvesting / Bio

Ron Payne harvesting/bio complex is shown in Figure 1:



Figure 1 : Ron Payne

I cannot follow:

- how such a facility can be of any fit in EBO, when substantial pumping and piping to the existing EBO underground water tank would appear to be required. (?)
- how cost would be anywhere near the budget of \$430,000 ( ? )

Given other underground piping in the area, any expenditure of this nature in *EBO* appears completely unwarranted and uneconomic.

Perhaps the funds would be better spent widening and protecting the associated water channel adjacent to New Line Road.

As a related matter, use of Catchment Remediation Rate [ *CRR* ] funds for this bio/water harvesting "frolic" , if I may use that word, is most inappropriate in my view.

██████████ and ██████████ would be aware of my serious reservations about the business case behind such expenditure and the reference to the Audit Committee following the last *CRR* review Paper.

### 3.2 Sandstone Seating

Seating behind goal posts or wickets is sub-optimal , from the aspect of sports viewing.

Similarly to Item 3.1, I have concerns about the value and usefulness of such seating.

Covid will likely constrain and concertina the number of teams by age groups in the near future.

The most populous group of supporters tends to be for the youngest age groups, because it includes parents and grandparents etc. . The older age groups have generally much less viewer participation from my experience. However, even the younger groups do not have sufficient viewer participation to warrant any "mini - grandstand "; such viewers like to be near the sidelines, in any case.

The business case for sandstone seating needs to be reviewed. In addition, relevant contribution(s) should be made by the adjacent WPHSports Club, as appropriate.

### 3.3 Pedestrian Circuit

Please refer Attachment 1. This proposal would appear to be a "business case fail".

### 3.4 Fitness Trail

Please refer to Item 3.3 comments.

There could be some merit in this.

Fencing changes/ updating to allow greater access from numerous points should be considered in tandem (see also Item 4.2, Page 7 below) .

### 3.5 Board Walk

This item may well become a vandal haven, as well as a burdensome maintenance cost. Not to mention the business case aspects.

Based on past performance, the area is likely to be overgrown regularly (refer Figure 2.)



Figure 2 Board-Walk area east of Oval.

### 3.6 Playground

An update is overdue.

### 3.7 Amenities Block

Change room amenities should not be contemplated.

Again, based on past experience with the Toilet Block ( which has been regularly damaged and used for drug taking - a case was reported to Police recently, with offenders apprehended) a "changing room " would be a serious error.

#### 4.0 Other Items

##### 4.1 Toilet Options

##### Figures 3, 4 Modular Unisex Toilet ( Epping Area )



The unit above services a busy area outside a shopping centre in Epping (53-57 Rawson St Epping NSW 2121).

A similar Unit should be more than sufficient for *EBO*.

**PS:** It would seem that the cleaning contractors in this case ( not Hornsby Shire ) are ubiquitous and consistent in their attention to detail (!), when one compares the state of the front and rear of the Unit.

#### 4.2 Fencing

Renewed fencing would have the advantage of facilitating access from numerous points. In turn , that would reduce pressure on verges and nature strips :

Figures 5,6 Existing Access Points



( .. like wearing sandals to a tuxedo dinner ??)



A combination of bollards and sandstone blocks could be more suitable.

#### 4.3 Tree Trimming and Replanting

- Tree trimming to enhance visitor (and property) safety needs attention, as already reported.
- Removal and replantings for non-native / unsuitable and dead and /or damaged trees, also require attention.

#### **5.0 Conclusion**

A beneficial overall result can be achieved, without huge and unnecessary expense; and with possible contributions from sports user groups.

#### **6.0 Parallel Follow-Up**

##### 6.1 Restitution for Oval top-soil

Apparent poor quality top soil provided and paid for by sports user groups needs restitution ??

##### 6.2 Colour of Adirondacks - Red (Canadian ), Teal (Hornsby ? ), Blue (USA). ??

Probably a cedar colour would be best...



I am not suggesting huge numbers - rather, such random seating would help set a " relax , restore , revive " **feel and tone** for individuals and families .

They would also not be too out of sync with existing seating on the eastern side of the *EBO*.

### 7.0 Next Steps - Collaboration

As the various submissions are considered and evaluated, having regard to items such as

- Council's budget ;
- relevant Court orders ;
- expenditure definitions; and ,
- Council' s tendering / quoting and order process,

I feel there would be substantial benefit, in terms of :

- ✓ early consensus; and
- ✓ time cost and prioritisations ,

for regular communication by [REDACTED] / [REDACTED] on progress, with a specific group of individuals who have made submissions on EBO.

Please consider.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]



**ATTACHMENT 1 : OVAL WALKING ACTIVITY**

**SUMMARY of Walker Activity - Circuit of Edward Bennett Oval Notes : \* ( Unaudited )**

**For the fortnight ended Sunday 20 November 2022**

<b><u>Days / Times</u></b> :	<b>6:00 - 9:00</b>	<b>16:00 - 18:00</b>
<b><i>Mondays to Fridays</i></b>	<b><i>Maximum - any one day for a 30 minute time period</i></b>  <b>2</b>  <b><i>Total Walkers</i></b>  <b>2</b>	<b><i>Maximum - any one day for a 30 minute time period</i></b>  <b>3</b>  <b><i>Total Walkers</i></b>  <b>3</b>
<b><i>Saturday</i></b>	<b><i>Maximum for a 30 minute time period</i></b>  <b>1</b>  <b><i>Total Walkers</i></b>  <b>1</b>	<b><i>Maximum for a 30 minute time period</i></b>  <b>2</b>  <b><i>Total Walkers</i></b>  <b>2</b>
<b><i>Sunday</i></b>	<b><i>Maximum for a 30 minute time period</i></b>  <b>0</b>  <b><i>Total Walkers</i></b>  <b>0</b>	<b><i>Maximum for a 30 minute time period</i></b>  <b>3</b>  <b><i>Total Walkers</i></b>  <b>6</b>

**\* Notes:**

1. Other walkers prefer to do their own " suburban trail " because it is less boring than an Oval circuit ; and, they can chat to neighbours, if so inclined.
2. A business case for some expenditures allocated, does not appear to exist for this location, based on the data summarised above.
3. New Year " resolutions " sometimes see numbers only slightly higher than in the Table. However by mid- January they fall away.
4. " Build it and they will come " -- sorry, I don't think so ... (!) ... in sufficient numbers to tip a business case.

**HORNSBY SHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2032 - COMMENTS****Table 1 : Comments on Proposed Measurement of Theme Elements**

<b>Theme Element Item</b>	<b>Proposed Measurement</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Liveable:</b> Connected and Cohesive	Volunteer participation rates	Not clear how calculated: Is a single day's volunteering equivalent to a person who volunteers 2 or more days per week ? The existing Baseline (24.9%) implies 1 in 5 residents are volunteers - which appears overstated / incorrect ? Should not the measure also include, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council followers via Email Updates from Council;</li> <li>• Council followers via Social Media (e.g. Facebook);</li> </ul> at least as subsidiary measures ?
Inclusive and Healthy	Number of medium density dwellings approved  Community Quality of life  <i>Refer also</i> Item G 2.2 'Plan for the needs of the community'	Baseline number of 44 appears surprisingly low - is it correct ?  Source and basis of calculation for "financial stress" unclear - If via survey, there may be natural exaggeration bias. Can this measure be reconsidered and/or obtained from defined and independent sources ?  The EPA (Environmental Planning Act) prevents proper planning - based on demand and realistic area supply (both current and available over time) calculations - in the case of Child Care Centres.  Should not this matter be slated for legislative review?

**HORNSBY SHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2032 - COMMENTS**

<b>Table 1 (Continued) Theme Element</b>	<b>Proposed Measurement</b>	<b>Comment / Observation / Feedback</b>
<b>Sustainable</b>	--	--
<b>Productive</b> Integrated Accessible Transport	--	--
Vibrant Viable Places	Prosperity  Tourism / Visitation	Should be GRP (Gross Regional Product ); not NSW "GSP" .  Visitor nights/ day trips : Not clear how day trips are actually measured. Is this data provided from Council estimates; or an external source ??
<b>Collaborative</b> Open and Engaged	Quality of Service	May I suggest that a significant component of this obviously unacceptable baseline result (55%) may be due to the quality of training provided to some of the contact telephone answering staff at Council ( via 9847 6666). Such individuals are the 'face of the Council'. Specific improvement suggestions: 1. Have a standard greeting. 2. Avoid double handling . Connection to an individual's message bank is fine in most cases - and especially when it is known that the person to be contacted is not currently available. 3. Conduct call reviews; provide praise, where warranted.

**HORNSBY SHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2032 - COMMENTS**

<b>Table 1 (Continued)</b>	<b>Proposed Measurement</b>	<b>Comment / Observation / Feedback</b>
<b>Collaborative Smart and Innovative</b>	Long Term Financial Plan	<p>The baseline measure of 100% appears (a) somewhat meaningless; and, (b) easy to achieve.</p> <p>That is because there are no related parameters, for example, such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how long will CRR loading remain in place;</li> <li>• proportion of income to be generated from rates;</li> <li>• what the proposed surplus goal is - either in percentage or dollar terms; and,</li> <li>• what target is applicable for aggregate surpluses held in reserve.</li> </ul> <p>There also is insufficient disaggregation in Summaries of Income and Expenditure produced throughout the year. That degrades transparency.</p> <p>Thus, reasons for variances from original budget are not always clear. In addition, under-estimation or over- estimation of costs for individual major projects are not readily identifiable.</p> <p>There is no reporting of ROCE - return on capital employed.</p> <p>I submit that the community indicators in this theme element are sadly lacking.</p>

**Table 2 : Comments on Theme Element Categories**

Item	Comment / Observation / Feedback
<p>There are 8 "G" categories in total.</p> <p>The total number of sub - categories ( G 1.1 etc., through to G 8.4) is 25.</p>	<p>Some of the Sub Categories appear to be very ill defined and have no specific measurement parameters.</p> <p>In particular :</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">G 8.4 "Roll out a network of internet of things".</p> <p>The "internet of things" appears to be an endless wish list which may or may not stand business case scrutiny. Surely there must be some specific process or technology under on-going consideration for possible implementation ?</p> <p>I suggest that <u>all</u> of the G- 8 sub-categories, and more specific measures related thereto, need a much closer look: e.g.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b><i>What specific education ? (G 8.3)</i></b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b><i>What "things" ? (G 8.4)</i></b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b><i>What specific partnerships ? (G 8.4)</i></b></p> <p>Innovation, in many cases, will be linked to available technology as well as implementation experiences. Is there a Business Case / Staff Ratio case associated with process / technology implementation?</p> <p>Should there not be partnerships and/or best practice links with Other Councils/ Other Australian States, which may already have tried certain processes and technologies that meet business case objectives / targets ?</p> <p>Should not there be greater commitment to employment of apprentices ?</p>

**HORNSBY SHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2032 - COMMENTS**

<b>Table 2 (Continued)</b> <b>Comments on Theme Element Categories</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Comment / Observation / Feedback</b>
<p><b>G 7.2</b> (Easily connect and communicate)</p>	<p>There is no specific measurement indicated for ease of use and access to relevant information from the Council's web -site.</p> <p>What priority is in place for a web-site review? (I ask this because it was flagged in community input for the 2021/22 Operational Plan Exhibition.)</p> <p>Is there a better web format used by other Councils?</p> <p>Can an organisation structure chart be provided to show Council Department responsibilities, key section / subsection personnel names and titles; and, their email contacts? [ Many matters can often be resolved, easily and simply, by direct communication with the correct responsible person. ]</p>
<p><b>G8.2</b> ( An Organisation of Excellence)</p>	<p>There is no measurement (s) indicated.</p> <p>Should there be HR surveys ?</p> <p>Should not Council's staff values be reported on ?</p> <p>Should there be State-wide Council comparisons ?</p>

Author name: [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Friday, 10 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

[REDACTED] Subject: Hornsby Shire Council SRV Hello I write to let you know I intend to forward a submission to IPART, via the web portal, late today 3 March (or, no later than 8:00 am Monday 6 March 2023 ). The attached items will be included, together with other relevant comments and responses in line with IPART SRV submission criteria. In summary, my submission will contend and show that the proposed SRV is unimaginative ; un-researched ; unacceptable ; and , just plain unfair. I understand from [REDACTED] that IPARTs web portal for SRV inputs is to close this afternoon; nevertheless, submissions on Hornsby Councils SRV may still be lodged via [localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au) in the very near term. Please consider. [REDACTED] 3 March 2023R

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING - 13 APRIL 2022

**Observations, Positive Feedback and Some Questions for the Future**

Non- Agenda Item Presentation (Short presentation proposed as per Page 1, herewith...)

I am very aware of how quickly 3 minutes can elapse - hence my summary.

Some related Notes and some Quotes are contained on Pages 2 -6 , for information and action - according to individual priorities, and, Council management collegiate resolve.

Acceptance of Responsibility

Picture a person, with arms across chest; and each hand pointing in the opposite direction.

Obfuscation

A general complaint seen from corporates and industry bodies who deal with Councils.

Little Things

Can someone please encourage RMS to make roundabouts and major median strips look like someone cares ?

Big Things

Is the EPA not due for an overhaul ?

Is Council addicted to shire rates income and building property for its own use - rather than seeking to diversify income sources ?

The Future and Community Strategy

Commendable ! ( Your Vision, Your Future 2022 -2032 .)

Are the proposed measurements realistic and sufficiently encompassing ?  
(Separate submission made to related Public Exhibition, which closed yesterday).

The items listed under each of the 5 areas above are just a sample - some related and more concrete observations, positive feedback, and, some questions for the future, are contained below.

Please consider.

██████████  
██████████  
██████████  
██████████



## HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING - 13 APRIL 2022

**Notes :**Acceptance of Responsibility

- The Budget Summary 2022-2023 .pdf single page (included separately, for ease of reference ) is positive.

However, it defies disaggregation - as well as identification of :  
key changes in deliverables and fundings; and,  
initially proposed costs of various capital projects.

- Use of acronyms is inappropriate in such a Summary.  
Can they be covered via footnote(s) ?
- "*....but it's in accordance with legislation....* " should not always be an appropriate response - especially when there is lack of transparency.  
What does the legislation actually say ?  
Reports must be tailored to the user.  
Relevant legislative requirements, if any, can be a footnote, or noted as available - together with reconciliations - for audit.

- Ovals Management :  
Is there a 'turf war' between sports management and playground management ?

Should the responsibility lines and work teams in that relevant department of Council ( not to mention any others ) be reviewed -  
so that, for example, Sports areas and Playground areas at the same location are ground/tree serviced and mowed " *in sync* " ?

- Should the term "Revised Budget" be dispensed with - and 'Year Forecast Expense' be used instead?  
Where "Budget" is a moving target during a year, can accountability ever be achieved?

Obfuscation

- I like the standard headings used in the various General Meeting papers; as well as the Item annotations on each page ! They are very helpful, relevant and corporate - esq. !!
- Can long sentences and introductions to paragraphs in Business Papers cease ?  
e.g. ' *The Table shows* ' .... rather than " the Paper / Table sets out the following information, which is consistent with....."

**Observations, Positive Feedback and Some Questions for the Future :**

**Hornsby Shire Council General Meeting. April 13 2022.**

## HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING - 13 APRIL 2022

Obfuscation (continued)

- Not everything with financial data, or with numbers, should always be consigned to an " Attachment ".

Key data warrants highlighting, within the main body of a paper - if necessary by tables and brief notes.

- Consistent terminology is important :  
When "bio treatment and water harvesting" suddenly becomes referred to as "bio treatment" with the same " Budget " allocation as for a prior year ( as applicable in the 2022 - 2023 Operational Plan Draft ) , the veracity of all project proposals tends to become compromised.
- Recommendations often appear too long:

.... for What specific outcome / action is an approval being sought?  
( ...the What, Why, Where, How, When and Who should already have been covered in the Paper.)

Little Things

- Abandoned Vehicle :  
An abandoned vehicle in currently (as of a.m. 12 April 2022) on Edward Bennett Drive Cherrybrook opposite House No. 44 ( which is within Ward C ).  
The need for removal has been reported numerous times to Council by Police and a number of residents, following on from plate confiscation by Eastwood Police command, in mid January early February 2022.

It appears Council's vehicle recording system is either never monitored, not used correctly, or, has information recorded inaccurately - yet, there is a special phone prompt on 9847 6666 for reporting of abandoned vehicles.

Regretfully, an "easy fix" has not taken place to date .....

- Roundabouts / Median Strips at major intersections - RMS and Council Roads.

A continual plea ! - can someone Please arrange to initiate regular maintenance - with some native plants ???

- Should all ' key ahead prompts ' for 9847 6666 be reviewed?

**Observations, Positive Feedback and Some Questions for the Future :**

**Hornsby Shire Council General Meeting. April 13 2022.**

## HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING - 13 APRIL 2022

Little Things (continued)

- Should not all calls to 9847 6666 be recorded ? For staff training and management purposes ?
- Does management actually visit and talk directly with all 'front line staff ' ?

Big Things

- Have legislative constraints on proper planning and implementations been identified?
- Is there a group-wide Risk Register ?
- Are skill sets ( and development thereof) recognised as more important prerequisites and constraints to implementations, rather than " funding ", per se ?
- Is there an over-reliance on consultants, for the sake of absolute perfection?
- Is there a standard Business Case Template in use , with relevant guidelines?

The Future and Community Strategy

- Is Castle Hill Road to become ' Gridlock by Neglect '?
- Have macro planning parameters, including net sales proceeds from crown land, been understood sufficiently?
- Can a proportion of government land sales be leasehold only?  
(In parts of London, freehold land cannot be purchased, for 'love nor money'... )
- Are shire population growth forecasts correct - to what statistical confidence level ?  
What are the specific implications for Hornsby Shire ?

*(there is no such thing as foreseeable future - only one which is worked towards, within our relevant lanes ..... )*

HORNSBY SHIRE COUNCIL GENERAL MEETING - 13 APRIL 2022

**Quotes :**

Elizabeth II:

- *We all need to get the balance right between action and reflection. With so many distractions, it is easy to forget to pause and take stock.*
- *Let us not take ourselves too seriously. None of us has a monopoly on wisdom.*
- *It's worth remembering that it is often the small steps, not the giant leaps, that bring about the most lasting change.*

Margaret Thatcher:

- *There is no such thing as society: there are individual men and women, and there are families.*

Eleanor Roosevelt:

- *Understanding is a two-way street.*
- *If life were predictable it would cease to be life, and be without flavour.*
- *Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That is why it is called the present.*

Oprah Winfrey:

- ❖ *You can have it all. Just not all at once.*

Mahatma Ghandi:

- *In a gentle way, you can shake the world.*
- *There is more to life than simply increasing its speed.*
- *Distinguish between real needs and artificial wants and control the latter.*

**Observations, Positive Feedback and Some Questions for the Future :**

**Hornsby Shire Council General Meeting. April 13 2022.**

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)  
16/2-24 Rawson Place  
Sydney, NSW, 2000  
(02) 9113 7774

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you as a concerned resident (ratepayer) of Hornsby Shire Council in regards to the recent submission/application for a permanent SRV - where Hornsby Shire Council is looking to implement a **31.05%** cumulative increase to rates.

Not only is this poor timing, having already implemented a permanent Additional Special Variation in 2022 of 2.28% but to apply for a SRV in these extremely uncertain economic times<sup>1</sup> is irresponsible.

An SRV will significantly add to the increasing cost of living and put unnecessary additional strain on households<sup>2</sup>. Over the last twelve months to the December 2022 quarter, the CPI (Consumer Price Index) rose **7.8%** the highest since 1990. And the Reserve Bank recently raised its cash rate 25 basis points to **3.35%**, its highest level in just over a decade<sup>3</sup>. The RBA have forecasted the rate will reach **4.25%** by the end of the 2023. Unfortunately, salaries/wages aren't moving at the rate of inflation therefore putting more pressure on households. This means on a \$500,000 loan with an interest rate of 5.68% p.a. (currently the average variable rate among lenders), this will add an extra \$90 to borrowers' monthly mortgage repayments. That's on top of the extra \$893 per month the average borrower has had to fork out as a result of last year's combined rate hikes.

To make matters worse the community were engaged at a cost of **\$81,840** (not including the cost to engage Morrison Low<sup>4</sup>) and then totally ignored. An overwhelming majority (**86.29%**) of the responses (1,977) did not support Council applying for an SRV.

When communicated to by Council as part of the SRV process I found that most of the average figures were the lowest possible, thereby putting a positive spin on the outcome.

For example: Hornsby Shire Council (via the Morrison Low report and their website<sup>5</sup>) stated that '*Residents in the Hornsby Shire local government area traditionally pay lower rates than the average rates of other councils in the Northern Sydney region and than NSW councils in the same category as ours*'.

Whilst that may be the case for some I found that not to be accurate - as the average ratepayer actually pays more than Ryde, The Hills Shire, North Sydney, Willoughby and Parramatta.

You'll find below that the average residential rate according to each of the councils listed for 2022/23 is significantly lower than that of Hornsby Shire Council.

**The Hills Shire Council** - average residential rate of the 2022 financial year is **\$1130.08** (without ASV \$1120.16)

**City of Ryde** - average residential rate 2022 financial year is **\$1066.12**.

**City of Parramatta** - average residential rate 2022 financial year is **\$1,018.04**.

**Hornsby Shire Council** - average residential rate 2022 year is **\$1,272.79**

Taking that into consideration the SRV was then applied to these existing 2022 rates (via individual Rates Notices) Land value, base amount and CRR (not including domestic waste management). And I found out that in Cherrybrook the impact will be **\$463.36**, Pennant Hills **\$488.81**, West Pennant Hills **\$500.66** and Glenorie **\$601.17**. Looking at the average residential rates being paid and the examples I've shown above proves that it's a higher overall average of **\$513.50** not **\$395.21** as averaged out by Hornsby Shire Council.

I understand that averages must be used to forecast and model certain financial outcomes but these figures are way off and misleading to the residents.

Therefore, I personally feel that Council does not have the communities best interests at heart and are not 100% transparent with its residents as clearly shown above. It is the view of the community that ratepayers' money (General Revenue) must be spent on Council's 'core' essential services. They are required to prioritise essential projects, defer non-essential projects and to seek (where possible) State and Federal Government Grants as alternative sources. It is Council's role to implement better financial management and to budget within their means. To increase efficiencies and productivity, savings, reduce wastage and to reduce overhead costs. No matter what figures Council puts up to tick a box for a submission for IPART, I personally feel they have not demonstrated acute financial management or regard for the community and it's interests – placing their own agendas ahead of the residents. They do not represent me or the community.

I urge IPART to carefully examine the motives and financial spend of Hornsby Shire Council and the overall timing and financial impact an SRV will have on the entire community and each household.

Yours sincerely,



References:

<sup>1</sup> *We are potentially heading towards a recession*  
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-02-01/australian-recession-risk-on-the-rise/101916388>

<sup>2</sup> *Rising housing costs remain a source of cost-of-living pressures for many households.*  
<https://treasury.gov.au/speech/opening-statement-economics-legislation-committee-february-2023>

<sup>3</sup> *Australian Bureau of Statistics – January 2023*  
<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/price-indexes-and-inflation/consumer-price-index-australia/dec-quarter-2022>

<sup>4</sup> Morrison Low were contacted and did not respond. Hornsby Council and GIPA (Government Information Public Act) were contacted as well but as per section 14 part 4(b) of the GIPA Act, couldn't provide the information requested.

<sup>5</sup> *Hornsby Shire Council Rate payers pay less?*  
<https://yoursay.hornsby.nsw.gov.au/srv>

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 20 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I have detailed the inconsistencies and misleading 'average' figures as well as the current rates of neighbouring Councils compared to Hornsby for Criterion 3 to substantiate my case. So for Criterion 3 the Council has not clearly shown the impact of any rate rises upon the community, has not demonstrated the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay rates, and has not established that the proposed rate increases are affordable having regard to the community's capacity to pay. By ignoring the request against a proposed SRV submission, spending undisclosed monies to engage Morrison Low and not accurately detailing the impact on ratepayers in the Hornsby Shire Council. I would like my entire submission to remain confidential.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes they did but the figures they've used are skewed averages. Hornsby have used an average of a residential increase of \$395.21. For example in Cherrybrook the impact will be \$463.36, Pennant Hills \$488.81, West Pennant Hills \$500.66 and Glenorie \$601.17. Looking at the average residential rates being paid and the examples I've shown above proves that it's a higher overall average of \$513.50 not \$395.21 as averaged out by Hornsby Shire Council.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes but the response was blatantly ignored.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

An overwhelming majority (86.29%) of the responses (1,977) did not support Council applying for an SRV. Council ignored the responses after spending more than \$81,840 to engage the community (not including the undisclosed amount they paid Morrison Low to conduct the independent analysis and evaluation).

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Hornsby Shire Council is looking to implement a 31.05% cumulative increase to rates. Not only is this poor timing, having already implemented a permanent Additional Special Variation in 2022 of 2.28% but to apply for a SRV in these extremely uncertain economic times is irresponsible. An SRV will significantly add to the increasing cost of living and put unnecessary additional strain on households.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. By using skewed figures the Council has portrayed a false narrative. The actuals are much higher causing greater impact to the community than the averages they've used. With the RBA recently raising rates to 3.35% adding to the general rising cost of groceries, fuel, mortgages and of water, electricity and gas bills I feel the Council hasn't carried out due diligence when considering the impact to the community. So of course they look affordable because they are not accurate.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Extremely vague and generic. It does give scenario breakdowns or drill down to specifics in terms of individual cases. A counsellor will be made available doesn't help me account for the SRV. Please note Council says interest will be charged and applied to late rate payments. So how exactly does that ease the burden that the community is currently facing.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

## Rate comparison table 2022/23

Below is a table that shows forecasts on the rate increase for residential rates after the SRV is applied.

**Table 3 Average annual rates**

Rating category	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026/27	Cumulative increase
Residential	\$1,272.79	\$1,380.98	\$1,484.55	\$1,581.05	\$1,668.01	\$395.21
Business	\$2,437.00	\$2,644.15	\$2,842.46	\$3,027.22	\$3,193.71	\$756.71
Farmland	\$2,133.64	\$2,315.00	\$2,488.63	\$2,650.39	\$2,796.16	\$622.52
Westfield	\$268,650.80	\$291,486.12	\$313,347.58	\$333,715.17	\$352,069.50	\$83,418.70
Hornsby CBD	\$5,149.14	\$5,586.82	\$6,005.83	\$6,396.21	\$6,748.00	\$1,598.86

The average residential rate will increase by \$7.58 per week at the end of the four years, business and farmland rates increase by \$14.51 and \$12.71 respectively.

Below highlighted in red is the actual impact on residential rates after the SRV is applied.

### Cherrybrook (with SRV 8.5%, 7.5%, 6.5%, 5.5% applied)

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
Residential	\$1,490.98	\$1,617.71	\$1,739.04	\$1,852.08	\$1,953.94	
Increase	N/A	\$126.73	\$121.33	\$113.04	\$101.86	<b>\$463.36</b>

### Pennant Hills (with SRV 8.5%, 7.5%, 6.5%, 5.5% applied)

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
Residential	\$1,574.22	\$1,708.03	\$1,836.13	\$1,955.48	\$2,063.03	
Increase	N/A	\$133.81	\$128.10	\$119.35	\$107.55	<b>\$488.81</b>

### West Pennant Hills (with SRV 8.5%, 7.5%, 6.5%, 5.5% applied)

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
Residential	\$1,612.36	\$1,749.41	\$1,880.62	\$2,002.86	\$2,113.02	
Increase	N/A	\$137.05	\$131.21	\$122.24	\$110.16	<b>\$500.66</b>

### Glenorie (with SRV 8.5%, 7.5%, 6.5%, 5.5% applied)

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
Residential	\$1,936.07	\$2,100.64	\$2,258.19	\$2,404.97	\$2,537.21	
Increase	N/A	\$164.57	\$157.55	\$146.78	\$132.27	<b>\$601.17</b>



## SUBMISSION ON HORNSBY COUNCIL SRV

### 1. Introductory Circumstances / Contextuals

- " *Distinguish between real needs and artificial wants and control the latter.* "  
( Mahatma Ghandi )  
(See also Quotes Extract from April 2022 non-agenda item to Council - Attachment 1.)
- Hornsby Quarry / NorthConnex :

*Both the Quarry, its use for NorthConnex and the associated Federal and State Fundings (or lack thereof) have left a real inter-generational cost, in my opinion, for Hornsby Shire ratepayers . . . requiring consideration of a wider and more elevated range of options and alternatives, going forward ... .*



Each of these ' contextuals ' are expanded upon in Part I, Part II and Part III of this Submission . . which outlines my real concerns about the SRV, as exhibited.

Submission components (Sections 2. - 7. inclusive ) are summarised in Page 2.

Please consider the wider range of alternatives and options presented, for revision of - and changes to - the proposed SRV.

2. SRV Concerns : Part I - ( Distribution of any deliberated increase(s) )

- 2.1 Businesses: especially those adjacent to Council owned parking
- 2.2 Yes - there is a " double dip " (and compounding) for VG residential values
- 2.3 Ratepayers to be levied a " fair share "
- 2.4 Summary and Conclusions - Part I

3. SRV Concerns : Part II - (Increase other Income and reduce Expenses)

- 3.1 Some Options :
  - a) Merging of Financial Reporting Functions
  - b) Sale of Software
  - c) Joint Planning / Infrastructure
  - d) Self-Insurance
  - e) Library
- 3.2 Income from leasing - e.g. Cherrybrook Station precinct
- 3.3 Revisit planned (SRV related) capital expenditures :  
' *Connected Walking and Cycle Paths* ' and ' *Technology* '
- 3.4 Revisit existing Capital Projects
- 3.5 Summary and Conclusions - Part II

4. SRV Concerns : Part III -  
(Renegotiate for share of Tolls and additional funding  
- as a special matter;  
Revisit productivity - going forward)

- 4.1 Loss of Council area to Parramatta
- 4.2 Hornsby Quarry / NorthConnex
- 4.3 Productivity Improvements Going Forward
  - (a) Working from Home and Alternative Uses for Council Property
  - (b) Realistic " FTE " numbers
  - (c) Consultants
- 4.4 Summary and Conclusions - Part III

5. Next Steps

## 2.0 SRV Concerns : Part I - ( Distribution of any deliberated increase(s) )

Any actual increase must be distributed fairly, to recognise that average land values can change at a much different pace, because of smaller lot sizes and higher density living -- compared with older (and perhaps larger) properties in established areas.

### 2.1 Businesses - especially those adjacent to or near Council owned car parking

Such businesses need to be charged a greater proportion of any increase - to reflect Council maintenance costs and the inherit business amenity that Council car parking provides - in my opinion.

### 2.2 Yes - there is a " double dip " for VG land values - Residential Rate Payers

Where particular established locales have a valuation growth rate greater than the general residential average (due to latter's being affected by smaller lot sizes / housing density ), then compounding over time will " skew " levied rates unreasonably and unfairly towards older and larger properties; even though such properties may have long term ratepayer residents whose occupant numbers per property may be much less than those for smaller land size (and higher density) properties. And, even though such properties were the " normal " sites in earlier years.

### 2.3 Users to pay " fair share "

The better principle to payment via land value is payment representing "fair share" of use of Council services. Council rates should not be a quasi land tax.

### 2.4 Summary and Conclusions - Part I

- ✓ Avoid additional " automatic " use of land value, going forward.
- ✓ Should not the "Catchment Remediation Rate" remain fixed ?
- ✓ Apply a wider range of criteria for distribution of any deliberated increase - e.g. businesses adjacent to Council owned and operated car parking.

### 3.0 SRV Concerns : Part II - (Increase other Income and reduce Expenses)

These items are consistent with the need for a wider range of options and alternatives, as well as the need to consider " wants vs. needs ".

#### 3.1 a) Merging of Financial Reporting Functions

- Has any consideration been given to centralising, say, back-office data input and accounting report production, with a special function group (*SFG*) across a number of Councils?
- Could such an *SFG* have synergistic and significant productivity benefits via:
  - savings on equipment and property costs ;
  - flexible shift operations, improving timeliness of reports production;
  - lower cost of staff training; and
  - better skills fit and demand for type of work involved ?

#### b) Sale of Software to Other Councils

- Is any developed software able to be packaged for sale to other Councils?
- Can any Council employed software developers be contracted to other Councils, on a fees for service basis?

#### c) Joint Planning Studies

- Is there any scope for cost recovery for planning input and/or other specialised research provided to Department of Planning and Environment ?

#### d) Self-Insurance

Claims made on Insurance Policies over the last 3-5 years are significantly less than insurance premiums paid....

- Have policy coverages been reviewed and premiums renegotiated ?
- Should higher deductibles apply ?
- Should formal self-insurance be initiated ?
- Are Workers' Compensation premiums for Council, as a whole, over- subsidising higher risk State Government employees?

Concessions can always be negotiated for good risks.

e) Libraries

If I may, some observations, from my perspective on libraries generally: many city libraries are firstly and importantly quiet study places and subsidiary exhibition centres (rather than 'loan factories'); indeed, many larger ones are quasi museums.

- Are libraries overstaffed at study times?
- Are libraries understaffed at non-study times?
- Can book returns processing be handled by junior sub-librarians / apprentices?
- Can service desk / information / advice functions be carried out rotationally, by all rostered staff - including the in-charge Librarian - for an individual shift?
- What precisely is included in the funding and budgets for new libraries ?  
( See also 3.4 )
- Should not library funding be derived in larger part from developer contributions - rather than having those contributions allocated to the extent they are, for example, to the Hornsby Quarry? ( See also 3.4 and 4.1 )

3.2 Income from leasing - e.g. Cherrybrook Station precinct

I understand previous Submissions have encouraged non-disposal of Government land, and its use for leasing income instead.

- Can Cherrybrook Station land not be overlooked for suitable alternative use, for Shire benefit, please? Perhaps for Council / State Government Offices, with existing Shire Offices becoming surplus?

3.3 Revisit planned (SRV related) capital expenditures :

*' Connected Walking and Cycle Paths '* and *' Technology '*

- Are the proposed *connected walking and cycling paths* fully costed for associated roadworks, crossings, lights etc ?
- Is the walking and cycling path ' wish list ' simply a wish - not a need - when we see little use already for existing paths?

*(I have rarely seen a cycle on Pennant Hills Road on footpaths adjacent to the NorthConnex Admin complex. )*

- Re *Technology*, I am somewhat shocked that cyber security is a feature, when the risks have been well known for some time...  
precisely what funds are being sought and for precisely what purpose ??

Surely there are adequate audited data protection and computer recovery methodologies already in place ???

#### 3.4 Revisit existing Capital Projects

- Have existing (pre - SRV ) capital projects, other than Hornsby Quarry and Westleigh Park, been reviewed adequately with business case methodology ?

#### 3.5 Summary and Conclusions - Part II

1. I submit that much more can be looked at by Council's senior management staff, for income growth and expenditure reductions.
2. Relatively small past savings and expenditure reductions do not necessarily transport into the future in full - I think much more action is required than what appears, with respect, to be just a ' dust - off ' from previous SRVs; and/ or copies of proposals which may have been prepared by other Councils - undoubtedly many , if not all, with different and disparate history; geography, demographics; and, population density.

#### 4.0 SRV Concerns : Part III

##### 4.1 Hornsby Quarry / NorthConnex

Although some may question one of the reference sources (Notes:(1) Page 7) the scale of quoted investment for NorthConnex is considerable, by any measure.

1. Is it not possible for a case to be made for additional special reimbursement, from the State Government, because
  - i the Quarry is an inter-generational work in progress; and,
  - ii the Quarry ' upgrade ' will in the longer term, enhance the liveability of the Hornsby Town Centre area and provide better scope for higher density and affordability in adjacent areas ??and,  
because NorthConnex could well have had substantial cost benefits during construction, due to the close proximity of the Quarry (owned by Council) for spoil dumping ??

2. Further, the cost escalations for the remediation necessary at the Quarry will occur in an inflationary cycle phase over the next little while - a phase which NorthConnex has been able to avoid ??

#### 4.2 Loss of Council area to Parramatta

Community consultations have noted an NPV loss to Hornsby Shire in the vicinity of \$250m.

Surely a case can be re-negotiated for a State review - for example, by an interest free loan arrangement, to be repaid via a share of future Tolls revenue?

In making this suggestion, I am not familiar with the details of ' toll concessions ' nor details of the longer term arrangements for the Tunnel operations by Transurban. **Notes:(1)**

#### 4.3 Productivity Improvements Going Forward

##### (a) Working from Home and Alternative Uses for Council Property

Proposed constant staff numbers appear unrealistic and inconsistent in the real world.

Can "working from home" reduce pressure on Council Office space and release property for leasing ?

Do all staff need double desks ?

#### **Notes:(1)**

**Wikipedia- NorthConnex** : A\$3 billion, consisting of a construction budget of A\$2.65 billion in addition to land and project delivery costs, was funded through toll charges and a contribution from the NSW and Australian Governments of A\$412.3 million each.<sup>[28][29]</sup> The toll concessions of Westlink M7 and Lane Cove Tunnel were extended from 2037 to June 2048 to fund the project.<sup>[30][31][32]</sup> The toll concession of the M2 Hills Motorway was also extended from 2046 to June 2048 for the M2's integration works with NorthConnex.

NorthConnex is owned by the NorthWestern Roads Group (NWR), consisting of Transurban (50%), Queensland Investment Corporation (25%) and CPP Investment Board (25%).<sup>[45][46][47]</sup> NWR also owns Westlink M7.<sup>[32]</sup>

**ABCNews**: [https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-11/toll-road-giant-yet-to-calculate-profit-from-\\$3-billion-tunnel/8433904](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-04-11/toll-road-giant-yet-to-calculate-profit-from-$3-billion-tunnel/8433904)

(b) The real " FTE " numbers

The 2022 Financial Statements for Hornsby Shire disclose a favourable movement for " FTE ". Most commendable.

However, the numbers are for May spot dates.

Is the movement realistic and meaningful, where part-timers and casuals are employed over summer months / school holidays / other peak times throughout the year ?

(c) Consultants

Continuing use of consultants appears to be unabated.

Yes, they can add value. Many just "ask for your watch to tell you the time", from my observation.

#### 4.4 Summary and Conclusions - Part III

- *Both the Quarry, its use for NorthConnex (beneficial and unquantified spoil disposal) as well as the associated Federal and State Fundings (or lack thereof) have left a real inter-generational cost, in my opinion, for Hornsby Shire ratepayers .*
- *Productivity going forward needs further work.*

#### 5.0 Next Steps

- *Deliberation of a wider and more elevated range of options and alternatives, going forward, is considered mandatory.*





**Attachment 1.**

**Quotes :**

Elizabeth II:

- *We all need to get the balance right between action and reflection. With so many distractions, it is easy to forget to pause and take stock.*
- *Let us not take ourselves too seriously. None of us has a monopoly on wisdom.*
- *It's worth remembering that it is often the small steps, not the giant leaps, that bring about the most lasting change.*

Margaret Thatcher:

- *There is no such thing as society: there are individual men and women, and there are families.*

Eleanor Roosevelt:

- *Understanding is a two-way street.*
- *If life were predictable it would cease to be life, and be without flavour.*
- *Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That is why it is called the present.*

Oprah Winfrey:

- ❖ *You can have it all. Just not all at once.*

Mahatma Ghandi:

- *In a gentle way, you can shake the world.*
- *There is more to life than simply increasing its speed.*
- *Distinguish between real needs and artificial wants and control the latter.*

## **Input for Submission:**

### **2022-2026 Delivery Program including Operational Plan and Budget 2022/23**

[ Extracts from GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING 13 APRIL 2022-Non-Agenda Item Paper and presentation ; with relevant contextual comments. ]

- Re The Budget Summary 2022-2023 .pdf single page (included separately, for ease of reference ).

The summary defies disaggregation - as well as identification of :

key changes in deliverables and fundings; and,  
changes to initially proposed costs of various capital projects.

Can such identification be covered by a related footnote(s) for external and internal restricted assets balances and expected changes for their individual components ?

Use of acronyms is inappropriate in such a Summary. Can they be covered via footnote(s) ?

*"...but it's in accordance with legislation.... "* should not always be an appropriate response - especially when there is lack of transparency.

What does the legislation actually say ?

Reports must be tailored to the user.

Relevant legislative requirements, if any, can be a footnote, or simply noted as available, together with reconciliations - for audit purposes

- The terminology "Revised Budget" should be dispensed with - and ' Year Forecast Expense ' must be the preferred terminology, going forward, for quarterly Budget reviews.

Where "Budget/ Revised Budget" is a moving target during a year, I strongly doubt that accountability can ever be achieved.

- Capital project Items:

When "bio treatment and water harvesting" suddenly becomes referred to as "bio treatment" \* with the same " Budget " allocation as for a prior year ( as applicable in the 2022 - 2023 Operational Plan Draft ) , the veracity of all project proposals tends to become compromised.

\* Attachment 1 Item 3 - Capital Projects 2022/23 13 April 2022 General Meeting: \$430,000.  
Please note that the Business Case for this item is unsubstantiated.

As a separate but related matter, I note that there is also an oval and playground upgrade for Edward Bennett Oval (\$1.5m , committed agency funding by the NSW Government).

I would be most interested to know:

- (a) the precise nature of such proposed capital expenditure;
- (b) how such an agency allocation surfaced (e.g. via Council submission ?); and
- (c) what business case parameters were utilised,  
and/or are proposed , prior to implementation.

From [REDACTED] >

Sent: Friday, 24 February 2023 9:18 AM

To: IPART <[ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au)>

Subject: Hornsby Council's application for a Special Rate Variation (SRV).

**Criterion 1, Question 1** *Has Council Clearly established the need for and purpose of a different revenue path for the Council's General fund?*

- No it has not.
- We expect Council to prioritise essential core services such as parks, local roads, garbage collection. Defer non-essential projects until funds are available. This is common sense.
- Needs to budget within its means and implement better financial management.
- Council proposes expenditure as usual. Claims to have reduced staff but then contracts works out to private consultants at a price in excess of employing in-house staff.
- Council wants to fund a" wish list "established when it conducted 6 rushed consultation studies when establishing its future plan for Hornsby Council.
- Council claims that community surveys have set Council's priorities. Community groups have long questioned the validity of Council surveys.
- Increase efficiencies, productivity and savings. E.g. Council is said to over-order and over specify concrete for many works resulting in additional cost than warranted.
- Wasteful use of General Funds by engaging consultants to do Council's work. E.g. Cost of public consultation for rate rise was \$82,000 approx. Council would not reveal cost of employing the consultants who determined that Ratepayers could afford the SRV. It is rumored that the total cost of the SRV application is around \$400,000.
- Council claims the rate increase will be used to maintain both Hornsby and Westleigh Parks. These will not be anywhere near completed when the SRV comes into force. These Parks need an additional \$107M to complete. Council does not have the funds to finish them. Will Council be asking for another 30% rate rise in four years to

complete them because the NSW Government is unlikely to provide another grant similar in size to the \$90M Council got for the two Parks.

**Criterion 1, Question 2. Has Council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?**

- Basically no, it has not.
  - Council reinforces the spurious claim that the community supports the expenditure. At the final well attended public forum at the Hornsby RSL most community speakers were opposed to the SRV. Council's explanation did not satisfy the community members present. Council claims that once explained the community was satisfied. This was not the case. Only two very conservative community groups were in any way supportive.
- 

## Criteria 2

**Criterion 2, Question 1. Did the Council communicate the full cumulative increase of the special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?**

- In one way it did, however, using the average rate is deceptive and misleading. It hides the true rate rise.
- The average of rates across the shire is quite misleading and skews the result and hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners.
- The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rated household lower the average rate across the shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount.

**Criterion 2, Question 2. Has the council's community engagement Strategy**

***demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?***

- No, it has not.
- Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates.
- Advertised mainly on Council's website which most ratepayers don't read.
- Council held 4 public forums of which two were poorly attended.
- Council's pamphlet used in the mail-out provided a very positive false impression misleading the reader.
- Most speakers at the Hornsby public forum were opposed to the SRV. The General Manager Head did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function.
- Council documentation mentioned that Council was expecting increases in waste management costs. The cost of waste management is not paid for from the rates pool of money. A separate waste fee is charged for this service. Household pay for any increase incurred.

***Criterion 2, Question 3 Please comment on the action taken by Council to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.***

- Council ignored the community feedback.
- Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation.
- In these inflationary times with sharp rises in monetary terms of mortgage repayments and cost of living. This rate increase is a travesty.
- Even with the proposed additional \$50 pensioner discount, on average the SRV will still add an additional \$350 to their rate bill. If renting the pensioners will be dealing with increases in rents to absorb the rate increase.
- Consultants Morrison Low determined that the rate rise was affordable. Was this because they were being paid by Council?
- Council claims the loss of rate revenue is because of Epping's amalgamation with Parramatta (thanks to Hornsby Council's

mismanagement) is a causal factor in needing the SRV. No mention of the plethora of high-rise buildings that has occurred in recent times which have increased Council's rate base.

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### Criteria 3

**Criterion 3, Question 1.** Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers at the proposed special variation.

- It is not reasonable at all and the SRV should be rejected.
- The SRV will be on top of the cost of living pressures that ordinary households are experiencing. Increases in food bills have featured prominently on the national media. People are having to make expenditure choices not seen for generations, e.g. do we buy food or pay the rent?
- Inflation is currently running at almost 8% . Council's proposal for 31% is outrageous.
- House mortgages are now hovering at around 6%. Households and families are stretched to the limit. This rate increase could be the impost that forces them out of their homes with banks calling in their loans.
- The proposed increase in the pensioner concessions rate of \$50 is nothing short of insulting. The average pensioner SRV increase of \$350 is unaffordable for most pensioners.
- Council has lost touch with the plight of the community and have a complete disregard for us.
- Council MUST focus on core essential services and DEFER non-essential expenditure projects.

**Criterion 3, Question 2** Please comment on the Council's consideration of the community's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

- Council has a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire.
- They want more money for their self-inflicted financial problems with no consideration for the additional financial burden and hardship and stress on the families, households and local businesses.
- They need to get themselves in order and prioritise on the core and essential services and defer non-essential projects for another time.
- Disappointed with the Morrison Low report commissioned by Council which basically says the community has the capacity to pay and are willing to do so. Obviously the report reflects the council's desire for that outcome.
- Public forums clearly indicated that the community does not have the capacity or willingness to pay.
- Whilst Council's hardship policy at first glance seems reasonable, I can only imagine the stress of a ratepayer who finds they cannot afford the rate increase. It is hard to believe that Council will treat hardship cases with compassion. The final paragraph of the Hornsby's Hardship Policy says :  
*"14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates"*. This shows how compassionate Council is to its ratepayers. It is bullying people instead.

---

## Criteria 4 and 5

**Criterion**

**4**

**Criterion 5, Question 1** *In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment*

*strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response.*





Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Insufficient detail has been provided on alternatives. Council's main reason to explain the deficit in funding is due to loss of high density areas to Parramatta council. There has been no effort to consider adding additional housing to increase the number of ratepayers to match the numbers lost to Parramatta.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has disregarded the majority of feedback provided as it was 95% against the rise. They have advised that they have placed more weight onto the feedback given by community organisations rather than individual ratepayers.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has disregarded the majority of feedback provided on capacity and willingness to pay. The majority of feedback has requested council to reduce waste and focus on core services, however council has interpreted this as meaning that ratepayers don't want to see a reduction in services.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No details have been provided. Council has only stated they will review hardship provisions.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and

cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No NEED has been established, it's a wish list. Non essential projects should be deferred.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

HSC has not canvassed alternatives. Restore projects Defer non essential projects Implement better financial management Be more accountable and demonstrate openly spending to rate payers with better justification. Increase efficiencies or savings reduce wastage and overhead costs.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, however; the result is skewed as it uses average rates across Hornsby Shire. This is misleading and deceptive.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. It is mainly advertised on HSC website. This does not adequately inform significant cross sections of the public who can't or find difficulty in accessing it. What material is published is inadequate and questions the truthfulness of the impact of the SRV

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council did not demonstrate that the community concerns were considered in the final decision.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The rate rise is not reasonable and certainly doesn't acknowledge the current economic circumstances.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. HSC has not addressed the community's capacity to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

This is poor and the only evident relief is to pensioners, which in itself is not adequate at \$50.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

No further comment, other than the Council's application, as it currently stands, should be wholeheartedly rejected.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; doesn't appear to have adequately taken 'routine' increases due to significant Land Valuation increases into proper consideration in their budgeting process. appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The value provided for the 'Average' rate payer is somewhat questionable,

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

This process comes across as purely as a 'tick-in-the-box' exercise as: Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The elderly and young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times . . . noting that current Key current feedback and concern is on 'The Cost of Living'?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The definition of 'Hardship' is ambiguous, and the proposed increases will Significantly increase the Cost of Living for ALL ratepayers.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

N / A - unknown

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

N / A - unknown

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Given the current economic situation nationally it is unreasonable for council to request a 31.05% increase in rates when our land value has doubled and they will be receiving almost 100% more in rates from the ratepayers of Hornsby Shire. This appears to be double dipping to me.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

I do not recall receiving this information. Given that the valuer general land valuations have just been released and the value of our land had almost doubled, council will be receiving substantial increases in rates and there is no need for a levy. Most of the people I have spoken to in Cherrybrook land value has doubled since the last valuation.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

All families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed

special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I have not seen council's the information about hardship. However, everyone is experiencing hardship at the moment with the cost of living, excessive costs for utilities which are only going to increase higher, an additional increase of over \$1000 for my rates will not be sustainable. I am due to retire, and definitely won't be able to afford this increase on a pension.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I do not know the answer to this question.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I have not seen any productivity improvements and cost containment strategies.



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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Lets go back to the drawing board and start a fresh. This time lets take the time to consult, engage and provide feedback more openly, purposefully and transparently.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Not to my knowledge. Per feedback Ive provided through consultation process, this should be undertaken first. Rate payers should have a choice in determining what projects are needed and when. Non-essential projects should be deprioritised and/or pushed back. The proposed SRV increase is too high in one hit and should be lowered and rolled out over longer period

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not to my knowledge they havent. Theyve consulted but not taken any feedback into account and are pursuing their original proposal, which by my understanding of feedback from rate payers wasnt supported in the full. We need an alternative please.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

I do recall the dollar amount of the increase being advised but not the percentage, although I could be wrong as it was a while ago now. Anyway I do recall the dollar amount as a percentage being an incredibly large increase. We cant afford this n this climate of inflation and interest rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No I dont think they have. There was a letter that provided high level info and pointed you to their website for more information. The website was where you provided feedback. I think there was also a couple of community sessions as well. No community drop in stations, no social media, no surveys, no Q&A options, no progress updates, no this is what we heard reports - very average, almost like Council wanted this to pass by quietly in the night. It was by chance today that someone I caught the train with told me about this IPART process which is closing on 03/03. No advice from Council.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

As per above - nothing, not acceptable!!! They didnt enact their engagement plan. The consultation process was nothing more than a tick the box exercise. This is reflected by their upholding of the original proposal

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The SRV is simply too large for many rate payers to bare in current conditions. As per my consultation feedback, we understand opex, capex and new investment costs money. The point here is what needs to be done and by when. How might we implement differently to reduce increase and/or spread over greater period of time

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I did not see any evidence of this at all. It was more like this is what were going to spend the money we dont have one, and this is how were going to raise those funds to pay for it I.e. through SRV. Nothing about accessing alternative sources of funding like borrowing and/or seeking state government support

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

It was negligible, recall pensioners receive a very small offset but thats it. Again, hardship clause wouldnt be needed if the increase was fairly distributed over a longer period of time

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Do t recall seeing them, no

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Non existent in my opinion

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not. We expect Council to prioritise essential core services such as parks, local roads, garbage collection. Defer non-essential projects until funds are available. This is common sense. Needs to budget within its means and implement better financial management. Council proposes expenditure as usual. Claims to have reduced staff but then contracts works out to private consultants at a price in excess of employing in-house staff. Council wants to fund a wish list established when it conducted 6 rushed consultation studies when establishing its future plan for Hornsby Council. Council claims that community surveys have set Councils priorities. Community groups have long questioned the validity of Council surveys. Increase efficiencies, productivity and savings. E.g. Council is said to over-order and over specify concrete for many works resulting in additional cost than warranted. Wasteful use of General Funds by engaging consultants to do Councils work. E.g. Cost of public consultation for rate rise was \$82,000 approx. Council would not reveal cost of employing the consultants who determined that Ratepayers could afford the SRV. It is rumored that the total cost of the SRV application is around \$400,000. Council claims the rate increase will be used to maintain both Hornsby and Westleigh Parks. These will not be anywhere near completed when the SRV comes into force. These Parks need an additional \$107M to complete. Council does not have the funds to finish them. Will Council be asking for another 30% rate rise in four years to complete them because the NSW Government is unlikely to provide another grant similar in size to the \$90M Council got for the two Parks.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Basically no, it has not. Council reinforces the spurious claim that the community supports the expenditure. At the final well attended public forum at the Hornsby RSL most community speakers were opposed to the SRV. Councils explanation did not satisfy the community members present. Council claims that once explained the community was satisfied. This was not the case. Only two very conservative community groups were in any way supportive.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

In one way it did, however, using the average rate is deceptive and misleading. It hides the true rate rise. The average of rates across the shire is quite misleading and skews the result and hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners. The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rated household lower the average rate across the shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it has not. Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates. Advertised mainly on Councils website which most ratepayers dont read. Council held 4 public forums of which two were poorly attended. Councils pamphlet used in the mail-out provided a very positive false impression misleading the reader. Most speakers at the Hornsby public forum were opposed to the SRV. The General Manager Head did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function. Council documentation mentioned that Council was expecting increases in waste management costs. The cost of waste management is not paid for from the rates pool of money. A separate waste fee is charged for this service. Household pay for any increase incurred.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community feedback. Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation. In these inflationary times with sharp rises in monetary terms of mortgage repayments and cost of living. This rate increase is a travesty. Even with the proposed additional \$50 pensioner discount, on average the SRV will still add an additional \$350 to their rate bill. If renting the pensioners will be dealing with increases in rents to absorb the rate increase. Consultants Morrison Low determined that the rate rise was affordable. Was this because they were being paid by Council? Council claims the loss of rate revenue is because of Eppings amalgamation with Parramatta (thanks to Hornsby Councils mismanagement) is a causal factor in needing the SRV. No mention of the plethora of high-rise buildings that has occurred in recent times which have increased Councils rate base.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable at all and the SRV should be rejected. The SRV will be on top of the cost of living pressures that ordinary households are experiencing. Increases in food bills have featured prominently on the national media. People are having to

make expenditure choices not seen for generations, e.g. do we buy food or pay the rent? Inflation is currently running at almost 8% . Councils proposal for 31% is outrageous. House mortgages are now hovering at around 6%. Households and families are stretched to the limit. This rate increase could be the impost that forces them out of their homes with banks calling in their loans. The proposed increase in the pensioner concessions rate of \$50 is nothing short of insulting. The average pensioner SRV increase of \$350 is unaffordable for most pensioners. Council has lost touch with the plight of the community and have a complete disregard for us. Council MUST focus on core essential services and DEFER non-essential expenditure projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire. They want more money for their self-inflicted financial problems with no consideration for the additional financial burden and hardship and stress on the families, households and local businesses. They need to get themselves in order and prioritise on the core and essential services and defer non-essential projects for another time. Disappointed with the Morrison Low report commissioned by Council which basically says the community has the capacity to pay and are willing to do so. Obviously the report reflects the councils desire for that outcome. Public forums clearly indicated that the community does not have the capacity or willingness to pay. Whilst Councils hardship policy at first glance seems reasonable, I can only imagine the stress of a ratepayer who finds they cannot afford the rate increase. It is hard to believe that Council will treat hardship cases with compassion. The final paragraph of the Hornsbys Hardship Policy says : 14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates. This shows how compassionate Council is to its ratepayers. It is bullying people instead.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The Council doesn't get it. Given the 9 successive interest rate increases on mortgages, the Council needs to LISTEN TO THE COMMUNITY and shelve its plans for any rate increases. All they will do is increase the hardship currently felt by home owners.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council may have grand plans to address hardship but they've got to understand the immense pain being felt by mortgagees and retirees in the current economic environment. It beggars belief that the Council has ignored our previous submission and feedback and are arrogantly pushing forward to increase rates. This is totally unacceptable. We've been in this Hornsby shire for over 36 years and have always loved the area.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

All comments and observations made by me in the above criteria sections are "Without Prejudice " and based on that information currently available to the General Public I understand that council received 2,235 submissions and that 95% rejected the rate variation. Is that not a MAJORITY.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO--it certainly has not Council should defer ALL no essential works until funds become available through their due diligence and prudent financial management. We all have to budget within our means -- Council is NO exception. I understand they say they reduced costs by reducing staff levels --- but then go an employ Consultants who for sure are at a cost in excess of direct employed staff. What logic is that ? I also question the validity of so called Council surveys carried out FOR- --and so paid by-- the Council ---- surely a conflict of interests Finally I heard a rumour to the effect this whole issue is estimated to cost as much as \$400,000 !

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No--it has NOT.... Council say the proposal is supported ----- but it is clearly not the case. Make public the response received from ratepayers when this issue first raised.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Not clear. a single dwelling household pays a much higher rate ? Incorrect use of waste management fees and future increase in costs. This item is already a separate so any increase would flow on automatically ? No idea of ongoing efficiency measures -- what are they ?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

In simple terms -- NO Council has not

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Initial response by Council appears to be to ignore the Hornsby Shire people Their actions are unreasonable and on that basis should be rejected. Inflation is 8% --- not 31% -- and so everyone is already suffering financially Council MUST focus on core essential services and defer non- essential .

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Totally unreasonable. Shows lack of respect for the Hornsby Shire people.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Public forums clearly demonstrate the Hornsby Shire people do not have the willingness or capacity to pay these exorbitant extra costs -- especially in view of the current cost of living pressures. Council should look to themselves first -- their lack of experience ? appears to have resulted in the need for extra monies for self -inflicted financial problems. As an example of non-essential works -- how much did the numerous large obelisks saying Cherrybrook cost ( recently installed ) -- and for what reason / purpose.?

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

There would not be any hardship if Council were realistic and dropped this proposal in favour of talking to the Public on how WE all can improve efficiencies and so save money in the long term.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

NOT been advised ?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Inadequate.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Not to my knowledge, the council spent thousands of dollars consulting with the community regarding a special rate variation, my understanding is that 95.14% of respondents rejected the proposal

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not to my knowledge

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Not to my knowledge

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

The council spent thousands of dollars on a community consultation process which I believe 95.14% of respondents rejected the council's proposal

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the overwhelming rejection of the proposal SRV and proceeded to implement it

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The timing could not occur at a worse time with interest rates increasing rapidly, financial stress increasingly impact all households and council attempts to increase rates by 31.05% over four years

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Completely ignored the impact of present financial hardship on community due to inflationary pressure and interest rate increases

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I am unaware of any such proposal, but certainly would not be sufficient for present community pressures

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

My understanding is that 95.14% of respondents rejected council proposal

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Non essential work could be deferred, operations in previous 2 years severely impacted by Covid pandemic and processes and procedures implemented to contain & control thus rendering any comparison of efficiencies etc irrelevant and not comparable

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

We all need to manage our income and expense better council should do the same and pass on the savings to the residents rather than asking for more.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Not clear

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not sure, they do need to manage their finances better, other councils are lowering their rates for the benefit of the residents and the community. we are aware of other council's rate charges, it seems Horsby council rates is much higher than others and they want to raise even more.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

They have indicated the average dollar increase..

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

We've received notification by post.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Not sure, with my communication with the council it seems they are waiting for the response from IPART for their submission.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

We are already experiencing inflationary pressures, higher interest rates and increases in cost of living. We all need to manage better with what we have.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Not sure, most households don't want this extra impose.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

We are not aware of this.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

We are not aware of this.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

They have indicated on their website areas of expenditure, we have no way of knowing how they are managing their expenses..



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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

No

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council has a wish list of projects but has not prioritised its necessary projects

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No council has not looked at other alternatives such as selecting necessary projects only or increasing efficiency

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes but the true cost to single dwelling home owners is hidden. The rate is based on unimproved capital land value on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates but single dwelling households pay more.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No I only got one letter from the council about rate increases proposed and heard nothing more.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has not considered rising living costs and pressures on ordinary people when deciding the extent of increases. 31% over 4 years is significant.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed increase of 31% over four years will impose hardships on lower socio economic groups who are already under high pressure of cost of living. The proposed \$50 increase in pensioner concessions is too low

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Not a high willingness at all. For example the Hardship Policy says that the council will adopt the maximum interest rate to deter late payments. This is not showing much understanding of peoples financial pressures.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

More measures are needed to address hardship

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I think so

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No particular comment

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. No need has been established by council for this variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, no alternatives have been proffered to the local community. There are many ways in which alternative options could provide cost savings, including changing the scope of existing projects, delaying or retiring non urgent and non essential projects, changing the financial plan and management of finances and reducing costs and making savings on existing expenditure.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, however the council used an average rate across Hornsby Shire rather than by the rating category. This has resulted in ratepayers being misled or deceived by the information provided.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. The primary method used to inform members of the public has been advertise on the council website, rather than adequately informing the local community and engaging in a dialogue. Engagement commands a two way interaction, not text pasted on a website. More consultation and meetings over a number of days ought to have been provided to demonstrate engagement and achieve community awareness.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The council has established guidelines in its Community Engagement Plan which were not followed because council did not demonstrate that community concerns were factored into the final decision made.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed rate rise is unaffordable and therefore unreasonable for the majority of those in the local community. We are affected by the current economic climate and multiple interest rate rises.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Inadequate consideration has been given to the issue of affordability and capacity to pay. Spending is down, belts are tight and as the cost of living soars, pushing forward with a rate rise is clearly flying in the face of a plethora of economic evidence which proves the community does not have capacity nor a willingness to pay an increase in rates.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The plan is inadequate and ignorant, it only addressed assistance for pensioners with an inadequate concession of \$50. This shows a lack of insight and concern for people who will most definitely experience hardship as a result of any increase.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Not aware of any NEED being established. Non-essential projects should be deferred.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Hornsby Shire Council has not canvassed alternatives, such as defer non-essential projects, increase efficiency, cost cutting measures, better financial management and so on.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, but average rate was used across the board. Hence, result is misleading and inaccurate.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, not adequately informed of the true impact of special rate variation.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Hornsby Shire Council did not follow the Community Engagement Plan guidelines and did not show that community concerns were considered in the final decision.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The rate increase is unreasonable especially in this time of hardship due to inflation and interest rate hikes.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

The council has not adequately considered the community's capacity to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The council only assisted pensioners \$50 which is insufficient.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

It appears that the council has established the need for a different revenue path to support what the residents of the shire have asked for. It doesn't appear that the residents weren't made aware that the 'wish list' wasn't financially achievable with current income levels.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Doesn't appear so.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Below are excerpts from the results of the extensive community consultation - Considerable effort and resources were used to inform and consult the community for the SRV engagement and the draft LTFP. The use of a variety of engagement mechanisms (digital, print, community forums, letters, e-newsletters, emails, survey, submissions) demonstrated that there was sufficiently wide reach to all segments of the community, to be informed and given the opportunity to provide feedback. Overall, the submissions and feedback clearly demonstrated community awareness or understanding of the proposed SRV even though the general sentiment was not supportive of the SRV. The general community forums indicated an overall negative sentiment, or partially supportive (or neutral) sentiment toward the SRV. The business ratepayer forum indicated an overall supportive sentiment. The following word cloud was generated from the 55 comments on the SRV video post on Facebook (5 October 2022). From this was derived a list of 15 relevant keywords ranked by frequency of appearance. Overwhelmingly, the dominant sentiment that appears is poor or bad timing. As outlined in the themes above and the number of responses and submissions received from the community, there was a high level of community interest, understanding and engagement with the SRV consultation process. The multiple engagement methods, including the survey and the submissions received, demonstrate that Council's engagement process adequately informed and consulted widely throughout the community, even though generally the overall sentiment was not supportive of the SRV. This reflects that the community has been made aware and informed of the proposed SRV. In addition to the online survey, Council invited the community to make submissions about the proposed SRV, by email or by letter, during the consultation period and 506 submissions were received. The majority of the submission feedback reflects that there is knowledge and awareness around the proposed SRV and the process that Council is undergoing as part of its potential SRV application. Although a majority of submissions opposed the SRV, there was still some support and agreement within the community for the proposed SRV. This included awareness that rising prices were affecting Council as well as the community, and an understanding of why the SRV would be required to maintain the service levels that the community is currently receiving. There was further support if Council utilised the SRV for particular purposes, such as facility maintenance, retaining services or maintaining or improving assets and if Council considered a reduced rate rise. The overwhelming feedback, however, was not supportive of the proposed SRV. Some of the major common themes from the 506 submissions included concerns that the SRV increase was too high and would be unaffordable, especially in the current economic conditions of inflation, interest rate rise, and general cost of living pressures. It is seen as bad timing with the rising costs and financial stress on the community or as a waste of money or a money grab. The feedback was that Council has to understand how the community feels due to the current economic environment and financial stress. There were 1,841 respondents to the survey, who made 1,977 contributions. The majority of survey responses (65.74%) chose to provide feedback on the proposed SRV; 37.30% chose to provide feedback on both the proposed SRV and the draft Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), and only 7.94% chose to provide feedback solely on the draft LTFP. (Noting, that of this 7.94%, most comments were still related to the SRV component.) An overwhelming majority (86.29%) of the responses (1,977) did not support Council applying for an SRV, with 8.85% (175) as partially supporting, and 4.20% (83) indicated support for Council applying for an SRV. Out of the 1,977 survey responses, the majority of ratepayers who responded were residents (98.43%) as compared to businesses (2.58%) or other (0.91%).

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Unreasonable in light of current economic conditions and uncertainty

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Way out of step with issues the community is facing coming out of the pandemic and now soaring inflation. Based on significant community feedback, the majority are not willing or able to pay

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.  
Plans to address hardship only focus on a very small group

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?  
yes

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.  
Efforts have been made but if council was a publicly listed company it would be more focussed on productivity improvements and cost containment. Some tough decisions need to be made with regard to plans and spending. Treating the situation as - 'well you asked for these things so this is how you're going to pay for it'!

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, there has been no setting out of the Council's need for the extra funds, or at least none that has been provided to ratepayers. Indeed: Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not at all. As a ratepayer, and therefore a stakeholder in this, I have heard no canvassing of alternatives. The first thing we knew was the sudden increase in valuation. Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

It hasn't been sent to me, either by email or by post, showing disregard of the Council towards those who fund it.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Not seen a detailed plan, just high level proposals like bushland preservation at \$10M. Which bushland and what exactly needs to be done. Similarly for other high level initiatives like pathways, eye

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No evidence of considering project prioritization, efficiencies and savings

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. First time I am hearing about this, through some pamphlet at the local shopping center. No idea how this was communicated previously.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

No evidence of this

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Surely this is NOT the right time to increase rates on top of all the other macro economic effects on people's budgets. This is a choice, not a necessity, so why not do it at a time when people are not hit by increased mortgage rates, rents, energy costs, grocery costs, etc.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Unable to comment on their consideration for the community, but again, doing this at a time when so many people are struggling to pay for necessities seems very short sighted and inconsiderate.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

It only addresses certain parts of the community like pensioners. The vast majority of households are not considered.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Unable to comment

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Unable to comment



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council stated that they needed this Special Rate variation to cover expected future costs. However, some of the projects that they stated they needed an increase in funds to achieve were more in the "nice to have" rather than "must have". Residents were asked to fill in a questionnaire on projects that they would like to see achieved, but it was never explained that a Special Rate variation of 31% would be needed to cover these. Council admitted in a meeting that this had not been disclosed. An example of this is the construction of double width coloured concrete footpaths which involved the destruction of perfectly good single width footpaths, then the Mayor complaining at a meeting that they couldn't build footpaths in areas that had none.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not as far as I'm aware and I attended a presentation and information night. This month, the Valuer General issued new valuation reports. This has seen a huge rise of approx, 70% in the unimproved values for Hornsby this year compared to 2019 valuations. As rates are based on unimproved values, Council now has a very large increase in revenue that is an alternative to their Special Rate Variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes they did.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Definitely not. Council in their application to IPART stated they had fourteen(14) meetings with staff and rate payers. In fact, there were only four (4) involving rate payers. Rate payers who had lodged their email address with Council received an email stating that a series of meeting to discuss the SRV would be held and to lodge an application to attend, as places were limited. Rate payers who had not registered their email address got notification by mail The initial offerings were: 1) Meeting at Hornsby RSL 2) Meeting at Hornsby Library 3) Another meeting at Hornsby RSL due to demand 4) Zoom meeting. I registered and attended the first. It was held in the Boronia Room with just 55 seats available. Notification by mail of the SRV arrived in my mailbox on the day of the meeting so most ratepayers had no opportunity to register for that meeting. The meeting at Hornsby Library was more a question and answer type session rather than a presentation. It was held on a weekday between 1pm and 8pm when many ratepayers would have been at work The third meeting was also in the Boronia Room with the same 55 seats available. The ZOOM meeting was a presentation with little opportunity to ask questions.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Very little. At the meeting I attended, I raised my concerns that I would be liable for a rate rise of approx. \$750 to which the Mayor stated that I could apply for a pensioner discount. I stated I was not a pensioner and even if I was, I would still be liable for a significant rise. His response was "everyone has to contribute" I wrote to all the Councillors in my Ward and while one spoke against the SRV, they capitulated and voted for it.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The impact will be huge. In combination with the Valuer General's increase, the SRV will raise rates approx 78% in the first year and 101% by the fourth year. This in itself would be unsustainable. With real wages falling 4.5%, the rise in interest rates, cost of power, petrol groceries, no rise in pensions etc. this will cause real hardship.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

The Mayor's comment that "everyone has to contribute" sounded very callous to me. I did not see any willingness on their parts to take individual circumstances into account, or change the SRV amount due to negative feedback from the meetings.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Pensioners have an increased discount, but no one else. The Council's hardship policy seems to refer mainly to interest on outstanding amounts or delaying payments. This does not seem very compassionate. In fact, in their hardship policy they state " Council requires all ratepayers to pay their rates in full by the due date(s)".

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Hornsby Council, in comparison with neighbouring Councils has the highest consultancy expenses and average staff wages. They also have \$530,000,000 in investment accounts. They were proud to point out at the meeting that it had grown from \$500,000,000 in July which seems to point out that they have money coming in but are not spending it.

# NOTICE OF VALUATION

Land value as at 01/07/2019



Valuer  
General

[REDACTED]

Return to: PO Box 745, Bathurst NSW 2795

VALUATION DISTRICT HORNSBY

PROPERTY NUMBER [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Register of Land Values shows you to be the owner(s) or lessee(s) of the property detailed below.

[REDACTED]

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY [REDACTED]

DESCRIPTION OF LAND (Lot/Section/Plan)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

LAST DATE TO OBJECT 14/04/2020

## BASIS FOR VALUATION

The land value is the freehold value of the land excluding any structural improvements.

This land value reflects the property market conditions as at 01/07/2019. The land value reflects the physical condition and the way in which the land could be used as at 19/08/2019.

[REDACTED]

The land value recorded on this Notice of Valuation has been determined under the Valuation of Land Act 1916 for rating and taxing purposes. Land values have regard to the requirements of rating and taxing legislation and should not be used for any other purpose without the specific agreement of the Valuer General.

Valuer General

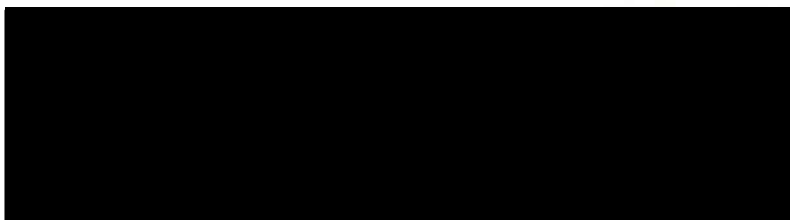
# Notice Of Valuation

Land value as at 01/07/2022



Return to: PO Box 745, Bathurst NSW 2795

Valuation District HORNSBY  
Property Number [REDACTED]

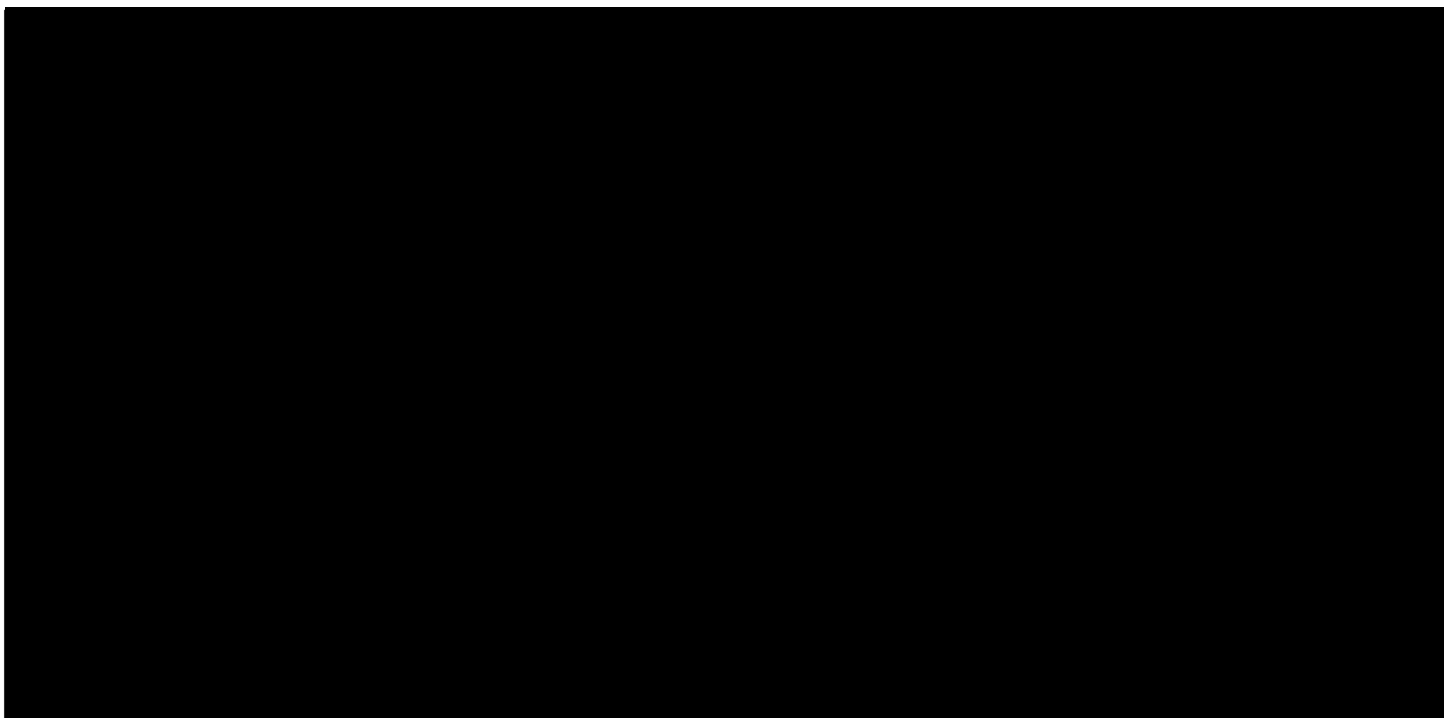


The Register of Land Values shows you to be the owner(s) or lessee(s) of the property detailed below.



Address of Property [REDACTED]

Description of land (Lot/Section/Plan)



Last date to object 14/04/2023

## Basis for valuation

The land value is the freehold value of the land excluding any structural improvements.

This land value reflects the property market conditions as at 01/07/2022. The land value reflects the physical condition and the way in which the land could be used as at 03/09/2022.



The land value recorded on this Notice of Valuation has been determined under the Valuation of Land Act 1916 for rating and taxing purposes. Land values have regard to the requirements of rating and taxing legislation and should not be used for any other purpose without the specific agreement of the Valuer General.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The number of residents in Hornsby Shire has increased dramatically with the explosion of unit development. Developer charges were levied to provide additional infrastructure and service capacity. There should be more income available to Council based on the increase in resident numbers alone. However, it appears the council manipulates some magic 'rate in the dollar' formula - to 8 significant figures no less! There are no details readily available and apparently very few council officers able to explain it, if indeed that is possible, rational, fair and equitable and aligned with the various services actually used by the various ratepayers. PS - why does Google enter into IPART's privacy policy ???

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO Council has failed to explore alternatives to [REDACTED] ratepayers. There is significant opportunity for efficiency gains on existing programs and works, including its infrastructure delivery. Councillors have, I understand, privately acknowledged that around 20% could be achieved. Council has not explored new new income opportunities, for example charges for real estate advertising in public space - that is just one for instance.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

NO The communications about the SRV were focused on promise of improved services. Service provision is generally adequate, and there was no information on the incremental benefit that might be realised with an initial 8.5% increase in the first year and a total 35% overall. See also efficiency gains and new charges for commercial interests, as above.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, but. Council presents the impact in terms of "average". It appears that the impact of the proposed rates increase (which is of questionable justification) is inequitable. Single dwelling owners will be subsidising unit owners - the very group that is arguably generating the demand for more council services such as better parks and recreation.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

NO There were limited opportunities to hear about the proposal first hand and question the assumptions behind it. Widely distributed pamphlets presented a very one-sided view. That said, it appears the majority of people that attended meetings and made submissions during the Council's consultation phase (perfectly timed to be buried in busy end of year/Christmas period) are opposed to the increase on the basis of financial hardship/capacity to pay. As a self funded retiree on a modest income and no real opportunity to grow my income stream I share these genuine concerns.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council's efforts to address the concerns of pensioners and those on fixed incomes is inadequate and demonstrates little understanding or compassion.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The impact on ratepayers is unreasonable. The justification for the increase is poorly made, if at all.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. This is crucial for many older residents has been given little consideration.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Inadequate.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Noted?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

see above

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I am concerned that this significant rate rise, timed with an increased cost of living and soaring mortgage rates, will see many rare payers having to sell their homes.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council are disregarding ratepayers request for the rate rise to NOT happen

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The rate rise is substantial, and not urgently needed. Cost of living is increasing to a point that residents will struggle to pay rent or mortgages.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has not considered the community's lack of capacity to pay. Council have repeatedly ignored the protest from rate payers.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

It doesn't sufficiently cover the hardship that will directly result from the substantial rate rise

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has not prioritised urgent works, a rate rise of this magnitude is not urgently required.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council has failed to establish any element of need. Instead, Hornsby Council merely intends to progress with a series of non-essential projects, for example, the current upgrade to the Great North Walk track around Cowan which just six residents were in favour of in recent community consultation.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. Hornsby Council offered absolutely no alternatives when proposing the rate rise. Specifically there was no consideration given to: -Reduction of waste, efficiency improvement and reduced contract expenditure -Project rescoping, re-prioritization, delay project commencement -Improve internal management practice I submit that Hornsby Council's failure to consider these alternatives and provide any transparent explanations as alternative measures is grounds for dismissal of the rate rise proposal.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. The full rate increase was only articulated in terms of an average rate across the shire, lacking the required detail across categories.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. There has been no engagement beyond the tokenistic request for feedback in which over 85% of residents opposed the rate rise. A total lack of rationale for the proposed rate rise is evidence for insufficient community engagement.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored community feedback and has not provided any response to any suggestions provided whatsoever

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Totally unreasonable in the current climate of increasing costs and mortgage pressure, this will cause significant undue hardship and is well in excess of inflation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

No consideration was provided.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Only pensioners have been offered a paltry \$50, with no consideration to the large number of young families with large mortgages now paying over \$1000 a month in extra interest.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No notice of this occurring has been provided to me.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Hornsby Council has provided zero productivity improvement and cost containment strategies in relation to the proposed rate rise. In my opinion this is blatant mismanagement and the fact the rate rise has been progressed without any indication of improved financial management highlights the contempt in which Hornsby Council holds the community.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No 'need' has been provided. We have only seen unsupported 'ideas'.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No alternatives have been canvassed such as alternate spend plans.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. We note that there are also significant land revaluations ongoing. Our own shows a massive 84% growth over the last 3 years. Since rates are partially determined by land value then this re-assessment also represents a significant increase in rates. Combined with a SRV that can make the annual rate rise hugely increased and unaffordable. The combination has never been explained.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

We don't believe that they have adequately engaged to demonstrate their strategy of how much we're going to have to pay, and what they intend to spend it on.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I am not aware that they have done anything to respond to community feedback

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

We note that there are also significant land revaluations ongoing. Our own shows a massive 84% growth over the last 3 years. Since rates are partially determined by land value then this re-assessment also represents a significant increase in rates. Combined with a SRV that can make the annual rate rise hugely increased and unaffordable. The combination has never been explained.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

We note that there has been significant ratable dwelling growth over the last few years (approved by council planning) and that rate income from those new dwellings should represent a wind-fall income to the council's budget. Why isn't that funding the additional things they are suggesting they want to do? Plus the dwelling growth (and new rate payee's) isn't slowing down with all the planning that is being approved by council

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The significant cumulative rate rise the council is suggesting will be across the board at a time when everybody is struggling with cost of living increases. The thing about rate rises is that you can't simply cut back/ switch-off the heating/ eat less.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The council has failed to demonstrate the need for increasing rates without first applying for state and federal grants. Council should focus on essential services at this time rather than trying to implement a wish list at this difficult economic time. Council should be aiming to improve the management and organisation of their body to be more efficient. Had they behaved more professionally, recreational areas for newly developed areas could have been made a requirement of the property developers, a common practice.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

We are not aware of any alternatives the the council may have canvassed.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Initially council did include some information, however what they have failed to take into account is the revaluing of residential land which was completed at the height of the property market in July 2022. The valuations have increased land values by over 80%(84.5% in our own case). This will have an enormous impact on rates for the forthcoming financial year and all subsequent years without the proposed SRV, and there is no evidence council has taken this into account.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

There has been a strong objection from residents with 95% of feedback received by council objecting to the SRV.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Rising interest rates and prices with housing price reductions is adding strain to all households whether residents are working or retired. Salaries are not increasing, or by very little and many are either in receipt of pensions or are self funded retirees in which case, they will not be eligible for any assistance. Their properties would have been purchased, often many years ago and the property values as at 17/07/2022 do not reflect their wealth for everyday living but they will suffer as they will fall outside any safety net.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has disregarded all objections to the SRV showing a level arrogance and disrespect to those who placed them in positions to serve the community.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The community is under immense financial pressure and another increase at this time will put many families in financial distress affecting their mental health.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No Need has been established just a wish list. All non essential projects should be deferred

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No it hasn't. Implementation of better financial management is needed. Increase efficiency and reduce overhead costs and wastage.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, but using the average of rates across the shire is misleading, skews the results and hides the true cost to most single dwelling owners

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, advertised mainly on council's website. Council held four forums of which two were poorly attended. Most speakers at the forum were opposed to the SRV

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Community feedback was ignored. Hsc received 2235 submissions and 95% were against the SRV

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The SRV will be in addition to the the rising cost of living pressures households are experiencing. Choices about expenditures have to be made. Mortgages have gone up by huge amounts and is putting enormous pressure on families resulting in anxiety and mental health issues. Another unnecessary rise is putting even more stress on families.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

HSC has not considered the community's capacity to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

HSc has only agreed to pay \$50 to pensioners which is grossly inadequate.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

There will be a majority who support an increase but may well not be in favour of the size of the increase. HSC will point to the majority who support an increase for their justification, but will fail to indicate what level of increase is acceptable to all. I support an increase but not at the level proposed by HSC.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Unknown.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

no comment

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. I do not believe that this has really been considered. There will be a majority who support an increase but may well not be in favour of the size of the increase. HSC will point to the majority who support an increase for their justification, but will fail to indicate what level of increase is acceptable to all.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Unknown, probably lip service comments.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No sure, did not see them.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Its all made up by HSC at the best of times.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, they want to fund a Wishlist of improvements, not all which are essential There has been no prioritisation

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. They could re prioritise the essentials from the nice to haves

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No, community consultation was not good, meetings were over subscribed so you couldnt attend

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

The community consultation ticked the boxes of what needed to be done

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They took no notice of the overwhelming majority response as. NO and recommended it anyway

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

They keep saying its a cup of coffee a week for each rate payer, in the current climate this is a smack in the face The impact of the cost of inflation has decimated discretionary spending

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

We said no we couldnt afford it

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Not that i can see

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

They ticked all the boxes required for submission , nothing more

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

They seem to have had financial mismanagement for some time and now we are expected to pay for it

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Please hear the voice of Shire residents - now it is not the time to increase the rates. The Council need to spend responsibly and must not squeeze more money from residents pushing them further into poverty.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Not really - they said they need an increase just because they want to keep spending the way they currently do, without conducting any spending audits, introducing cost controls and deferring non-essential projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

They have - by saying they'll have to review and prioritise the development and maintenance activities - and that is sensible for every individual or organisation during the time of financial hardship.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

They did, but Hornsby Shire is too big and rates var too much across the Shire so the average result provided by the council does not reflect the upcoming rate rise for the majority of ratepayers accurately

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it was advertised only through electronic means (e.g. website) and majority of meetings were held via Zoom which cuts off access to information for most vulnerable residents of the Shire

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Basically they didn't consider the community feedback - 86% of respondents voted against the proposal but the Council decided to still push ahead

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is fully unreasonable given the current financial circumstances. What's more, the new land valuation figures have been released this year (30% increase) - and I am sure the Council will use that updated figures for the applicable rates calculation - which would increase the rates for FY2024 even further. It is a burden the vast majority of ratepayers in the Shire simply can't afford.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

They said they understand the lack of capacity but they simply don't care - they just want more money to spend as they please

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The council has only agreed to assist pensioners with just \$50 which is fully inadequate given the fact the real rate rise will be ~\$500 p.a.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

They have not provided a reasonable feedback. One example was spending of 8.6MAUD to external consultants in 2021 - despite the numerous queries from ratepayers to explain the only answer given by GM was to the extent "we spend money as we deem necessary".

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Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

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Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

They have - by saying they'll have to review and prioritise the development and maintenance activities - and that is sensible for every individual or organisation during the time of financial hardship.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

They did, but Hornsby Shire is too big and rates vary too much across the Shire so the average result provided by the council does not reflect the upcoming rate rise for the majority of ratepayers accurately

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Basically they didn't consider the community feedback - 86% of respondents voted against the proposal but the Council decided to still push ahead

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is fully unreasonable given the current financial circumstances. What's more, the new land valuation figures have been released this year (30% increase) - and I am sure the Council will use that updated figures for the applicable rates calculation - which would increase the rates for FY2024 even further. It is a burden the vast majority of ratepayers in the Shire simply can't afford.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

They said they understand the lack of capacity but they simply don't care - they just want more money to spend as they please

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

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Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

They have not provided a reasonable feedback. One example was spending of 8.6MAUD to external consultants in 2021 - despite the numerous queries from ratepayers to explain the only answer given by GM was to the extent "we spend money as we deem necessary".

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Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No NEED has been established, just a wish list! Council should defer non-essential projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

HSC has not canvassed alternatives. 1. Rescope projects 2. Defer non-essential projects 3. Implement better financial management 4. Increase efficiencies or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes but the result is misleading and deceptive as it uses an average rate across Hornsby Shire.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, advertised mainly on Council's website and has not adequately informed the public or truthfully represented the impact of SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

HSC did not follow the guidelines in their own Community Engagement Plan as they did not demonstrate that community concern were considered in the final decision.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The rate hike is unreasonable given the current economic circumstances.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

HSC has not adequately considered the community's capacity to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

HSC has only agreed to assist pensioners with an inadequate \$50.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. The council claims to fund a wish list of projects not needed by the community. Council claims to set priorities for spending, but their own submission to IPART states these are aspirations of State and Local governments not the Hornsby community. Council expenditure is on private consultants paid at a higher rate compared to permanent staff whose numbers have been reduced.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. Council has not opted for essential projects only, and has not considered the re-scoping of projects to achieve more economical outcomes.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Council uses misleading average rates only rather than specifying the true cost to individual lot owners. The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the same costs of the rates levied for the home unit building site. This lowers the average cost across the shore and therefore is not considered full communication of the increase.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. The main form of advertising was via council website therefore rate payers had to seek-out engagement methods rather than be invited to them. The majority of public attendees at the forum were opposed to the SRV. Council has not followed in-full their own Community Engagement Strategy.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

95% of 2235 submissions to Council opposed the SRV. Public forums also demonstrated majority opposition to the SRV. The Community Engagement Outcomes submitted by Council to IPART demonstrates public opposition to the SRV.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

A \$50 pensioner concession is an insult. The average \$350 SRV increase is unaffordable and will result in adding to extreme cost of living stress, including but not limited to rental and mortgage stress.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council imposes the maximum penalty on late rate payments. Please refer to the Council's Hardship Policy. Council ignores community feedback regarding the community's inability to afford the SRV and the community's opposition to the SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council imposes the maximum penalty on late rate payments. Please refer to the Council's Hardship Policy. Council ignores community feedback regarding the community's inability to afford the SRV and the community's opposition to the SRV.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council has not established the requirement to increase rates. In a time of rapidly increasing inflation and costs pressures the council should be focussing on their core functions and not asking for exorbitant rate increases to fund special projects i.e \$18 million on connected walking and cycling paths. Individual Ratepayers have been forced to reduce spending and initiate cost savings but the council through this application are indicating that they are not bound by these realities and expect ratepayers to cover the cost.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The cumulative increase the council is proposing is totally unreasonable. The Australian economy may experience a recession during this time. With war in Ukraine increasing petrol, electricity and gas prices household budgets are already experiencing stress. To propose increases in rates in the current global situation that far exceed any reasonable measure conveys a complete lack of engagement with the community.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. There is no consideration of ratepayers capacity to pay. If any consideration existed such an excessive cumulative increase of 31.05% over 4 years would not have been proposed.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council indicated a \$50 increase in pension rebates.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

On 4th Nov 2022 at precisely 2:30pm, I wrote the following email to the General Manager of HSC to which I was not even given the decency of a response other than an auto-reply acknowledging receipt. This clearly shows one thing: Hornsby Council just DO NOT CARE about their ratepayers because they have chosen to ignore our pleas on SRV. To the General Manager, I say NO to your proposed 31.05% rate increase. Whether its over 1, 2, 3 or 4 yrs, the cumulative total figure is the same for our pockets!! Why are you increasing our rates when you cannot even manage the current maintenance of our suburbs? It also bears total inconsideration from Council to even contemplate the increase for your ratepayers at a time when people are facing the most difficult economic times. Council was voted in, to be guardians of the community for a better quality of life, not to provide more struggles to an already struggling community. Spend Council funds, our hard-earned funds, on essentials like maintaining our parklands, our streets, our roads. Everywhere you look, council footpaths are overrun by weeds. Roads are a bunny hopping scene loaded with potholes. Creeks and surroundings are so overgrown with weeds and broken tree branches, they make a great haven for snakes not people. So instead of thinking of raising our rates for additional revenue to spend on projects the whole community does not urgently need, be money smart and utilise your funds for our safekeeping. Hornsby Shire residents must have pride in their Council, It is therefore imperative that Council gains residents respect and pride by ensuring our suburbs are well maintained and provide excellent services! Spending our money on projects that do not benefit the majority of Hornsby Shire residents must be deferred to better times not during difficult economic times. Sincerely HSC Ratepayer

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

As a Ratepayer, Hornsby Council has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. Adding insult to injury, Hornsby council, being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. The Council has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? As a local body voted in by the people, aka as Ratepayers, Council must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Vaguely, with less enthusiasm, Council appears focused on fixing their financial problems by shifting the burden to ratepayers to pay higher rates. Hornsby Council has responsibilities to the ratepayers who voted them in, and as such:- Must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. Must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate. Must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. Must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority residents.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council's community engagement strategy is a farce, a slap to ratepayers, and one big hypocritical move! Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An OVERWHELMING 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are NOT willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). DESPITE the above results, Council completely ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

It is beyond audacity how Hornsby Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. It's almost like Mom says NO so go run to daddy -boohoo. An absolute waste of ratepayers' money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders. I really hope IPART see through it all. We don't need Councils who are there for their own interest and gains rather than that of the community. This is not the first time HORNSBY council slap their ratepayers. I think it's time we as a community act to put this council in place.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is common knowledge that families, in particular young families, are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times? There is absolutely no justification here!!

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Hornsby Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and PERMANENT 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail. And give hope not only to current ratepayers but also to our youth, the future generations, that YES there does exist a government body in this instance IPART who oversee greedy Councils who govern purely for themselves with absolutely no regard for its community, and in doing so IPART are able to provide a just and democratic society - which is a God-given right, and not something that must be continually fought for.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Not worth commenting!

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

IPART should consider whether council has adequately balanced its own desire to deliver on its strategic plan against what is really in the best interests of the community. The fact that the community expressed a desire for some of the projects listed in surveys cannot be used to justify these rate rises - the community may not have asked for these projects to be delivered if it was aware of the associated impact on rates. IPART must consider the timing of these rate increases given current economic conditions and the impact of interest rate rises and inflation on the community. It is time for council to minimize spend on additional projects (beautification projects, non-essential upgrades) not simply carry on with business as usual and expect the community to bear the financial impact.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I do not believe council has taken any meaningful action in response to feedback from the community which overwhelmingly opposed these increases. They have simply stated they will review their hardship policy, when they could have put forward a more modest proposal that reduced the financial impact on the community (e.g. rate rises sufficient to meet baseline costs only without delivering additional 'priority' projects; delayed delivery of projects, etc.)

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed increase is excessive in light of financial pressures currently facing the community. Council is prioritizing delivery of its own strategic plan over the needs of households that will already be struggling with rising costs and interest rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. I do not believe that committing to a review of the current hardship policy is a sufficient response. Other options are available including delaying delivery of special projects.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The plan lacked specificity. As above, council did not adequately explore alternatives such as delaying delivery of projects, maintaining baseline services only, etc.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The rate increase application is driven by Council's mismanagement of the funds in past 5 years. They have spent \$6 million on consultation fees alone in last year. The community refuses to pay for mismanagement. Need new council manager (preferably with not the highest salary in Sydney like is the case now). Council needs to stop spending fund on irrelevant and non-fundamental projects like dog parks and reduce the outgoings to various consulting bodies. The financials need to be made clear and public. This overspending has to stop. Council actively avoided engaging with community and refused to answer finance related questions

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The need has been established. Council basically advised the rate payers that rates are going up by 30% in 3 years because they think they need it. As for purpose - no list has been provided detailing in which areas exactly the extra revenue would be utilized.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. And council deferred all questions from the public which demanded answers to this question. They have ignored all questions requesting the review of overhead costs, increasing efficiency of savings or reducing wastage. No answers have been provided to requests to rescope projects or defer non-essential projects, absolutely zero plan on how council can better financially manage the fire. They simply skipped straight away to demanding more revenue without providing public with proof that everything has been done in their power to manage the resources they have

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, the result is misleading and deceptive as it uses an average across Hornsby Shire

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Absolutely not. If anything, Council actively avoided wide advertising the ways to engage. I follow Council's social media and Council posts several times a day - if they deem something important - it will be posted more than one time. They did post about 1 meeting only 2 days prior to it happening and when all seats have been booked out. Basically council posted notices as required by legislation, however they actively avoided actually promoting the consultation via their social media. They have set up only one face to face consultation with the public as far as I am aware and it was conducted in a small venue with only few seats available to attend which had to be prebooked. Basically the community did not get a chance to ask questions as they have set it up in a way so that those wanting could not attend. When the meeting happened all questions have been brushed off or answered with generic mumbo jumbo, no financials have been discussed

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Haha, what action? There was no action. Feedback from community is simply a box which they have to tick. They let it happen, pay as little attention to it as possible and move with whatever they have determined anyways. The feedback from community has been ignored. More than 70% of submissions were objecting the special rate variation and demanding more transparency on Council's financials. In response Council produced 100 pages report alluding on 5 pages that "community is generally happy with the Council" with statistic confirming objections to rate variation buried in the report and expressed literally in 2 lines

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The rate increase is absolutely not reasonable given the current economic circumstances. There is no 30% salary or other income growth over next 3 years projected for anyone

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council ignored all community feedback.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council has agreed to assist pensioners with an inadequate \$50

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I browsed Council's website and I finally found them - how many people would be determined to do that?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

There is no part in that application which lists any cost containment strategies with figures, just few generic statements.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The rate increase application is driven by Council's mismanagement of the funds in past 5 years. They have spent \$6 million on consultation fees alone in last year. The community refuses to pay for mismanagement. Need new council manager (preferably with not the highest salary in Sydney like is the case now). Council needs to stop spending fund on irrelevant and non-fundamental projects like dog parks and reduce the outgoings to various consulting bodies. The financials need to be made clear and public. This overspending has to stop.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council's communication has been poor and non-consultative at best. No list detailing a clear direction of revenue generation has been provided. They have basically advised the rate payers that rates are going up by 30% in 3 years because they think they need it.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, as mentioned, very non-consultative and autocratic approach in nature. In fact they have deferred all questions from the public which demanded answers to this question. Questions requesting the review of overhead costs & a better efficient spending have been ignored. No answers have been provided to requests to re-scope projects or defer non-essential projects; no plan on how council can better financially manage the fire. They simply skipped straight away to demanding more revenue without providing public with proof that everything has been done in their power to manage the resources they have.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, they have however, it is misleading as it uses an average across the shire. Rating categories are not clearly described. No overview of its ongoing efficiency measures and discussions on its progress against these measures have been clearly defined.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, they have avoided to the best of their abilities to engage wide varieties of public engagement meetings. I follow Council's social media and Council posts several times a day - if they deem something important - it will be posted more than one time. They did post about 1 meeting only 2 days prior to it happening and when all seats have been booked out. It appears that council posted notices as required by legislation, however they actively avoided actually promoting the consultation via their social media and other forms of community engagement or providing an ease of communication methods. Despite many of us who we know who actively wanted to participate in the only face to face meeting regarding the matter, we could not as the venue chosen seemed a deliberate attempt to have the smallest of the attendance possible and not enough notice to be able to book the session. When the meeting actually took place questions that were targeting towards the SV's rate increase and about its efficient use of the funds, they were not answered satisfactorily and no financials were discussed.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The feedback from community has been ignored. More than 70% of submissions were objecting the special rate variation and demanding more transparency on Council's financials. In response Council produced 100 pages report alluding on 5 pages that "community is generally happy with the Council" with statistic confirming objections to rate variation buried in the report and expressed literally in 2 lines

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The rate increase is unreasonable given the current and near future uncertain economic circumstances. There are no 30% salary or other income growth over next 3 years projected for anyone. With inflation at its highest, RBA rate hikes and now the council! Its quite ridiculous to even propose with terrible communication or lack of a revenue growth plan. There is no upside that I can see here.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Feedback has been ignored, like I mentioned in previous query, this council appears to be autocratic in many dealings especially this one. It has failed to provide a just system for community involvement.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council has agreed to assist pensioners with an inadequate \$50

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

It needed to be made easy to access for all community. This council has done quite well in keeping the community in the dark and simply trying to issue their wishes rather than whats best for the community especially in current times.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

There is no part in that application which lists any cost containment strategies with figures, just few generic statements. Paper written is extremely poor.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
The workings of Hornsby Council need to be transparent and community engagement needs to be prioritized. Stop the dictatorship Hornsby Council!

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. There has been no attempt made by Hornsby Shire Council to inform the residents about this. There has been absolutely no transparency. The Council has been sneaky in their approach and has increased the valuation of my land property by almost 75% so as to justify their rate increase. This is unacceptable. It is unclear why Hornsby Council rates are the highest among all Council rates when the services received in return are no different from those in the other councils.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not at all. High-handed approach as always.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

There has been absolutely no communication from Hornsby Shire Council and I still remain in dark as to the total increase in dollar amount. Their high-handedness is completely evident, there's no transparency and there was no consultation.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council has completely failed to make the community aware of the developments and this exorbitant, unreasonable and unjustifiable rate variation.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I'm not aware of any action Hornsby Council has taken in response to the feedback from the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Considering the current financial environment resulting in the financial stress on every individual /family, rate variation will be detrimental to survival and cause mental health issues, pushing residents to the brink.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The Council has completely ignored the community's capacity to pay the increase in rate. Their approach has been "take it or leave it".

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I have not seen the hardship plan which again proves lack of transparency and community engagement. All I have been notified of is my land valuation which is a whopping 75% increase.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I have been kept completely in the dark. Surely Hornsby Council could have utilized social media or online communication for this purpose however the Council failed to adopt this.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Hornsby Council has failed to explain and/or justify their higher costs as compared to those borne by other Councils within Sydney.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 2 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council has not provided sufficient & reasonable supporting reasons for the Rates Rise.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers' money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers' behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and

cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
Totally unacceptable

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No need for this at all Cannot see this at the right timr

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No need for this at all Cannot see this at the right timr

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes result misleading

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

HSC Did not follow the guideline

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Rate hike unreasonable

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Community cannot pay these high rates

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Only assisting pensioners. What about families suffering

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Unacceptable

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Unacceptable

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council has not established the need for and purpose of a different revenue path for its General fund. The projects Council proposes to fund from the additional SRV funds tend to be aspirational rather than essential services, and might be appropriate if Council had existing funds for them, but are not necessary enough to require residents to pay additional rates. Council needs to reduce expenditure on fees for consultants so as to have more funds for essential works and projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not that I am aware of. Council's claim that the community supports the SRV rate rise is contradicted by evidence, both by majority opposition to it expressed at its final public forum on the topic, and by the 95% of submissions received from the community that expressed opposition to the rate rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Use of averages does not communicate the actual and cumulative rate rises for individual ratepayers.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No,

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council's claim that the community supports the SRV rate rise is contradicted by evidence, both by majority opposition to it expressed at its final public forum on the topic, and by the 95% of submissions received from the community that expressed opposition to the rate rise. Despite 95% of submissions received from the community being opposed to the SRV rate rise, Council is proceeding with its application for the SRV rise. This surely demonstrates that Council is ignoring community feedback.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The current economic climate is making life difficult for everyone except the very rich, with recent multiple rate rises causing big increases in repayments for mortgagees, and big cost of living increases affecting everyone. Current economic comment stresses both these types of cost increases to people, and there are some economists who forecast a recession. Council is applying for a 31% increase in rates which is way above the current high rate of inflation. This is not the time to burden Hornsby ratepayers with additional costs in their rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council is quoting the conclusions expressed by its paid consultant as demonstrating the community's capacity and willingness to pay, rather than the evidence expressed by members of the community themselves of their inability and unwillingness to pay, as expressed in submissions and public forums.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council's Hardship Policy concludes with the statement that it will charge the maximum interest payment allowed on all overdue rates.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

MIS-COMMUNICATION / INFORMATION GAPS Ive been talking to number of residents, who are clue less of the net \$ impact of the proposed SRV to themselves individually as there was no communication to that effect other than general information/ average figures which can be a total distortion based on the standard deviation of the statistical distribution which is only know to the HSC and consultants. To date evn I dont know the exact \$ impact. I do not think any resident knows won individual \$ impact for that matter. MISMANAGEMNT : I strongly believe HSC is currently mismanaged they need to explain to the community the PUBLIC VALUE they have created with each tax payer dollar they have spent and held accountable . How many HSCs completed projects have gone thru a independent post implementation audit to confirm agreed deliverables have been met and expected value has been realised? TRANPARANCY : They have not shown any empathy toward the rate payers/ community like other councils eg (Hills) where it has an online rate calculator , one can see proposed change impact to varied scenarios. HSC have not even published the formula how the rate is calculated based on number of variables. Surely this can be easily done to expaln individual impact on the proposed SRV and new land valuation which is appox 70-80% more than current valuation used for rate calculation by HSC. All kept under generalistic approach taking / notifying average figures and generalistic FAQ comments on individual impact, keeping the community in the dark and confused. A fair go to the share residents is required. Community has lot of lessons learned and deserve better for hard earned money .

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why werent these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; appeared to focus their analysis on their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development Contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the communitys rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of rate payers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyones quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times. Council has chosen to burden ratepayers

with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Councils reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Please reject the council's SRV application. Only that way they will be forced to be more reasonable and realistic in provision of services

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. They have not adequately asked ratepayers whether we want money spent on the items that use to justify the SRV.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not fully. They have failed to present the alternative of cutting spending and cutting staff. Since the council area is now smaller, the staff should have been cut in proportion. Most of the proposed expenditures are really unnecessary. For example, \$6m on 'Sustainable and resilient community initiatives' and \$30m on 'Upgrading community infrastructure'.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

For the SRV, yes. A letter was sent to ratepayers.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

As with almost all engagement surveys, Hornsby Council appears to view them as a 'tick the box' requirement - meaning council is determined to pursue its original intention and tries to rationalise away objections. This has happened in my experience with numerous consultations. For example, the council created a 'high pedestrian activity area' in Pennant Hills, despite strong opposition and despite the fact that there are a few pedestrians. In all my dealings with the council, they have repeatedly demonstrated incompetence and lack of reasonableness. That the council gave up part of its LGA to Parramatta at a time when amalgamations were uncertain is another example of their poor management. Almost everyone objected to the SRV as excessive. However, the council falsely claimed that they need to proceed with the SRV in order to deliver the services the community said that they need. The fact is the broader community has never been consulted. They could have provided a survey form with the rates notice.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The compounded increase will be 31%. This is outrageous at a time when all households are facing rising prices on nearly everything, including fuel, utility bills, food, transport and cost of servicing debt. This has forced most people to cut spending in unnecessary areas. The council ought to do the same. It is particularly insulting when the incumbent Mayor and his party handed out leaflets at the last election claiming 'responsible financial management'. This was just a lie.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.  
Presumptuous.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

It appears so, but the council never informed anyone - they just assume you will look at their website.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

If they claim to have had effective measures in the past, why do they need the SRV? The council needs to re-assess the real need for some of its proposed expenditures and provide business cases, then fully inform and canvass feedback from ratepayers - not from people and organisations who consume these services but contribute nothing to council revenue.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

There needs to be a common sense approach to this process. Currently there seems to be very little of that. Look at any economic forecast and the next couple of years look a challenge. Let people bounce back from this and cut out the non essentials. Cut costs, get leaner, re-quote existing essential projects and then have a phased approach for the non-essentials over a longer period of time once the economic conditions bounce back. That's a more common sense approach than the outrages plan currently put forward.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

I don't think a need has been established. It looks like a laundry list of wishful thinking without real clarity on these actually being needed and wanted by ratepayers. In this economic climate, everyone i know is financially stressed or likely to be soon with ongoing interest rate rises and inflation. In my opinion council should be deferring all non essential projects till a more financially buoyant time and then introduce in waves rather than a big dump.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No they haven't. I think the focus should be on: -deferring anything non -essential as above. - Look at cheaper alternatives for essential items. -Implement better financial management and look to drive efficiencies where possible

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes they did however this is using an average rate across the Hornsby Shire which is misleading as it skews the results as single dwelling households will pay a much higher share than units (who share the increase) which there a plenty of in the Hornsby shire.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Not in my opinion. The amount of people i have spoken to who are unaware of the proposed changes is scary. Most people don't follow the council website where most of the information is held.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The council didn't demonstrate that the community concerns (from those who are even aware of it!) were considered in their final decision, which goes against their own Community Engagement Plan guidelines. This is far from demonstrating that have taken any feedback on board..

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

As mentioned above, we are leaning into a recession and this is a massive hike. This is unreasonable and also scary. Many residents are struggling with expenses as it stands, let alone with this increases. They will push many to the edge. Again, the methodology and timing is all wrong.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Zero consideration. Seems like they are tone deaf to the world around us.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

From what i could see - the council is only offering to pay pensioners some support via \$50 which is grossly inadequate. Whilst pensioners will struggle and deserve support (more than \$50!), they are unlikely to be the ones with large mortgages and children still at home - its us who will be impacted equally as hard.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not sure

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Not sure

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I voted for ██████ in every election. He needs to be politically put down as he is hurting the residents to make his legacy impressive. Hornsby Shire should not be a liberal retirement home.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Not at all. They have talked about spending more money upgrading parks like Ruddock Park, but no necessity to actually raise more money for their ongoing maintenance of the shire.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. The mayor wants to make Hornsby a bigger government, despite no actual necessity for this. They have not looked at options such as reducing expenditure on gold plating specific areas of the shire.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

I believe it's 30% but I suspect the council is deliberately making it hard to actually know what the full amount will be.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Have not heard a thing beyond a letter from the council promising a massive rise in government costs amidst cost of living pressures is obviously for our own good.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I believe their response has been precisely zero in any meaningful way.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

████████ wants to upgrade Ruddock Park and doesn't care about the shire residents who live nowhere near it. Most rate payers will receive absolutely no benefit from this rate increase.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council is only doing this as they believe we can all pay. They have done precisely nothing to engage with the current increasing cost pressures on rate payer residents.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The only impact council will have on hardship faced by rate payers is to dramatically increase it. I expect to hear nothing from them beyond reminders to pay and interest levies on being late.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I have not seen them. I am an active member of our community. Volunteering for Apex and SES. I spend a lot of time in different areas of the shire. I have never seen any documents beyond councils letter for this.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I have not heard anything on this topic from council. They haven't talked about the thousands of units being built, all with, albeit small, rates levies. Incoming rates should be high.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The council has established a need for an increase in collectable rates from ratepayers. However, it is the amount of the increase that is of concern to ratepayers due to the non presentation of optional costs and projects over the next ten years. Council recommended that all projects in the future are essential and not discretionary. These appeared to be not negotiable even though at public meetings the public attendees questioned that position.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

As per my previous comment, council didnt appear to want to move from a discretionary project budget to reduce the suggested rate rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Councils documentation and presentations were quite detailed in both percentage terms and dollar values. What didnt appear to be factored in were the very recent ( Feb 2023) NSW Valuer Generals land values increases of approximately 40% in some property Values around the Hornsby shire. These increases in land value will be factored in the rateable values council apply to rates, effectively raising the rateable base level by the VGs increases. This will place incredible financial hardships on a larger population of the shire than factored by Hornsby councils analysis and proposals.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

The variety of councils engagement methods appeared appropriate. Unfortunately the venues for the public discussion and feedback sessions seemed to be limited in seating and therefore limiting the number of the public that were able to attend and provide face to face feedback to the council representatives.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Councils actions on the community feedback appears minimal. Some additional allowances were announced for hardship cases, but it seems that all other requests for explanations and alternative finance models and cases were not taken into account.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed special variation plus the Valuer General land value increase is effectively a double increase and didnt appear to be factored into the SRV info presentation s of costing models. This will affect and impact a significantly larger proportion of the shire ratepayers than before.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Councils presentations contained financial analysis of the socioeconomic models within the shire. Most of the attendees at the public briefing sessions appeared willing to commit to an increase, but were not willing to pay at the increased rate council were proposing.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council announced that the IPart submission contained a method to address and expand financial hardship considerations . Im not aware of the details of that additional consideration information was included in the submission as the document in the submission is dated prior to the SRV discussion (document dated 17 April 2013). As previously mentioned the SRV submission did not appear to factor in the Valuer Generals UCV increase. This will place a significantly larger financial burden on the ratepayers.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Council have appeared to have complied with the above.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council appear to have explained cost containment in past years, but as indicated in my previous comments, there doesnt appear

to have cost containment strategies demonstrated in the proposed capital works budgets. This spending level appears to be able to be reduced to lessen the need for the amount of the proposed SRV. This seemed to be a common and frequent comment back to council..

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 3 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

It is irresponsible that the gross majority of HSC rate payers are deliberately ill-informed and therefore unaware of the financial burden caused by Council's intended staggering increase in rates, under the heading of Special Rates Variation. I do not consent to Council's application.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. No NEED has been established, only a wish list! It is Council responsibility to defer any non-essential projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. Hornsby Shire Council offer no evidence, therefore has not canvassed alternatives. Council has a responsibility to rate payers to offer alternatives for the rescope projects and other non-essential projects. Council has a responsibility to rate payers to prioritize better financial management and reduce overhead costs.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes. However, the inconclusive result is misleading and deceptive because the result uses an average percentage rate across the Shire.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. Advertisement was predominantly on the Council's website so has definitely not adequately informed the rate payer, nor has Council truthfully represented the huge impact of the Special Rate Variation upon the rate payer.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Appalling. Hornsby Shire Council neglected to follow the documented guidelines in their own Community Engagement Plan, because HSC did not demonstrate that community concerns were to be considered in the final decision regarding implementation of the Special Rates Variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Appalling. This proposed rate hike is irresponsible of HSC given the current economic circumstances which are only destined to worsen, in the current financial climate.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Dismissive. HSC has not adequately considered the community's capacity and willingness to pay because rate payers have not been adequately informed (ie., website only), and the rate payers are ill-informed of the huge impact which the Special Rate Variation will impose upon them.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Inadequate. HSC's agreed assist of \$50 to pensioners only, is dismal percentage-wise.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not applicable, since Council has failed to meet its responsibilities to rate payers, as laid out in my response to the above 8 questions.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Not applicable, since Council has failed to meet its responsibilities to rate payers, as laid out in my response to the above 8 questions.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 9 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

We oppose the request by HSC to increase rates by more than 30% over the next four years to cover their apparent lack of financial planning. To provide a background to our opposition, we have just received our new Valuer General's Notice of Valuation upon which Council's rates are calculated. Our valuation has increased 83.4%. If, as we suspect, this level of revaluation is reflected over large sections of the Shire, Council will be reaping a rate windfall, even without increasing its rates. If rates are not increased, due to the revaluation, our cost will climb by 39.2%. If they do go up, even without increases in fixed costs (highly unlikely), our rates will climb by 47.0%. If these increases are even partly reflected over the Shire, it is not unreasonable to think that the proposed SRV would be covered quite adequately and would therefore not be required. We are both aged pensioners and have to live within our means on a limited income. We can't break off bricks and tiles from our house to pay bills. We are not fly by nighters who moved into the area to make a quick profit; we've lived in this house, in this suburb, for 40 years. Just like we have to live within our means, Council should have to live within its means too. Considering the level of increase they are seeking, it would appear that Council has been living well beyond its means for quite some time.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

We do not believe so

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

There does not seem to be ample evidence of this

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

We received no communication about the proposed increases until we read it in the media

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Various communication methods such as email or letters does not seem to have worked sufficiently well

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Over 95% of respondents to Council's consultation process were opposed to the SRV. Council then ignored these responses and went ahead with the application

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

See our comments in the "Other" section

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

We are unable to find any direct reference to how this will be addressed

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

As above

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

It would appear so

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

It would appear so

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 10 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Phone submission - Name Suppressed Concerned ratepayer is very unhappy with the council, he is not getting what he paid for. He would like a refund. He cannot get anyone to fix his road which has pot holes and overgrown vegetation. This has been happening for decades. He believes that the politicians are not interested in helping, they are only interested in themselves and he says that we need to stop this rate rise. He raised concerns about overgrown vegetation leading to bushfire risk and damage. They are not maintaining the vegetation at an acceptable level. There is road damage and the road does not have sufficient road base which then causes issues in the road every time it rains. He told the council worker fixing the pot holes that he was not doing it properly, that resurfacing the road is a waste of time as the road base is insufficient. The council does not do anything about fixing this. He then raised that there are at least two areas where the road is subsiding where the river has pushed past the pipe and was flooding the road. The road has many deep holes in the road this poses a hazard which the council is aware of and not fixing. The road needs to be dug out and redone to be properly fixed.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 10 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I would also like to note that at the time the council requested responses to their rate increase proposal, they had not released their most recent financial statements (which based on previous years, had been released by that point in time). This meant that responders could not consider all of the facts and independently consider how well the council has managed (existing) funds. I noted this in my submission and this was ignored. It is unacceptable that the constituents did not get the full picture. Hornsby Council should adopt the approach of other councils and live within their means. The ratepayers do not have a bottomless pit of money and this is likely to push many into financial hardship. The council has also ignored the wishes of its constituents (most of whom responded AGAINST this rate variation) by proceeding and applying to IPART anyway.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. The council has advised residents that it will allow for greater services to be provided. In a high inflation and high interest rate environment, they should live within their means, even if that means that some future projects are put on hold.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

The only "alternative" I have heard mentioned is that they will cut back services and future projects. I think this is a far more sensible idea than hitting residents with a 30%+ rate increase when times are tough.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. They have mentioned certain projects such as the Pennant Hills Town Centre upgrade. They have wasted huge amounts of funds on projects like the Hornsby Quarry Park the (new) Westleigh Park and have focused a lot of funds in the more affluent parts of the shire such as Cherrybrook and Beecroft. Meanwhile areas like Mount Colah, Asquith, Hornsby Heights all look tired/don't get a lot of additional projects/services.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Initially, council only communicated the proposed rate variation via Facebook. When I submitted my objection to the rate variation, I noted in my submission that I was astounded that "mail outs" had not yet been sent to residents so that those on social media could also respond within the required time frame. A week or so after that, mail outs were sent. It meant those who were not on social media had less time to respond which I don't think is acceptable.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They have ignored community feedback. According to the council, the vast majority of respondents wrote against the special rate variation. The council unanimously decided to apply for it anyway. They are out of touch with the requirements of their constituents.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Like any household or business, the council need to live within its means. We are facing a very difficult time economically - interest rates are at record highs (compared to recent years), inflation and cost of living is out of control, people are genuinely struggling. This isn't limited to those living in Hornsby Shire - it is a problem faced across Australia. The proposed rate increases ranging from around 6-8.5% per year for the next few years - so why should be paying so much more. This will hit not just those households who "own" their property but local businesses and residential tenants. It is unaffordable. Forecasts are now that unemployment will rise and we are on the brink of a recession - in such circumstances it is definitely not appropriate for the council to be taking on high cost big projects and not living within their means.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I don't think this has been considered at all. In my submission I noted that (at the time) interest rates and inflation had increased significantly and this was impacting households and businesses. Interest rates and inflation has increased even further since my submission. Council have not acknowledged the impact on households and businesses in the Hornsby Shire. The response I received to my submission was essentially "thanks but we are doing this anyway."

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The only material thing I could see was allowing those who couldn't afford to pay an extension of time to pay. That's hardly much of a concession. It still means struggling households and businesses have to pay and in the meantime, the next rate instalment becomes overdue.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I assume (and would expect) Hornsby Council has followed the rules here but I cannot confirm either way.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I don't think it's been satisfactory. Like every budget - a household budget or a business budget - prices have gone up, supply chain issues have been impacted etc. Yet we are all required to live within our means. My view is that if it's a choice between doing huge, expensive projects (Hornsby Quarry Park, Pennant Hills Town Centre, Westleigh Park) and increasing rates OR living within their means and only providing basic services until their finances improve, I choose the latter. I would also like to note that at the time the council requested responses to their proposal, they had not released their most recent financial statements (which based on previous years, had been released by that point in time) - which makes me suspicious that they did not want to have their accounts reviewed to see how funds had been managed. It was not transparent and did not give constituents an opportunity to comment on the councils financial management (which I noted in my submission).

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 10 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Given the current economic conditions, families needing to be dealing with recovering/living with Covid and significant increases in home mortgage interest rates it is not appropriate nor community spirited for Council to progress with Rate increases. Council needs to better manage and direct the existing financial resources in a more fiscally responsible way (as families are required to do to live) rather than to put hand out for larger income. Council needs to take a long-term approach to managing/maintaining/improving/creating infrastructure/resources in the community within a reasonable fiscally responsible long-term plan. There have been no major unforeseen catastrophes resulting in Council reserves needing to be depleted and requiring this extraordinary rate increase.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Yes but significant information provided but unclear as to how the council arrived at this point. No real explanation on previous fiscal management or future planning.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?  
briefly

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Very little community engagement other than a direct contact.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

No advice provided by council on any feedback received.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Financial impact is unreasonable given receipt of Valuer General Notice of Land Value as at 1/07/2022. Land valuation increase from previous (1/07/2019) is 59%. Given this is used in part for Council to apply Rates there will already be significant increase in revenues to Council based solely on 59% increase in VG Land Values.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Hornsby shire is a diverse population with a significant increase in apartment dwellings. Previously community has complied with Council changes but expect that with lower levels of community wealth this will now challenge ability to cope with increases proposed.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Hardship provisions are in place and represent a very small portion of the community. Will probably significantly increase causing extra burden on council resources and dilute the effectiveness of the rate increases.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No idea! Assume so.....

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has most definitely explained this to comply with requirements but the community does not see any of these benefits on the ground.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 12 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They are ignoring the situation

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

With the current property valuation rise, and the council rate rise, will be Australian on any household.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Although the council lost a lot of revenue in 2016, that revenue has been replaced with the amount of units in which have been built since that time,

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

With a hardship, the right player has to pay the outstanding fee at the end of the day for the people who do not want to move to A more affordable area, they would rather keep their address.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Individual counsellors and employees should become accountable for any spendings unreasonably spent within the council of rate payer funding.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

To explain what the difference between council and any other business and why the rates cannot go up we CPI. With the 30% rate increase, and the 30% property value increase, this is like double dipping.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 12 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I am a residential ratepayer in the Hornsby Shire I do NOT SUPPORT Hornsby Shire Councils application for a proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase. Council ignored thousands of ratepaying residents who responded to the recent community consultation and who objected to the proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV) There is no justification for Council to burden ratepayers with its proposed substantially large SRV during the current and future forecast harsh economic times. Ratepayers would adversely suffer financially under Councils proposed SRV increase. The Hornsby LGA ratepayer community; o DO NOT NEED Council spending \$18M on unnecessary walking and cycling paths. o DO NOT NEED Council spending \$6M on unnecessary sustainable and resilient community items. o DO NOT NEED Council spending \$31M on unnecessary community infrastructure. o DO NOT NEED Council spending \$10M on unnecessary bushland and open space items. o DO NOT NEED Council spending \$2M on unnecessary planning and technology. o In summary, Hornsby resident ratepayers DO NOT NEED \$67M spent UNNECESSARILY by Council on any of the above proposed items. Resident ratepayers DO NEED and expect Council to budget within their means to manage and spend RATEPAYERS MONEY responsibly within its budget limits over the next 4 years WITHOUT the proposed SRV. Council must instead cut back non-essential projects, overheads and operate within its means and focus on its essential core services to its ratepayers. I STRONGLY OBJECT to Hornsby Councils proposed Special Rate Variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 12 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Dear Sir/Madam I am writing this letter to express my deep disappointment and frustration with the recent large land rate increase of 31.05% over 4 years by Hornsby Council. As a property owner in the region, I believe this increase is unreasonable and unjustified. The substantial increase in land rates will have a significant impact on my financial situation, and I fear it will result in a disproportionate burden for property owners in the area. Given the current economic climate, many residents and businesses are already facing financial hardship, and this increase will only compound their difficulties. I understand that local councils are responsible for providing essential services to the community, but I believe that this increase is excessive and not in line with the ability of property owners to pay. I am also concerned that the increase will lead to further inflation in the housing market, making it even more challenging for people to afford a home in the area. I urge IPART to consider the adverse impact that this increase will have on property owners and to reconsider the proposed increase. I believe that a more reasonable and equitable approach is necessary, one that takes into account the financial situation of property owners and the current economic climate. I would appreciate a prompt response to this matter and an opportunity to discuss this issue further. I look forward to hearing back from you soon. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 12 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Given this has come in a time of extreme financial hardship caused by inflation, interest rate rises and community challenge ... and add to that we have received Land valuations this year that have almost doubled which will have an impact on council rates .. and again on top that 95% of the ratepayers have voted NO to the projects that this rate interest rise is to be attributed to .....

WHY HAS THIS GONE THIS FAR ?? .. The council is NOT representing its ratepayers.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No .. the council has advised a set of objectives that are ambiguous at best with no clear objective in the delivering the needs as identified by the ratepayers

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No . They have simply stated their desire for the rise and based it on objectives not in line with the need for the council area or the ratepayers

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes to first part , no to second part !

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Unknown .. I simply received a letter in my letter box. I learnt more from community websites such as NextDoor

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Our 'representative' council simply ignored the NO vote of 95% of ratepayers to the rise and pursued the submission to IPART. In other words they forgot they were to represent the ratepayers not themselves.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

unacceptable given the current economic climate

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

What do you mean .. they simply ignored it. 95% of ratepayers in the survey said NO .. they ignored the result and with 'blinkers' on pursued their own agenda

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No .. again they simply ignored not only the hardship it would represent to ratepayers but also the vote of NO by the ratepayers

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Why you asking ratepayers that ? Should that not be part of YOUR responsibility to ensure?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

The objectives are not in line with the needs of the ratepayers .. hence 95% of the ratepayers in the survey said NO

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 13 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not. A council should not be an entity to its own and working outside the realms of reality. All of us are faced with financial hardship at the moment. We are required to make tough decisions... reduce activities children do, buy second hand books, let someone go at work. It is unreasonable of such rate increases when council have not realistically looked internally to reduce labour and overall costs that do not provide value.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No they have not. They need to streamline their internal processes, staff and look to find further cost savings. Just as every other business should do. A council is not an entity that is immune to economic conditions and needs to operate to the same standard the rest of us are operating.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 13 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I live in an area that recently was categorized as 'flood prone' even though I live on a hill and a huge drain runs down my street. I never made a claim for flood related damages or anything else related to my property. I recently received a notice about my land value, which i thought will be less than the previous evaluation because of the new categorization. Somehow however, the land value went up by 200k., which does not make sense. I have to pay higher rates because my land is more valuable, but the fact that my property is 'flood prone' devalues it if I want to sell it but at the same time my insurance rates go up. How does this work?

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, the council has not established clearly the need and purpose for the increase of the rates. Building a sustainable and resilient community, footpaths are not as important as getting those roads fixed. We have patched roads and lots of potholes appear after heavy rain. The majority of people in our area are battling financial problems because of much higher mortgages, high petrol and groceries prices, insurances and everything else that has gotten very expensive. The Hornsby council could try and make some savings of it's own and not put more pressure in the households.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 13 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Hornsby Council is behaving as if it is business as usual with a disregard for the impacts extreme weather events will have on the community. in the future. They are planning to raise revenue through rate rises to fund sports projects that the community cannot afford to maintain. As a resident I have no wish to put the community into financial hardship for facilities that will not benefit the Hornsby community.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

There was extensive community engagement that elicited feedback that appears to have been ignored by council. Possibly it was councils intention to apply to IPART regardless of community feedback and expect residents to come to this forum to object because it applied to IPART despite the overwhelming rejection of its argument for a rate rise, this wasn't clear.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

In my opinion one of the major failings of councils application is it's failure to be flexible in its demands...the message from the GM was the full rate rise or nothing with no consideration of an acceptable rise somewhere in between. I am confident the community understands the need for council to raise funds sufficient to maintain essential services within the shire. However when a large proportion of the funds that will be raised, if the rate rise is authorised, will go to building a regional sports facility that will benefit the north shore in general rather than just the Hornsby shire, is totally unacceptable. So many areas of Australia are being severely impacted by the extreme weather events caused by climate change, Hornsby will not be spared these catastrophes, if we are going to raise extra funds over and above those needed to maintain what we have then it should be to ensure our storm water, our sewerage, our ability to react to and survive bushfires are addressed.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The council appears to have just assumed that the community will be able to pay and have only made vague offers of rebates for pensioners.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

It may have been adopted by council but there was an overwhelming rejection by the community....consultation only seems be a box for Hornsby council to tick, not a means of getting feedback from the community and acting on it.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The timing of the councils proposed SV is extremely unfortunate and displays a high degree of insensitivity to the financial pressures already facing ratepayers within the Shire. At a time when many ratepayers will be forced to make difficult decisions regarding the "simple basics" of life, council's application for a 31% increase in rates over a four year period is appalling. The simplest analogy to this application is to ask yourself what the response would be if you asked your own employer for a 31% pay rise to meet your future expenditure needs. For the vast majority of ratepayers in the Hornsby Shire, the response would be obvious.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. The council has not demonstrated in any substantive manner, why there is a need for an increase over and above the already substantial rate peg increases that it enjoys on an annual basis. In both it's submission to IPART and its public consultations, there has been no explanation provided as to why the council has failed to manage its budget within the general rate peg increases, which have consistently been well in excess of inflation as measured by the CPI. No doubt, all ratepayers in the Hornsby Shire would like to be able to appeal for a 31% increase in their income to meet future expenditure needs. In the real world (that rate payers occupy), this is simply not realistic.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

The council has canvassed alternatives to the rate rise in a cursory and dismissive manner. During its public consultations where the question of alternatives was raised, the council stated that the only alternative would be to make significant cutbacks to services and or its asset maintenance program. It was clear that council had given little thought to genuine and innovative alternatives to the 31% impost on ratepayers, implying that the SV was a foregone conclusion and therefore alternatives were redundant.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Although the council has addressed the cumulative increase in the terms required by IPART, the disclosures have been skewed in order to minimise their impact, such as by quoting weekly dollar increases for the average ratepayer. I consider myself to be an average ratepayer and the increase in my case will be approximately double that which the council has disclosed. There are either very few "average" ratepayers or perhaps the use of average as the defined measure is not the best representation of the increase that ratepayers will actually experience.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

The community engagement process followed by council appears to have followed a "tick the box" approach. In its submission, council describes its community engagement with respect to the SV as having been "robust". This can only be described as flattering. The brief engagement period of slightly more than one month meant that most ratepayers were unaware of the proposed SV and more importantly, the magnitude of the increase.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Again, the council appears to have adopted a prescriptive approach based on the strict requirements of getting their submission through IPART, rather than a genuinely consultative dialogue with ratepayers. Indeed, at one community consultation event, the Mayor made a brief appearance at the conclusion of the event and claimed that there had been no increases in rates for the past ten years (a patently false statement). In addition, council has made no attempt to highlight that one third of respondents to a survey they undertook in relation to the SV, indicated that they did not agree with the SV.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

In the current economic environment (as at February 2023), the proposed SV is likely to have a highly detrimental financial impact on ratepayers and households more generally (given that the proposed increase will likely be reflected in higher rents of properties in the Shire). Given the likelihood that we will enter a recession in 2023 with the associated increase in unemployment, and already escalating costs that ratepayers are facing, an increase of 31% (albeit over four years) is likely to result in a sharp increase in ratepayers facing financial distress. Undoubtedly, this will lead to higher levels of mortgage stress and forced sales of properties, further exacerbating the decline in property values already being experienced. It is unclear that council has taken into account the likely future impact of the proposed SV on ratepayers household budgets more broadly.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council engaged Morrison Low to prepare a report on ratepayers capacity and willingness to pay. From reading the report, it is

clear that the report was prepared to fit a predetermined conclusion. Indeed on page 15 of the report, figures from the 2016 Census Data are quoted in relation to housing stress. Given the current economic climate, these statistics would be woefully outdated.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council's plan makes no provision for the likely financial hardship that will result from the proposed SV on ordinary ratepayers. Whilst it is acknowledged that those on fixed incomes (or income support payments) will be most drastically impacted by this proposed increase, there appears to have been little thought given to the impact more broadly in light of the rapidly deteriorating economic conditions faced by ratepayers. For instance, there is no modelling of how the proposed SV will impact the close to 50% of ratepayers with mortgages, who have incurred nine straight interest rate increases with more to come. This is not to mention those ratepayers who will be coming off fixed rate mortgages at some point in the coming 12 - 18 months.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Insufficient explanation has been provided in relation to productivity improvements and cost containment strategies. Anecdotal evidence of waste continue to be observed such as the non-essential installation of bio-filtration sites where higher priority issues exist (eg. urgent road maintenance).

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

What Hornsby Council is doing here is nothing but atrocious. I have lived in Berowra for over 40 years, and we have always been known as the forgotten suburb. We (Apex) obtained a grant for a pool in Berowra years ago - where did that money go??? We have asked and asked but get no response. I am fed up with paying for other suburbs to get facilities when we don't. The Council needs to be more accountable as to what they have done with the funds they have had. There is a lot of building going on in Hornsby Shire - where does that money go? I could go on and on but if I had a crystal ball, I could almost tell you that this is a total waste of my time writing this and the council will be granted the 30% rise because that is what happens in this political society we live in - oh how cynical I can be.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Business as usual model - what does this even mean? Every day running of the council should already be mapped out with budgets etc years in advance. If they hadn't wasted money this wouldn't even be on the table. They have not explained in plain English why the council needs to increase our rates. All we have done is pay out for them to mismanage. I am sure that councilor wage rises have been factored into this - who else has had a pay rise in the last few years? Not me.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

I haven't seen anything pertaining to alternatives, but I could name a few they could have done knowing full well that they didn't have the money to do things like:- planting trees (of which most are dead) - feasibility studies costing millions of dollars which I am sure could have been cheaper - empty council chambers which could have been rectified to save on rental premises and the BEST one ----- who on earth pays someone to dump their dirt into the quarry when Northconnex would have had to pay to get rid of it and council could have made money.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

I feel they did not - I am all for rate rise if the \$\$ are being used correctly but I don't think that the average person would understand why this is proposed. The problem then is that the council will spend thousands in literature to each household when there could be simpler ways to communicate. I would like to see the % of where all of this extra money will go to - it would be interesting.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I feel that they just ignore us and do what they want anyway - everyone I know has put in an objection but it seems as though it is still going ahead. Also who keeps them accountable with the proposal and make sure that the money is spent where they say it will?

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

30% over 5 years is a lot of money - with mortgage rate rises, cost of living rises and now rate rises it will cause an awful lot of hurt amongst the resident who live from week to week. Children will suffer. Also with the huge increase in Land Value this will also increase the council rates ----- so is the 30% on top of this???? So double win for the council.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

They have not taken anyone or anything into consideration - they have mismanaged the funds and now they just expect us to foot the bill - and no-one would be willing to pay for that.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

That is hilarious - I would love to ask them how they plan on doing this. I believe that you have to be on some sort of pension to receive any type of help - if you are on a pension you cannot afford any rise of any amount!

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

They probably have been exhibited but I have no idea where

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Again, it all comes back to mismanagement of funds - Long Term Financial Plan should have been done years ago and when realising that the funds would not cover what is planned cuts should have been made and decisions should not have been made to make "whoever" more popular.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Instead of Council crying poor over a merger decision from some years ago, as well as employing expensive consultants and draining existing resources on an SV application process, I would like to see the Council look at longer-term structural changes and reforms to meet the changing needs of the local community. The Hornsby CBD has considerable potential to become a major commercial hub to rival Parramatta, which would attract substantial revenues from commercial ratepayers and bring more opportunities for established local businesses. Towers could be accommodated above the existing Westfield Shopping Centre and surrounds, the Hornsby CBD as well as overstation development, without overburdening existing infrastructure nor encroaching on leafy suburban areas elsewhere around the shire. Indeed, doing so would capture more of the large number of commuters who currently pass through the Shire to the CBD, North Sydney, Norwest and Parramatta as well as encourage more local residents to work locally. Yet nowhere has this been meaningfully explored as a viable alternative to squeezing more money out of existing ratepayers, and doing so at a time when they can least afford it.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The need for a different revenue path has been somewhat outlined - clearly the reduction in households due to the rezoning of a portion of the shire to a neighbouring Council has affected revenues. Yet this is not a new issue, with the rezoning proposed and subsequently enacted a number of years ago. Hornsby Shire Council has had ample time to explore alternate revenue sources and review its cost base and existing expenditure profile. Hence an application for an SVR now shows poor financial management and planning in the past, leaving little confidence that an SV increase in rates would be well-utilised and managed in future.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, there is very little evidence that Council has pursued any alternatives to rate rises, nor conducted a detailed review of its existing spending profile. For example, Hornsby CBD's geographic location as a juncture between three train lines (Epping, North Shore and Central Coast/Newcastle) and major roads (M1, North Connex, Pennant Hills Rd, Pacific Highway) makes it an ideal location as a major commercial hub, hosting commuters from across Greater Sydney, the Central Coast and Newcastle. Yet this has failed to be explored at all as an option to generate commercial rates from larger businesses, and no provisions have been made for future zoning changes to tap into this unique opportunity. As another example, Hornsby Shire Council has diverted significant resources into Hornsby Quarry - effectively tying up considerable financial, logistical and operational resources into a single project with limited overall community benefit, at the expense of numerous essential services across the Shire (e.g. crumbling local roads, lack of sealed footpaths, no local waste management centre).

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, this was conveyed in both percentage and dollar terms - both of which have caused considerable community angst and frustration, particularly at a time of soaring inflation and interest rates. However, the Council has failed to communicate the costs of its SV application and consultation process, including engagement of consultants - expenditure which likely is aimed to be recouped by the SV itself.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

While communicating the initial resident consultation was extensive via letterbox drops, social media, newsletters etc, this communication has been noticeably lacking since then - suggesting Council did not receive the positive community feedback it desired ahead of lodging its application with IPART.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

There is no reasonableness to a 38% increase in rates for ratepayers - particularly when the Shire fails to offer the same level of community services of neighbouring councils to which it is basing its comparisons. The greater shire has a dearth of sealed footpaths, which are primarily concentrated around the inner suburb of Hornsby and not in high-foot traffic residential areas of neighbouring suburbs. It does not have its own Waste Management Centre, forcing residents into expensive one-off collections or taking to neighbouring facilities. Its extensive delays in planning applications are having serious adverse ramifications for local residents and small business operators (which, in turn, reduce its pool of available ratepayers). The proposed increase is also unreasonable for the demographics of the Shire - a large proportion of older residents and retirees, while limited local

employment options mean the majority of working-age residents are forced to commute outside of the Shire and therefore not use its local services during the week.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. I fail to see how Council has considered this factor at all. The timing of this application, amid high inflation and rapidly rising interest rates - the latter particularly significant given the large prices of property within the Shire meaning buyers have larger than average mortgages - also demonstrates a lack of contextual consideration for residents' capacity to meet the proposed rate increase in the short to medium term.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

These plans are insufficient in both detail in how they would be implemented in practice, as well as for the size of the increase under the current broader economic climate. The plans also fail to outline how Council proposes to continue meeting its obligations should a significant number of residents require the use of hardship provisions.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

In referencing previous criterion responses, the IP&R documents were widely exhibited by Council, however poor communication with residents since that time means that whether it has been approved and adopted by Council has not been communicated.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

These plans were presented in a generalised nature, and lacked detail and specifics. In the absence of specifics, examples and detailed guidance of ongoing efficiency measures, and usage of the additional funds that would be raised by an SV, it is difficult for residents and ratepayers to understand the need for and usage of the proposed increase.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Hornsby Council, wake up and realise there is a cost of living crisis, join your community in austerity measures rather than adding to the problem.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not at all, rate rise only, no discussion of expenditure savings that could balance the need for a rate rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes they [REDACTED] away plenty of money of glossy print on this.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, one mention months ago and they are hoping for it to slide through quietly.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Nil, no further communication, no adjustment to their proposal taking on board feedback.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Completely unreasonable, 30% is outrageous.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

With increasing interest rates, increasing mortgage stress and general cost of living issues in the community there is clearly an issue with the capacity to pay a 30% increase.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Not aware of this aspect, let's hope it is robust as the plan will cause a lot of hardship in the community.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

So they say.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

They have not done this, there are no clear productivity improvements or cost containment strategies, they are seeking to continue to increase spending by gouging more revenue through rate increases.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

They are incompetent , irrational , unreasonable, selfish , arrogant , do not listen to their constituents, do not provide their income and expenditure details . Will not improve roads and traffic , the traffic department are useless and incompetent . I have had experience with them as well as all members of my street which is affected by the local school . They seem to not have any workings with the state government to improve schools when we need more built . They just want to build more units so they can get more revenue without considering the repercussions on schools and traffic etc.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No decent information

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

I think so

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Definitely not . Arrogance personified

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They have ignored us and voted accordingly after publishing that 95% of people surveyed objected to it . I watched their meeting and completely completely against it.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I have been living in Hornsby shire for 35 years and we have paid our fair share of rates and never complained . Even when we had to pay a levy for the Hornsby quarry. I had to retire early due to Ill health and are now on one nurses salary . We cannot afford the proposed increase also because of cost of living increases as well.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

They totally ignore us. They are incompetent especially the influential [REDACTED] [REDACTED] . They need to be wise with their spending on essential things and adjust their spending accordingly like a household budget .

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No plan observed at all.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Havent seen any . Not communicated well if they have . [REDACTED] !

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Havent seen any response . Nothing in the mail . Only seen giant plans for the Hornsby centre with 36 floor buildings etc which we dont want or need .

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Of course, with the global volatility and uncertainty, I appreciate the challenges facing Council, as well as all of us rate payers. While I agree and support the initiatives proposed, with rising interest rates and rapidly rising power costs, is nearly \$18m on connected walking and cycling paths a prudent spend in light of the current global economic forecast, looking into a possible global recession? As we are doing right now with our household spending (and indeed in our workplaces too), Council should really be considering cutting back or postponing non-essential spend until better times. The focus should be on a more modest spend to maintain existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

I haven't seen an alternative proposal for consideration from Council. I would support cutting back or postponing desirable but Not Essential programs to better times.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

It is my understanding that an overwhelming majority (86.29%) of the responses (1,977) did not support Council applying for an SRV, with 8.85% (175) as partially supporting, and 4.20% (83) indicated support for Council applying for an SRV, while 95.14% (86.29% + 8.85%) - rejected the 31.05% SRV. I have not received any further correspondence from Council reflecting they have heard this feedback and are consider any alternate action.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

As previously mentioned, while I agree and support the initiatives proposed, with rising interest rates and rapidly rising power costs, is nearly \$18m on connected walking and cycling paths a prudent spend in light of the current global economic forecast, looking into a possible global recession? As we are doing right now with our household spending (and indeed in our workplaces too), Council should really be considering cutting back or postponing non-essential spend until better times.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. I have not seen or received communication from Council reflecting they have considered the community's capacity or willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

This is a bad time to be thinking about increasing rates given the financial circumstances. The council should focus on efficiencies and alternative paths and cuts to non-essential services instead.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council has NOT established the need for increasing rates. Do not increase rates. Ratepayers' money (General Revenue) must be spent on Councils 'core' essential services. Prioritise essential projects (not wish list), defer non-essential projects, seek State & Federal Government Grants, as alternative sources. Implement better financial management to budget within your means. Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not enough

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

SRV increase is too high putting additional cost of living pressures. Exacerbated by rising inflation, interest rate hikes, energy bills, rent rise and potential future economic recession.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has lost touch with the community, budgeting excessively, with no money. Council wants more money from ratepayers to fix Council's financial problems, with no consideration for the additional financial burden placed on its ratepayers.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Not at all

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Council appears to be attempting to take the 'easy' approach of passing the consequences for its poor financial management and unrealistic ambitions directly on to its ratepayers rather than accepting responsibility itself. It has completely ignored community feedback and appears to have undertaken the 'consultation' with the community in a very cynical way, simply 'ticking the box' without any attempt to actually take into account the community's wishes.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Essential projects should come first, non-essential aspirational projects should seek alternative revenue sources (State and Federal govt) or be delayed. Seek efficiencies and cost savings and increases in productivity rather than additional revenue from ratepayers.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not as far as ratepayers have been informed. Need to seek alternatives such as state and federal government.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Some communication (one mailing) but not clearly detailed.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Not really

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Community feedback has been overwhelmingly against the proposed increase. This has been completely ignored by council.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed increase is huge and can not by any stretch be considered 'reasonable'. The impact on ratepayers would be unbearable for many, and at the least very difficult for others.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Particularly in an environment of increasing inflation and rising energy and rent bills it is completely unrealistic to expect ratepayers to have the capacity to afford such an increase. The community has made it very clear in their response that they do not agree with the increase. Council simply ignored this; they have lost touch with the community.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council seems to want money to deal with the results of their poor financial management, without considering the burden this places on ratepayers.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Not known,

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I don't recall anything in the documentation sent by council that addressed this aspect.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

In my opinion it has not, to my knowledge there has been no communication advising of the proposed increase and justifying such a re large increase.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

In my opinion no. Already over the years, we have seen basic services reduce ie: street sweeping etc, yet they spent money on planting trees in front of everyones house and having contractors come and water them. Pot holes in roads all around the electorate remained untended to for a long time, causing further erosion and a safety issue for motorists.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

In my opinion no.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

IN my opinion no. The first I became aware of the potential to have a rate rise was when the Valuer Generals valuation arrived two weeks ago with sustantial growth.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Unaware of any action. In my opinion, what ever efforts they make is just to tick a box to say they have 'consulted' and do what the want anyway.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Even though the property values have substantially increased over the past 4 years, a large part of that is because of the Metro Station at Cherrybrook. This does not equate to existing residents capacity to draw on income they don't have. You can't expect someone on a single modest income , living and working hard to pay a mortgage they could afford 10 years ago suddently find themselves paying Eastern Suburbs rates with out the water views. I am fearful that many residents, especially the elderly or close to retiring will not have the cash flow to pay such a large increase at once on top of the cost of living inflation already affecting the bottom line and be forced to sell their home and move out of the electorate.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I don't hink they have considered it al all. Anyway understands that a 30%+ increase is substantial, especially when you are unable to see what you are getting for your money. Why should todays residents pay for the mismanagement of Council over many years in such a harsh financial way.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No idea. From memory, it is basically payment plans, time to pay etc and ensure residents are receiving rebates if entitled.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Unknown

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Unknown

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No - Hornsby Shire Council has not explored all options. For example they are justifying the rate rise with aspects such as the increased Operating Expenditure associated with new Hornsby Park and others. These parks should not be built unless they are self-generating income e.g. shops, park use fees. Council should consider the deferral of projects to live within their means. The glossy report produced seems to pre-assume that we want increased services, we do not, just deliver the core services to a good standard at a reasonable cost. Council continues to waste money in other ways such as subsidising reusable nappies/underwear - this should be an individual choice not council subsidised.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. They have not considered increased user pays options e.g. park use, venue hire, putting commercial operator in venues to get rent etc.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Potentially

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No - it has all been very pre-assuming the SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Council are asking ratepayers to pick up the tab for their previous mismanagement. Whilst obviously council is in this position and needs to get out of it, I dont think they are doing enough to consider the rising cost of living pressures ratepayers are under.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Whilst Council has done capacity to pay studies, these have centred on the use of averages. Better statistical analysis considering the spread of incomes (i.e. using standard deviation) would improve the robustness of these calculations. People are facing increased mortgages, potentially economic recession, increased electricity/gas charges - we dont need an over the top increase in council rates too.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The Councils plan centres on providing increased rebates for Pensioners etc. Whilst understandable due to the fixed nature of some pensioners incomes, this is actually pushing the burden onto other ratepayers who may be living under government/workplace agreement wage caps etc.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council HAS NOT demonstrated the need for increasing rates. Do not increase rates. Ratepayers' money (General Revenue) must be spent on Councils 'core' essential services. Prioritise essential projects (not wish list), defer non-essential projects, seek State & Federal Government Grants, as alternative sources. Implement better financial management to budget within your means. Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

High Financial Impact on Ratepayers SRV increase is too high putting additional cost of living pressures. Exacerbated by rising inflation, interest rate hikes, energy bills, rent rise and potential future economic recession. Council has lost touch with the community, budgeting excessively, with no money. Council wants more money from ratepayers to fix Council's financial problems, with no consideration for the additional financial burden placed on its ratepayers.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, Hornsby Council HAS NOT demonstrated the need for increasing rates. Do not increase rates. The reasons given for the rate rise, are purely because the council has been poorly managed from a financial standpoint, rather than implementing better financial management and better efficiencies across the council. The council has instead decided to simply charge it's residents more money to make up for their poor fiscal management. Given the current economic climate, where interest rates are increasing and cost of living is through the roof, the council is looking to put its residents under further financial stress rather than looking at ways they can fix their internal issues. This is absolutely abhorrent and a complete disregard for the views and means of the residents of Hornsby council.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No absolutely not, the asked for the opinion of people within the council and over 96% of respondents were against the proposed rate rise, yet the council decided to go ahead, without offering alternatives or even seeking alternatives.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, a letter was sent that would have been easily missed by many with very little information on how you could have your say. It was only through community efforts through apps like the Neighbourhood app that I gained awareness and was able to have my say.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The feedback from the community was overwhelmingly and by a clear majority (96%) against the rate variation, thousands of residents voted and had their say against the rate variation, however the council chose to ignore the views and response from the community and go ahead anyway.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

There are no clear reasonable grounds for the increase, this coupled with increasing cost of living pressure makes this decision absolutely abhorrent. Interest rates have sky rocketed and mortgage repayments in many situations doubled. Land valuations were raised by 85% in the last few weeks which will also increase pressure on council rates. This increase may see my family being forced to sell and move because the rise is too high and unjust and would make it difficult for us to afford to pay our mortgage and rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

The council has chosen to ignore its residents and failed to uphold basic financial management that would allow them to continue without this heavy handed rates increase. The council asked the opinion and impact of the proposed rate rise across the community and completely ignored the very clear majority position of being against this for both capacity and willingness as well as need.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

This was not made clear to me in its proposal

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

It has made me and other rate-payers very angry and resentful of Council. This is especially so in view of difficult and uncertain economic circumstances, little evidence that Council adequately manages its existing funds, and the focus of Council's reasons representing the wishes of relatively small groups of special interest groups, rather than focusing on essential services and the wishes of an overwhelming number of ratepayers

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No they have not established this. In particular, they have not addressed management and scope of their own existing expenditure. Are they spending only on essential services in order to save money. Their reasons appear to be funding non-essential expenditure. Instead of assuring the rate-payers that they have responsibly managed and optimised the rates they have collected, they simply seek to take more at a VERY DIFFICULT TIME for many people. This is especially alienating because Council overheads appear to be poorly controlled, and much expenditure is pandering to special interest groups rather than funding the interests of an overwhelming number of ratepayers. Council appears to be protected in its appropriation of our funds by the State government.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I believe it is obvious to council that the cost of living in the Shire is a difficult issue for many rate-payers. Yet the Council appears to ignore this significant problem impacting our lives enhancing the perception that the Council does not serve our community, cannot be trusted with our finances and is predatory. The additional burden at the very least unreasonable under the current circumstances.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is highly unreasonable in view of the cost of living stress. So much so that one has to question whether Council actually has any insight into the needs of the community or whether it has simply lost touch and represents a burdensome government instrument.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Manifestly, the cost of living, inflation, high cost of mortgages, education, transport etc is rapidly deteriorating. Our ability to pay for these increasing costs is being rapidly eroded by inflation. Council does not appear to have given due consideration to these matters

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

There will be hardship for most ratepayers. Based on past performance by Council and State governments, any attempt to address this hardship after implementation of the rate increases will simply partially deal with a small part of those enduring the hardship. It will then be publicised as having dealt with the hardship. I think ratepayers have had enough of government behaving this way and then constructing a positive narrative that is actually false.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council HAS NOT demonstrated the need for increasing rates. Do not increase rates. Ratepayers' money (General Revenue) must be spent on Councils 'core' essential services. Prioritise essential projects (not wish list), defer non-essential projects, seek State & Federal Government Grants, as alternative sources. Implement better financial management to budget within your means. Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

High Financial Impact on Ratepayers SRV increase is too high putting additional cost of living pressures. Exacerbated by rising inflation, interest rate hikes, energy bills, rent rise and potential future economic recession. Council has lost touch with the community, budgeting excessively, with no money. Council wants more money from ratepayers to fix Council's financial problems, with no consideration for the additional financial burden placed on its ratepayers.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

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Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I will be very disappointed if this goes through at the rate increase that has been proposed. Many of my friends feel they have no say in this as they have already objected and been ignored by council.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No I dont believe they have. The increase has not been clearly identified and is a huge jump in payments for council tax payers

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No not that Im aware.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

They did and I objected to the rate increase as compared to other councils the costs are astronomical.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, I was surprised when they announced the increases and do not feel they have listened to community feedback. The mayor shut down speakers at the council meeting. We did not vote for the councillors to increase rates this much

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Very little. I had no response apart from on Facebook where our candidate told us they had voted it through.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The increase is not reasonable. There are many families struggling with increased costs and I know I would prefer less services rather than this huge increase.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I dont think they have. I am not sure how well members of the community understand the impact on their rates. Very disappointing

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

There is no assistance for working families. The only assistance I am aware of is for pensioners. I am fed up with continual increasing costs and this one is another money grab without any need

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I cant comment on this

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I am not aware of this being communicated to us

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Unknown

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Unknown

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The majority of ratepayers are suffering significantly from current inflation. Many are unable to cope with price increases that are in line with inflation; price rises that far exceed the inflation rate would be crushing for too many people and would most certainly be totally non-viable for the most economically disadvantaged members of our community such as pensioners and retirees.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The council has not adequately demonstrated attempts to assess the community's willingness OR ABILITY to meet their proposed rises.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The measures proposed would be quite inadequate relative to the overall impact of the proposed rises. If those who are struggling financially cannot meet the proposed rises, then that is the bottom line: measures to alleviate the impact will not be enough.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Unknown whether this has been fully complied with.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

My impression is that the council's response to this was a matter of 'saying what was expected' in order to comply.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 15 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Most residents would probably accept a more reasonable rate increase (perhaps 15pc) but the level they are pushing for is outrageous.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

I think council needs to reassess their expenditure and only spend money on necessary things. Projects like the water clock in hornsby should be funded by fundraisers and not rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

They havent advertised this so I dont know. They need people trained in accounts to manage the money and forget projects which are driven by councillors wishes rather than residents needs.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

31pc. Absolutely outrageous. Im a pensioner. How do I cover that? The cost of living has skyrocketed since Covid. This could break the financial back of a lot of people.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Many people dont have time to check websites. Older people often dont own computers. This should have been done by mail to every resident.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Their attitude seems to be: We only had feedback, all negative, from (say) 40pc therefore 60pc must be in favour!! That is an assumption! A written questionnaire should have been sent out to all residents which included a return stamped addressed envelope inviting feedback.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I have already stated that this level of rate rise is too high. There are many people out there struggling with mortgages and just getting getting by. This level of increase is excessive!

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

There was no extensive individual assessment done. Therefore, Council has no real idea of all residents abilities or willingness to find the money for this level of increase.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I havent seen this. However, if they were intending to reduce it for some then it should be reduced for all.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I havent received these in the mail so I dont know.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Again, I received nothing in the mail so I dont know. Hopefully they dont intend funding any more useless developments like the equestrian centre at dural.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 16 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

NO

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No they have not

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They have ignored all feedback given objecting to the increase

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This will be a huge increase and many will not be able to find the extra money. In my case it will be approx \$700 extra per year and I will be struggling to find this extra money given the increased cost of living.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Most cannot afford this and who gets a pay rise of 31%? It is an unrealistic increase. How about the CPI increase instead?

Every local I have spoken to is incensed about this proposed increase in rates.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I have not heard about this. I would assume they will not exempt anyone experiencing hardship but rather give them longer to pay which is still an unreasonable increase.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I don't know

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 16 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The documents are content dense and would be incomprehensible to many people with different learning styles. Thus the information is not accessible to many people. It is not a reasonable expectation that the majority of people have time and traits and temperament to process all the documented information and be able to make an effective submission to IPART. There is high level of distrust in the integrity, transparency and accountability of Hornsby senior management and councillors. Councillors have not been interacting with community to help them comprehend the need - or otherwise for this SRV. Our ward councillors won't meet with us to talk about the rates issue, only "many other important local issues" (email correspondence from one of our ward councillors) I feel that Council needs a reset to re-establish their credibility, financial- and social responsibilities to the ratepayers and develop different strategies for operating sustainably, as many ratepayer households and businesses are having to do their best to do.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, need is not clearly established. In their motivation for need and purpose, Hornsby Council rely on their assessment of community support for strategic initiatives, before anyone was advised of the cost implications or considered the economic environment. The Local Strategic Planning Statement was prepared in 2019, pre-covid. Council refer to a survey that reportedly indicated 70% support for strategic initiatives, but does not report what the level of community support there was for the master plan for Hornsby Park. Since then, quite reasonably, peoples priorities have changed given the very economically challenging times we are in (see Criterion 2, Q3). Many households are under increasing financial stress, as are many businesses, with more business closures and job losses, most ratepayers no longer support the need for these initiatives at this time. More important to them is being able to pay for food and mortgages or rent, power and water, medical- and other essential expenses. Hornsby Council also claim the need to increase council staff wages, some over and above the 3% award increase, to attract and retain talented staff, blaming lack of inbound migration as the reason for staff shortages, not that they have terminated staff unfairly (see Criterion 3, Q2, and Q3). They are budgeting for a 40% increase in employee costs over 10 years. This seems excessive. Need and purpose is not clear.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Their base case without an SRV shows the start of a deficit in 2025/26, of about \$1 million, and becoming an accumulative deficit of about \$40 million over 10 years. However a 12% reduction in employee costs in 2025/26 would save \$7 million, and cumulatively \$77 million over 10 years (see criterion 5). It seems to me there is potential for greater efficiencies and rationalisation, for a more responsible and transparent financial management. Community feedback has strongly been opposed to proceeding with Hornsby Park development and non-essential initiatives at this time of worsening economic conditions. Hornsby Park will incur budgeted costs of 22.7 M over 10 years for recurrent operations and maintenance and asset renewals. Many in the community have suggested that the Park not proceed at this time, or until a time that the community feels secure enough that this is a sustainable cost to bear; and that nice-to-have, but non-essential initiatives are also not necessary. Other potential alternatives for cost savings: Avoid the much of costs for Hornsby Park by creating instead a native bush regeneration recreational space Dont spend on Hello Hornsby (\$800,000 over 10 years) why not rather support existing community service providers? Dont spend on an Inclusive community centre (\$431,000 pa) - why not rather improve existing community centre facilities involving existing community groups? Dont spend on new shared walking/cycling pathways (\$14 M over 10 years) not essential

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The communication last year did not include the impact of the new land valuations on the rate-able land value that determines the rates to be paid. There is much confusion about how rate-able values are affected. This reflects poorly on how information and data has been shared with the community. Council is accusing some members of the community of intentionally spreading misinformation. Pg 18 of the Morrison Low report, Community Capacity to Pay, gives their recommendation that Hornsby Council review their impact analysis after the issue of the new land evaluations, which have only been received in February 2023. Apparently some properties will be paying a maximum extra of 8.5% in first year; other properties will be paying a minimum extra of 8.5%. What is their maximum?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

There seems to have been variety, but not effective reach. The only communication that reached me was a late-in-the-process email, which prompted me to attend the last public meeting on 31 October 2022. I personally posted notice of this on our community FB page, for which I was thanked by others who said they would not otherwise have known about this. I question why our ward councillors could not have been more helpful in connecting with their ward ratepayers. Our ward councillors do not seem to be actively engaging in any meaningful way with those living in their wards. So, no, the methods have not ensured

community awareness and ability to engage in the process.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

86.29% of survey respondents did not support the SRV plus 8.85% only partially supported it, for a total of 95.14% opposed, against 4.2% who supported it. At the public meeting on 31 October 2022 only one person expressed support for the SRV and one shared his generally favourable opinion of councils business management, but did not support the business case for the SRV. Every other person who spoke up, challenged the senior management team to justify their proposals. The mayor, Mt Phillip Ruddock, simply insisted they had to have the rates increase. Hornsby Council has not accommodated any community suggestions in any amendment to their SRV plan. They have been uncompromising in disregarding community anxiety, stress and hardship under present and worsening economic conditions.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is flawed to make assessment of reasonableness of impact of the increased rates without considering the accumulative impact of many other cost increases, especially for basic needs of food, shelter, health care. These are comments taken from a read of newspapers over the past few weeks: Ehssan Veiszadeh, acting chief executive for Committee of Sydney, is quoted in the Sydney Morning Herald dated 4 February 2023: Were almost in unchartered waters with concerns around cost of living. Other news comments: "Inflation is at a 30 year high"; Sydney rents are "24.7% higher in this last year"; "40% of Sydneysiders are very concerned; middle aged households, the ones with families, have barely an extra dollar in savings theyre facing a cash flow crunch; many households have whittled down savings buffers and savings are exhausted; future rate rises (mortgage interest rates) are going to see all areas worsening in repayments; no suburb immune to rising rates; regional suburbs and city fringe areas likely to have the highest rates of mortgage delinquency; prevailing mood is households across the board are deeply worried not sure how theyll be able to manage. How is it reasonable for Council to require ratepayers to pay a higher than usual increase in council rates too, or penalty interests charged for overdue payments? It is not reasonable to expect payment of higher rates to fund non-essential expenditures to be more important than payment of basic living costs. It is also not reasonable to expect ratepayers to pay for council staff and councillors to have wage increases on top of their existing high wages. They will not suffer the hardships that many ratepayers are already suffering.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The Morrison Low report on Capacity to Pay relies on ABS data from 2016 and 2021, Housing and Homelessness Policy Consortium, 2016; and workforce status, 2016. None of this reflects the current reality in which there are many more people vulnerable due to unemployment and financial stress. These additional affected people have been made vulnerable because of covid policies: people with disabling injuries from covid-vaccine side effects and people who lost jobs for not consenting to be injected with the experimental covid vaccine. Thus they have lost incomes, depleted savings, and may have increased medical costs. I personally know families with both parents/partners denied the right to work, including by Hornsby Council, and earn money. What assessment has Hornsby Council made of jobs lost by teachers, health care providers, firefighters, retail assistants, their own former employees and more? It is not a reasonable assessment to assume that a past track record of low levels of overdue rent indicates an ongoing capacity and willingness to pay the higher SRV. Council has shown itself to not care about the welfare of Shire residents; rather to be hypocritical and insensitive to community anxieties and realities of economic hardships, while they continue to protect their own wages and privileges.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Hardship policy applies only to pensioners under certain conditions. Proposed \$50 increase in rebate from \$250 to \$300. For comparison, our first year increase (if only 8.5% SRV applies) will be an extra \$131, \$80 more than \$50. As described above (Q2), there could be many more newly vulnerable whole families, without reliable incomes or with reduced incomes, working for much less pay in different poorly paid work. There is no hardship support for them. Furthermore, it is Hornsby Council policy to apply the highest level of penalty interest rates to deter late payment; and to recover overdue rates from deceased estates. I raised my concerns about such hardship with a councillor I spoke to. She expressed her view (and presumably council policy) that people who did not comply with their workplace covid mandate to have the covid-vaccine did not deserve to have a job, at least not with council. She blames them for their predicament. Hornsby Council senior management exempted themselves from mandated covid vaccinations.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

As far as I can tell. See criterion 6 re difficulties for people to synthesise all this content-dense information and make sense of it.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No cost containment, productivity improvements or process optimisation (deliver services for lower cost) that I am aware of

e.g. no rationalisation of organisational structure. I have been told there are over 34 branch managers earning over \$250 K each, plus approx. six senior managers between branch level and GM. Senior management staff have salaries in excess of \$400,000, with closer to \$500,000 for the General Manager. Thus in excess of \$11.4 Million for management wages. How do we measure their value of service to the community for these wages? Are all these roles and the wage bill justified? Their charts show a lower FTE per population size in the Shire; but higher operating cost per FTE, e.g. in 2020, about \$275,000 per FTE compared with \$245,000 per FTE i.e. about 12% higher. Hornsby Councillors and the mayor are already paid the maximum amount for a metropolitan medium council, \$25,360 for councillors, plus an extra \$68,530 for the mayor (Local Government Remuneration Tribunal) confirmed to me by a Hornsby councillor. Employee costs over the next 10 years are budgeted to be \$641.4 million. By way of example, a 12% reduction in employee costs yields a savings of about \$77 million (mentioned in Criterion 1, Q2). Current ratepayer experience of Hornsby venue management of the community facilities, is it's unreliability. Sometimes the keypads are not unlocked at the right time for people who have made bookings to access the facilities. Quality of service at the community native plant nursery has deteriorated since they terminated the nursery manager against his will. There are no known responses to remedy these issues. We are also dealing with major community backlash against what seems to be an incompetent consultants study of flood zone properties in the Shire. Council cancelled a public meeting and have not rescheduled. The councillor I spoke with about this has not given me any further information on this matter. The community cannot assess Council financial sustainability when Council will not reveal what they are spending on items like recurring external consultant's fees. E.g. expenditure on materials and contracts increased 18% from 2020/21 to 2021/22; 24% from 2019/20 to 2020/21; compared to \$5-9% in previous years. It is the ratepayers who have paid all the associated costs of job terminations of employees for non-compliance with workplace mandated vaccines (senior management exempted).

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 16 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has not listened to the feedback from the community on the impact of the special variation. Over 80% of ratepayers were against the special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is unreasonable to increase rates at a time when the land values have just risen so much (giving council extra income) and when many owners are facing hardship with mortgage rate rises.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has not listened to the residents. Council could cut expenses or delay projects.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The scale of the proposed rate rises (31% over 4 years) is extremely steep and will have a significant negative effect on many families and ratepayers at a time when interest rates and the cost of living are rapidly rising as well. Rate rises will only compound financial stress. As such, I fear for the mental and financial health of many people in the Hornsby LGA. Council also seems to be applying for an SRV to cover business-as-usual costs rather than to fund any special projects or to cover an unexpected extra cost or drop in income. This strikes me as poor financial planning on the council's behalf and ratepayers are to be punished for it. Given the current financial climate, a more appropriate course of action would be to perhaps shelve or delay some of the more long-term, non-essential projects rather than increase rates at such a time. Increasing rates will only have a significant negative impact on the community the council is supposed to serve.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

This is a very difficult period for most Australians. Cost of living pressures, world events and the uncertainty of day to day living is causing stress and hardship to many. We in the Hornsby Shire are feeling these pressures. This is not the time to inflict more stress and concern on residents by forcing us to pay extraordinarily high rates. Yes, an increase is expected so we can maintain the lifestyle we have enjoyed in in this shire, but we ask for it to be a reasoned, .considered increase, not one which is frankly, outrageous!

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. The need of the Council is not in line with the needs of the Residents. Our priorities are the maintenance of existing services, not the creation of new ones which will be utilised by only a small percentage of the community.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. Council would not entertain alternatives which were suggested and unanimously supported by residents.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. A general guideline of the expected increase was given, but on further investigation, I found this guideline totally inaccurate. Council indicated my rates would increase by a total of 8.5% in the first year, when in fact, it is 12.06%.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Council did not give Residents sufficient notice of its intention to apply for the rate variation. I received information on councils intention for the variation with my quarterly rate payment notice. This came as a total surprise. This arrived on Friday, 28th October. Council gave the following options for feedback: 1: Open Community Forum - online Tuesday 25 Oct - had already been conducted 2: Community Drop-In Hornsby Library 1-8pm Thursday October- had already been conducted 3: Community Ratepayers Forum. Monday 31st Oct- I attended this having been given 3 days notice! 4: I could do a survey on councils website- what if I had no access or ability to do this? Overwhelmingly, Residents attending the Forum were angry with Council for not being given sufficient time to avail themselves of all the relevant information and for not listening to their reasons against the proposal.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council completely ignored the feedback. There were over 2250 responses to the online survey with above 95% against the proposal. Those attending the meeting I attended were unanimously against the proposal. Council would not consider any changes or modifications to their proposal.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Hornsby Shire has over 65% of residents middle aged and older. Many are on fixed incomes or aged pensions so do not have the capacity for such a large increase of 8.5%- 12.06%(in my case). Many are on acreages which have higher rates than those on residential properties anyway. Just because some are on larger land holdings doesnt mean they are in a position to afford higher increases. Some properties in my area were valued in excess of \$1m above the previous Valuer Generals Valuation which means a higher percentage rate increase. This was due to some high sales figures during the peak boom in real estate after Covid with people wanting rural properties. Those of us who have had no change in income cant be penalised because of the change in property values. The increasing cost of living pressures and rising inflation is making it increasingly difficult for us to live at the level we have done in past years. Everyone is finding it hard but to have this extra burden of 8.5%-above 12.06% on our rates will cause added stress. This will lead to ill health and possible mental illness. Im personally very concerned, not only for myself but those around me.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Over 90% of the feedback to council has been against the proposed increase. We were prepared for an annual increase as weve had in past years of around 3.5% We love our area and realise that to maintain it we must accept some increase in our rates. This special rate increase is something no one expected or was prepared for. At the forum which I attended, it was made clear to the council that most would accept a gradual increase over the next 3 years, but a 31% increase was beyond anyones comprehension. We gave council examples of how this increase would impact those of us on fixed incomes and suggested areas council might find savings by working more efficiently. No suggestion was taken on board. Most believed that the outcome had already been decided and that council would not consider any options.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council stated that they would consider cases of hardship. This was by deferring rates and charging interest on those deferred amounts, resulting in even higher payments at a later date. Also, council stated they would give concession card holders/pensioners, an additional \$50 rebate per annum making the total rebate of \$300 per year. This amounts to less than \$1 per per week, which has little to no impact if your rates have gone up by 31%.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

How can this even be being considered given the strain families are under with mortgage rate rises and cost of living pressures, shame on the council! They need to pause the increase before they contribute to families having to sell their homes and end up on the streets.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

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Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 17 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I oppose the special Variation request on the basis that the projects and expenditure requested form part of normal council obligations and are not time crucial to the community. Council has recently spent funds on upgrades and improvements that were unnecessary, uncommunicated and will be completely demolished by future planning projects eg library renovation which is now possible to be completely demolished for their town planning concept. Their supposed lack of funds available for general requirements to the community has been due to this poor foresight in funds management already provided by ratepayers and should not be remedied by imposing further costs upon those same ratepayers. Many of the proposed projects can be postponed without great impact on residents until council is able to more appropriately manage their finances.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 18 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

A rate rise is not necessary. The council should shelve their current plans to allow for rate payers to survive in this cost of living crisis. They can increase rates when inflation is lowered.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

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Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 18 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The council is not currently operating at a loss. The only way this will change will be through its own poor management, so there is certainly no need for a special variation to rates at this time. Yes, it may have to cut back on some services like all of us, but this is what the RBA has asked us all to do. How can this council think that doesn't apply to them? And how dare this arrogant, self centred body severely lacking in transparency and consideration of its rate payers, decide to go on a spending spree with money rate payers cannot afford to give? Really. IPART should tell this council to go do their job, manage within their budget, be grateful of the windfall the Valuer General has just given them, and stop wasting money it claims to be so short of making this SVR application.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Unlike other councils, I have not seen any details on this proposal. There was short article in the local paper, but no detailed projections or business case distributed as far as I can tell by any mail, email or public announcement. There may have been a opportunity to provide feedback on the council website, but that closed before I was even aware of what they were planning. There was a total lack of transparency

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Don't know

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

They did not communicate this to my household, despite it being in the council area, owned by us, and upon which we pay rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

The council's community engagement strategy has been to hide as much as possible from the community. I suspect this is a very unpopular proposal, and the council has adopted a policy of "the fewer that know, the less resistance there will be"

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They haven't told enough people to get any feedback.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed special variation is totally unreasonable. Rate payers will be struggling with high inflation and rapidly increasing home loan repayments, and some (up to 10% according to the RBA) will be approaching real hardship. Moreover, they are going to be hit by substantial rate increases following on from the extraordinary increase in the just released Valuer General land values, on which rates are based. Households will struggle to pay these increases, let alone the ones proposed in the Special Variation. In the light of the Valuer General valuations, the council should drop this SV proposal and live with the increases that will flow on from the land valuations, which will be far in excess of inflation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Totally non-existent. Clearly, many, if not most, rate payers will be struggling with high inflation and rapidly rising home loan repayments, and there has been zero consideration of this. And no one from council has asked me if I am wiling to pay. This is just a totally self centred council that is only focused on itself with zero regard for its rate payers, which it clearly sees as nothing more than a money tree to fund its own desires (or perhaps election promises) to improve their chance of re-election

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Whatever the plan was, it is now out of date. Rising inflation and rapidly increasing home loan repayments will have significantly increased the number of people who are, or will, be in hardship. So whatever they proposed, it will be inadequate.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Don't know

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No doubt, the council will selectively pick favourable examples to make this point. It is all really quite meaningless unless it has been produced or audited by an independent body taking a complete and holistic approach.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 18 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council has not explore any alternative and reasonable path to expand revenue base to meet core service needs. They have an extremely poor record if financial management, especially in delivery if capital work projects, such as the Quarry.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. Despite market conditions, supply chain disruption, labour and material costs increase. Council continues to make a whole lot of non essential projects. They also do not make cases for Government Grants when available to support projects.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes. However, submission was ignored. No reply. No consideration. No communication prior to making IPART application despite request to be notified.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Previous engagement relates to a potential IPART application. They kept quiet about the application was made.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

No action. Submission was ignored. Only an auto rely email after making a submission.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

A 30plus percent over 3 year is significant to household budget given current inflation and increase interest rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council's report relied on outdated data to conclude that Hornsby home owners are rich enough to absorb the SVR, ignoring sky high inflation and the nine interest rate hike plus falling real wage.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The Council only proposes ordinary measures that will fail to address the current extraordinary times.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has no idea how to contain and control costs. The Quarry had millions poured into it and still needs millions to finish. Their financial management is so poor and cannot be trusted.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 18 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
I do not support this rate rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 18 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Hornsby Council seems to be making an ambit request for a huge increase in rates. I can identify several very high cost projects that could be modified or even cancelled with no detrimental effect on the Community. If the Council is indeed in such a dire financial state as to need such an extraordinary increase in rates, these cost reductions should be considered first. For example, the Council plans on a huge upgrade to Edward Bennett Oval, adding excessive man made structures, cement paths etc that are not needed and have not been requested by the local community. This one project would save approximately \$2m in costs to the Shire. It is quite incredible that the Council would think that now is a good time to increase the financial burden on Households with inflation and interests rates at such high levels.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No they have not. There is no clear purpose or stated reason for this Special Variation. It seems more like the Council would just prefer a bigger budget. There needs to be demonstrated efficiency improvements and cost cutting carried out and a return to core responsibilities before the need for an increase to Rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. They should explain where their services would be cut if the SV is not approved.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Now is exactly NOT the time to be increasing financial demands on households in the Hornsby Shire. With the high cost of energy and mortgage rates not to mention the other inflation related costs, the average ratepayer will be finding their budgets stretched already.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The Council really must be c██████████l if they think a 30% increase to rates is going to be considered reasonable and that the community would be willing to pay this. It seems more like, "" If we ask for 30% then maybe we can get 20%".

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 19 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I'm already under server impact of rising mortgage payments & living cost . This price increase is only going to make it even harder for my life.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

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Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 19 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council has not demonstrated the need for increasing rates. In the current financial climate everybody including council needs to decrease spending and concentrate on only the essentials. Council has not shown any costs cutting measures at all or better financial management practices. Do not increase rates show us cost cutting measures.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

To my knowledge it has not. Some alternate ideas such as applying for State and Federal grants could be used for some projects. Better financial management to work within budgets and cost cutting measures to increase efficiencies, reduce waste and reduce overheads could be engaged.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Not easily found or understood

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

I have not seen anything published openly to ensure all of the community was aware this was proposed

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I have not seen anything

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The councils rate increase is extremely high at a time when rate payers are facing financial stresses in all areas of their life. Rent and mortgage increases, cost of living, energy bills, etc. To add these extremely high rate increases as well at a time majority of people are already facing financial burdens is not appropriate.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council has obviously not thought about what the majority of rate payers are currently going through financial with the dramatic increases on all living expenses.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 20 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, Hornsby Council has not clearly demonstrated the need. There is no clear need for additional funding for the special projects. Nor is there a clear need for those proposed special projects. With the additional 3200 new homes planned for the Cherrybrook Metro precinct, there will be additional \$40.6M in revenue for the Council \*based on the average of \$1.2k per annum assessments rates per home. Wouldn't this additional revenue help defray and fund Council's core and essential services? (4) Hornsby Council should seek improved efficiencies and reduce wastages.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed SRV is too high, considering the current high inflation rate and interest cost. SRV proposal is putting unnecessary incremental strain on the family budget. If families are tightening their belts during these difficult times, likewise Council should consider deferring projects that are non essentials (non core) but are just "nice to have". Council should consider deferring or reducing the budget of \$30.8M for "Upgrading your community infrastructure". We are happy and can make do with what we have around our neighbourhood. Council do not seem to have any regard on the impact of the rate increase to the community.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council do not seem to have any regard on the impact of the rate increase to the community. Despite an overwhelming objection response received by Council, it still proceed to submit the proposed SRV increase.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not. Ratepayer's money must only be spent on core essential services. Council should prioritise essential tasks; defer non-essential tasks and seek Federal and State grants as alternative options. Council needs to better budget within their means and reduce their own costs.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No it has not. Council is lying that the community supports the rate rise when the community overwhelmingly is against it.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Council used the average rate which is deceptive and misleading, hiding the true rate rise.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No it has not. Most people do not read Council's website. Council's mailed pamphlets were misleading the shire residents. Many people are still not aware of Council's unpopular rate rise proposal.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community who submitted over 2,200 submissions 95% of which were against the rate variation. Council consultants Morrison Low are making misleading statements that the rate rise is affordable. Council claims the loss of rate revenue when Epping amalgamated with Parramatta shire which was their own doing and not with the consent of the shire. Council has allowed a plethora of high rise buildings which increases their base/

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable under any circumstances. We do not want any special variation. We have cost of living pressures; rising inflation; rising interest rates; rising energy bills; rising rental costs; with a economic recession down the line. Council wants to exploit the ratepayers for its own financial problems due to its own making. Council do not listen to the community but treat them with disdain.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council has completely disregarded the community and is running [REDACTED] over them. The public forums clearly and vociferously said that we do not have the capacity or willingness to accept the special variation. We do not want it.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

This is a joke. We are experiencing hardship now please see answer above. We say no, no no no and no.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not. It provided us with a voluminous report that most of us could not comprehend as it was clearly written by consultants to confuse the reader. There was no explanation as to what alternatives had been canvassed for the options. It seems like just increase the rates and our spending patterns will continue as always. No programme of efficiencies or cost cutting. The projects are not prioritised. Everything does not need to be done at once. If there was no automatic rate increase well managed organisations would live within their means.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. To my knowledge there has been nothing discussed on the projects with the wider community. If people know the impact of these rises on their rates they could then maybe decide if a proposed expense to upgrade a park would be in their interest. Looks like Council has put forward a wish list and expects ratepayers to accept it.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. Only averages were provided. I cannot recall anywhere in the report where Council advised what the annual impact would be on households and how it would be based. With the increase in high rise properties in the area the rates do not get shared equally. The majority of single dwelling rate payers will pay an increased share. Averaging is not useful in making a judgement.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Other than acknowledging receipt of my objection I have had no contact with the Council on this issue. I understand that there were a community meetings on the subject which was attended by some people. Council did not share the results of those meetings.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

It is my understanding that more than 90% of the community submissions received by the Council were against the SRV. Yet the Council voted to go ahead. If 90% of submissions were ignored then one can see a pattern on how this SRV has been advanced.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

We are living in a period of high inflation and interest rates. Any additional impost on the ratepayer makes our budgets even more stretched. For the Council to go ahead with this SRV in these times with a wish list of projects determined by them shows no understanding of how things are in present times. Families, businesses are pro actively trying to budget so they can withstand the pressures. Council just wants to push forward as they expect the ratepayer to fund their wish list and existing management structure.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I don't think they have had any consideration. If they had they would not proceed with the SRV at this time. It shows they are out of touch with the community. Some of these projects are a wish list of it will be good to do. However, if there are constraints then only "stay in business" projects should be done. Defer or discard the wish list projects.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I don't know.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I understand that the Council voted to proceed with the application

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 20 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not. We expect Council to prioritise essential core services such as parks, local roads, garbage collection. Defer non-essential projects until funds are available. This is common sense. Needs to budget within its means and implement better financial management. Council proposes expenditure as usual. Claims to have reduced staff but then contracts works out to private consultants at a price in excess of employing in-house staff. Council wants to fund a wish list established when it conducted 6 rushed consultation studies when establishing its future plan for Hornsby Council. Council claims that community surveys have set Councils priorities. Community groups have long questioned the validity of Council surveys. Increase efficiencies, productivity and savings. E.g. Council is said to over-order and over specify concrete for many works resulting in additional cost than warranted. Wasteful use of General Funds by engaging consultants to do Councils work. E.g. Cost of public consultation for rate rise was \$82,000 approx. Council would not reveal cost of employing the consultants who determined that Ratepayers could afford the SRV. It is rumored that the total cost of the SRV application is around \$400,000. Council claims the rate increase will be used to maintain both Hornsby and Westleigh Parks. These will not be anywhere near completed when the SRV comes into force. These Parks need an additional \$107M to complete. Council does not have the funds to finish them. Will Council be asking for another 30% rate rise in four years to complete them because the NSW Government is unlikely to provide another grant similar in size to the \$90M Council got for the two Parks.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Basically no, it has not. Council reinforces the spurious claim that the community supports the expenditure. At the final well attended public forum at the Hornsby RSL most community speakers were opposed to the SRV. Councils explanation did not satisfy the community members present. Council claims that once explained the community was satisfied. This was not the case. Only two very conservative community groups were in any way supportive.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

In one way it did, however, using the average rate is misleading. It hides the true rate rise. The average of rates across the shire is quite misleading and skews the result and hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners. The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rated household lower the average rate across the shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it has not. Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates. Advertised mainly on Councils website which most ratepayers dont read. Council held 4 public forums of which two were poorly attended. Councils pamphlet used in the mail-out provided a very positive false impression misleading the reader. Most speakers at the Hornsby public forum were opposed to the SRV. The General Manager Head did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function. Council documentation mentioned that Council was expecting increases in waste management costs. The cost of waste management is not paid for from the rates pool of money. A separate waste fee is charged for this service. Household pay for any increase incurred.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community feedback. Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation. In these inflationary times with sharp rises in monetary terms of mortgage repayments and cost of living. This rate increase is a travesty. Even with the proposed additional \$50 pensioner discount, on average the SRV will still add an additional \$350 to their rate bill. If renting the pensioners will be dealing with increases in rents to absorb the rate increase. Consultants Morrison Low determined that the rate rise was affordable. Was this because they were being paid by Council? Council claims the loss of rate revenue is because of Eppings amalgamation with Parramatta (thanks to Hornsby Councils mismanagement) is a causal factor in needing the SRV. No mention of the plethora of high-rise buildings that has occurred in recent times which have increased Councils rate base.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable at all and the SRV should be rejected. The SRV will be on top of the cost of living pressures that ordinary households are experiencing. Increases in food bills have featured prominently on the national media. People are having to

make expenditure choices not seen for generations, e.g. do we buy food or pay the rent? Inflation is currently running at almost 8% . Councils proposal for 31% is outrageous. House mortgages are now hovering at around 6%. Households and families are stretched to the limit. This rate increase could be the impost that forces them out of their homes with banks calling in their loans. The proposed increase in the pensioner concessions rate of \$50 is nothing short of insulting. The average pensioner SRV increase of \$350 is unaffordable for most pensioners. Council has lost touch with the plight of the community and have a complete disregard for us. Council MUST focus on core essential services and DEFER non-essential expenditure projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire. They want more money for their self-inflicted financial problems with no consideration for the additional financial burden and hardship and stress on the families, households and local businesses. They need to get themselves in order and prioritise on the core and essential services and defer non-essential projects for another time. Disappointed with the Morrison Low report commissioned by Council which basically says the community has the capacity to pay and are willing to do so. Obviously the report reflects the councils desire for that outcome. Public forums clearly indicated that the community does not have the capacity or willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Whilst Councils hardship policy at first glance seems reasonable, I can only imagine the stress of a ratepayer who finds they cannot afford the rate increase. It is hard to believe that Council will treat hardship cases with compassion. The final paragraph of the Hornsby's Hardship Policy says : 14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates. This shows how compassionate Council is to its ratepayers.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I wasnt aware of any such until recently someone had struck up a conversation at a family BBQ

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Date of submission: Tuesday, 21 February 2023

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Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

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Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

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Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it has not. Many community members do not access or unable to access the Council's website and therefore would not be aware of the SRV proposed increase in rates. Councils pamphlet used in the mail-out provided a very positive false impression misleading the reader. Most speakers at the Hornsby public forum were opposed to the SRV. The General Manager Head did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function. Council documentation mentioned that Council was expecting increases in waste management costs. The cost of waste management is not paid for from the rates pool of money. A separate waste fee is charged for this service and households already pay for any increase incurred.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community feedback. Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation. In these inflationary times with sharp rises in monetary terms of cost of living. This rate increase is a travesty. Consultants Morrison Low determined that the rate rise was affordable. Was this because they were being paid by Council? Council claims the loss of rate revenue is because of Eppings amalgamation with Parramatta (thanks to Hornsby Councils mismanagement) is a causal factor in needing the SRV. No mention of the plethora of high-rise buildings that has occurred in recent times which have increased Councils rate base.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable at all and the SRV should be rejected. The SRV will be on top of the cost of living pressures that households are already experiencing such as increases in food bills. Inflation is currently running at almost 8% . Councils proposal for 31% is absolutely outrageous. Council has lost touch with the plight of the community and have a complete disregard for us. Council MUST focus on core essential services and DEFER non-essential expenditure projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council has demonstrated a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire. Council wants more money for their financial management problems with no consideration for the additional financial burden and hardship and stress on the families, households and local businesses. Council needs to prioritise on core and essential services and defer non-essential projects for another time. Disappointed with the Morrison Low report commissioned by Council which basically says the community has the capacity to pay and are willing to do so. It seems that the report reflects the councils desire for that outcome. Public forums clearly indicated that the community does not have the capacity or willingness to pay.

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Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



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Date of submission: Tuesday, 21 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

As a long time resident of Pennant Hills in the Hornsby Shire, I support the SRV application from Hornsby Council. I am satisfied with Council's performance and I am satisfied that we need this SRV in order to be able to continue the level of services provided to us. The automatic IPART rate pegging should be increased and better match inflation and CPI, such that such extraordinary SRVs are no longer required.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Yes. Council has clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund. Council has presented these outcomes in various presentations within the community.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes, Council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise, namely that Council will have to stop providing many services within the next few years, or reduce the extent or quality of services provided to residents, when Council's budget will inevitably run into the negative.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, Council communicate a very detailed overview of the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms, as well as in real dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Yes. Council has published their request, with the underlying arguments, for an SRV in various media, websites, emails, and during presentations within the community.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The Pennant Hills District Civic Trust engaged with Council and proposed a Community Consultation session on the Special Rates Variation in Pennant Hills Baptist Church, and Council has cooperated with this request in a very positive and engaging way. Council has also listened to and commented on several feedback speeches as well as answered questions from residents in the Council meeting.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed change in SRV amounts to a reasonable change of on average around 4% each year over around 5 years (for now). The Sydney press was screaming loud that rates were going to increase by 35% but that includes the usual IPART peg rate anyway, which is about half of that total increase, and which is by design not capable of keeping up with inflation as a whole. I find that an increase of approx. \$80 on my \$2000 annual rates bill is reasonable, in order to ensure Council can deliver essential services.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council is only trying to achieve a flat line budget over the next 5-10 years whilst keeping the current standard of services. Council has done many surveys over the recent years to ask residents what they expect from Council, and Council is of the opinion that the services offered match the services requested. With declining budget (due to increasing costs), a reduction in services would be against what the residents have asked for.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council is (and always has been) very reasonable in how it intends to deal with hardship situation. I personally do not believe many such hardship situations to arise due to this 4% increase in rates for home owners in the Shire. The current rise in mortgage interest rates from ~1% to 4% within a year will hit many of these home owners much harder. Will lenders show the same level of understanding in situations of hardship as Council proposes? I doubt this very much.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Council has exhibited, approved and adopted all required documents prior to submitting the proposal.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and

cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has explained and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 21 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Council need to scrap this idea and re think what strategy [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] stop looking a a small group of rate payers to pay for your mistakes.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, not at all.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Seemingly No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Partially but at the same time the usual smoke screen, I still don't know the actual proposed rate rise for my personal circumstance other than is two high and will make paying rate in the future much less likely, we have just received a new valuation from the valuer general which seem to keep going up and up but the land value on the real marked increase is negligible. And council want to use this as a guide ! Guide to never ending increases. We need real wage increases not 0.5% more like 30%. We are struggling with sharp rises in cost of living, mortgage, electricity, insurance, food etc higher controls and cost put on public ie, metered parking, paid parking at shopping centre, speed cameras on every corner, user pay systems for gov services payed camping national parks etc etc. We just cant afford another rise in costs

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

I hardly bother trying to attend because council don't seem to listen to the rate payers concern anymore , they just do what they want and [REDACTED] businesses wants.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

None, just business as usual.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. We don't all live in ivory towers or work over payed cushy jobs, I do not have the capacity to pay any rise it rate, I haven't even had a holiday in well over 10 years. I dont support the rate rise and no one I have spoken with in the community dose either, council is living in fairyland if they think they have comunity support for the special rate variation.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

They plan to charge us that can afford it leased the special late rate payment at the highest interest rate they possible, and good luck getting any other assistance.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

? No idear havent heard anything.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Nil

Author name: Name suppressed

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
The council doesn't appear to have considered the dramatic financial burden this massive increase would have on ratepayers. There must be another way run the council's budget.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?  
Hornsby council has not demonstrated the need to increase rates by this extraordinary rate which is way above any inflation linked rise. Budget should be done within means and not increased to spend on non core projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?  
Not from the minimal information available to rate payers.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?  
Not that I am aware of, the increases proposed are compounding year on year.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?  
No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

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Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

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Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 21 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

I have yet to see any evidence that Hornsby has shown a valid reason. Instead of increasing rates, stop using more expensive private contractors. There was approx \$80k spent on a public consultancy for the special variation and an as yet undisclosed sum for the private consultancy around the same.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

I have yet to speak to anyone who is in agreement of increasing rates (note that most people didn't seem to be aware of the proposed increase) in an already financially stressful environment at this time and so I do not believe the claim that there is a majority support that has been received. I require Hornsby Council to look after the residents by providing the necessary and due care for services that are already part of the mandate. I still can't see the justification for the proposed increase beyond a Wishlist.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rated household lower the average rate across the shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates. Advertised mainly on Councils website which most ratepayers dont read. Council held 4 public forums of which two were poorly attended. Councils pamphlet used in the mail-out provided a very positive false impression misleading the reader. Most speakers at the Hornsby public forum were opposed to the SRV. The General Manager Head did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function. Council documentation mentioned that Council was expecting increases in waste management costs. The cost of waste management is not paid for from the rates pool of money. A separate waste fee is charged for this service. Household pay for any increase incurred.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation. In these inflationary times with sharp rises in monetary terms of mortgage repayments and cost of living. This rate increase is a travesty. Even with the proposed additional \$50 pensioner discount, on average the SRV will still add an additional \$350 to their rate bill. If renting the pensioners will be dealing with increases in rents to absorb the rate increase.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

In the current world with crazy interest rates, crazy fuel prices, crazy food bills and so on..., is this really an issue that the council is willing to bet it's tenure on? There is already too much month left at the end of the money for the household.... 31% increase is ridiculously high... people are upset with the recent RBA hikes which are way lower than the percentage that Hornsby Shire council is proposing.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. I don't feel or believe that the council has taken feedback seriously at all. It seems to be determined to just proceed regardless. Note that a similar approach has taken place with the rural land redevelopment, higher density housing without care for traffic load and so on. It seems to me that Hornsby are just bull headed and do what they want. This is deeply disappointing.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

There is no plan that I can see. Compassion vrs. interest and a defiant approach is what I can see.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation

period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 21 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council HAS NOT demonstrated the need for increasing rates. Do not increase rates. Ratepayers' money (General Revenue) must be spent on Councils 'core' essential services. Prioritise essential projects (not wish list), defer non-essential projects, seek State & Federal Government Grants, as alternative sources. Implement better financial management to budget within your means. Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

High Financial Impact on Ratepayers SRV increase is too high putting additional cost of living pressures. Exacerbated by rising inflation, interest rate hikes, energy bills, rent rise and potential future economic recession. Council has lost touch with the community, budgeting excessively, with no money. Council wants more money from ratepayers to fix Council's financial problems, with no consideration for the additional financial burden placed on its ratepayers.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

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Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

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Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I have been involved and sent submissions to Council on their Draft Rural Lands Strategy over the last 9 years. They had public displays and submissions and employed SRS Consultants. The constituents and consultants made similar observations and recommendations as to future uses and development of the rural area. Hornsby Council finally had a meeting and only accepted the most minimal of changes and rejected large changes even those recommended by the consultants. Hornsby council DOES NOT LISTEN to the people, but spends our money pretending to listen.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council has not demonstrated the need to increase rates. Rate payers contributions should be spent on the basic functions of council such as roads, upgrade and maintenance, parks and nature strip maintenance, garbage collection. These are neglected in favour of spending excessively on consultants and not listening to constituents.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This increase will have a very significant effect on the financial health of all ratepayers. Especially as land values in the Hornsby Council area are also increasing rapidly, the basis for rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The Council has not considered the community.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I am not aware of this.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

i don't know

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

All, just words, from experience

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

It is time that this Council remembered that it serves the local community - and that it worked to show it has listened to its residents and acted accordingly. This has not happened during this process and, resultingly, trust in the council has declined rapidly

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The Council has NOT. Despite a letter attempting to do this, it seems pretty clear that this level of this increase is not necessary. Instead the Council could look at current ways of operating, means to gain greater efficiencies and better project management: e.g. instead of - Driven increased costs due to contracting out to expensive consultants, rather than in house staff, as a budget shifting exercise that is moving the costs into the rate payer. -Wasteful use of General Funds -Misleading claim that rate increase is to main parks completion

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No they have not. The Community does not support these expenditures & their financial impacts on rate payers, esp those on single dwelling lot holders.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

They have - YES. However their attempt to use averages to make their case is flawed, as is the use of unimproved capatial value of land.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Most communications were on the council website which people only go to if they need information. It's not a communication medium. Letterbox comms painted a much more positive and baised state of affairs. Face to face means of engagement was poorly promoted and has poorly attended, esp due to COVID impacts on public meetings those attending the public forums spoke agaisnt the motion and this was not addressed in any way by the council

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I believe that submissions were in the thousands and over 90% were against the rate increase at this level. despite this there was no attempt by the council to change their approach or actions

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Unreasonable, esp in current economic climate. all households have increased pressure and hence now is not the time to push through an increase of this magnitude. If other councils are not needing to do this then Hornsby doesn't need to either (unless there has been serious mismanagement of funds!). An increase can be held back to a lower level and spread across a longer period of time

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

it appears that there is NO consideration of capacity or willingness. The Morrison report (commissioned by the same council!) no doubt reflects the wishes of the people who employed those consultants - and would not have been published or approved until the appropriate findings were "found" If this was a pitch to a Board of Directors of a corporation it would have rejected and the Council tasked to rework. In this case it appears that NO notice has been taken of the people who are footing the "bill" - us the ratepayers. There also appears to be little attempt to tailor and prioritise the work to be undertaken. It's an "all you can push through" approach where costs to the citizens licin gin this area is not be taken into consideration

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

clearly the community are NOT willing to pay - and hardship is not being addressed. There is still insufficient reason for this council to put through an increase so much larger than other councils have needed to

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

unknown

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and

cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.  
without inside knowledge of the reality of the operations it is difficult to judge how well any measures have in fact been implemented or effected.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council are clearly poor financial managers with high rates for minimal services

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

I don't believe they have looked at their poor financial management and seen how they can cut costs rather than burden already overburdened taxpayers

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The council asked for feedback and my understanding is they received an overwhelming negative response which they ignored

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, there was an email

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They appear to have completely ignored it

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Such a large rate rise at a time of high inflation and increasing mortgage rates is irresponsible. Though Hornsby is on paper an area of high SES there are many elderly pensioners and families servicing very high mortgages and this will really hurt. Sadly also despite high rates Hornsby Council delivers very poor services compared to other areas

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

As above I think there has been no consideration or understanding.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I do not believe this large rise can be ameliorated.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

n/a

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

The Hornsby Shire Council (HSC) has provided financial statements for both with and without the special rate variation (SRV) that the council is requesting. The main justification is that without the SRV the HSC will show a deficit in net Operating result before grants and Contributions provided for Capital Purposes. The cash flows show that HSC does not have a net cash loss over the period. The negative operating results are due to Depreciation and Amortisation of the capital investments that are planned. As the depreciation is for capital largely provided for by grants, and not by recurrent income, the use of depreciation in this case is misleading as to actual result. The use of EBIDTA would be a more accurate measure and shows that HSC will not run at a loss over the planning period. Therefore the HSC has no need for the SRV.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Both items have been communicated.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

On the light side and with a relatively short timeline for both consultation and the iPART submission, but probably acceptable.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

HSC have largely ignored the considerable negative feedback, except to hide some unfortunate (for HSC) revelations in hard-to-find documents, such as developing a substantial war chest (over \$60 million) of uncommitted cash over the life of the LTFP (figure 7 attachment 20).

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

In the current environment of reduced wage increases compared to inflation, the proposal for a very large rate variation is totally unreasonable, especially as there is no real cash flow loss facing the council.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

None apparent.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I am unaware of the plan. I have seen the financial sensitivity analysis.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I presume so.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I have not examined this in enough detail to comment.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council HAS NOT demonstrated the need for increasing rates. Do not increase rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

SRV increase is too high putting additional cost of living pressures. Exacerbated by rising inflation, interest rate hikes, energy bills, rent rise and potential future economic recession.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has lost touch with the community, budgeting excessively, with no money.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council wants more money from ratepayers to fix Council's financial problems, with no consideration for the additional financial burden placed on its ratepayers.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I wish this rate hike is not approved and send back to the council to find ways to reduce their costs and unnecessary spends.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council has not demonstrated the need for rate increases. They should cut down the costs, increase efficiency and prioritise the things to do with existing rate..

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

No action taken in my opinion

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

SVR increase is too high and this is done before looking for ways to increase efficiency and decrease council costs. In this days of high inflation council should try to decrease costs and keeps rates same rather than increasing the rate to help the community

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Definitely no. A lot of wishes and plans without thinking about the ratepayers situation especially at this hard times. In addition ratepayers will be slugged much higher rates just with the recent doubling of their land valuation by the Valuer General even without any rate increase. Where will the ratepayers find the money to pay their rates ? Incomes are not rising and all other cost of living have gone up . We are being squeezed from both ends. The council have simply ignored the ratepayers objections to the SV and just bulldoze their way through.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not that has been made known. It seems they treat the ratepayers as the money tree. It is the easiest means of raising funds despite the hardships ratepayers are facing. They should defer non essential projects find alternative means of funding if and when necessary. There should be better financial management within the council itself, reduce wastage, reduce overheads, and increase efficiencies.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The impact would be disastrous on top of the rate rise due to the doubling of the recent land values sent out to ratepayers. I believe Council have lost touch with the ratepayers and who they are. They think that ratepayers are there to fix all its financial problems. They need to be more considerate of the long suffering ratepayers.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. They did no such consideration otherwise there would not be so many objections to this SV, which Council deliberately ignored.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

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Date of submission: Thursday, 23 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not. We expect Council to prioritise essential core services such as parks, local roads, garbage collection. Defer non-essential projects until funds are available. This is common sense. Needs to budget within its means and implement better financial management. Council proposes expenditure as usual. Claims to have reduced staff but then contracts works out to private consultants at a price in excess of employing in-house staff. Council wants to fund a wish list established when it conducted 6 rushed consultation studies when establishing its future plan for Hornsby Council. Council claims that community surveys have set Councils priorities. Community groups have long questioned the validity of Council surveys. Increase efficiencies, productivity and savings. E.g. Council is said to over-order and over specify concrete for many works resulting in additional cost than warranted. Wasteful use of General Funds by engaging consultants to do Councils work. E.g. Cost of public consultation for rate rise was \$82,000 approx. Council would not reveal cost of employing the consultants who determined that Ratepayers could afford the SRV. It is rumored that the total cost of the SRV application is around \$400,000. Council claims the rate increase will be used to maintain both Hornsby and Westleigh Parks. These will not be anywhere near completed when the SRV comes into force. These Parks need an additional \$107M to complete. Council does not have the funds to finish them. Will Council be asking for another 30% rate rise in four years to complete them because the NSW Government is unlikely to provide another grant similar in size to the \$90M Council got for the two Parks. Criterion 1, Question 2. Has Council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise? Basically no, it has not. Council reinforces the spurious claim that the community supports the expenditure. At the final well attended public forum at the Hornsby RSL most community speakers were opposed to the SRV. Councils explanation did not satisfy the community members present. Council claims that once explained the community was satisfied. This was not the case. Only two very conservative community groups were in any way supportive.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

In one way it did, however, using the average rate is deceptive and misleading. It hides the true rate rise. The average of rates across the shire is quite misleading and skews the result and hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners. The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rated household lower the average rate across the shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

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Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it has not. Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates. Advertised mainly on Councils website which most ratepayers dont read. Council held 4 public forums of which two were poorly attended. Councils pamphlet used in the mail-out provided a very positive false impression misleading the reader. Most speakers at the Hornsby public forum were opposed to the SRV. The General Manager Head did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function. Council documentation mentioned that Council was expecting increases in waste management costs. The cost of waste management is not paid for from the rates pool of money. A separate waste fee is charged for this service. Household pay for any increase incurred.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community feedback. Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation. In these inflationary times with sharp rises in monetary terms of mortgage repayments and cost of living. This rate increase is a travesty. Even with the proposed additional \$50 pensioner discount, on average the SRV will still add an additional \$350 to their rate bill. If renting the pensioners will be dealing with increases in rents to absorb the rate increase. Consultants Morrison Low determined that the rate rise was affordable. Was this because they were being paid by Council? Council claims the loss of rate revenue is because of Eppings amalgamation with Parramatta (thanks to Hornsby Councils mismanagement) is a causal factor in needing the SRV. No mention of the plethora of high-rise buildings that has occurred in recent times which have increased Councils rate base.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable at all and the SRV should be rejected. The SRV will be on top of the cost of living pressures that ordinary households are experiencing. Increases in food bills have featured prominently on the national media. People are having to make expenditure choices not seen for generations, e.g. do we buy food or pay the rent? Inflation is currently running at almost 8% . Councils proposal for 31% is outrageous. House mortgages are now hovering at around 6%. Households and families are stretched to the limit. This rate increase could be the impost that forces them out of their homes with banks calling in their loans. The proposed increase in the pensioner concessions rate of \$50 is nothing short of insulting. The average pensioner SRV increase of \$350 is unaffordable for most pensioners. Council has lost touch with the plight of the community and have a complete disregard for us. Council MUST focus on core essential services and DEFER non-essential expenditure projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire. They want more money for their self-inflicted financial problems with no consideration for the additional financial burden and hardship and stress on the families, households and local businesses. They need to get themselves in order and prioritise on the core and essential services and defer non-essential projects for another time. Disappointed with the Morrison Low report commissioned by Council which basically says the community has the capacity to pay and are willing to do so. Obviously the report reflects the councils desire for that outcome. Public forums clearly indicated that the community does not have the capacity or willingness to pay. Whilst Councils hardship policy at first glance seems reasonable, I can only imagine the stress of a ratepayer who finds they cannot afford the rate increase. It is hard to believe that Council will treat hardship cases with compassion. The final paragraph of the Hornsbys Hardship Policy says : 14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates. This shows how compassionate Council is to its ratepayers. It is bullying people instead.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 23 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
Council should not ignore the residents' strong call for rejection of the Special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

I am not convinced that Hornsby Council is justified in applying for a cumulative increase of 31.05% over four years considering that cost of living including food, utilities, medical insurance etc have increased significantly in recent months. Many submissions have been made by others against this increase. I can only add that Hornsby Council should "live within their means" and budget for necessary services only. Unless it is for safety and health reasons, Council should cancel or defer capital expenditure on non-essential items.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Clearly there is no reasonableness when there is special variation increase of 31.05% in light of the recent significant increases in the cost of living.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council does not appear to have taken into consideration the impact on pensioners, retirees and young families with mortgages. There is a high proportion of ageing residents who do not have the means to pay such exorbitant increase in rates.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 23 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
Discrimination against the community by a Marxist government.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, the council has NOT any need.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, the council has NOT canvassed any alternatives.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The council is using a misleading but of arithmetic. An average can be manipulated by the figures used in the calculation.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No visible consultation by the council. This is a stealth tactic.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The council has ignored community feedback.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The council is ignoring the high cost of living already imposed on rate payers.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

No consideration on the high cost of living already imposed on rate payers.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

The council is NOT addressing any hardship of rate payers. The council is imposing to charge more for late payers.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 24 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

I don't believe so. The recent substantial rise in Unimproved Capital Values would ensure adequate funding through normal avenues. This is not the time to be increasing the burden on Family Incomes.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

The Council has only announced it's intention to raise rates, no real justification has been discussed with residents. A major proportion of people in the Beecroft Cheltenham area are Retirees and young families and the Council should concentrate on easing the cost of living for these, not increasing it. They are currently expending thousands on a Cycle Track which will not only reduce Street Parking and Open Space but will only benefit a small proportion of residents, and then only for recreational purposes.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

I do not believe so. I certainly have not received such information.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

I don't believe so.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I wrote to Council, and received a reply stating that my submission had been noted. Nothing since.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I would consider that under the present climate of Inflation and high cost of living it would be reasonable to expect Council to curb expenditure and keep rate increases to a minimum. Residents with a mortgage are already under financial stress.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 24 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council HAS NOT demonstrated the need for increasing rates. Do not increase rates. Ratepayers' money (General Revenue) must be spent on Councils 'core' essential services. Prioritise essential projects (not wish list), defer non-essential projects, seek State & Federal Government Grants, as alternative sources. Implement better financial management to budget within your means. Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This will be a massive financial impact on ratepayers SRV increase is too high putting additional cost of living pressures. Exacerbated by rising inflation, interest rate hikes, energy bills, rent rise and potential future economic recession. Council has lost touch with the community, budgeting excessively, with no money. Council wants more money from ratepayers to fix Council's financial problems, with no consideration for the additional financial burden placed on its ratepayers.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 25 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

In this unfavourable economic climate, it would be prudent for the council to reconsider its plan for the SRV and stick to only providing the most essential works. Residents wish to see increased savings and better financial management before they would even consider supporting such an increase.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

There is no NEED established - just a 'wishlist'. Council should defer non-essential projects. Council claims that community surveys have set Council's priorities, but the council's own submission IPART states these works are part of their 2024-2025 Delivery Program which is part of the Your Vision Your Future 2032 which are aspirations of the State and Local Government and not members of Hornsby Shire.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No they have not.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, however, using the average of rates across the shire is misleading. It hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No - it was advertised on Council website and a large proportion of the residents were not aware not adequately informed, hence the public forums were poorly attended. Most speakers at the public forum were opposed to the SRV and the GM did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has not demonstrated that community concerns were considered in the final decision. Community feedback was ignored. 95% of the submissions received were opposed to the SRV. The public forums indicated that the community does not, at this time, have the capacity or willingness to pay.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The average pensioner SRV increase of \$350 is unaffordable for pensioners. The SRV would be an added cost to increased cost of living expenses. Families are stretched to the limit and these increases could force them out of their homes.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council has not so far considered the community's capacity and willingness to pay and seem determined to proceed regardless of the hardship and distress it will cause residents. Affordable living should be a right not a burden to families who currently need to decide if they can afford either food for the table or pay the bills that keep rising.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council's hardship policy states that as a deterrent for late payment of rates, council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates. This is not compassion.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 25 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Its been really disappointing how the council have gone through this big process to gather community feedback which was overwhelming against the submission yet they proceeded anyway. There are obviously costs that have increased inline with inflation but they are trying to double dip especially with the higher than expected land valuations we have all received so they will be receiving significantly more from us in that sense. Its really disheartening

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, I feel we have been trapped into a rate rise for non essential luxuries as per the document given to the residents

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No they have not. They have told us the reasons for the increase but for silly reasons such as new suburb signs and not indicated any money mismanagement from inside

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

There have been lots of different methods to communicate the strategy but lots of unwillingness from the council to listen to the population

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I feel as though the council had lots of opposition to the proposition on the special rate from the community but the application was still lodged. I feel as though the council have decided to go against the residents which decreases confidence with the council

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Life is tough right now. I think a increase in line with inflation would be acceptable but beyond that will make things extremely tough for a lot of us

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Nil consideration to what community have said

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Unacceptable because hardship only includes those on benefits or low income earners. No one cares about reasonable incomes but high mortgage repayments

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No. This was very sudden. There was minimal time to absorb the proposals. They just told us what they wanted and didnt listen to anyone

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Nil. They asked residents to put a Wishlist together and we have been trapped into a SRV from a Wishlist. If residents had known they were to use this against us then we wouldnt have said anything



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 25 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No the council has not demonstrated clearly why the this extraordinarily high increase is needed. They have written up a long Christmas wish list, a fairy tale. In fact what the council has demonstrated is utter disregard to effectively budgeted the current rates they collect.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not to my knowledge. I can't see real reduction in wastage and a better and careful management of funds already being collected. Council has not come up with any alternative or ways to revisit current projects and negotiate a better deal. The council is not living within its means. Only essentially projects should be going ahead.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, I do not agree with their rate averaging. It is misleading and hides the true figures.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Absolutely not. Council has mailed a pamphlet which provided a really positive impression. However it has failed to adequately inform the community of a proper and meaningful discussion of the rate rise. The engagement was poor and I don't believe everyone in the community had an opportunity to become aware. Apart from the pamphlet I was not made aware of any other engagement.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I don't believe the council has considered community concerns.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This is not a reasonable rate rise. Many in the community are struggling in the current climate, many are barely able to cover the current costs of utilities, interest rates, and basic necessities of life. It is a massive struggle already.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

The council has ignored community feedback as most in the community do not have the appetite for such an increase. This is not what the community can bear at this time with such enormous pressures on basic living needs.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 25 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

In my opinion no

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

I believe so

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Significant portion of the community opposed this but its still going ahead

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

I understand a rise given the volatility of costs rising but this is too much. It will impact a lot of people and people will struggle.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

As above

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

No I do not believe they did although I may have missed this

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Unsure

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Fair strategy but rate increase not commensurate to this

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 26 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Partly. Council is planning on undertaking significant work that is non essential. The increased costs to achieve these projects is not justified as they are not essential.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No - the community has not been consulted on rescoping project or alternatives to rate rises. Cutting staff costs would also be an alternative

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Unsure. When looking at the data it is confusing and seems to show unit owners will incur similar costs to entire households

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Community's feedback ignored .

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Mortgage rate increases and inflation are already putting pressure on households. While It is important for the community to be invested in, there will not be a community remaining if people cannot afford to live in Hornsby. The rate increase is for wish list projects - the cueueent community will not benefit as they will be forced out or not be able to afford to enjoy the projects as they struggle to meet cost of living increases

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I havent seen any communication from council on this. I regularly check my main ans am subscribed to Council mailing lists and havent seen communication on this issue.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Unknown

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 26 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I feel deeply hurt and insulted about how out of touch our council has become with its community. I know there is significant wastage that is going on and we are required to foot the bill. We were hoping to get some respite from the additional levy that Hornsby residents were forced to pay from acquiring landfill from the NorthConnex to fill the Hornsby Quarry. This year working in an NFP I have already had. net wage loss of nearly 5% against CPI - 3% is all my company could afford). I am also paying over \$2,000 more per month to finance my mortgage repayments - yet Hornsby Council expect me to afford this increase. What gets me most is the deception they have used throughout this process to try and demonstrate to you that they have community support.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No need has been established. I feel that the council has been very deceptive throughout this process. Prior to announcing their intention they sent residents a survey asking them for a whole list of things that they would like (without advising them that they were unfounded). They then turned around and said we need this special rate rise to deliver on the things you wanted. No cost indicators given and no hints they were even contemplating this sort of action.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not really. They expect mums and dads with mortgages facing the heftiest rate rises and cost of living pressures in decades to somehow stump up extra funding. How about council reassess like its residents have had to what non-essential services can be cut.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

They gave an indicator of the average increase. As a homeowner though who has a decent parcel of land (of which much cannot be developed as it backs onto National Park) I stand to pay a disproportionately higher amount than average given the amount of medium to high density housing that has formed in Hornsby CBD

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

They held forums. Despite the overwhelming majority of recorded conversations indicating the community's strong objections to this rate rise they simply did not care. In fact they planted politically connected members of the public to join the conversation at the Council meeting to try and at least get one voice to support them - most likely for statistics and mislead you into thinking that there is a greater percentage of residents who support this. (I would be happy to provide names and details of this).

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Complete arrogance. They simply do not care about the financial stress many of their younger residents are under.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

No reasonableness shown. There is a suggestion that those under financial hardship may apply for relief.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. This question just infuriates me. This Council has shown blatant disregard at the community's plea not to push this.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

There is no assistance on offer for me. I'm not a pensioner and the \$50 would be inadequate for them as well.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes - much to the devastation of the rate payers it was supposed to listen to.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Not really. It feels like we are writing a blank cheque for council to further mismanage our scarce resources.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 26 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Many projects are not needed or in the best interests of rate payers

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, council has not assessed alternatives that might be in the better interests of residents

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No most of the community was through the Councils website

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The community is in general unhappy with current plans for further development and the accompanying rate increases

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

In this era of rising inflation and cost of living, council should not be increasing rates

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Council has not taken into account community's ability to pay, particularly pensioners and young families

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council is providing inadequate assistance to those in hardship

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 26 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No, In addition to rates rises there has been an increase in Ladner valuation which means ratepayers have been exposed to rate gouging

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Not adequate considering the impact and wider impact of inflation

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

They need to demonstrate the cost cutting they have undertaken to raise resources rather than handing rate payers a higher bill.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Totally unreasonable because the rates are being increased and land valuation is being increased which means a double whammy given the inflationary rises that are already biting. This looks an additional hit in the gut

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

They need to consider how much people's incomes are rising before introducing special variation in rates.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

A reasonable impact would involve looking at the overall inflation situation and reduction in disposable income of rate payers. We don't need walkways along roads if we have to limit our groceries.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

It would be great to see the improvements at ratepayers level rather than broad savings

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Criterion 1, Question 1 Has Council Clearly established the need for and purpose of a different revenue path for the Councils General fund? No it has not. We expect Council to prioritise essential core services such as parks, local roads, garbage collection. Defer non-essential projects until funds are available. This is common sense. Needs to budget within its means and implement better financial management. Council proposes expenditure as usual. Claims to have reduced staff but then contracts works out to private consultants at a price in excess of employing in-house staff. Council wants to fund a wish list established when it conducted 6 rushed consultation studies when establishing its future plan for Hornsby Council. Council claims that community surveys have set Councils priorities. Community groups have long questioned the validity of Council surveys. Increase efficiencies, productivity and savings. E.g. Council is said to over-order and over specify concrete for many works resulting in additional cost than warranted. Wasteful use of General Funds by engaging consultants to do Councils work. E.g. Cost of public consultation for rate rise was \$82,000 approx. Council would not reveal cost of employing the consultants who determined that Ratepayers could afford the SRV. It is rumored that the total cost of the SRV application is around \$400,000. Council claims the rate increase will be used to maintain both Hornsby and Westleigh Parks. These will not be anywhere near completed when the SRV comes into force. These Parks need an additional \$107M to complete. Council does not have the funds to finish them. Will Council be asking for another 30% rate rise in four years to complete them because the NSW Government is unlikely to provide another grant similar in size to the \$90M Council got for the two Parks.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Criterion 1, Question 2. Has Council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise? Basically no, it has not. Council reinforces the spurious claim that the community supports the expenditure. At the final well attended public forum at the Hornsby RSL most community speakers were opposed to the SRV. Councils explanation did not satisfy the community members present. Council claims that once explained the community was satisfied. This was not the case. Only two very conservative community groups were in any way supportive.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Criterion 2, Question 1. Did the Council communicate the full cumulative increase of the special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category? In one way it did, however, using the average rate is deceptive and misleading. It hides the true rate rise. The average of rates across the shire is quite misleading and skews the result and hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners. The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rated households lower the average rate across the shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Criterion 2, Question 2. Has the councils community engagement Strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness? No, it has not. Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates. Advertised mainly on Councils website which most ratepayers dont read. Council held 4 public forums of which two were poorly attended. Councils pamphlet used in the mail-out provided a very positive false impression misleading the reader. Most speakers at the Hornsby public forum were opposed to the SRV. The General Manager Head did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function. Council documentation mentioned that Council was expecting increases in waste management costs. The cost of waste management is not paid for from the rates pool of money. A separate waste fee is charged for this service. Household pay for any increase incurred. No links to this IPART site to encourage residents comments

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Criterion 2, Question 3 Please comment on the action taken by Council to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation. Council ignored the community feedback. Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation. In these inflationary times with sharp rises in monetary terms of mortgage repayments and cost of living. This rate increase is a travesty. Even with the proposed additional \$50 pensioner discount, on average the SRV will still add an additional \$350 to their rate bill. If renting the pensioners will be dealing with even higher increases in rents to absorb the rate increase. Consultants Morrison Low determined that the rate rise was affordable. Is this information out of date or has this council paid consultancy failed to look at (well documented) current and future cost of living increases. Council claims the loss of rate revenue is because of Eppings amalgamation with Parramatta (thanks to Hornsby Councils mismanagement) is a causal

factor in needing the SRV. No mention of the plethora of high-rise buildings that has occurred in recent times which have increased Councils rate base.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Criterion 3, Question 1. Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers at the proposed special variation. It is not reasonable at all and the SRV should be rejected. COVID-19, climate change, and global supply chain issues have each driven up the cost of living in Australia. Housing costs, groceries, and transportation are 2023's biggest expenses. The SRV will be on top of the cost of living pressures that ordinary households are experiencing. Increases in food bills have featured prominently on the national media. People are having to make expenditure choices not seen for generations, e.g. do we buy food or pay the rent? Between December 2021 - 2022, headline inflation in Australia rose by a mind-boggling 7.8%, wages appear to have only risen by 3.3% over the same period of time. Inflation is currently running at almost 8% . Councils proposal for 31% is outrageous. House mortgages are now hovering at around 6%. Households and families are stretched to the limit. This rate increase could be the impost that forces them out of their homes with banks calling in their loans. The proposed increase in the pensioner concessions rate of \$50 is nothing short of insulting. The average pensioner SRV increase of \$350 is unaffordable for most pensioners. Council has lost touch with the plight of the community and have a complete disregard for us. Council MUST focus on core essential services and DEFER non-essential expenditure projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Criterion 3, Question 2 Please comment on the Councils consideration of the communitys consideration of the communitys capacity and willingness to pay. Council has a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire. They want more money for their self-inflicted financial problems with no consideration for the additional financial burden and hardship and stress on the families, households and local businesses. They need to get themselves in order and prioritise on the core and essential services and defer non-essential projects for another time. Disappointed with the Morrison Low report commissioned by Council which basically says the community has the capacity to pay and are willing to do so. Obviously the report reflects the councils desire for that outcome not the current reality. Public forums clearly indicated that the community does not have the capacity or willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Criterion 3, Question 3 Whilst Councils hardship policy at first glance seems reasonable, I can only imagine the stress of a ratepayer who finds they cannot afford the rate increase. It is hard to believe that Council will treat hardship cases with any compassion. NB The final paragraph of the Hornsbys Hardship Policy says : 14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates. This shows how compassionate Council is to its ratepayers. It is bullying people instead.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Yes exhibited to a very small percentage of residents Approved because council want this Adopted despite opposition

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The council should give us a good living area as we have spent a fortune buying places for us to live with nature and greener rather than in a concrete jungle

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

COUNCIL 1 has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. 2 being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. 3 has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? 4 must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

COUNCIL Council; 1 appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. 2 must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. 3 must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. 4 must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. 5 must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

1 Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. 2 An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. 3 A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

1 Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. 2 Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. 3 How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council 1 Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. 2 Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. 3 Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. 4 The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No it has not. We expect Council to prioritise essential core services such as parks, local roads, garbage collection. Defer non-essential projects until funds are available. This is common sense. Needs to budget within its means and implement better financial management. Council proposes expenditure as usual. Claims to have reduced staff but then contracts works out to private consultants at a price in excess of employing in-house staff. Council wants to fund a wish list established when it conducted 6 rushed consultation studies when establishing its future plan for Hornsby Council. Council claims that community surveys have set Councils priorities. Community groups have long questioned the validity of Council surveys. Increase efficiencies, productivity and savings. E.g. Council is said to over-order and over specify concrete for many works resulting in additional cost than warranted. Wasteful use of General Funds by engaging consultants to do Councils work. E.g. Cost of public consultation for rate rise was \$82,000 approx. Council would not reveal cost of employing the consultants who determined that Ratepayers could afford the SRV. It is rumored that the total cost of the SRV application is around \$400,000. Additional wasteful spending for incorrect modelling completed as park of flood survey works. Council claims the rate increase will be used to maintain both Hornsby and Westleigh Parks. These will not be anywhere near completed when the SRV comes into force. These Parks need an additional \$107M to complete. Council does not have the funds to finish them. Will Council be asking for another 30% rate rise in four years to complete them because the NSW Government is unlikely to provide another grant similar in size to the \$90M Council got for the two Parks.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council has decided to blindly push on with the SRV with complete disdain for the wishes of the majority of the community in attendance with the meetings Council reinforces the spurious claim that the community supports the expenditure. At the final well attended public forum at the Hornsby RSL most community speakers were opposed to the SRV. Councils explanation did not satisfy the community members present. Council claims that once explained the community was satisfied. This was not the case. Only two very conservative community groups were in any way supportive.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

In one way it did, however, using the average rate is deceptive and misleading. It hides the true rate rise. The average of rates across the shire is quite misleading and skews the result and hides the true cost to most single dwelling lot owners. The rate is based on the unimproved capital value of the land on which the building stands. Home unit owners share the cost of rates levied for the home-unit building site. These lower rated household lower the average rate across the shire. Single dwelling households pay a much higher rate amount.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it has not. Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates. Advertised mainly on Councils website which most ratepayers dont read. Council held 4 public forums of which two were poorly attended. Councils pamphlet used in the mail-out provided a very positive false impression misleading the reader. Most speakers at the Hornsby public forum were opposed to the SRV. The General Manager Head did not convince the meeting that the SRV was essential for Council to function. Council documentation mentioned that Council was expecting increases in waste management costs. The cost of waste management is not paid for from the rates pool of money. A separate waste fee is charged for this service. Household pay for any increase incurred.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community feedback. Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation. In these inflationary times with sharp rises in monetary terms of mortgage repayments and cost of living. This rate increase is a travesty. Even with the proposed additional \$50 pensioner discount, on average the SRV will still add an additional \$350 to their rate bill. If renting the pensioners will be dealing with increases in rents to absorb the rate increase. Consultants Morrison Low determined that the rate rise was affordable. Was this because they were being paid by Council? Council claims the loss of rate revenue is because of Eppings amalgamation with Parramatta (thanks to Hornsby Councils mismanagement) is a causal factor in needing the SRV. No mention of the plethora of high-rise buildings that has occurred in recent times which have increased Councils rate base.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is not reasonable at all and the SRV should be rejected. The SRV will be on top of the cost of living pressures that ordinary households are experiencing. Increases in food bills have featured prominently on the national media. People are having to make expenditure choices not seen for generations, e.g. do we buy food or pay the rent? Inflation is currently running at almost 8% . Councils proposal for 31% is outrageous. House mortgages are now hovering at around 6%. Households and families are stretched to the limit. This rate increase could be the impost that forces them out of their homes with banks calling in their loans. The proposed increase in the pensioner concessions rate of \$50 is nothing short of insulting. The average pensioner SRV increase of \$350 is unaffordable for most pensioners. Council has lost touch with the plight of the community and have a complete disregard for us. Council MUST focus on core essential services and DEFER non-essential expenditure projects.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire. They want more money for their self-inflicted financial problems with no consideration for the additional financial burden and hardship and stress on the families, households and local businesses. They need to get themselves in order and prioritise on the core and essential services and defer non-essential projects for another time. Disappointed with the Morrison Low report commissioned by Council which basically says the community has the capacity to pay and are willing to do so. Obviously the report reflects the councils desire for that outcome. Public forums clearly indicated that the community does not have the capacity or willingness to pay. Whilst Councils hardship policy at first glance seems reasonable, I can only imagine the stress of a ratepayer who finds they cannot afford the rate increase. It is hard to believe that Council will treat hardship cases with compassion. The final paragraph of the Hornsbys Hardship Policy says : 14. As a deterrent for late payment of rates Council adopts the maximum interest rate advised by the Minister for Local Government to all overdue rates. This shows how compassionate Council is to its ratepayers. It is bullying people instead.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council has been unable to satisfactorily explain how they will take control of surging costs in operating the council and attempting to provide council functions. At this time it appears this SRV is an attempt to have more funds provided to council during a period of significant political upheaval (this close to the state election) and with no regard for the continued pressures for the cost of living being experienced by the current and ongoing interest rates cycle. If Hornsby council is unable to provide basic services within its current budget then it must look introspectively into acquiring more efficient policies and procedures to undertake their work, or obtain more competitive contracts as part of its ongoing procurement process - in addition to not wasting rate payers money with poorly thought out consultant fees and the poor construction of critical infrastructure (incorrect and unsafe installation of regulatory School Zone signage on Rosemead Av outside a primary school requiring additional attendance to make sign visible).

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The council rate is high enough now for us. Family like mine, single mother with no assistance from government due to working full time, can no longer bare more financial stretches. Thanks to increasing in the rate by RBA , high mortgage interest rate financial burden is enough to break our back and now council wants to increase rate on us. This will cause so many vulnerable families like me to have no choice than go on dull and put the pressure back on the social security and getting hand out from government. Please stop this madness now and give us couple of years to deal with high inflation and increase in interest rate before asking for more money.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

To summarise, Council's timing of the increase is poor, the amount of the suggested variation is outrageously in a period of flat wage growth, increasing inflation and high interest rates. In particular, ratepayers who have a small businesses and casual employees that managed to survive the effects of Covid restrictions have already depleted their savings and would find it difficult to pay significantly higher rates charges over the coming years.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; a) has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. b) being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. c)has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why werent these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? d) must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; a) appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. b) must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. c) must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. d) must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. e) must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

I Cannot recall. However as our rates are in excess of \$2,000 pa, the increase will be at least an additional \$620 pa!

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the communitys rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

a) Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyones quality of life. b) Those on a fixed income will also struggle to absorb the increase. c) Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. d) How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

a) Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. b) Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. c) Councils reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed

special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

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Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No NEED has been established, just a wish list! Council should defer non-essential projects. I live on a small plot of 479sqm and currently pay over \$1700 per year, which I feel is rather exorbitant considering when I lived in Kur-ring-gai, I lived on 1357 sqm and the rates are around \$2400 per year.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Hornsby Council has not canvassed alternatives., The need to: Rescope projects Defer non-essential projects Implement better financial management Increase efficiencies or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. We are all having to do this due to rising prices. This all came about because they didn't get the merge with Kur-ring-gai council. They just keep adding unfair levees.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, but the result has been misleading and deceptive as it is using an average rate across Hornsby shire.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, advertised mainly on Council's website and has not adequately informed the public or truthfully represented the impact of the SRV.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Hornsby Council did not follow the guidelines in their own community engagement plan as they did not demonstrate that community concerns were considered in the final decision

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The rate hike is unreasonable given the current economic circumstances. This will lead to those that are retired to having tighten their belts even further.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Hornsby has not adequately considered the communities capacity to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Hornsby has only agreed to assist pensioners with an inadequate \$50.00. Whilst I'm not a pensioner as yet, living off my super is not going to last forever, and I'm concerned that this will not be a one of thing for the council, they seem to have a lot of unnecessary levees.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

As I don't trawl the Hornsby council website, I can't honestly say.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

No I don't believe they have. Perhaps if Council delivered the normal services that I currently pay for - street cleaning, I think in 5 years of living in this Council area I have seen a truck twice. Think they need to step up before they make us pay up.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Hornsby Council are forecasting budget surplus for many years to come. Hornsby households and ratepayers are not. A rate variation of this amount, which was voted against by 86% of ratepayers, and with no clearly laid out justification for, must not be allowed to go ahead. Families are still enduring hardship as a result of the global pandemic, global supply chain issues, runaway inflation and interest rate increases. It is entirely unreasonable to expect ratepayers to accept this, and forcing many households in to financial hardship is morally irresponsible.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. There is no clear need or solid case for any of the proposed developments. They are all "nice to have" as opposed to essential.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. I have not been made aware of any alternative and in fact the negative response of the previous request for response to the SRV have been ignored.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. This information was not easy to come by. It was a complete surprise to find it buried on a community page on Facebook. Where were the email, mail or telephone notifications? I suspect I would hear pretty quickly if I did not pay rates at all. My income will not change despite CPI and the general cost of living continues to rise.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, the negative results of the previous ratepayer engagement have been ignored and the information has been very hard to find.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Deceitful and dishonest. Council is pushing ahead regardless of the fact ratepayers are against it. This is in direct contradiction to 86% of ratepayers voting against it.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is without question unreasonable. Households across Hornsby and indeed the country are being forced in to financial hardship with CPI increasing and house prices falling.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

There is absolutely no consideration of the community's capacity to pay. The SRV question was asked and the response was 86% negative, with no clear case being laid out for the need to increase rates. It is completely unreasonable to forge ahead with a rates increase at this time.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

There has been no information presented to justify forcing households in to hardship for such a plan. None of the outlined projects are essential. How could any council in good conscience knowingly force households in to hardship? Particularly in light of what has been endured over the last few years.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

It is entirely unclear. As with the other stages, if information about this process does exist, it is not easy to come upon.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Regulation of spending and cost control is not only the requirement of an elected council, but a minimum responsibility. The word "review" is used a lot. But this should be an ongoing process for every single government organisation the world over. No practical cost saving measures are detailed. Anything that alludes to cost saving is vague at best.

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Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The entire process of rate payers' consultation and the submission process was undemocratic, arrogant, and simply unfair. In these hard economic times, we all have to do more with less and so should the Council. Council should do mainly what it was designed to do (Rates, Roads, Rubbish) and distance itself from the popular social and political issues. Just one small example of program that should be abolished is \$6,035,096 for Sustainable and Resilient Community Program. Leave Science to Scientists, Politics to Politicians and social isolation to Psychologists. And most of all: Stop Wasting Money. I could quote many examples we observe daily. Council should treat our hard-earned money with respect, like their own money, instead of just throwing them around on unnecessary programs and activities. I hope that IPART will listen to our concerns and reject the SRV application.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, it has not. Firstly, some of planned initiatives are not necessary. The proposed spending is a wish list and it is not something that the ratepayers require or support. Many of the current and proposed initiatives are pure waste of money. In the attempt of the cash grab the Council did not take into consideration the future rate increase associated with increased land valuation that is revised every 3 years. Revised land value will form the base of calculating rates that will apply from 1 July 2023. The average land valuation in Cherrybrook has increased by 85% (in my case from \$775,000 to \$1,430,000). As 2 of 5 components are relative to land value, applying "rate in \$" to my new land value, and keep 3 other components unchanged, will already increase my rates from 1 July 2023 by 35%. Now, without thinking the council wants to add another 31% over 4 years, which will compound to well over 70% increase.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, it has not. Firstly, the Council should focus on responsible money management and stop wasting money on unnecessary initiatives, instead of making ratepayers paying for its financial mismanagement. The Hornsby Council must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. It must not put the costs of unnecessary future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. It must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. It must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions, especially multi storey apartment buildings. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants and Development contributions.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No, it did not. Although some correspondence was sent, it completely ignored the percentage or dollar value of the obvious increase caused by the latest increased land valuation. Thus, the numbers presented were misleading and out of date. The Council is well aware that new land valuations are presented every 3 years and kept rate payers in darkness by ignoring this massive, in my case 85% increase, which will increase my rates by 35% before any future SRV may be applied on top of it.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it did not. Only small percentage of community was able to engage in discussions and questions asked during discussions were not answered properly and were not addressing the concerns. Every rate payer should have been asked directly of their opinion by correspondence, instead of having just some of community engaged. Of those who had sent submissions, an overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message was that ratepayers were not willing to pay for the SRV. Despite that the Councilors still voted for SRV. Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

There was no action taken by Council in response to feedback from the community. I have not received any reply to my correspondence either. Instead, the Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART for approval. So much ratepayers' money had been wasted on the community consultation campaign that went nowhere while rate payers were ignored and treated like cash cows.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Many residents, like me, are self-funded retirees on fixed incomes, and we are already struggling with the high cost of living. We can't just go and get jobs to pay for increased costs. We are also not eligible for any reductions or programs, as we are not recipients of government pensions. On the other spectrum, young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large

mortgages are severely impacted by high interest rates. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates will be severely impacted. It is inhumane, that Council can justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times. The times are very tough, we all have to do more with less, and so should the Council. But first of all, Council should stop wasting money, the proof of which we can see almost daily.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. That aspect was completely ignored by the Council and its Councilors. Capacity: as explained in question above, most of rate payers don't have the capacity, starting from young families, up to retirees on fixed incomes. Willingness: 95.14% of respondents rejecting this increase clearly shows that there is no willingness to pay. Witnessing regular money wastage and lack of respect for our hard earned money makes rate payers even less willing to pay. Especially that our rates are already too high and higher than in other neighbouring suburbs.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Council's plan is a joke and completely out of touch. As I explained before, this increase in rates in current circumstances including cost of living / inflation / increasing interest rates / growing unemployment and underemployment will cause hardship for almost everyone, and not only those that Council considers eligible. Everyone is facing increased rates due to increase in land valuation, that is already hard, we don't need SRV to make it even harder.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No, I am not aware of it. However, if it was, it should have been properly communicated to rate payers, and it was not.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I am not aware of it. Productivity, cost containment and responsible money management is non-existent at Hornsby Council.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, Hornsby Council has not established any need for the proposed projects, to me it seems it is more of a wish list. I believe Council should defer the non-essential projects until rate payers are not as squeezed by already soaring inflation, interest rate hikes etc etc.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not at all. Council seems intent on going ahead with their proposed projects without any consideration of alternatives to the rate rise. There are many things they could do better, such as implement better financial management, re-scope projects, reduce wastage and overhead costs. Perhaps they should reconsider the annual 3% increase of their employee wages, and rethink the astronomical wages they pay the executives, all from ratepayers funds.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

They did, however they used the average rate amount across Hornsby Shire, therefore the result is quite misleading.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. It almost seems as if they have been reluctant for the public to access the information - unless you go to their website - and who does that unless they are specifically trying to find something? The impact of the special rate variation has not been truthfully represented.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Hornsby Council did not demonstrate that the concerns of the community were considered in the final decision, which means they did not follow their own guidelines in their Community Engagement Plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The proposed rate increase is not reasonable and will too heavily impact ratepayers considering the current economic climate and circumstances.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Hornsby Council has given no consideration to the community's capacity to pay, nor to their willingness to pay. Over 90% of the community disagrees with the rate increase, and yet the council seems determined to go ahead with the rate increase regardless.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

As far as I know Hornsby Council has only agreed to assist pensioners with \$50. This is pretty inadequate in my opinion.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and

cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No need has been established by council. Council should defer no essential works.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. Council should, Defer no essential projects rescope projects Implement better financial management Increase efficiency and savings

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

1. Yes but the result is misleading and deceptive as it uses an average rate across the shire.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

2. No, mainly advertised on councils website . I was only made aware from a community Facebook page

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

3. HSC did not follow guild lines in their own plan as they did not demonstrate they had considered the community concerns

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The rate hike is unreasonable given the current economic conditions

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. HSC has not reasonably considered the rate payers of the shires ability to pay the increased rates.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

HSC has only agreed to assist people such as pensioners an inadequate \$50

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Please, I implore you to decline this ridiculously high rate increase proposal. It WILL destroy many families way of life and force them to relocate for affordability. Please.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Most definitely not.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

I highly doubt it. They are extremely incompetent.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

No. I have no idea exactly how much it will be.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The council unfortunately are a law unto themselves and care little for the massive and catastrophic impact that this will have on rate payers.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This enormous proposed rate increase is not only unnecessary but will financially cripple struggling households.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

They haven't. There has been massive disapproval from rate payers which continues to be ignored.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

A small increase would be acceptable. This is ludicrous. Hardship will be felt by most. A much lower increase would reduce or eliminate the need for assistance.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

No.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

There has been an unfortunate mismanagement of funds in the past and present.



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Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyones quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Councils reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No, it has not. Council should prioritise essential core services such as parks, local roads, garbage collection. Defer non-essential projects until funds are available.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No, it has not.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes, it did and did not. it's not clear specific dwelling lot owner rate increase.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No, it has not. Most community members are unaware of the SRV proposed increase in rates. Advertised mainly on Councils website which most ratepayers dont read.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community feedback. Council received 2,235 submissions of which 95% were against the rate variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

take consideration inflation, it's acceptable for 3-4% increase.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Council has a complete disregard and lack of respect for the people of Hornsby Shire. They want more money for their self-inflicted financial problems with no consideration for the additional financial burden and hardship and stress on the families, households and local businesses. They need to get themselves in order and prioritise on the core and essential services and defer non-essential projects for another time. Disappointed with the Morrison Low report commissioned by Council which basically says the community has the capacity to pay and are willing to do so. Obviously the report reflects the councils desire for that outcome. Public forums clearly indicated that the community does not have the capacity or willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I don't know anything before read this artical from social news.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

no, we don't know anything about this. but we can see how the money was wasted on Apple Tree Park project. So many nice trees were cutted and removed.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

At this time of rampant inflation, never seen before increases in interest rate rises, this council increase is not inline with the increases in supply costs, once again the top of the food chain is further increasing their profits at the expense of homeowners and their employees. i doubt council workers will receive a 33% payrise over the next 4 years

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why werent these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

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Council; appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). Council ignored the community sentiments

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the communitys rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders. Go to Criterion 3,

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyones quality of life. Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. Councils reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted

by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Not very clear

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No alternatives explained

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Not aware of having received any notification

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council only interested in increasing rates by whooping 32% I am a pensioner dependent on age pension. Wonder how I will survive

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

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Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. The need for items on Council's list to be done immediately has not been demonstrated. It is more a "nice to have" list.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. Consideration has not been given to deferring non-essential items.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

I don't believe so.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No. I don't think that the majority of ratepayers would even be aware of the proposal. Only those who regularly visit council website.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

There was no evidence that any feedback was considered.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

It is unreasonable to propose a rate increase at this time when inflation and higher interest rates are already putting pressure on household budgets.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I don't think that they have considered this.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Inadequate, and appears to be more an effort to "tick a box" than a genuine effort to address hardship.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I do not know.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

There are examples of poor spending decisions, eg trees on verges under power lines, which have been ignored.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Council should concentrate less on high end projects until they have addressed the backlog of general services. By using contractors to do the maintenance they used to do it has resulted in less control of price and quality of work.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. I only found about the rate rise from a random TV news report about councils in Sydney applying for this SRA.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

As a pensioner we will be forced to draw down further on our savings and the proposed rebate is less as a percentage than the current rebate. This rate rise is way above present inflation and should not be allowed to impact on the economy this way.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. The council has not taken into account that the Valuer General has doubled our land value and this will double our rates

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

As stated above the rebate is less than the current rebate.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council HAS NOT demonstrated the need for increasing rates. Do not increase rates.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Not to my knowledge

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

High Financial Impact on Ratepayers

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Hornsby Council special rate variation is not warranted., the spent \$81k on community consultation and ignored the outcome. Economic circumstances, community capacity to pay the increase may push families over the edge as the juggle the cost of living increase mortgages, food, medical home insurance etc increases. It appears council has money to spend on unimportant things example painting steps multi colours to railway station, coloured signs all over & digital notice boards, all these unessential expenditure. VGs have increased ours by 56% others as high as 80+% these increases will impact on rates and further impact living costs. Apart for families with mortgage and cost of living expenditure what about the lower end self funded retirees who have had negative superannuation returns over the last 12 months, who are required to pay this negative interest, they also have to deal the cost of living with negative income. At this stage the variation is not justified. Council should be receiving increased income from the passing of multiple unit complexes where a single house stood, this would bring in a large increase in rates with little or no expenditure on infrastructure. Special rate variation is not justified at this stage

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I believe this SRV could have been completed better by a year 9 student who would have taken everything into consideration. I also believe for something like this to go ahead properly, it needs to be contracted to a company who is capable of doing this correctly that is not friends, relatives or work associates of any of the counsellors or top tier workers at the Hornsby Council.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Not even a little bit.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No. This has come across more as a we are doing this and you have to fit in.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes but is not completely clear.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Not really. I have only seen it on one method of social media. Elderly people who do not use this forum would not have a clue.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

No. Our reasoning appears to be irrelevant.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This is completely unreasonable. The expectation of a hike of approximately 1/3 is ridiculous. It does not even have a staggered ladder to make it reasonable over a period of time.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Doesnt appear to have been given any consideration.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

This has only been considered to one area of people who may not be able to pay. Then it is an incredibly small percentage that hardly makes a difference

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Im only aware that they managed to blow something around \$30 million on a hole in the ground.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here. This and other Council 'wish list' items do not follow with community engagement or desire.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council; - has not demonstrated a need for higher increases to rates, in fact, more questions are raised. -being fully aware that there is NO FUNDING available, proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives. Council now wants a massive SRV imposed on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives. -has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements. Why weren't these asset maintenance expenses addressed in previous years budgets? -must focus on existing, core Council maintenance and services, such as parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for Council activities in support of communities in its local government area.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Council; -appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates. - must Increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage, reduce overhead costs. -must not put the costs of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits. -must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit of the majority of residents. - must align future expenses on future initiatives with revenue from future ratepayers who will directly benefit from these initiatives, upon completion. Such as, future ratepayers who will own thousands of planned dwelling constructions. Future initiatives may then be funded from future ratepayers, Federal & State Government Grants, Development contributions or Special Levy as appropriate.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

- Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% special rate variation (SRV) increase over four years. -An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2,500 respondents rejected this massive rate increase. A clear message - ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV, per Council's Consultants report (p.15). -Council ignored the community sentiments.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

-Council ignored the community's rejection and applied to IPART (Independent Pricing And Review Tribunal) for approval. - An absolute waste of ratepayers money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere. - A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

- Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates. Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments. Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life. - Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving on to high variable interest rates may be severely impacted. -How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV, specially, during harsh economic times?

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

- Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% Special Rate Variation (SRV) increase over four years. Compounding further rate increases above & beyond this permanent base. --Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives. Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialized segments. -Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers behalf. -The community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I do not of any consideration offered by Council. If past performance is an indicator probably no or little consideration

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

it is ridiculous of council to expect residence's to accept and be able to pay this special rate rise. they asked our opinion and we said no, but they are pushing forward anyway. they should consider the financial environment at the moment, and understand that people cannot afford this. but instead, they are busy wasting the money that we already give them, planting trees, and then digging them up less than 12month later to put in a path.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

I am not aware of any reason why the council requires this extra funding.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No they have not. They asked the community about the rate rise and the community was unanimous in saying no. no alternate plan has been proposed. they are simply moving forward with this rate rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

to my knowledge there has been no action taken by council in response to the community feedback. the community feedback was that we don't want, or see the need for the rates to rise as much as proposed.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

the cost of living is rising rapidly at the moment, and it is affecting all ratepayers everywhere. many people in this area also have a large mortgage, due to the cost of housing in the area. and with interest rates rising as well, more people in the area are turning to food banks and other support networks to help them with the cost of living. to raise the rates by such a large amount would be a huge imposition on the majority of the people in the hornsby area.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. the community has told council we object to this special variation, but they are not interested. they consulted us only to tick a box, not to actually listen.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.  
It's time that ALL councils were called to account for their actions. For too long they have wasted ratepayer money on projects that have no value for residents but are to further their own agenda. It's time to listen to the people that pay.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

It appears that the councils main reason for hiking rates is not to deliver core services but to expand services/initiatives that have not been requested, nor I believe are required by residents. While I think that some rise in rates is necessary to keep up with increasing costs 30 percent is far greater than what seems appropriate. This is especially considering that the land values upon which the rates are determined has been significantly increased recently which will already provide council with a significant increase in funds. They are wasting money on unnecessary things like 'public consultation about the proposed rate increase' and then totally discount every objection that was raised. Total waste of ratepayer money. I don't want my rates money wasted on unnecessary projects

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No they have not explored one alternative. They are simply trying to s██████ residents and are trying to make it appear that we all agree with the proposed rate rise- a total falsehood

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

In short -NO

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

There has been little information put out for residents that seems meaningful. They don't appear to be overly interested in what residents think

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Their reaction to community feedback has been to ignore us all.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Many people are suffering from an increase in interest rates and inflation. It is totally unfair to put so much extra burden on families in this position. It is not the job of ordinary ratepayers to bail out a council who can't manage their budget.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.  
There has been absolutely no consideration.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I do not feel council will be overly compassionate to those in financial hardship no matter what their so called proposal says. They apply fees to late payments and always have.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I have absolutely no idea.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

I do not believe that council has proven actual productivity improvements. The proof is in the numbers. If they still can't balance their budget then there are still issues with spending on non-essential items

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Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Council has not demonstrated a need for increases in rates and being fully aware that there is no funding available proceeded to adapt a significant number of strategic initiatives and now wants to impose a massive SRV on ratepayers to pay for these initiatives Council has not clearly established the reasons behind asset maintenance increased expenditure requirements Council must focus on existing core Council maintenance and services eg, parks, local roads, garbage collection and other amenities that are fundamental matters for council activities in support of communities in its local government area

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Council appeared to focus their analysis on fixing their financial problems and convincing ratepayers to pay the higher rates Council must increase efficiencies, increase productivity or savings, reduce wastage and overhead costs and not put the cost of future initiatives on current ratepayers who may never realise its benefits It must budget general revenue expenditure evenly across Hornsby Shire for the benefit for majority of residents

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Hornsby Council spent many tens of thousands of dollars to promote their 31.05% SRV increase over 4 years An overwhelming 95.14% of about 2500 residents rejected this massive rate increase A clear message that ratepayers are not willing to pay for the SRV per Council's Consultants' report (page 15) Council ignored the community sentiments

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council ignored the community 's rejection and applied to IPART for approval An absolute waste of ratepayer's money on a community consultation campaign that went nowhere A massive slap in the face to a significant majority of ratepayers who were represented by a very large sample of responders

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Young families are already struggling with high costs of living. Large mortgages severely impacted by high interest rates Tenants struggle more as rates are absorbed into rental payments Rising inflation continues to impact everyone's quality of life Borrowers with large fixed interest rate mortgages moving onto high variable interest rates may be severely impacted How can Council justify the need to burden ratepayers with its substantial SRV especially during harsh economic times

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. Instead of deferring or postponing non-essential projects to better economic times, Council has chosen to burden ratepayers with a huge and permanent 31.05% SRV increase over 4 years Compounding further rate increases above and beyond this permanent base Numerous initiatives were adapted by Council with no clear evidence as to who actually benefits from these initiatives Hornsby Shire ratepayers must not be financially impacted by special initiatives that cater to specialised segments Council's reports, budgets, financial plans are too complex for ratepayers to assess and are therefore relying on IPART to thoroughly assess these on ratepayers' behalf The Community is counting on IPART to fully assess Hornsby Council's SRV application in great detail

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Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Social responsibility for young families who are stressed by huge increased costs due to COVID and the world economy is my chief concern. For once, older ratepayers have to speak up in defence of the younger generation. That's why I feel so strongly about this! Please protect the vulnerable. Please reject the HSC application for an SRV.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

NO. I am of the opinion that in difficult times when there are many people suffering from Mortgage stress, then it is a time for the Hornsby Council to stick to basic services. I have three of my children and their families living in Hornsby Shire and they all have large mortgages and big energy bills and all the costs that come with children. I am also concerned that their land values have increased substantially and therefore their rates. BUT added to this HSC wants to increase the rates 31% above the government allowable rate hike.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

NO. HSC needs to prioritise the essential services and leave the 'wish-lists' for a few years.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes. Scary!!

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

NO. HSC asked for feedback thoughts on a SRV and thousands of people sent submissions saying that a SRV was inappropriate at the moment. HSC completely ignored the anti SRV feedback - in effect wasting many thousands of dollars in the process. What terrible 'money managers'! They need to do some serious financial/budgeting education.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Totally ignored.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

See above

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

See above

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

A special discount for Pensioners has been mooted. Fortunately, most seniors in HSC are well established. It is not an area they 'upgrade' to in their advancing years. The HSC won't be handing out lots of discounts. It's the young mums and dads we should be considering. They have a lot to lose and our area needs them to keep the area vital.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.



Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 28 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I am not opposed to a rise in order to fund genuine improvements. It is my opinion that council has ignored clear feedback that rate payers are opposed to this particular application and has failed to justify its proposal to the community it serves. Council should reconsider which projects are truly necessary and how costs could be limited. I suspect this plan was initially conceived in a different economic climate and has not been amended to reflect the current situation. Therefore I do not support it and I urge ipart to reject it on that basis.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Not really, they have a proposed wish list of projects they would like to achieve but it is not clear that these are necessary.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

I have seen no information presented by the council of alternatives to their expensive wish list proposals. The language used in the information form the council is leading

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

They probably did but I dont remember these details

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Most of the engagement I have seen came from the opponents to this increase.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

The council had a consultative where my understanding is that the majority of respondents opposed the special variation. They have ignored these responses and feedback and proceeded with the application.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

In the current economic climate I do not believe that this rise in order to fulfil the councils wish list is reasonable

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I do not believe that the council has considered this appropriately. Hornsby council has a history or financial mismanagement and I do not trust them to act in the best interests of the lower income parts of the community

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

My understanding is that the aid proposed to aid pensioners is quite small in comparison to the rise.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I assume so but do not feel qualified answer as I have no knowledge of what all of the relevant documents would be.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Documents I have seen from the council have made a case for the plans and the improvements they would offer. I have not seen details of any cost containment plans. They may exist but in the public information that I have seen this was not readily apparent to me.

By email: [REDACTED]

23 February 2023

## **LETTER OF OBJECTION TO SPECIAL VARIATION AND MINIMUM RATES 2023-24**

**REVIEW:** Special Variations & Minimum Rates 2023-24

**COUNCIL:** Hornsby Shire Council

**APPLICATION TYPE:** Special Variation

### **INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL (IPART), NSW**

PO Box K35

Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

*By email to: [ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au)*

### **NB - COVER SHEET ATTACHED FOR THIS SUBMISSION**

Dear Sir / Madam

I am a resident, and ratepayer, of Hornsby Shire Council (Council), having resided in the Council area for approximately 25 years (continuously). I wish to lodge an objection to the current proposal by Council for a Special Rates Variation.

This letter, or submission, is in two parts. Part one addresses the criterion considered by IPART as per the IPART web site. Part two provides additional commentary.

Thank you in advance for considering this submission. I urge IPART (the Tribunal) to reject Council's application.

#### **PART ONE – IPART CRITERION**

**Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?**

In my view, the need for the Special Rate Variation has not been clearly established. Despite Council's assertions, viable alternative strategies have not been adequately assessed.

**Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?**

No – as above. Council has been dismissive of alternatives that would see expenditure trimmed to match a more reasonable revenue base. For Council to talk of a "small increase" (in excess of 30% over four years) is dismissive and disrespectful – especially in today's economic climate.

**Question 1 (Criterion 2)** – Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The increase in percentage terms was clearly communicated in a letter to ratepayers in October 2022. The increase (proposed) in dollar terms was communicated in average terms, which for a Shire as disparate as Hornsby was meaningless and misleading. In my personal situation, applying the quoted percentage terms to my annual rates results in an increase well above the Council quoted average. Also, I am not aware of the proposed increase being shown by rating category – I am unaware of the impact of the proposed increase on businesses nor on high rise developments (I don't believe this has been made transparent) – an increasingly important consideration in the Hornsby precinct where a proliferation of high rise development is afoot. I assume that Developer Contributions remain unaffected (I believe they are capped at a low level).

**Question 2 (Criterion 2)** - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

It is hard for me to gauge this, but I am aware that Council's survey of ratepayer attitudes to this proposed increase was disproportionately distorted by a high response rate from Council employees!

**Question 3 (Criterion 2)** - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

I attended a feedback / consultation session facilitated by Council in late October 2022. The attitude displayed by Council, and consultant, staff in that session was dismissive and effectively ignored the feedback that had been received that was overwhelmingly opposed to the Special Rate Variation. Council subsequently decided to push ahead with the Application – clearly against the wishes of residents.

**Question 1 (Criterion 3)** – Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

An increase in excess of 30% over four years is clearly unreasonable!

**Question 2 (Criterion 3)** – Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I am unaware of Council giving any consideration to a capacity and / or willingness to pay. If Council did give consideration to this aspect, then surely Council would have elected not to proceed with the Application.

**Question 3 (Criterion 3)** – In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

I understand that Council has a hardship policy in place that has recently been "relaxed" in a blatant attempt to sweeten the impact of the proposed rate increase. I understand that the hardship policy, if applied, only grants deferral of rate payments, not a waiver – so someone experiencing hardship will effectively be carrying a debt into future years

**Question 1 (Criterion 4)** – Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I believe so.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) – In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

Council's response in this regard is inadequate. The whole Special Rate Variation proposal is predicated on an absence of productivity improvements. In Council's letter to ratepayers in October 2022, there was no mention of past productivity improvements. Cost containment efforts are illusory.

## **PART TWO – ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY**

In addition to the above five criterion, I wish to make a few other comments for the Tribunal's consideration:

- Approval of a Special Rate Variation in excess of 30% over four years would effectively be rewarding financial incompetence over many years. No serious consideration of an alternative approach whereby spending is matched to a minimum rate increase (peg) is apparent; no serious attempt has been made to limit so called "strategic initiatives". In difficult economic times, such initiatives frequently need to be trimmed or phased (or dropped) – but Council is dismissive of any suggestion to embark on such an exercise.
- Council has failed to take on board significant levels of Community feedback – overwhelmingly unresponsive of the proposed increase.
- And the feedback received by Council was distorted by submissions lodged by Council staff – disingenuous at best.
- Council received significant NSW Government funds - \$90million - in compensation for the ill-fated Council amalgamation (when Hornsby Council "lost" high rate paying suburbs to a neighbouring Council – Parramatta – area, despite not being "amalgamated" per se). These funds would seem to now be lost in Council finances – what is there to show for these funds, effectively provided by all NSW taxpayers to support Hornsby residents?
- The NSW Government recently announced a payment of \$6.5million to Hornsby Council to assist with remediation of road damage following recent floods. Council has long argued that infrastructure repair is a major contributor to the case for this Special Rates Variation. Now that Government funding has been made available, can we expect Council to reduce the size of the request now before IPART? – I doubt it!
- As pointed out on the IPART web site, the proposed SRV will not cover other Council services such as ongoing waste management services. I think it is pretty safe to opine that fees charged for these services will not reduce in the foreseeable future. On top of this, the mooted introduction of the Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) service in future is unlikely to be free to ratepayers. So, the net impact here on ratepayers is a likely substantial increase in fees – on top of the exorbitant fee increases sought under the Special Rates Variation application – such that the 30% over four years will likely prove to be a floor that proves to be a serious understatement of the actual impost on ratepayers.
- In addition to the above point – many ratepayers will have recently received valuation notices from the NSW Valuer General and in my case, the assessed land value (as at July 2022) has increased by around 70% since the last valuation in 2019. Council rates based on the Valuer General's "rateable value" are a major component of our annual "rates notice". Despite being

questioned on this, Council has been unable to explain how increased land valuations will not feed through to increased rates being levied. So, in addition to an expected increase attributable to waste management, the impact of rising land values will contribute to a double whammy on top of the proposed Special Rate Variation (if approved). This is totally unreasonable.

- In June 2022, Council received approval for an Additional Special Variation. Curiously, Council neglected to mention this in communication with ratepayers. It seems that Council has history here – reinforcing my first dot point above in relation to rewarding incompetence.
- Finally, everyone knows that times are tough in a financial sense at present. (Indeed, times are tough for many people in many different ways at present.) To seek a rates increase as sought by Council highlights just how out of touch they are. Costs of living, energy prices, interest rates and more are all rising – and ratepayers don't need additional Council rate rises to exacerbate pressures that are already evident.

Overall, I'd like to suggest that the proposed Special Rate Variation is unreasonable, avaricious, excessive and egregious. At a time of unbridled cost of living pressures, the proposed increase is simply over-the-top. I have no confidence that Council financial sustainability will be attained from the approval of the requested increase – recent history probably suggests otherwise – and I would not be surprised if Council were to again approach IPART in four year's time for a further increase, given Council's recent track record.

Again, thank you in advance for considering this submission. I urge IPART to reject Council's application.

Yours sincerely

*[Signed]*

████████████████████

**Note:**

**Cover sheet request** – I request that my name and contact details be suppressed, but grant permission for my submission to be published

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 1 March 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

From: [REDACTED] Sent: Thursday, 23 February 2023 10:06 AM To: IPART Subject: Submission re Special Variations and Minimum Rates 2023-24 - Hornsby Shire Council Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Submission re Special Variations and Minimum Rates 2023-24 - Hornsby Shire Council Dear Sir / Madam Please find attached a submission in relation to the above matter. The submission is comprised of: 1. Submission Cover Sheet; and 2. Supporting letter. Both documents are attached in pdf format. As noted, I request that my name be suppressed when publishing this submission on the IPART web site. Can you please acknowledge receipt of this submission. Thank you for your consideration. Yours sincerely [REDACTED]

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

**From:** Local Government Mailbox <localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 March 2023 10:13 AM  
**To:** Local Government Mailbox <localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: C [redacted] submission against TSC unreasonable 104.49% SRV - due 3 March 2023; 2  
**Attachments:** 1/4ly budget review @ 30 Dec 22 and xxxx presentation at TSC 22/2/23: Please include with word version submission.

Hello [redacted],

Can you please process this submission – They’ve put the submission cover sheet info into the word doc as a screen shot:

Are you an individual or organisation? Required

I am making a submission on my own behalf  
 I am making a submission on behalf of an organisation

How would you like us to identify your individual submission? Required

Publish my name  
 Do not publish my name

Would you like your submission to remain confidential? Required

Not confidential - The submission can be published on IPART's website  
 Confidential - All or part of my submission should be treated as confidential and not published by IPART. I have indicated which parts of my submission are confidential.

First Name Required

[redacted]

Last Name Required

[redacted]

Email Required

[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** Friday, 3 March 2023 7:49 AM  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** FW: C [redacted] submission against TSC unreasonable 104.49% SRV - due 3 March 2023; 2  
**Attachments:** 1/4ly budget review @ 30 Dec 22 and xxxx presentation at TSC 22/2/23: Please include with word version submission.

Hello [redacted],

I forwarded you a submission from [redacted] 5 minutes ago, can you please add these attachments to the submission? Sorry I didn't put them together, I was working through my emails in sequence.

Thanks,  
[redacted]

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 2 March 2023 8:32 PM  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** [redacted] submission against TSC unreasonable 104.49% SRV - due 3 March 2023; 2

Attachments: 1/4ly budget review @ 30 Dec 22 and xxxx presentation at TSC 22/2/23: Please include with word version submission.

[REDACTED],

**Attachments to include with my word version of the IPART online form please.**

Can you please add the 2 attached documents, being presentations speaking against 2 TSC agenda items (1/4ly budget review @ 31 Dec 2022) & (TSC proposed 104.49% SRV to submit to IPART for approval) The documents include content not presented, being insufficient time and references from TSC documents.

Together with the earlier file I emailed to you I s the whole of my submission against Tenterfield Shire Council's unreasonable proposed special rate variation. I emailed a word version of your online form as the captcha requirement wasn't working & when I refreshed the screen all the content was lost

<b>Department:</b>	<b>Office of the Chief Corporate Officer</b>
<b>Submitted by:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Reference:</b>	<b>ITEM GOV2/23</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW STATEMENT - DECEMBER 2022</b>

Attached is a presentation to TSC 22 February 2023 public meeting (technically before the public meeting and not included in the recording of the meeting) speaking against the quarterly budget review (Item Gov 2/23) which again increased the Operational Deficit by \$1+ million before additional depreciation relating apparently to 30/6/2022 indexation of assets (nothing new there)

COUNCIL

7 DECEMBER 2022

<b>Department:</b>	<b>Office of the Chief Corporate Officer</b>
<b>Submitted by:</b>	[REDACTED]
<b>Reference:</b>	<b>ITEM GOV101/22</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>APPLICATION TO IPART FOR A SPECIAL RATE VARIATION TO INCREASE GENERAL INCOME - ORDINARY RATE INCOME.</b>

Attached is a presentation to TSC 7 December 2022 ordinary meeting speaking against the proposed unreasonable 104.49% SRV. Item GOV 101/22

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 1 March 2023 1:30 PM  
**To:** IPART <[ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au](mailto:ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au)>  
**Subject:** Hornsby Shire Council

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to register my displeasure for the rate increases that the Hornsby Shire Council is putting forth for Hornsby Shire residents over the next 3 years. Though I do understand that the council has the largest amount of roads to take care of in NSW, as stated by themselves. I believe the increase is excessive and unwarranted.

The council has had it's increases by calculating rates from a larger and larger portion of our land values over the last 20 years since my husband and I have been residents. The land values in 2002 for us was \$530000 with our property being bought for \$720000 in 2000 the rates would have been worked out on roughly 70% of the house prices at the time. 70% being a generous amount given the 2 year differences.

In todays values they are working out their rates on roughly 95% of the price we may get at market. Given this years valuation of \$2200000 and the indicators being that we don't think we could get more than \$3000000, even if we did sell last year when they are saying our land was worth that amount.

This factor goes hand in hand with extras being charged such as the fairly recent addition of Waste Water Management Costs due to no sewerage for much of our area. Please note we both maintain the system and pay for the pump out of the system when needed. What the council needs to apply the fee for a licence for, I don't know.

Out our way there is also a 'Domestic Waste Availability Charge', (in 2012 this was listed as 'Garbage Charge Rural').

Residents paid for the Quarry management when they were dumping the soil from the new metro into it. While being lumped with an environmental disaster of asbestos being allowed to be trucked through and dumped in the area, it's still there I believe. At a meeting with residents inside the neighbouring property the council member stated the 8 meter high hills of dumped earth next to the fence line, were within acceptable limits for a meter high retaining wall.

The companies they hire for road fixes (that don't appear to be correctly fixing them) leave their gravel at the back of a parkland impacting on the parks fence almost knocking it over. The road to Northholm Grammar is a high danger area that has had residents, parents and the principal constantly trying to have fixed for at least 8 years.

The rates go up every year yes as do costs, however the council has covered themselves in several ways there is no need to give this excessive increase. I feel we have been readily let down by the management and there should be a through investigation into their request, as increases should be earned, just like all employees in a business.

Kind regards,  
Concerned Resident

**HORNSBY COUNCIL SRV SUBMISSION.**

Hornsby council submission for *a SRV should not proceed* until further investigation and reporting is undertaken on the impact of the SRV and the recent increases in *Local Land Valuations* of between **75% to 85%** and how both are going to affect the financial capabilities of council and the dramatic affect on the wider community. This is particularly important when taking into account the impact on pensioners ( who are being offered relief of up to \$300 ) and self funded retirees. ( who are being offered **NOTHING** ) With 24.1% of residents in the shire being over 60 there will be a substantial burden on this group most of whom have restricted funds because of the low interest rates in the past decade.

Council's SRV submission projects a surplus of \$6.584 million per annum if accepted. Why should ratepayers fund an annual surplus? Council also estimates that the completed Hornsby park project will cost \$3.1 million for upkeep annually from 2028. Why should ratepayers fund this? It should be a user pays system and it is not the sort of development that elder residents would use frequently if at all. Councils Investment Income funds are listed at the base rate of 0.1% while they could now get up to 4% interest. I don't see this mentioned anywhere. This is just a small sample of issues from their submission that are unexplained.

In the last 10 years there has been a massive increase in the number of units in the shire. Where there was once only two residential houses there can now be 20 or more units all paying rates however councils documentation suggests that there is not enough income from these rates to cover ongoing maintenance costs but does not indicate where the income is spent. They need to be transparent and explain why there is not enough income, how much on average each unit pays in rates and where the money is being spent. The statement that expenses exceed income is not believable. If they can't increase income when there is a change in the number of rate able properties from 2 to 20+ then it comes back to **BAD MANAGEMENT**.

In the submission by council they indicate that all their costs are rising on major projects, maintenance and administration the same as everyone else and yet there seems to be no attempt to reign in their spending. It has been reported that the replacement roof for Galston Aquatic Centre was originally costed at \$1,000,000 with the removal of several trees however the decision was made to leave the trees in situ and redesign the roof with the inevitable cost blowout to \$8,000,000. **BAD MANAGEMENT**.

Council also blames the change in boundaries as a reason for the drop in finances but they were the ones who pushed for an amalgamation with neighboring councils against residents wishes, obviously planning for an increase in income. Surely they should have planned for whatever result was achieved. The loss of a portion from the boundaries reduced rates income but also reduced ongoing maintenance. Again **BAD MANAGEMENT**.

Unfortunately, being a particularly political focused council most of ratepayers funds are being channeled into major projects which gain the media attention. This has lead to an ongoing deterioration on maintenance and upkeep services while localised major projects, most of which elder ratepayers will never use, gain the attention and funding. (eg. Hornsby Park and Westleigh Park. )

The above is just a few of the issues previously listed in the community survey so i am sure these will be covered by other resident submissions however i have attached a set of tables which indicated the true costs of various options to ratepayers, not councils fictional figures.

**\*\*\*\* Councils submission fictional estimates.**

- 1 2022 - 23 Average rates are \$1272.79. No normal household blocks are anywhere near this! I am on a normal Hornsby Heights block and my rates are \$1,936.22 so that is \$663.43 more than the supposed average. To get \$1,272.79 there must have been thousands of units used in the estimate and their rates must be very low.
- 2 Council says that the average increase will only be \$2.07 per week in the first year. That's for the fictional average but for my property, not including the Land Value increase,

my rates would increase to \$2,100.80, which is \$3.17 per week on my current rates but \$15.92 on the average.

- 3 The estimated cumulative increase over 4 years is \$395.21 but without adjusting for the increased land value and with all other rates costs remaining constant, my increase will be \$601.21. This is a more realistic costing for single households.

The attached tables are:-

- 1 Hornsby Council estimates of supposed yearly cost.
- 2 Rates for 2022 - 23 for my property at Hornsby Heights.
- 3 Rates estimate for Hornsby Heights in 2023 - 24 with new Land Value only applied.
- 4 Rates estimate for Hornsby Heights for the 4 year term with the new Land Value and proposed % increase applied each year.

From the tables attached, if there were no limitations imposed by IPART and the charges that are not based on the land value remain constant, my rates would increase by \$1,313.32 over the 4 years to \$3,249.54 with a cumulative total cost over my 2022 - 23 rates of \$4,167.29..

This is where council needs to come clean on how the new land values, which they will use, and their proposed yearly increases are going to be used in estimating actual rate rises at which stage IPART would get a clear understanding of their financial position and the impact on ratepayers. I cannot see how IPART can make an informed decision until the land value and SRV issues are clarified.

Table # 4.

Actual Rates for Hornsby Heights 2023 - 2024 if New Land Values applied + Annual % Increase.

	Rate in \$	Rateable value	Amount		Cumulative increase
Catchment Remediation	0.00010346	1,080,000	117.74		
Residential Land Value	0.00105264	1,080,000	1,136.85		
Residential Base Amount	Assume constant		595		
Domestic Waste Availability Charge	Assume constant		106		
Domestic Waste Management Charge	Assume constant		530		
<b>Total Charge</b>	<b>2023 - 24</b>		<b>\$2,479.59</b>		
<b>Total Charge</b>	<b>2023 - 24</b>	<b>8.50%</b>	<b>\$2,690.36</b>	<b>2023 - 24 Rates increase on 2022 - 23. with new land value + 8.5%.</b>	<b>\$754.14</b>
<b>Total Charge</b>	<b>2024 - 25</b>	<b>7.50%</b>	<b>\$2,892.14</b>	<b>2024 - 25 Rates increase on 2022 - 23. with new land value + 8.5% + 7.5%.</b>	<b>\$955.92</b>
<b>Total Charge</b>	<b>2025 - 26</b>	<b>6.50%</b>	<b>\$3,080.13</b>	<b>2025 - 26 Rates increase on 2022 - 23. with new land value + 8.5% + 7.5% + 6.5%</b>	<b>\$1,143.91</b>
<b>Total Charge</b>	<b>2026 - 27</b>	<b>5.50%</b>	<b>\$3,249.54</b>	<b>2026 - 27 Rates increase on 2022 - 23. with new land value + 8.5% + 7.5% + 6.5% + 5.5%.</b>	<b>\$1,313.32</b>

2022 - 23	2023 - 24	2023 - 24	2024 - 25	2025 - 26	2026 - 27
	Land Value only.	Land + 8.50%	Land + 7.50%	Land + 6.50%	Land + 5.50%

Total Increase from 2022 - 23 to 2026 - 27.      \$1,936.22      \$2,479.59      \$2,690.36      \$2,892.14      \$3,080.13      \$3,249.54      \$1,313.32

Total Extra payments from 2022 - 23 to 2026 - 27.      \$1,936.22      \$754.14      \$955.92      \$1,143.91      \$1,313.32      \$4,167.29

**Table #1. - Hornsby Council Estimate - supposed rate average**

Rating Category			2022 - 23	2023 - 24	2024 - 25	2025 - 26	2026 - 27	Cumulative increase
Residential			\$1,272.79	\$1,380.98	\$1,484.55	\$1,581.05	\$1,668.01	\$395.21

**Table #2 - Actual Rates for Hornsby Heights 2022 - 2023**

	Rate in \$	Rateable value	Amount
Catchment Remediation	0.00010346	610,000	63.11
Residential Land Value	0.00105264	610,000	642.11
Residential Base Amount			595
Domestic Waste Availability Charge			106
Domestic Waste Management Charge			530
<b>Total Charge</b>			<b>\$1,936.22</b>

Rates for Average Hornsby Hts House. \$1,936.22

**Table #3 - Actual Rates for Hornsby Heights 2023 - 2024 if New Land Values applied only.**

	Rate in \$	Rateable value	Amount
Catchment Remediation	0.00010346	1,080,000	117.74
Residential Land Value	0.00105264	1,080,000	1,136.85
Residential Base Amount	Assume constant		595
Domestic Waste Availability Charge	Assume constant		106
Domestic Waste Management Charge	Assume constant		530
<b>Total Charge</b>			<b>\$2,479.59</b>

Rates increase on 2022 - 23. with new land values only.

Cumulative increase
\$543.37

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

The decision on the SRV should be deferred until council documents how the massive land value increases are going to impact on residents and the financial bottom line. In my own circumstances considering the worst case, my rates could rise by 68% over the next 4 years. IPART should insist that council detail if they have factored in the land value figures in their estimates. My feeling, after going through their submission, is that there has not been any consideration of the new land values. Please see attached file.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No. Please see attached file.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

Yes but only as possibly a considered option. Please see attached file.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes but it is unclear how they reached the average rate when the majority of single households pay substantially higher. Please see attached file.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

The community has voted against the increase particularly as new land values have risen by 75% to 85%. Please see attached file.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Council has acknowledged the community engagement and the majority against the SRV but has decided to continue against those wishes. Note that it is not clear if council have used the new land values in their calculations and submission. Please see attached file.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

This is unknown as the 75 - 85% increase in Land Values that has arrived at the start of February may not have been considered in the initial submission and has a dramatic impact on rates depending on how the land value and 28% SRV are integrated and what is allowed by IPART. Please see attached file.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

I don't believe that council has seriously considered the ability of residents to pay the new rates particularly as 24.1% of residents are 60 and over and live in stand alone housing, not units and councils average rate estimate is dramatically lower than the average single household. Please see attached file.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Pathetic. They propose to give pensioners an extra \$50 ( \$300 total ) but self funded retirees, who make up a substantial portion of the 24.1% of over 60s, get no help. Their hardship proposal is laughable. Please see attached file.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

Council has complied with their requirements however, as per usual, they took no notice of the community objections and submissions. Please see attached file.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

There are sections listing what has been done in the past and proposals for what could be done in the future but in reading through the submission there is no indication that these strategies are going to be introduced. Past records would suggest that fiscal conservative decisions have not been adhered to particularly in regard to major projects. Please see attached file.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 27 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

Please see attached file as delivered to Council - No response or comment other than an auto reply of submission has been received

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

Hornsby Council has presented revenue shortfalls and forecast services gaps to residents as a fait accompli, and has not demonstrated effective and prudent measures that should be taken instead such as review/closure of some services, review of property, staff numbers, retirement of assets and equipment. They have apparently surveyed residents on what services they would like to see, however did not ever advise residents if these services could be funded from existing revenues. The Council has based their SRV assumptions on a self fulfilling answer, before asking the question - what is the true non SRV baseline required and why has the new SRV baseline become so critical? Where is the 10 year review of costs, revenues and services and why has the electorate not been previously advised of their stated growing deficits? The SRV proposal is a random and unscientific plug that is designed to cover poor cost controls, inadequate planning and outdated thinking by management.

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

The Council has not demonstrated any due diligence over the alternatives. At the Residents session that we attended they refused to answer the questions on "What if" or "what considerations and modelling had been performed" to mitigate the scale of SRV. The presentation was simply put forward as the only way, with no evidence of alternate considerations provided. There has been no evidence provided of independent review, no external opinions sought, no baseline proof that the cost base Council is working with is historically correct, let alone needs more funding to survive. Hornsby council has used the flawed assumption that as Residents regularly pay their rates, they have the capacity to pay - yet in the same document they state that the most affected ratepayers will be families with dependents - this clearly demonstrates an out of touch and arrogant approach to rate payers.

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

The Council used averages only and minimised the impact by diluting the numbers to estimated cost per week across the whole electorate - however this is flawed as the SRV is based on Land Valuations which at the time of the public meetings had not been updated. Now that the valuer general has provided updated valuations in 2023, it is incumbent on Council to re-calculate the impact for every resident, not just averages - so that rate payers would have the chance to see their site costs and their financial impacts. The use of averages also ignores the fact that many properties are not rated per resident ( such as Unit blocks ) so the weighted figures and averages on population are also flawed. There has been no scientific approach to providing open and transparent data, more to the point the presentations deliberately used best case rather than a more stable and economically sound view.

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

The Community engagement was poorly advertised, short notice and in some cases was not received. There was a severe lack of clear and public data, and there was no attempt to hold sessions at times suitable to shift workers, contractors and self employed business people. On surveying the community recently, very few people were aware of the community sessions, the impacts on their finances from the SRV and the data being used as averages and how it links to Land Values. Public messaging must be regular, high profile and delivered across multiple mediums. The campaigns adopted were poorly planned and communicated.

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

There has been limited recourse. We submitted a response and have heard nothing. There has been no publicity of the fact that more than 80% of residents ( who knew about the SRV ) had rejected the proposal, even worse as there was such poor community engagement no data as to how many people attended, responded or engaged with Council in any way over the SRV. If Council thinks that less than 20% support provides a mandate for action, this is even more troubling to residents.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

The Survey data presented outlines that the most affected groups will be home owners with dependent children, this alone is a red flag and should have terminated the approach to justifying an SRV.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay. As previously stated the Council's assessment on the ability to pay is based on inaccurate averages, flawed assumption and

even worse a consideration that because residents typically pay their rates they have an ability to pay. The use of weekly impacts is misleading, as the actual rates are linked to Land Values so real empirical evidence is need on a property by property basis so people can make their own decisions as to what they support - averages are not the full picture here.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

They have been exhibited and were able to be found on line. The delivery of the documents was after the public sessions however, so it was very difficult to ask quality questions without the relevant supporting data.

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

This was neither demonstrated nor discussed at the public meetings. We have not been able to find any evidence of prudent financial controls over costs, a 10 year analysis of trends, nor any independent review of the cost base. Council management outlined the staffing levels currently on the books, but refused to explain what ( like any business ) there has not been an external or expert review completed on costs, benefits, staffing and salaries. Likewise there has been limited evidence provided on baselines, correct operation costs, and what could be done to support operations without an SRV being approved - Council simply ignored the questions on modelling a world where revenues were static. It was interesting to note that at the session we attended, only three councillors attended, and only one spoke. The one who spoke used fear tactics by referring to Central Coast Council financial woes, however was unable to identify what actions Councillors had taken to mitigate the SRV proposal.



Dear Sir/ Madam,

In response to the proposal for Hornsby Council to seek a special rate variation (SRV) – **This Proposal is NOT ACCEPTABLE.**

#### **Lack of Disclosure.**

In the council held SRV meeting on 17/10/22 at Hornsby RSL, it was demonstrated that the funding timelines and revenue shortfalls portrayed had been clearly evident for an extended period. The Council employees and elected officials present at the meeting **offered no clarity as to why there was no publicised management warning of this trend** prior to the recent elections. The shortfall and impacts were not raised in the recent public elections so ratepayers could have voiced their concerns and exercised their democratic rights. If the issues were not so apparent as to be made public, why were savings achieved over the past ten years period so important other than to dilute/avoid an ongoing issue that had not been addressed previously ?

#### **Flawed Assumptions.**

The Council GM and consultant present raised the fact that previous savings achieved were ongoing efficiencies, however they have not provided any evidence of an external expert review of their adequacy. Nor have they outlined what the true cost base, correct employee numbers, structures and systems of the Hornsby Council organisation should be. None of the elected officials or officers at the function raised other options to mitigate the growing gap in funding and cost base in the forum other than taxing residents, so it must be assumed that they are complicit with the proposed SRV without questioning the cost base. **There was no evidence produced at the forum nor in the work papers and submissions that management and council officers have any idea what the real cost base should be, nor has it been tested by other experts other than those in support of the SRV.**

All the supporting documentation on the HSC website leads to the same conclusion as to support the SRV yet to provide balance and fairness the full disclosure of alternatives needs to be considered. While the long-term financial plan, capacity to pay and asset management strategy are informative to the case for an SRV, there is no discussion of migration to user pays, removal/sale/reduction of assets, increased efficiency of operations or service levels and staff reductions that any well managed business should regularly and vigorously consider.

#### **Time Limited.**

The Council's Consultant present outlined that the SRV proposal will operate as an ongoing approval. **This is not acceptable** as it will continue to cover the problems of a poorly structured cost base and perpetuate poor governance by new funding being used as a blunt axe to fix management inaction. It is entirely unacceptable to approve any SRV without proper and due electoral process and public review with time boundaries and scope-controlled terms of reference.

#### **Cost Increase Drivers.**

The council staff outlined that the loss of revenues from Epping, the new park and several surveys led initiatives are driving the need for these new funds. **The new initiatives must be given further public and open discourse and discussion as new ( unfunded) business items, so that they can be voted on individually under due public process.** The facts presented by the council staff and the data lodged on the website by the consultants appear as a well-crafted set of excuses for failed governance and a management team unable to make the hard decisions and changes needed to make ends meet.

It is not acceptable for council officers to bundle the **major funding needs into broad categories without assessing each project on its merits** and providing rate payers with the approval as to how to spend the money on each proposal.

### **Mayor Ruddock.**

The mayor spoke at the meeting as to the dire situation, however **neither he nor any of the councillors present offered any alternate view** as to how services could be managed without the SRV and how the council and staff could improve their operations in lieu of a new super profits tax on residents. This lack of questioning and rigour is apparent in the supporting documentation which seeks funding increases without asking the harder questions on what other options exist and have been modelled. Some of the resident survey data dates to 2017 which is extremely questionable as to its relevance and appropriateness to the business case.

### **Conclusion.**

**Residents must be given the chance to drill into every line item**, to place due pressure on elected officials, and to strongly argue the best use of their money. The proposed SRV is a blunt and poorly researched tool being supported by inadequate management, self-fulfilling and preordained conclusions, and a complete lack of due governance by councillors and officers.

Please feel free to contact my office to discuss the issues raised by this proposal.

Author name: S. Korres

Date of submission: Wednesday, 22 February 2023

Please provide any other comments on the council's application that you would like to make here.

I don't support the exorbitant rate rise, especially as it is embedded in the general rates and will therefore stick going forward. If specific funding is required for important one-off infrastructure projects council should be proposing temporary levy increases with funding explicitly set aside for those projects. Once completed rates should reduce to more normal levels. This council, and this Mayor, is a joke. Mr Ruddick is intent on leaving his personal legacy at the cost of Hornsby ratepayers. A full review of current spending and community needs should be conducted before any underlying rate rise is approved. Such a lot of money has been wasted - the trees project resulted in dozens of trees planted randomly in our suburbs only to mostly be smashed to smithereens by disenfranchised youths that the community doesn't have the funding to keep under control. A waste of money, did nothing to beautify our neighbourhoods, and just made them look like straggly, ill-planned attempts without thought to beatification or design. Might as well have just scattered seeds from a passing plane. Please don't let this circus get any bigger.

Question 1 (Criterion 1) - Has the council clearly established the need for, and purpose of a different revenue path for the council's General fund?

No

Question 2 (Criterion 1) - Has the council canvassed alternatives to the rate rise?

No

Question 1 (Criterion 2) - Did the council communicate the full cumulative increase of the proposed special variation in percentage terms? And the total increase in dollar terms for the average ratepayer by rating category?

Yes

Question 2 (Criterion 2) - Has the council's community engagement strategy demonstrated an appropriate variety of engagement methods to ensure community awareness?

No

Question 3 (Criterion 2) - Please comment on the action taken by council in response to feedback from the community on the proposed special variation.

Spent nearly \$100,000 to find the community doesn't support the rates rise but is going ahead anyhow.

Question 1 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the reasonableness of the impact on affected ratepayers of the proposed special variation.

An enormous increase in the face of wanton unnecessary spending by this council on nice-to-haves like electronic signage in the station/Westfield precinct. Ratepayers are facing cost of living crises while this council is splashing the cash to support Ruddick's power play.

Question 2 (Criterion 3) - Please comment on the council's consideration of the community's capacity and willingness to pay.

No consideration whatsoever.

Question 3 (Criterion 3) - In its application the council outlined how it intended to address hardship caused by the proposed special variation. Please comment on the council's plan.

There shouldn't be the need to address hardship if council properly considered spending in light of community needs and affordability. A huge influx of be ratepayers due to multiple high rise apartments should help to fund infrastructure, not more \$ out of everyone's budget.

Question 1 (Criterion 4) - Have the relevant IP&R documents in the council's application been exhibited, approved and adopted by the council before it applied to IPART for the proposed special variation?

I believe so

Question 1 (Criterion 5) - In its application the council is required to explain and quantify the productivity improvements and cost containment strategies the council has realised in past years and plans to realise over the proposed special variation period. Please comment on the council's response here.

It's all politicising to ensure the increase gets through iPart.