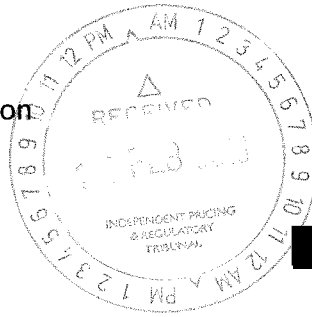


Independent Pricing & Review Commission

P.O. Box K 35

Haymarket Post Shop

N.S.W. 1240



R. E & G. M. Barton



Wingecarribee Shire Council – Fit for the Future Rate Review

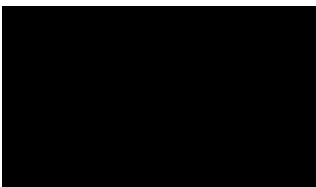
To The Manager,

This Council has conducted a survey of a small proportion of residents and is justifying the survey as an overwhelming support for its rate hike of 45%. The survey was not conclusive and showed a 1/3<sup>rd</sup> were in favour 1/3<sup>rd</sup> opposed, and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> noncommittal. In effect it could be interpreted that 2/3rds were not in support.

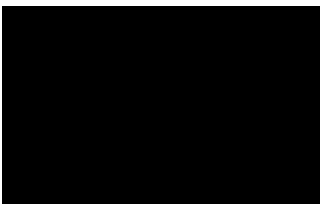
There are a lot of pensioners and self-funded retirees in this largely retirement locality on fixed incomes.

This increase is in addition to the rate pegging increases that the council is going to seek from the Dept of Local Govt of 2.1%.

The impact of these has to be considered by the capacity of the fixed income to pay. We don't get in financial terms much relief It would be good if the same increase in the pensioned rebates could be made to offset this increase.



R. E. Barton



IPART

P.O. Box K35

Haymarket Post Shop

Sydney NSW 2000



R.E. & G. M. Barton



Reference: Wingecarribee Shire Council – Special Rate Rise

Dear Sir/Madam,

Your reference Lucy Garnier

I have no objection to my letter being made available for Public Scrutiny.

I note your reference to the procedures involved.

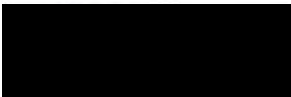
May I suggest that if 'cumulative rate' increase of 45.3% (Fit for the Future) should be given by the Council to offset any normal rate increase, in its Pensioner rebate to meet these expenses.

Pensioners are on fixed income and we certainly don't get the financial capacity to meet these type of expenses.

I very much doubt whether this will occur. The discussion is being made in the life of a dying and dysfunctional council that needs to be sacked.

It will certainly influence as to how I vote at the state level.

Signed



R.E. Barton



Copy to the :

Minister of Local Government

Level 17 NE

54 Martin Place

Sydney NSW 2000

**IPART**

**P.O. Box K35**

**Haymarket Post Shop**

**SYDNEY NSW 2000**



**R.E. & G.M. Barton**



**Reference : Wingecarribee Shire Council Special Rate Rise**

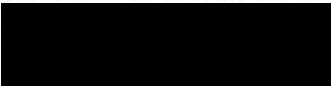
**Attention : Lucy Garnier**

**I have received a response to my concerns as to the 'special rate increase' being sorted by the Council.**

**My reaction to this correspondence which I enclose are:**

- 1. What about the ratepayers on fixed incomes? I am sure the Council is not going to increase the pensioner rebates by 46%.**
- 2. This is the Council that spent \$21 million of council's rate monies on advancing sub-prime loans to Lehman Bros fiasco.**
- 3. They proudly announced they might recover some of this in a class action! Why not wait for this to occur to see if it is as reality.**
- 4. The subject of 'affordability' does come up in the proposals.**
- 5. There are a large number of retired persons in the Shire.**
- 6. When the Council letter is examined the 'spin' is evident in quoting approx. 70% are in favour. I can interpret the results as 68% are opposed.**

**Please add my comments to my previous submission.**



**R. Barton**

**Encl :**

**Council's response**

26 February 2016

Mr R.E. Barton

Dear Mr Barton

**Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation**

Thank you for your correspondence regarding Council's proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV).

At its meeting on 10 February 2016 Council resolved as follows:

**MN 14/16**

*MOTION moved by Cllr T D Gair and seconded by Cllr G McLaughlin*

1. *THAT Council receives and acknowledges the extensive community feedback received during the community engagement and public exhibition for the Investing in our Future project, as detailed in Attachment 1 to the report.*
2. *THAT Council notes that an application for a Special Rate Variation is a key strategy from its Fit for the Future Improvement Action Plan endorsed on 24 June 2015.*
3. *THAT the draft Delivery Program, 2013-17 (revised December 2015), draft Long Term Financial Plan 2016-2026 and Strategic Asset Management Plan 2016-2026 be adopted with the amendments outlined in the report and Attachment 2 to the report.*
4. *THAT Council adopts Scenario 3 as its preferred scenario and lodge a Section 508A permanent Special Rate Variation (SRV) application by 15 February 2016 to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for an increase in 'General Revenue' and minimum rate amounts of three annual increases of 8.55% (including rate peg) in 2016/17, 9.25% (including rate peg) in 2017/18 and 2018/19 and an increase of 12.15% (including rate peg) in 2019/20 which includes continuation of the Environment Levy on a permanent basis.*
5. *THAT Council pass on its thanks to the General Manager and staff involved with the Investing in our Future project.*



2.

Following this decision, Council submitted its application to IPART on the 15 February 2016. Council is now awaiting IPART's assessment and determination of its application. Outcomes of this assessment are due to be announced on 17 May 2016.

By way of background, Council's decision to apply for an SRV came after an extensive program of consultation to ensure we obtain a true indication of community sentiment on the proposed SRV. I can confirm that at its meeting on 26 August 2015 Council endorsed the commencement of a community engagement program for a Special Rate Variation commencing in 2016/17. The multi-phased community engagement program was based on the following principles:

- Community engagement will be open, transparent and underpinned by fact so the community can make an informed decision
- Community engagement will be genuine and seek to illicit the views from a broad and representative cross section of the community
- Community engagement will be reliable and accessible utilising a variety of community engagement tools to provide a range of opportunities for input and feedback
- Community engagement will involve regular feedback to the community and Council on the outcomes of each engagement phase.

Between August 2015 and 1 February 2016 Council undertook three community engagement phases for the Investing in our Future project. The results of the consultation indicated that the community was supportive of some level of rate increase to at least maintain assets. A summary of the community preferred option is outlined in Table 1.

<b>Table 1: Preferred Investing in Our Future Option</b>			
<b>Survey Type</b>	<b>Telephone Survey</b>	<b>Online Survey</b>	<b>Postal Survey</b>
<b>Number of Participants</b>	403 Residents*	326 Responses**	661 Responses**
<b>Option 1: Deteriorate (Rate Peg)</b>	29%	35%	30%
<b>Option 2: Maintain</b>	37%	32%	34%
<b>Option 3: Improve</b>	34%	33%	34%
<b>No Preference</b>	N/A	N/A	2%
<b>Total percentage of respondents preferring some level of rate increase above rate peg</b>	71%	65%	68%

\* Micromex Research telephone survey was based on a random and representative sample of residents

\*\* Non representative sample of self-selected survey participants.

Further details on the survey, and indeed the entire suite of community engagement activity can be found at: <http://yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/SRV>

In determining the three scenarios, Council was guided by the State Government's 'Fit for the Future' sustainability benchmarks. In September 2014 the NSW State Government initiated its Fit for the Future local government reform program that required all NSW councils to submit a proposal by 30 June 2015 demonstrating plans

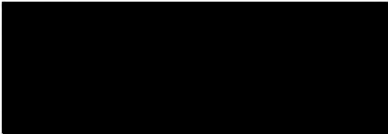
3.

to achieve long term financial sustainability. This required meeting seven asset and financial benchmarks in the areas of sustainability, infrastructure and service management and efficiency.

As a part of the Fit for the Future process Council reviewed the condition of assets and undertook detailed long term financial modelling. This work demonstrated that Council currently meets only two of the seven benchmarks and forecasts indicated that three benchmarks would be met in 2016/17. Condition assessments and sound asset modelling have indicated that while Council currently spends around \$24.3 million on the maintenance and renewal of community assets each year, there is a funding gap and a need to invest an additional \$8.5 million per year. This additional investment would ensure that the number of assets in poor condition does not continue to grow, resulting in intergenerational asset and financial management issues.

Your concerns in relation to the contributions/funding for and maintenance of areas of Mittagong in particular the village of Nattai have been passed on to the relevant sections of Council.

Yours sincerely



Larry Whipper  
**Mayor**