

From: helen
To: [Local Government Mailbox](#)
Subject: Submission regarding Councils application for variation of rates increase - [REDACTED]
Date: Sunday, March 11, 2018 6:11:02 PM

The following points are made: **SRV – Special Rate variation**

1. Community feedback on Council's SRV proposal was sought over the holiday period. Many residents/ratepayers were therefore unaware of the proposal which may explain a community response rate of less than 5% of the LGA's adult population.
2. Council's request for feedback explicitly stated upfront its preference for option 3 and thus introduced bias into its survey. There will always be some who defer to the 'Council knows best' sentiment.
3. Council told the community the SRV was for a 3 year period. It was not disclosed by Council that it was applying to IPART for a permanent increase (ratepayers will need to service the \$27 million loan by Council). Had this been disclosed, I suspect the percentage opposing option 3 would have been even greater.
4. Even in the absence of knowledge of point 3, of the 6,316 community respondents (phone interview and mailed out survey), 50.3% opposed option 3.
5. Yet Council's submission to IPART incorrectly states that a majority of the community supports option 3. Council has presented an inaccurate picture to IPART which is disturbing in itself and more so when community approval is one of the criteria assessed by IPART in granting the SRV increase.
6. Council claims that with no SRV it will be unable to maintain basic services. This is a surprising claim, given IPART, due to low wages growth, continuing low inflation and minimal growth in council costs, has capped rate increases to 2.3% in 2018/19 which 90% (115 of the 128) of Councils in NSW can happily work within. Randwick Council is one of **only 2 urban councils within Sydney applying for a SRV.**
7. Further to point 6, the claim is also surprising given that it contradicts the findings of the TCorp Report of 19 May 2014 on Council's Financial Assessment and Sustainability, which were that Council had operated debt free and with operating surpluses since 2001 and that this was forecast to continue to at least 2023, and that the continuation of the environmental levy allows satisfactory maintenance of all assets and services as well as the provision of some new services. Given this, it could appear that Council has either now misled IPART about its current financial situation or that its financial governance competence is wanting.
8. The closing date of 12-3-18 for lodging appeals to IPART, has not provided sufficient time for the community to respond, as people are only just finding out about Councils view & Council has not clearly advised people that they have applied for a permanent increase, whereas they have fraudulently represented that this will be a temporary increase over 3 years only.

Council staff responsible for the IPART submission and community engagement as well as Councillors who voted in favour of option 3 have misled the community, have not shown due diligence, have not

been transparent and have not provided full disclosure. It is apparent that Council had pre-determined that option 3 would be adopted. Councillors are responsible for representing the interests of the residents and ratepayers. This has not happened in this case. Some soul searching is in order

Regards

Helen Papandreas

