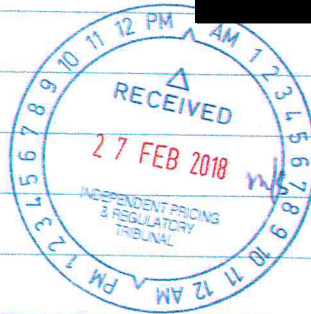


LPART



NSW

20. 2. 18.

B. C MOORE

DEAR SIR,

AFTER READING THE ARTICLES IN OUR LOCAL 'BENNINGEN COURIER SUN' I AM EXTREMELY CONCERNED THAT YET AGAIN, OUR SHIRE COUNCIL ARE HOLDING THEIR GREEDY HANDS OUT FOR A 19.1% INCREASE TO OUR RATES.

THIS IS THE THIRD LETTER I HAVE WRITTEN OPPOSING RATE RISES IN THE LAST 3 YEARS. THE LAST ONE WRITTEN A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AGO, JAN 29TH 2017.

AS AN 83 YEAR OLD SINGLE AGE PENS. THE 7.5% AWARDED LAST YEAR WAS A HEAVY BURDEN ON MY COST OF LIVING AS THIS BILL HAS TO BE PAID IN THE SAME PENSION PERIOD AS PHONE &

POWER. BUDGETING FOR THESE BILLS IS TRICKY. SACRIFICING USING AIR CONDITIONING IS A GIVEN.

I HOPE YOU TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT
THIS INCREASE WILL HAVE A SERIOUS
FINANCIAL IMPACT ON OUR ABILITY TO
PAY. IF THERE IS ANY BELT-TIGHTENING
TO BE DONE IT SHOULD BE OUR INEPT
COUNCIL TO LIVE WITHIN ITS MEANS.
WE ARE ALREADY DOING THAT. 2.3% IS
ALL THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED.

YOURS SINCERELY

Beryl Moore.

 - 20-2-18

RATE RISES

11.8% + 6% + 19.1% cumulative and compounding RATE rises. On February 7 the majority of councillors voted directly against the will of the community for this additional 19.1% SRV cost of living increase. At the meeting the Deputy General Manager Matt Fanning admitted that council did not receive one submission in support of the rate rise. A crowd of 70 - 80 people attended the meeting. Everyone was opposed to the rate rise. The Mayor Dominic King refused to allow a deputation from the Bellinghen Shire Ratepayers Association on the spurious grounds of not meeting the required council protocols. The mayor could easily have given the community five minutes to air concerns but Cr King refuses to give due consideration to the community concern, on this very important issue of rates affordability. It is absolutely clear that this 19.1% increase on top of the previous increases is unaffordable for people on fixed incomes and minimum wage recipients. No due consideration has been given to our community welfare or capacity to pay. If the council really cared they could have left the rate rises to a more affordable CPI based rate peg limit at 2.3% - it was the council's choice.

This council has shown itself for what it is. It was determined as UNFIT and rather than seriously restructure the organisation to live within their means, their only solution is to relentlessly raise the rates tax. This council's primary concern is to self-preservation regardless of the cost to us. Dominic King has publicly stated that he believes the council should be expanding into social services. We say this philosophy is the fundamental cause of all council's financial problems and it is not conducive to the responsible and respectful use of our money.

Never forget who voted against the community for the rate rise: Cr Dominic King, Cr Steve Klipin, Cr Jennie Fenton, Cr Desmae Harrison, Cr Toni Wright-Turner (absent but in favour). Who voted with the community: Cr Gary Carter and Cr Steve Jenkins. Remember the window for submissions to IPART will open soon so please have your say and let them know how unhappy we are!

Bruce Cleary
Bellinghen Shire Ratepayers Association

COUNCIL FARSE

Today I attended the council meeting in Bellinghen supposedly to gauge community support for its proposed rate hike. The meeting was a complete sham with the council having made up its mind on the proposal and not allowing any questions from the public. The large number of people who attended were unanimous in its objection to the proposal which, I understand, was the same as the similar meetings held previously held in other parts of the shire. As it was agreed that the shire did not have enough rateable properties with all the state forests and national parks the only realistic option available is for the shire to be amalgamated with an adjoining local government area. I

was always previously against this idea but now realise that it is now a must. I urge all ratepayers who are opposed to the proposed increases to write or email IPART with your concerns.

Allan Bennett
Bellinghen

RUCKUS at council

BY JANENE CAREY

THE council meeting on Wednesday February 7 was extraordinary in two ways.

First, it was an extra meeting, not the regular monthly one; second, it was attended by more than 70 vociferous residents opposed to the single item on the agenda, the application to the NSW Independent Regulatory and Pricing Tribunal (IPART) for a Special Rate Variation

of six per cent (inclusive of the rate peg) over the next three years.

The crowd filled the chairs, lined the walls, sat on the floor, spilled out the door.

They made such a ruckus, despite being warned by mayor Cr Dominic King "there can be no comment from the gallery" that within six minutes he had adjourned the meeting and asked them to leave, saying "we will reconvene when we

get some respect".

Derisory applause and shouts followed.

The group calling itself the Bellingen Shire Ratepayers Association (BSRA) had earlier sent an email to notify council that they would be attending and requesting permission to address the meeting.

However, this notice did not comply with meeting protocol as it did not include the name of the person

who would be speaking or a phone number, and a reply sent by council requesting the necessary details was not responded to by the deadline of midday on Tuesday, so the request was denied.

Cr Steve Jenkins moved if a representative of the BSRA was present that they be allowed to speak, but the mayor said "they have to follow the procedure".

When the meeting was formally closed, there were

shouts of "You won't get me out", and "What time is morning tea? We pay enough rates for it".

Cr King repeated his request and said if people did not leave, the police would be called.

Some people complied, while others stayed put.

The meeting reconvened at 9.20am and a discussion by councillors about the application to IPART proceeded,

with only the occasional

interjection from the gallery.

If approved by IPART, the rates increase will commence in the 2018/19 financial year for the specific purpose of implementing and partly funding the Sealed Road Resurfacing and Bridge Renewal Programs.

Two councillors, Cr Steve Jenkins and Cr Garry Carter, spoke against, citing community opposition and incapacity to pay.

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