

From: geoffrey schaeffer
To: [Local Government Mailbox](#)
Subject: Clarence Valley Council Special Rate Variation
Date: Friday, 9 March 2018 11:10:56 AM

I would like to lodge an objection to the application by the Clarence Valley Council to increase ordinary rates by 8% p.a. for 3 years commencing 2018-19. Whilst I primarily live in Sydney I maintain a holiday residence in [REDACTED] which is officially owned by my family company [REDACTED]. My personal dealings with my Sydney Council and with Clarence Valley Council has revealed a stark contrast in management style. My Sydney Council is managed well, is able to live within its means, (my rates did **not** increase at all this year) has accumulated little debt and is able to get jobs done on time and on budget. By contrast my experience with Clarence Valley Council has been one of frustration as obvious problems are met with multiple reviews, indecision, risk-avoidance and endless procrastination. For the record my rates in Yamba are just over three times my rates in Sydney based on an UCV valuation which is only 85% of my Sydney UCV. Whilst there are clearly many reasons for this disparity I suggest that Clarence Valley Councils' practice of farming out their decision making process to external consultants (for an undisclosed fee) is a major contributing factor. My concern is that if this Council is awarded the right to increase their rates by anything like what they are asking it will only encourage them to continue their current, extremely wasteful practices. I should add that my dealings with Council have always been polite and respectful with management quite willing to discuss any question but there always seems to be an inbuilt inertia when it comes to making a decision or taking action, with a preference for further review.

The one issue that I have been dealing with Council is the question of potential land slippage on Yamba Hill overlooking the main beach. This issue has been dragging on for years as it was firstly (quite rightly) addressed following the Threbo Landslide disaster in 1997. What is surely a relatively uncomplicated engineering question, has been turned into a most expensive, complicated and indecisive examination that one could possibly imagine. Over the ensuing years there have been no less than three separate consultancy groups awarded the job and judging by the size of the reports tabled and the masses of information contained in them, one can only conclude that many hundreds of thousands of dollars have been spent by Council with little to show for it. Despite the passage of time and the extent of the examination there still has been no definitive conclusion and no proposal for action. There seems to be a culture of risk-avoidance, and until this is changed this Council will continue asking for more income with which to operate. This, therefore is the basis of my objection. Unless this Council is forced to operate within a reasonably restricted income stream it will continue to operate in the same manner, one which has brought them to this current financial predicament.

Yours Sincerely,

G.W.Schaeffer
[REDACTED]