

[REDACTED]

IPART
Level 15, 2-24 Rawson Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attn: Mr John Madden

14 March 2019

Objection to North Sydney Council's Application for a Special Rate Variation

I am a resident of North Sydney, and am writing to object to our Council's proposed 40% increase in rates over the next 5 years – also referred to, euphemistically, as a Special Rate Variation.

My grounds for objection are as follows.

- ◆ We have only just come off our previous SRV, which concluded at the end of June 2018.
- ◆ North Sydney Council is in a very sound financial position, with reserves on hand exceeding \$37 million. They do not need the money.
- ◆ The modeling used to justify this increase is flawed, to wit:
 - it takes no account of the projected large increases in the number of residences and businesses within NSC's area, and consequent substantial revenue increases, over the coming 5 years;
 - it presents, as a justification for the SRV increase, data from the widely discredited TCorp Reports which were prepared for the NSW Government back in 2013 when they were promoting forced council amalgamations;
 - it fails to consider alternatives to a rate increase, such as special levies.
- ◆ Community consultation was a joke. Public meetings were very poorly advertised – I for one most certainly heard nothing about them – and drew ridiculously low numbers of attendees (especially if you discount all the Council staff who attended).

The "random sample survey" conducted by Jetty Research presented respondents with a biased, draconian view of Council's financial situation and future before asking them would they support a rate increase, and failed to make clear that these rate increases would be incremental over a 5 year period,

amounting to a real increase of 40%. I wonder how many people would have voted for the Council's preferred increase if that had been pointed out to them!

Furthermore, the Council report on "community consultation" fails to identify who actually did the analysis of the so-called "self-elect submissions", and what level of independence that person was able to bring to bear on their analysis.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend that you send North Sydney Council back to the drawing board on this one. They have tried to sneak it through without making the implications clear. They talk about openness and consultation, but don't deliver. They are as shifty as shithouse rats. They are being sneaky, as is their wont.

Yours sincerely,
Kel Cowling
Ratepayer of NSC