

From: Lithgow Ratepayers [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 11 March 2019 10:15 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox <localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: IPART Have your Say Submission: Lithgow City Council Special Rate Variation.

IPART Have your Say Submission: Lithgow City Council Special Rate Variation 2019-20.

(Your Have your Say webpage was not working correctly - so Submission sent by email)

OBJECTION – on the grounds of false and misleading information being published within the Lithgow City Council’s Application Form B.

In our opinion, the two enclosed attachments from the Lithgow Council's IPART Application Form B would have made Sir Humphrey Appleby from Yes Minister blush with great pride!

The first photo attachment is from page 20 of the Lithgow Council's IPART Application Form B (the paragraph commencing with the words, 'In summary,') and it is this little piece in the paragraph confirming the most deceitful and misleading misspeak we've seen for many a year:

'Council has recognised its relative socio-economic disadvantage by seeking only a one-off, single year increase of 9% which does not expire'

AND there's another even more beautiful example of Sir Humphrey misspeak of how to manipulate your Poll on a proposed Special Rate Variation in 'seeking only a one-off, single year increase of 9% which does not expire'.

The second photo attachment is from page 22 (and was continued onto page 23) of the Lithgow Council's IPART Application Form B (the paragraph commencing with the words, 'Although the Community Reference Panel').

It is completely bizarre and unfathomable that within a Lithgow City Council Community Reference Panel, that there would be absolutely no one in the room who would not Totally Disagree, Object in Full or simply say “NO” with their own Lithgow City *'Council seeking only a one-off, single year increase of 9% which does not expire'*.

These two statements *'Council has recognised its relative socio-economic disadvantage by seeking only a one-off, single year increase of 9% which does not expire'*; would in our opinion fully support the grounds of false and misleading information being published within the Lithgow City Council’s Application Form B and as such the IPART Application should be refused.

1.

In summary, Council has recognised its relative socio-economic disadvantage by limiting the proposal to retain the current 4.77% SRV plus an additional Special Rate Variation of 4.23% increase (plus rate peg) thereby seeking only a one-off, single year increase of 9% which does not expire. In 2019/20, the total SRV increase will be 11.7% (inclusive of the 2.7% rate peg).

2.

Although the Community Reference Panel (CRP) was convened to discuss Service Priorities, it became apparent that members of the panel also, wished to discuss the proposed special rate variation. The CRP provided Council with an opportunity to educate the community on the issues faced by Council and the need for a SRV. At the final meeting, time was allocated to allow the members of the CRP an opportunity, to:

- provide feedback on the application of a Special Rate Variation – Yes or No.
- Discuss – reasons for / against a Special Rate Variation.

A poll around the room provided a general consensus with the need for an SRV as follows:

- As a ratepayer with multiple properties I say no. BUT, if I can see where my money is going, I don't care as long as it's going to the benefit of the town.
- Yes, it's not a lot of money. If spent properly and we get 'bang for our buck' that's fine. I feel there should be a Works Committee for rural roads made up of rural ratepayers of the community from all rural areas that come together to discuss rural road issues.
- Yes, as a ratepayer I'd be happy if I could see where it's going.
- Yes, rates are cheaper here than in other Council areas in real terms and we will see good development happen.
- Yes for worthwhile projects that benefit the community.
- Yes, happy to retain current SRV (4.77%) UNTIL Council can show their improvements – best practice. There will be rural push back if people can't see it in their areas.
- Yes, in principle, although I'd love to see the projects for this with or without the SRV.
- Wavering – I think there will be resistance. Some people in the community will have difficulty understanding the concept of what they will be getting. Understanding how is that increase going to serve the bigger picture.
- Yes, one of the issues in that we need to understand what work is done. We need to be clear about what's happening.
- Yes, its been pointed out, its less than a cup of coffee.
- Yes, its need to be able to get things done.

Meeting notes from the three CRP meetings are included in the attachments.

From: Lithgow Ratepayers [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 12 March 2019 10:34 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox <localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: OBJECTION RAISED TO Lithgow City Council's Special Rate Variation Application.

(IPART Have your submission webpage not working correctly for this email this evening - as advised resent here)

OBJECTION RAISED TO Lithgow City Council's Special Rate Variation Application 2019-20.

Attached is a number of media reports from the Lithgow Mercury newspaper published on the 1 February 2019 - days after the Lithgow City Council resolved at their Council Meeting on the 29 January 2019 to apply to IPART for their Special Rate Variation Application 2019-20.

Front Page - 'YES VOTE TO APPLY FOR RATE RISE'.

Page 3: 'FIGHT TO BE FIT FOR THE FUTURE' Rates.

This media article records that, "Support was not unanimous among Councillors. Cr Cassandra Coleman said, while she would vote for the application to go ahead, that did not guarantee her support to implement it."

The media article continues, "Councillors Stephen Lesslie and Maree Statham voted against the move. It is a difficult decision for me because I've listened to the people for three months. Cr Statham said. The farming fraternity is outraged - they have come through ... the worst drought of the century."

Further, "Cr Lesslie said he had vowed to vote against the special rate variation unless a report on the proposal for stage two of the Main Street revitalisation project was put to council for open and transparent discussion."

Page 5: PUBLIC LETS RIP AT RATES MEETING.

Page 7: LETTER TO THE EDITOR from Lorraine Roebuck of Lithgow.

Newspaper articles removed due to copyright concerns

From: Lithgow Ratepayers [mailto:lithgowratepayers@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, 12 March 2019 11:03 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox <localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au>
Subject: OBJECTION RAISED to Lithgow City Council's Special Rate Variation 2019-20.

OBJECTION RAISED to Lithgow City Council's Special Rate Variation 2019-20.

Note: Publish - our submission and name can be published on the IPART website.

We understand that the Office of Local Government Guidelines provide provisions for Councils such as the Lithgow City Council applying for Special Rate Variations to fully engage with their communities about the Council's expenditure and revenue plans as part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) process.

In fact we understand (and agree) that IPART encourages members of the community to participate directly in their Council's community engagement processes.

Further we understand that as IPART does not hold public hearings as part of its assessment of applications by councils for proposed special variations, it (IPART) expects that Councils like Lithgow City Council would continue to consider community views on their Special Variation Application.

Notwithstanding this, we would like to advise IPART that following the Lithgow City Council's formal resolution to apply to IPART for their Special Rate Variation for 2019-20, that the Lithgow City Council has:

ABSOLUTE FAILED to continue to advise their more than 11,000 residential, pensioner, business and farmland ratepayers and residents that any or all members of the community can make a submission to IPART about the Lithgow City Councils' Special Rate Variation Application for 2019-20?

This unexplained public community failure can be completely confirmed by:

*** The Lithgow City Council Senior Staff and Councillors failed to include in their Formal Resolution to apply to IPART for their Special Rate Variation for 2019-20; that IPART will accept and consider submissions from interested groups or individual ratepayers regarding the Lithgow City Council's Special Rate Variation 2019-20s until 14 March 2019 - see attached Minutes for this clear and unequivocal omission from the Lithgow City Council Resolution on 29 January 2019.**

The same clear and unequivocal omission can also be found on:

*** The Lithgow City Council Facebook website - NIL Disclosures - see <https://www.facebook.com/LithgowCityCouncil>**

*** The Lithgow City Council Website - NIL Disclosures - see <https://council.lithgow.com/>**

*** The Lithgow City Council Media Release webpage - NIL Disclosure - see <http://council.lithgow.com/archived-media/media-releases-2019/>**

*** The Lithgow City Council Media Column in The Village Voice - NIL Disclosure - see attached IPART Submission - Lithgow City Council SRV - The Village Voice - Weekly Council Column.**

THE LITHGOW CITY COUNCILS SPECIAL RATE VARIATION FOR 2019-20 SHOULD BE IMMEDIATELY REFUSED.



MINUTES

Ordinary Meeting of Council

held at

Council Administration Centre

180 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Tuesday 29 January 2019

at 7:00 pm

19 - 03 RESOLVED

THAT Council:

1. Acknowledge the feedback received from the community during the community engagement and public exhibition process and provide this to the NSW Independent Regulatory and Pricing Tribunal (IPART) as part of the Special Rate Variation application by Lithgow City Council.
2. Adopt the following Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework documents that include the permanent Special Rate Variation Scenario - Maintain the current SRV + rate peg + one-off (permanent) 4.23% SRV:
 - a. Supplementary Combined 2017-21 Delivery Program and 2018/19 Operational Plan
 - b. Supplementary 2017-21 Workforce Plan
 - c. 2019-2029 Long Term Financial Plan
 - d. 2019-2019 Asset Management Strategy
3. Make application to the NSW Independent Regulatory and Independent Pricing Tribunal for the Scenario - Maintain the current SRV + rate peg + one-off (permanent) 4.23% SRV under section 508 (2) of the NSW Local Government Act – being an increase in a single year commencing in 2019/20 for the specific purposes of:
 - a. Maintaining existing services
 - b. Enhancing financial sustainability
 - c. Infrastructure maintenance/renewal
 - d. Reduce infrastructure backlogs.

MOVED: Councillor R Thompson

SECONDED: Councillor S Ring

CARRIED:

Divisions

FOR:

Councillor R Thompson,
Councillor W McAndrew,
Councillor C Coleman,
Councillor D Goodsell,
Councillor D Goodwin,
Councillor S Ring,
Councillor J Smith,
Councillor R Thompson

AGAINST:

Councillor S Lesslie,
Councillor M Statham

CARRIED: Unanimously

POINT OF ORDER

Cr Ring called a point of order as he felt that the issue of counting votes which Cr Lesslie was addressing was not an issue relevant to the topic at hand.

Cr McAndrew sought clarification on the point of order the as the item tonight is to appoint the Electoral Commission as Lithgow City Council election.

The Mayor did not rule upon the point of order but indicated that correspondence would be provided to the Electoral Commission in relation to this issue.

Divisions

FOR:

Councillor R Thompson,
Councillor W McAndrew,
Councillor C Coleman,
Councillor D Goodsell,
Councillor D Goodwin,
Councillor S Lesslie,
Councillor S Ring,
Councillor J Smith, Councillor M Statham,

AGAINST: nil

7.2. Finance and Assets Reports

7.2.1. FIN - 29/1/19 - Special Rate Variation Application

POINT OF ORDER

Cr McAndrew requested an apology from Cr Statham regarding her statement implying Cr McAndrew was proud of Council low staff numbers.

Cr Statham apologised to Cr McAndrew for her statement.

POINT OF ORDER

Cr McAndrew called a point of order regarding Cr Statham's claim of alleged comments made by Cr McAndrew during public forum.

Mayor ruled on the Point of Order and advised Cr Statham to remain focused on the agenda topic.



MINUTES

Ordinary Meeting of Council

held at

Council Administration Centre

180 Mort Street, Lithgow

on

Monday 25 February 2019

at 7:00 pm

The Chairperson declared the meeting open at 07:00 pm.

1. Acknowledgement of Country

The Mayor acknowledged the traditional custodians of this land we are on here today, and paid respect to their elders both past and present.

2. Present

Public: 56

His Worship the Mayor Councillor R Thompson
Councillor W McAndrew
Councillor C Coleman
Councillor D Goodsell
Councillor S Lesslie
Councillor S Ring
Councillor J Smith
Councillor M Statham

Also in attendance

Mr Graeme Faulkner, General Manager
Mr Andrew Muir, Director Economic Development and Environment
Mr Ross Gurney, Chief Financial and Information Officer
Mr Daniel Buckens, Director Water and Wastewater
Mr Jonathon Edgecombe, Director Infrastructure Services
Mr Michael McGrath, Director People and Services
Mrs Trinity Newton, Minutes Secretary
Ms Kaitlin Cibulka, Assistant Minutes Secretary
Mr Matthew Trapp, Water/Wastewater Works & Project Officer

3. Apologies

An apology was received from and leave of absence granted to Councillor D Goodwin who is unable to attend due to work commitments.

MOVED: Councillor W McAndrew

SECONDED: Councillor S Lesslie

CARRIED: Unanimously

Divisions

FOR: Councillor R Thompson, Councillor W McAndrew, Councillor C Coleman,
Councillor D Goodsell, Councillor S Lesslie, Councillor S Ring, Councillor J Smith,
Councillor M Statham,

AGAINST: nil

4. Confirmation of Minutes

19-08 RESOLVED

Confirmation of the Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of Council held on the 29th January 2019 were taken as read and confirmed.

MOVED: Councillor S Ring

SECONDED: Councillor C Coleman

CARRIED

Divisions

FOR: Councillor R Thompson, Councillor W McAndrew, Councillor C Coleman, Councillor D Goodsell, Councillor S Ring, Councillor J Smith, Councillor M Statham,

AGAINST: Councillor S Lesslie

5. Declaration of Interest

Andrew Muir - Director of Economic Development Environment declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 8.1.3 and 8.1.4 for the reason that he has a conflict of duties as he is a member of the Western Joint Regional Planning Panel that will eventually sit to consider and determine these applications. He will not vacate the Chambers so that he is able to be of assistance in relation to any questions of process only that may be raised.

Daniel Buckens - Director of Water and Wastewater declared a non-pecuniary interest in Confidential Item 12.6 for the reason that one of the properties identified as a potential site for the project is owned by a relative. Although he has removed himself from all dealing related to the land acquisition other than to be a reviewer to ensure correct procedure is followed including the review of the Council report and preparation of the Probity Plan he will the Chambers.

Councillor S Lesslie declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 8.1.3 and 8.1. 4 for the reason that as he is a member of the Western Joint Regional and will vacate the Chambers.

6. Commemorations and Announcements

Councillor C Coleman wished to convey her deepest concerns to Rich Evans and his family and wished him a speedy recovery, he is currently in Orange Hospital after he had a motorcycle accident on Saturday morning in Portland.

Councillor C Coleman offered congratulations to Ironfest committee for holding an amazing photo shoot which was held a couple of weekend ago. The "Ironfest does Lithgow" had 50 volunteers local and non local in costume plus at least 15 professional and non-professional photographers to take some breath taking photos. Cr Coleman acknowledged and thanked Mac Gregor Ross responsible for booking the venues, Rich Evans arranging the luncheon and Vicki Hartley who arranges the main characters, locations, photographers.

Councillor M Statham commemorated the passing of Daphne Bennett (formerly of Lean & Bennett Toyota) who passed away recently and was a prominent business owner in the community.

Councillor R Thompson acknowledged and congratulated the organisers and Staff for the recent Swimming Carnival which was a Regional event.

7. Public Forum

At 07:05 pm members of the public gallery were invited to participate in the Public Forum Session.

PF - MS RAQUEL OLIVOS made a statement in relation to a request for funding for Village Voice to be delivered around Lithgow Region and in relation to getting a water pipe from Lithgow to the Gosford area.