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Date of submission: Wednesday, 31 January 2024

Your submission for this review:

1. All council financial reporting should be reviewed by a recognised independent financial advisory person/organisation and the recommendations made public prior to any final decisions made by Council. 2. Council's should prioritise proposed expenditure before committing to a budget. The budget must clearly outline how expenditure is to funded, eg grants, levies etc so ratepayers understand how any increases in rates will be dedicated to funding those projects. 3. Council must clearly define the community benefits for a particular project and demonstrate how it will be funded and over what period. 4. A minimum 5 year plan, along with costing & outcomes must be agreed and evaluated by external professional advisors, before finalising a decision. Unfortunately, history shows the majority of elected councillors & council staff do not have the experience to properly evaluate financial modelling. This leads to decisions being made based upon political outcomes. 5. The planning system in NSW is broken. For years various governments and organisations have tried to streamline the system, without success. Councils need to develop a "tick the boxes" approval process, based upon very clear guidelines enunciated through their LEP and DCP. This will facilitate a much faster & transparent approval process. Greater flexibility is requires to produce diversity in design and improve local amenity. The community needs to be assured that the process is the same for everyone, without political or personal manipulation 6. Finally, given the current housing crisis, all councils and state government entities that own or control land that is either underutilised or unused, have a unique opportunity to develop these lands in conjunction with a credible developer. This process allows councils and government departments to retain the completed residential projects and rent them out as affordable housing.