

1. The volume and complexity of reports from local governments is overwhelming for the average ratepayer. IPR process and reports is too repetitive and includes data with no realistic and independent analysis of key and important information, such as trends and honest forecasts. They often contain demographic information that is out of the scope of LGA responsibility. Many targets are poorly defined or set, often with no “stretch” or no clear accountability or regular reporting on key performance. The sheer volume of reporting areas is overwhelming and must consume massive resources to prepare and publish. I am sure the volume and complexity is an impediment for most ratepayers to provide feedback or comment.
2. It is clear from the communication of the recent Special Rate Increase that the Council was bereft of skills necessary to provide relevant information to ratepayers. Expensive external consultants were engaged by Council to conduct this work.
3. Once again, this is yet another IPART LGA review focussed on internal workings of Councils. There is an urgent need for another attempt to modernise the Council Rating (Revenue) system. It is unreasonable for any LGA to continue using an archaic Unimproved Valuation system from the 1800s to form the basis of calculating and billing customers. As one of the only wealth tax systems in operation in Australia, it must be improved so that a broader base for “wealth” must be deployed. Many ratepayers in rural areas are billed the same as neighbours with multi-homes and families as those with single dwellings and small families.
4. Not enough effort is invested in seeking opportunities to cooperate and integrate with other LGAs to reduce costs by sharing resources and services. Nearly all Councils provide the same services so there is no excuse for every council to operate their own unique external and internal services. Significant savings for ratepayers could be made by the government mandating LGAs to share services with targeted savings in a range of services such as waste management, road maintenance, financial services, procurement, human resources, payroll etc.