

## **My Submission against Mid Coast Council Special Rate Rise**

A recently forced amalgamated Mid Coast Council is applying for a special rate variation. But this is a time when the previous Premier Mike Baird who was the architect of forced amalgamation promised no rate rise for 4 years. Which currently on the NSW Government web site on forced amalgamation it still states no rate rise for 4 years. But through an MP at MCC insistence who was elected to look after the interests of the people that elected and pay his wages a bill was placed to Parliament to get a rate rises for MCC. So once again it appears that a politicians word isn't worth any thing let alone the Premier of this state word.

MCC have for about a year been trying to talk up a rate rise to the community and to date it's hasn't gained traction. No one wants it and yet to impose this on an area with the high unemployment/pensioner base and a low socio-economic population. Who can ill afford this rate rise on top of the upward cost of living with no increase in pensions or unemployment benefits. Were are we to find the money for this rise on top of existing high charges.

The need for a rate rise is been blamed on the poor state and backlog of roads and bridges repairs across three former old Shire Councils. But remember who was in charge of those roads and bridge assets of ours that were let to fall into disrepair. Mr Glenn Handford (Interim General Manager MCC) who recently achieved 20 years of service to the former Great Lakes Shire Council was one of those who was in-charge of those assets. Yet now the Council and Glenn Handford call out for another special rate rise, but I would like to know what makes it so special. Is it the fact that once the special rate rise is in, it forms the new base of all future rates rises and never goes back. Or is it just a rate rise when your not really having a rate rise at all. But wait is it just a one off never to be seen again rise as the roads are all fixed and the bridges sparkle, I'm afraid not. We have attended many Community up date meetings and Councils members (Glenn Handford) have told us that the current road/ bridges backlog with out any extras will take generations to achieve a fix. So it not going to be the current generation paying through a special rate rise that will see the benefit. But as Glenn Handford has explained at community meetings that in about 30+ years maybe if nothing else happens the roads/ bridges will be fixed. Once again I ask why were the assets allowed to fall into disrepair for its in the Council Charter that assets must be maintained. So if there is this backlog of maintenance on roads and bridges, they have failed their own rules and Charter by not maintaining assets.

Currently MCC is still in the throws of amalgamation and at 3 recent Community up date meeting we have been told of the struggle to bring it all together with computer integration issues, staffing levels and in-antiquate office space for Council staff. So while all this is happening MCC have decided to apply for and take over Mid Coast Water and all its staff and assets which currently is a world class operation on its own right. To integrate the two facilities of MCC with Mid Coast Water will be another daunting task when one isn't even finalised yet. The interim general manager Mr Glenn Handford on Prime 7 TV has also broached the idea of bring the two utilities under one roof and he has indicated the old Taree Masters site as his

preferred area. This is a site that cost 13.5 million to build and you would guess the current owner would want a good return on his investment, so tell me where was that special rate rise for roads/ bridges going again?

It could be seen as it's all about Empire building on the part of MCC with a Special Rate rise to Councils coffers and Councillors profiles. Rates and cost of living go up each year with no end in sight for us pensioners plus wages do not increase for the forgotten people. The call of wages restraint and tighten your belts is the common call from all levels of Government to all the minions paying the bills. Yet I believe that once the rate rise plus integration of MCW is granted to a new council. They will vote themselves a wage rise for being astute financial managers and of course lets not forget the extra work load. So once again the special rate rise is absorbed in general revenue.

I say No to a special rate rise for amalgamation was supposed to bring real benefits to us all, not make life harder. Tell them to live within their means, we have to.

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