

Big Rob

[REDACTED]

10 March 2018

IPART SUBMISSION

**RE: LISMORE CITY COUNCIL, SPECIAL VARIATION APPLICATION**

My name is Big Rob. I am a local business owner and an active member of the Lismore City Council area.

I do not support any further rate rises for any reason at this time.

Lismore's businesses were suffering with very high rates, declining sales and a declining population for a few years and we are now still trying to recover from the devastating 2017 flood which wiped out many businesses.

Lismore City Council have a history of poor resource management so I believe any additional rate increases will just be squandered.

Business owners need a break from such high rates.

Lismore City Council already take advantage of the annual CPI increases and a huge general rate increase is expected shortly which will directly affect everyone including the business ratepayers when they are hit again.

I am also extremely concerned about how Lismore City Council undertakes 'consultation'.

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Council only pushes the ideas which succeed which come directly from members of the business community (eg: Eat The Street).

Clearly, if council stopped making bad decisions and managed the funds they currently have better, the community would be much better off. Handing them more money is just an absurd concept considering previous performance.

Every 'consultation' (including submissions and a petition) except one council controlled event has also resulted in overwhelming opposition to any rate increase with ratepayers showing a loss of confidence in Lismore City Council's ability to manage things well.

The very tightly council controlled 'consultation' event excluded many prominent members of our community who sought to participate in the supposedly open and transparent process. One [REDACTED] was even made to stand silently against a wall while the process was happening even though there were empty seats and only a small number of 'invitees' in attendance. These seemingly hand-picked invitees were then controlled by council staff at each table with many pushing for the increase using misinformation and scare tactics.

The whole process is flawed with conflicts of interests everywhere. The community just do not want this rate rise, they can't afford it and it will result in more business closures and others staying away.

Please listen to ratepayers for once and look closely at the way the 'consultation' was manipulated and ask some questions to those who do not have a conflict of interest about why there is so much opposition.

It should also be noted that council staff continued pushing ahead with the rate increase, including making submissions to IPART, during a period they should have done nothing while a rescission motion process was being undertaken. Three separate extra ordinary meetings were scheduled in a desperate attempt to push this through while councillors were on leave and council struggled to get a quorum to support it.

There is no doubt in my mind that, if yet another special business rate increases is approved, the community will respond very negatively.

Feel free to contact me if you would like clarification regarding anything contained in this letter or if you would just like some further information.

Kind regards,

Big Rob