

**Sent:** Tuesday, 3 March 2015 7:55 PM

**To:** IPART Mailbox

**Subject:** Objection to the 26 per cent increase in council rates proposed by the Eurobodalla Shire Council

To the Chairperson,  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal

Dear IPART Chairperson,

I object to the 26 per cent increase in council rates proposed as a Special Rates Variation by the Eurobodalla Shire Council in NSW.

This was falsely presented by council as a 5 per cent increase each year for three years. It is in fact a 26 per cent increase. Council now admits that.

I am totally AGAINST the proposal to increase rates above the standard annual increase for NSW councils.

The Eurobodalla Shire Council has been run inefficiently for years and its incompetence should not be rewarded.

Many of the Councillors have vested interests such as the so-called green movement and make decisions based on their ideology instead of the genuine needs of the community.

We need a council that treats all people equally and fairly instead of the fractured group of Councillors presently in power.

Some examples of the inefficiency of the ESC in regard to the SRV matter include:

- (a) Councils failure to perform an Efficiency Audit in accordance with good management principles. As a consequence council does not have a strategy to identify, manage and reduce its operating costs; Council has increased its staff numbers by 10 per cent over the past four years with a consequence increase in costs;
- (b) Council holds \$74 million in its reserves; \$26 million of this reserve is unrestricted funds waiting to be allocated;
- (c) Council cannot explain what it would do with the increased revenue from a SRV. It is apparent that the SRV is an ambit claim and council intends to achieve an increase in rates and then decide what it would do with the increased funds;
- (d) 38 per cent of ratepayers are non-resident ratepayers and council did not correspond with ratepayers until after its three community information sessions had been held;
- (e) The Micromex telephone survey arranged as community consultation by council contacted only 600 persons. Worse, the questions were loaded to bias responses towards council's position on a SVR increase. The council supplied the loaded questions and that corrupted the survey;
- (f) Council has failed to consider the economic burden a SVR would impose on its low socio-economic constituency with low average income, high unemployment and increasing aged population as retirees relocate to this coastal area;
- (g) Council has not engaged in appropriate community consultation with fewer than 100 persons attending the three information sessions. In contrast a public meeting at Long Beach was attended by over 100 persons who voted unanimously against the SRV increase. Two ESC councillors attended. The mayor, deputy mayor and council management did not attend in response to the invitation from the Long Beach Community Association.

What is needed is council decision making within the budget that is already available from current rate revenue and council's other income sources.

The Eurobodalla Shire Council must learn to operate within its budget.

Yours faithfully,  
Allan Graham Pryor

