

RE : Shoalhaven City Council's request for rate increases over the peg rate.

This council is not "fit for the future". They have failed to place properties operating legitimate businesses into their business rates category. This has gone on for many years. In some cases properly rated businesses are operating in direct competition with these incorrectly rated businesses. This applies to both Urban and Rural properties.

There would be an estimated 2-3000 properties wrongly rated in the Shoalhaven being extrapolated from the well researched village of Kangaroo Valley and surrounds. We have/had 29 business paying business rates whereas over 200 businesses in the Valley. There are over 50 towns and cities in the Shoalhaven and we are the largest tourism destination outside of Sydney. Only 2056 business are listed under the business category for the entire Shoalhaven. Many millions of dollars have been lost over the past years.

At my request to the Council, the staff have just begun reviewing this situation. They have acknowledged the oversight. Unfortunately this will take many months to modify as the Council has no idea where businesses are operating. Because of this we request that IPART consider the following;

- do not approve the full rate increase requested.
- whatever increase is approved, that it is for this year only (one-off).
- the Council be instructed to get their house in order.
- that future increases are only approved when the community is involved and satisfied that a fair application of rates has been attained.

(The businesses that have been paying proper rates have been unfairly done by and the general public is being asked to subsidize the errant businesses with a requested two year gross rate increase of 28 %.)

I remain available to discuss this further if requested.