

Author name: R. Lang

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Tamworth Regional Council Special Rate Variation Application 2024 Tamworth Regional Council Special Rate Variation Application is for a permanent increase of 36.3 percent over two years 18.5 from July 2024-5 and 15 percent from 2025-26

SUMMARY 1. TRC has conducted an opaque consultation with the community, which has not necessarily included all property owners that will be liable for the Special Rate Variation. 2. The Special Rate Variation will probably have a negative impact on the low SES property owners. The timing of the SRV in the middle of a tightening economy is poor. 3. We are not confident that the TRC will execute its plan as proposed given the proposal for new major infrastructure not disclosed in the TRC SRV documents. 4. Ratepayers are concerned that the eventual use to which the funds are put may be ineffective. CONCLUSION 1. The community consultation engaged with only a small section of the ratepayers in what was a significant programmed attempt to run information sessions. The response to the information session was substantially ineffective. TRC could have easily circulated a written survey to each ratepayer and all probability got an acceptable response rate. The question must be asked Why did they not conduct such a survey? 2. We are not confident that the TRC will execute its plan as proposed given the proposal for new major infrastructure not disclosed in the TRC SRV documents. 3. The Tamworth Regional Residents and Ratepayers Association does not support the proposed Special Rate Variation application. Yours sincerely [REDACTED]

Secretary



March 18, 2024

Carmel Donnelly PSM
Chair
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

Dear Ms Donnelly

Tamworth Regional Council – Special Rate Variation Application 2024

Tamworth Regional Council

Special Rate Variation Application is for a permanent increase of 36.3 percent over two years 18.5 from July 2024-5 and 15 percent from 2025-26

The proposal as submitted by Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) is to increase the rate applicable to business rates 36.3% above the rate peg over two years and to remain permanently after 1 July 2026.

At a meeting of the Tamworth Residents and Ratepayers Association Executive, and invited attendees, convened at 6:00pm on 21 February 2024 at the One of A Kind, 63 Denne Street Tamworth the following objections to the TRC special rate variation application were approved.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION – Council must provide evidence that the community is aware of the need for and extent of a rate rise

1. The 24,073 residential ratepayers, Farmland ratepayers (as set out in the proposed Special Rates Variation TRC document Morrison Low Report page 17) directly affected by the proposed special levy could have been directly contacted by mail with a description of the proposal and a survey response provided to those affected ratepayers at the same time.
2. TRC conducted eight (8) information sessions described in their fact sheet application. TRC is unable to provide numbers for attendances at those sessions of person who were actual business ratepayers.
3. In **Tamworth**, the number has been estimated as 14 at one of the meetings the Passchendaele Room, Tamworth Town Hall at 11.30 am on 17 October 2023 where about 32 people attended, the majority of whom were Council staff and Media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Tamworth has 19,428 residential properties (including Tamworth, Oxley Vale, Westdale, Hallsville and Hills Plains).
4. In **Tamworth**, the number has been estimated as 14 at one of the meetings the Heritage Room, the Tamworth Community Centre at 6.00 pm on 17 October 2023 where about 30 people attended, the majority of whom were Council staff and Media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Tamworth has 19,428 residential properties (including Tamworth, Oxley Vale, Westdale, Hallsville and Hills Plains).
5. In **Barraba**, 92 Kilometres north of Tamworth, the number has been estimated as about 120 people at the meeting at the Playhouse Hotel, Barraba at 12.30 pm on 18 October 2023, the some of whom were ratepayers, Council staff and media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Barraba 2,457 residential and farmland properties (including Barraba and Manilla). Many ratepayers present were vocally opposed to the rate increase. Not one ratepayer spoke in favour of the rate increase. There

appeared to be a high level of dissatisfaction with the proposal. The high attendance at Barraba was due to the local community's dissemination information about the meeting and not due to the council.

6. In **Manilla**, 48 Kilometres north of Tamworth, the number has been estimated at over 200 people at the meeting at the Manilla Town Hall, Manilla at 5.30 pm on 18 October 2023, the some of whom were ratepayers, Council staff and media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Manilla 2,457 residential and farmland properties (including Barraba and Manilla). Most ratepayers present were vocally opposed to the rate increase and dissatisfied with the level of services they were receiving. The high attendance at Manilla was due to the local community's dissemination information about the meeting and not due to the council.
7. In **Nundle**, 60 Kilometres east of Tamworth, the number has been estimated as 25 people at the meeting at the Nundle Bowling Club at 11.30 am on 19 October 2023, the some of whom were ratepayers, Council staff and Media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Moonbi Nundle 1,964 residential and farmland properties (including Moonbi Nundle and rural remainder). Most ratepayers present were vocally opposed to the rate increase and dissatisfied with the level of services they were receiving.
8. In **Kootingal – Moonbi – Bendemeer**, 21 Kilometres north-east of Tamworth, the number has been estimated as 50 people at the meeting at the Moonbi Town Hall, Manilla at 5.30 pm on 19 October 2023, the some of whom were ratepayers Council staff and Media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Moonbi Nundle 1,964 residential and farmland properties (including Moonbi Nundle and rural remainder). Most ratepayers present were vocally opposed to the rate increase and dissatisfied with the level of services they were receiving.
9. We understand many ratepayers received the notice of the Tamworth meeting the day after or two days after the meetings were held in the rate instalment notice. We understand many Tamworth ratepayers were extremely disappointed that they did not receive the notices of the meetings before the date the meetings were held.
10. There was no mail-out to all ratepayers, with a reply-paid survey.
11. The online survey as reported by Morrison Low Report stated that 97% of responses were against the special rate variation increase of 36.3%.
12. We are not aware surveys of ratepayers, random and appropriately stratified to capture the population characteristics of the local government area were undertaken.
13. Fact sheets and the Morrison Low Report was available on the website. The fact sheet glossed over the total funds to be raised and did not explain the key issues such as Invest in 'Councils Aquatic facilities', where current funding is estimated at \$60 million and his highly controversial, delivery of approved key projects including the Skywalk with Council borrowing \$3.7 million to complete it, and remediation of Ray Walsh House (RWH) the main Council Building valued at \$50 million and amortised to \$28 Million, is stated to be \$2 million to replace air conditioning and remediation of asbestos containing materials (TRC Draft Blueprint Resourcing Plan 2023-2025 P.17). Very recently it was being discussed that the asbestos remediation would cost more that and the possible sale of RWH was rumoured to be considered. The voluminous information in the Council documents were not adequately summarised to contain key relevant information in the fact sheets.
14. The online information was available for people with adequate computer technical and research skills.
15. There appeared to be only one notification of the meetings in the local newspaper in Tamworth. The process of public engagement was perfunctory and lethargic.
16. The gross amount of additional revenue estimated at \$7 million in 2025 and \$14 million in 2026 was not included in the TRC fact sheet.
17. Even at the late stage, there are still many ratepayers who are not aware of the proposed SRV, from the feedback we have received from our main street petition gathering.

IMPACT ON RATEPAYERS – The impact on affected ratepayers must be reasonable

1. As noted in the report prepared by Morrison Low (commissioned by Tamworth Regional Council) the TRC region is in the lowest 23% of socio-economic cohorts. We therefore question the damaging impact of the SRV on a large proportion of lower income ratepayers.

2. The Morrison Low report on capacity to pay, pages 1 and 2 identifies the lower socio-economic groups (SES) are Manilla-Barraba 7%, Moonbi-Nundle 15%, Tamworth Oxley Vale Westdale 38%, totalling 60% of the population. The higher SES tend to live in Tamworth CBD, Hallsville, Hills Plains and Calala. The report adds that property values on average align with the levels of advantage and disadvantage. Nevertheless, it is contended that the rate increase will fall more heavily on the low SES as they will tend to have less disposable income to meet increased fixed costs.
3. The Morrison Low report has a detailed assessment of their estimate of the impact of a rate increase on the disadvantaged. The report supports the proposition that the impact will be felt mostly by the low SES.
4. Some of the TRC proposed facilities such as the Aquatic Centre, encompasses closing both town swimming pools and locating a new Aquatic Centre in South Tamworth that is relatively less accessible, at an estimated cost of \$45 million, for which there is state funding of \$15 million, and replacing the Tamworth City Olympic Pool located in the CBD with a splash area and lagoon area with limited swimming capacity, 25 metres with four lanes, at a cost of \$15 million, as yet unfunded. This will make swimming facilities substantially inaccessible for low SES people.
5. TRC has stated in their fact sheet that ‘...Unfortunately, the money is required to keep infrastructure adequately maintained so we can continue to deliver the same level of service that the Community expects. For those that are struggling, Council has a "Hardship Policy"...’. TRC routinely classifies assets as operational, so that it does not have to prepare a maintenance plan for each facility and adhere to it. As a result, quite a few facilities have been allowed to be run down.

DEMONSTRATED FINANCIAL NEED – Council must demonstrate the financial need for the additional income

1. The fact sheet provided by TRC state that two thirds of the SRV will be allocated to road and transport networks. The fact sheet also states that TRC will invest adequately in its infrastructure to maintain assets at fit for purpose conditions.
2. Undertake key transport upgrades such as Jewry Street, Moore Creek Road and in the CBD.
3. Deliver the actions in adopted sports and recreation strategies and masterplans for key sites such as Victoria Park, Bicentennial Park and Chaffey Park.
4. Return key assets back to a satisfactory condition, particularly in stormwater and buildings (such as Town Hall, Community Centre and TRECC).
5. Invest in Council's aquatic facilities.
6. Deliver key approved projects such as the Skywalk and remediation of Ray Walsh House.
7. Build a new animal rehoming pound.
8. With the exception of road maintenance, which has been underfunded for possibly up to a decade, as stated by one of TRC engineering officers at the Tamworth Community Centre on the 17 October 2023, there is a concern that TRC will not adhere to these proposed plans.
9. TRC has been in discussions with developers to sell the Ray Walsh House Car Park and the Ray Walsh House itself over the last few months. TRC has had discussions with property owners in the CBD about the possibility of acquiring their property to build new Council offices and potentially a new Art Gallery, Library and Performance Centre. It is not that these proposals are opposed, it is that these proposals have not been made public and are not disclosed in the documents submitted for the SRV.
10. We raise the question, what other substantial infrastructure projects does TRC have in mind, which would be unfunded, even if the SRV is approved.
11. TRC in the DRAFT BLUEPRINT 100 Our Resourcing Plan 2023-2025 has prepared extensive estimates of the base case and scenario 1 and scenario 2 and scenario 3. While it is likely that proposals for roads and related infrastructure may be relatively reliable, we question whether some of the other infrastructure budgeted for, will occur as set out in these documents.

PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS – Council must explain and quantify the council's productivity improvements and cost containment strategies.

1. Morrison Low prepared a report entitled Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan.

2. TRC asserts that it has saved \$7.1 million per year at pages 6 and 7 of its report from past improvements.
3. TRC asserts that it can save \$1.649 million per year at page 9 of its report from current improvements.
4. TRC asserts that it can save \$4.9 million per year at page 10 of its report from present t improvements from its digital technology strategy.
5. We do not have sufficient information to comment on these assertions.
6. We note from the workforce management plan that staff turnover is 16% per annum, and is approaching 40% in the 30-39 year category and that 27% of the workforce is over 55 years of age. Implementation of these plans is critically dependant on staff retention and maintenance of corporate knowledge, Our Resourcing Plan - Draft (Pp 60-63).

SPECIAL RATE VARIATION DISCLOSED – Council Documents must include the Special rate variation in all of its documents and exhibit them, approve and adopt relevant planning documents

1. Our observation is that all documents requiring publication as special rate variation documents were so published.

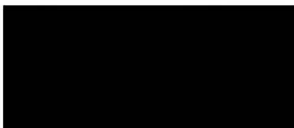
SUMMARY

1. TRC has conducted an opaque consultation with the community, which has not necessarily included all property owners that will be liable for the Special Rate Variation.
2. The Special Rate Variation will probably have a negative impact on the low SES property owners. The timing of the SRV in the middle of a tightening economy is poor.
3. We are not confident that the TRC will execute its plan as proposed given the proposal for new major infrastructure not disclosed in the TRC SRV documents.
4. Ratepayers are concerned that the eventual use to which the funds are put may be ineffective.

CONCLUSION

1. The community consultation engaged with only a small section of the ratepayers in what was a significant programmed attempt to run information sessions. The response to the information session was substantially ineffective. TRC could have easily circulated a written survey to each ratepayer and all probability got an acceptable response rate. The question must be asked ‘Why did they not conduct such a survey?’
2. We are not confident that the TRC will execute its plan as proposed given the proposal for new major infrastructure not disclosed in the TRC SRV documents.
3. The Tamworth Regional Residents and Ratepayers Association does not support the proposed Special Rate Variation application.

Yours sincerely



Secretary

Encl: Petition - TRRRA's petition has a total of 4,125 signatures of residents and ratepayers who object to the TRC Special Rate Variation: 1049 signatures via an online petition and 3076 on a paper petition.

IPART Note: The Group has also submitted a 191 page petition with the names and signatures of people who have signed the petition. In line with our Submissions and Privacy policy we have removed those 191 pages.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 17 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

RE: Objection to Special Rate Variation proposal Tamworth Regional Council As the local Tamworth & District Branch of NSW Farmers organisation, we wish to formally lodge an objection to the proposed Special Rate Variation of submitted by Tamworth Regional Council based on inequitable distribution and affordability concerns. This very excessive special rate variation of 36.3% over two years, is a valid concern for our farming members, with a significant impact upon residents and businesses across the Tamworth LGA. NSW Farmers is Australias largest state farming organisation, representing the interests of its farmer members across all agricultural commodities in the state. NSW Farmers advocates for a profitable and sustainable NSW farming sector. Tamworth & District Branch is the third largest Branch of NSW Farmers with 185 current members. The proposed application from Tamworth Regional Council is to increase rates by 36.3% over a two-year period. This proposal well exceeds the rate peg 2024-25 of 4.5% to 5.5%, and even with a growing population, exceeds the final rate peg 4.5% to 8.2%. This is extremely inequitable for all residents and ratepayers. Under this proposal, landholders of farmland would see an enormous burden placed on their business operations thus affecting future agricultural production. Agriculture is an important industry in the Tamworth economy with an array of commodities produced, including livestock (e.g. beef, sheep, poultry), cereal crops, broadacre crops, hay, milk, wool, eggs, and nurseries/cut flowers. In 2020-21 the total value of agricultural output in Tamworth Regional Council was \$305 million. Livestock accounts for 75.4% of total agricultural output in terms of value. (Data Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Value of Agricultural Commodities Produce 2020-21) Tamworth Regional Councils Blueprint 100 Strategic Community Plan 2023-2033 aims to ensure financial resilience and continue delivering essential services and facilities for the community. Cost-saving measures have not been implemented when focus is based on supporting a growing population and increasing commercial development. This proposal will jeopardise the current ratepayers in the region, when Council has failed to address current concerns such as roads and maintenance, Council office building with asbestos-containing materials (Ray Walsh House) and rental of alternate commercial premises as offices for Council staff, and the premature development of further sports and recreation facilities (e.g. new aquatic centre). Lack of sustainable development plans are of concern, when Council is overextending financial resources beyond their limits, especially when unable to adequately fund and manage current assets, can allocate millions of dollars to progress projects, then plan to build new assets. The financial discrepancy needs to be addressed without asking ratepayers to fund the bill with an excessive rate increase. This situation can lead to major financial stress and instability for the local ratepayers, entirely based on inadequate financial management at the local government level when focused on growing populations, new infrastructure, and tourism opportunities. Many farming businesses are still under financial hardship and uncertainty due to prolonged drought, bushfires and Covid pandemic which have significantly impacted agriculture and education. Largely agricultural land will be affected under the proposed rate increase, with many farmland ratepayers being forced to pay over \$10,000 more in rates each year. Unfortunately, ratepayers are also burdened whilst under pressure to remain silent, if Councils proposal is not approved, then Council claims delivery of current services will be impacted. There must be an alternate solution to implement further cost-saving measures, seek grants, or reevaluate spending priorities, to lesser the enormous impact upon farmland ratepayers and all residents in the Tamworth LGA. Tamworth & District Branch of NSW Farmers ask that you consider our farming members concerns and deliberate to reject Tamworth Regional Councils excessive Special Rate Variation in its current form and promote improved financial management at a local government level.



17 March 2024

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)

Level 16, 2-24 Rawson Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Objection to Special Rate Variation proposal – Tamworth Regional Council

As the local Tamworth & District Branch of NSW Farmers organisation, we wish to formally lodge an objection to the proposed Special Rate Variation of submitted by Tamworth Regional Council based on inequitable distribution and affordability concerns. This very excessive special rate variation of 36.3% over two years, is a valid concern for our farming members, with a significant impact upon residents and businesses across the Tamworth LGA.

[NSW Farmers](#) is Australia's largest state farming organisation, representing the interests of its farmer members across all agricultural commodities in the state. NSW Farmers advocates for a profitable and sustainable NSW farming sector. Tamworth & District Branch is the third largest Branch of NSW Farmers with 185 current members.

The proposed application from Tamworth Regional Council is to increase rates by 36.3% over a two-year period. This proposal well exceeds the rate peg 2024-25 of 4.5% to 5.5%, and even with a growing population, exceeds the final rate peg 4.5% to 8.2%. This is extremely inequitable for all residents and ratepayers. Under this proposal, landholders of farmland would see an enormous burden placed on their business operations thus affecting future agricultural production.

Agriculture is an important industry in the Tamworth economy with an array of commodities produced, including livestock (e.g. beef, sheep, poultry), cereal crops, broadacre crops, hay, milk, wool, eggs, and nurseries/cut flowers. In 2020-21 the total value of agricultural output in Tamworth Regional Council was \$305 million. Livestock accounts for 75.4% of total agricultural output in terms of value. *(Data Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) – Value of Agricultural Commodities Produce 2020-21)*

Tamworth Regional Council's [Blueprint 100 Strategic Community Plan 2023-2033](#) aims to ensure financial resilience and continue delivering essential services and facilities for the community. Cost-saving measures have not been implemented when focus is based on supporting a growing population and increasing commercial development.



This proposal will jeopardise the current ratepayers in the region, when Council has failed to address current concerns such as roads and maintenance, Council office building with asbestos-containing materials (Ray Walsh House) and rental of alternate commercial premises as offices for Council staff, and the premature development of further sports and recreation facilities (e.g. new aquatic centre). Lack of sustainable development plans are of concern, when Council is overextending financial resources beyond their limits, especially when unable to adequately fund and manage current assets, can allocate millions of dollars to progress projects, then plan to build new assets.

The financial discrepancy needs to be addressed without asking ratepayers to fund the bill with an excessive rate increase. This situation can lead to major financial stress and instability for the local ratepayers, entirely based on inadequate financial management at the local government level when focused on growing populations, new infrastructure, and tourism opportunities.

Many farming businesses are still under financial hardship and uncertainty due to prolonged drought, bushfires and Covid pandemic which have significantly impacted agriculture and education. Largely agricultural land will be affected under the proposed rate increase, with many farmland ratepayers being forced to pay over \$10,000 more in rates each year.

Unfortunately, ratepayers are also burdened whilst under pressure to remain silent, if Council's proposal is not approved, then Council claims delivery of current services will be impacted. There must be an alternate solution to implement further cost-saving measures, seek grants, or reevaluate spending priorities, to lesser the enormous impact upon farmland ratepayers and all residents in the Tamworth LGA.

Tamworth & District Branch of NSW Farmers ask that you consider our farming members concerns and deliberate to reject Tamworth Regional Council's excessive Special Rate Variation in its current form and promote improved financial management at a local government level.

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Chairman

On Behalf of Tamworth & District Branch of NSW Farmers Association

Author name: A. Allan

Date of submission: Saturday, 16 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I note, with some high degree of concern, the submission of an application to IPART., for a 36.3% Special Rate Variation (SRV) by Tamworth Regional Council. Unknown and not disclosed publicly and openly to the Region's electorate members was/is the fact that IPART., do not judge the merits of TRC's., SRV., application on the basis of how TRC., determined their need for such an SRV., or on the Electorates approval/disapproval of TRC's application for such, but on the basis of the actual process, used by TRC., to communicate their intention, of doing so, to the electorate's Ratepayers. The history of TRC's inferior modus operandi and quality of public consultation and communication extends back to 2004 following the subsuming of Tamworth City Council and several adjoining Shire Councils to form Tamworth Regional Council. It is essential that IPART's., attention be drawn to TRC's., continuous history of fallacious and grossly inadequate quality and frequency pertaining to their definition of "communication." My understanding, based on Community submissions against a previous 2019 SRV., - "failed" - application by TRC., is that IPART., will have historical records pertaining to that 2019 application, which can/should be referred in highlighting TRC's., historical and continuing failure to implement necessary communication standards and application techniques. Whilst it is true to say TRC., did conduct a community survey, following strong Community complaints regarding inadequate communication, evidence of the reality in meaningful improvements of such, other than "political-tick-a-box" aspersions of improvements, are difficult to find; and proven in their recent inadequate SRV., campaign of communication. A reflection of TRC's communication failings can be observed in the numbers of Community attendees at their meetings and the timing of such - just prior to the submission of their current SRV., - and "very" few, in contradiction to their statement in their February 2024 newsletter, that they commenced "talking with our Community" in mid-2023. Meetings in Tamworth City had 12 and 14 public attendees at the respective mid-day and evening meetings, whilst Barraba had 120 - mid day - and Manilla in excess of 220 evening meeting. The attendee numbers at Barraba and Manilla were achieved following a Manilla resident's detailed "letter-to-the-editor" published in the Manilla Express (which covered local news items in both Manilla & Barraba) highlighting the implications of the subject matter of the SRV., for discussion and the importance of the electorate's members being in attendance at the meetings. The letter's content was further distributed, in both towns, via "social media" and numerous "face-to-face" conversations. Although no motions were moved,for/against TRC's intended SRV application to IPART., both meetings, very clearly and robustly, refuted TRC's aspersions for such: indicating to TRC Councillors and senior staff, in attendance, their total disgust at the quality and quantity of service provided to the surrounding rural towns and immediate infrastructure - country roads especially - and, in doing so emphasised, that this was not just a recent decline, but had been evident since the implementation of the 2004 amalgamation and in parallel to an increased emphasis on increasing "wants" - as distinct from "needed" - facilities/infrastructure in the immediate Tamworth City area. In highlighting TRC's lack of Community consultation, two important infrastructure projects and to, a degree a lesser, but important vehicle parking adjustment in a busy commercial part of Tamworth were granted limited consultation: - major being "new road transport/rail freight rail hub" in Tamworth & Namoi River Bridge, Manilla - and, with the latter, the attendees at the only public meeting, were told - by the previous Mayor in no uncertain manner by, quite literally grabbing the mic., and declaring "there will be no discussion on the design/location of such only on its approaches. In closing, I draw your attention to the several proposals & inclusive recommendations pertaining, to communication, issued by LGA Minister T Kelly, MLC., 2 x issued 2003&4; Vardon Report 12/2003; LG Amalgamations, Gen. Purpose Standing Committee No 5 16/12/2003. These should be available via Hansard, but I have copies if desired. Only a Manilla Local Community Development S355 was formed, but failed due to lack of Council support. Summary: - Serious attention is required re the provision of frequent transparent communication to include Public, Councillors, less bureaucratic/autocratic - all too obvious, "I know better than you!", influence/control over Councillors & public; and less reliance on social, email & mobile phone messaging contact to TRC., which, most times, is not acknowledged as having been received. Regards A. Allan

Author name: A. Fritze

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

My name is Andre Fritze of [REDACTED] - this is also my statutory declaration & Im willing to be part of any Parliamentary inquiry in relation to my submission.. I confirm that that all Tamworth Councillors including the mayor are fully aware & supporting & in collusion with tamworth council general manager Paul Bennett in his perjury to the police & court in his sworn statement & that trc gm Paul Bennett fled overseas so as to avoid prosecution in relation to child sexual allegations (trc gm Paul Bennett refused subpoena to attend court & child sexual health report) forcing the matter to be dismissed after a full 12 months of diverting & obfuscating the court. Thus: if trc gm Paul Bennett (& trc councillors including mayor Webb) lodgement of fraudulent application to IPART is untrue also. For one example rates stated lower for one area are Not reflected in comparison to actual rate notice sent out. This includes devaluation of peel st Council building to be sold for development. Forensic Accountants & ICAC must be informed by IPART for transparent investigation as trc are bankrupt & are relying upon rate rate to bail them out to use the vernacular, this Includes another wage increase for trc gm Paul Bennett also . If IPART approved rate rise for Tamworth Council is approved it is very clearly evident that trc have been in contact with most senior IPART staff & said staff fully support & are also complicit in aforementioned complaint/issue raised re: child sexual matters raised to the court. I also confirm that trc had myself forcibly interned in the Banksia mental health unit in attempt to discredit myself in perjury by trc gm Phil Lyon thru contact with former senior officers of Tamworth Police Department. I also confirmed that this is my statutory declaration and am willing to be a full participant in any parliamentary investigation. Tamworth Member of Parliament MP Kevin Anderson has paperwork to confirm my matters most especially in regards to former local government ministers & current opposition Liberal LG minister Refusal to address matters outlined above . This is my statutory declaration- my name is Andre Fritze.

Author name: A. Hayward

Date of submission: Friday, 15 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I have lived in [REDACTED] a village under Tamworth regional council for over 35 years. TRC has let most of the infrastructure in the village deteriorate beyond repair. We have no footpaths a footbridge over Elberts Gully collapsed years ago and remains unserviceable despite several complaints. The fire hazard from long grass throughout the village remains. I have never seen the village so run down and TRC would like to increase our rates. I believe the money currently collected by TRC is being wasted. The village has gone backwards since amalgamation

Author name: A. Middlemiss

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I believe that the councils submission for the rate variation is not going to benefit those in the region who do not reside in Tamworth. As someone who lives in an outlying town it is hard to see where the rates we have been paying currently are being spent in our town. I understand that any council needs funding to provide a service but it seems unfair to increase the regions rates when it is not seeming to be shared in an equal manner through the region, based on the rates each region pays (not just based on the residents in town but also including those who pay rates who live on the land). As someone who has been told that grant funding wouldnt be supported by the council because they have allocated it elsewhere through grant applications of their own or because the facilities we have are not being utilised enough to warrant an upgrade when there is in fact multiple user groups, it is very hard to support an increase to the rates we pay. a) its hard to see where the current rates are being spent in our town (apart from the general water and disposal systems in place) and b) when our council doesnt want to support upgrading infrastructure in the outlying communities.

Author name: A. Spencer

Date of submission: Thursday, 14 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

It's a NO from me! We have just suffered a recent rate increase which effectively added an extra quarter to my annual rates, in a time of massive inflation and financial pressure on households. I am a self funded retiree, that moved to Tamworth in recent years, for lifestyle & affordability which is quickly disappearing due to Councils vision to overpopulate outside the scope of its revenue growth and infrastructure. Council proposes a SRV of 36.3%, which flies in the face of guidelines set by the NSW Office of Local Govt, to fund the remediation of Ray Walsh House, the excessive over staffing of Council, and the gross waste of funds and revenue through mismanagement and squander. Business owners aside, the Tamworth people I know do not want the population doubled as per the Council's plan and vision. Sport, parks, aquatic centres, animal rehoming and skywalks serve a vast MINORITY of ratepayers and these issues are NO justification for an SRV on top of our recent rate hike. I implored Council to continue efficiency and productivity improvements and begged them to reassess priorities but don't ask us to pay more in rates. Council must tighten their belts and live within their means just like the rest of us. I am so serious and worried about this that I have listed my dream home for sale, as I believe the SRV is a fait accompli, and I need to beat the drop in property values that will surely follow the rate hike. I will not be able to afford the rate hike on my self funded fixed retirement income and I will have to leave my much loved Tamworth. This is no joke.

Author name: B. Hickey

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

My family is absolutely against this. Myself and most of the town feel that we don't get value for money out of the rates we already pay. Especially those of us that live out of town and receive less services.

Author name: B. Lochrin

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I strongly oppose this rate variation application from Tamworth Regional Council. The reasons for this are, TRC is currently unable to allocate and distribute funds appropriately to enhance the wellbeing of the city of Tamworth. Due to mismanagement of funds and a underlying senior management problem. As a rate payer for the last 16 years i have watched this council in ability to use and distribute funds correctly. For these reasons i say NO. No to the increase of rates.

Author name: B. Palmer

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

as part of the rate increase. I would expect council would complete the kerb and guttering on the test of my residential property in manilla. They have done 2/3 but left 1 section in the middle incomplete. Tamworth council have told me they would complete it once funds come available. With all the new money, they would have more than enough to be able to complete the works.

Author name: B. Shepherdson

Date of submission: Friday, 1 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Preposterous. The council has no just cause to blanket increase rates. We pay \$2400 a year in Calala, the local playgrounds and parks are dry and unkempt. Roads are falling apart, the go to fix is filling them up with fill so they turn into bigger holes. Sack some incumbents and fund the refurbishment of the council offices internally, use the ratepayers money to increase the appeal and liveability of the town, like they are intended for.

Author name: B. Simmons

Date of submission: Saturday, 2 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

A 36% rate rise is ridiculous. My rates are already close to 4k a year. This will cause massive financial and mental stress on every single household in Tamworth. It will drive up the price of renting, which is already too expensive for the majority of people. No one wants this rate increase. Find savings somewhere else.

Author name: C. Drever

Date of submission: Monday, 11 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am writing to express my concern regarding Tamworth Regional Council's proposed rate increase of 36.3%. This substantial hike, set to take effect on 01/07/24, is a significant burden for many of us, especially considering the anticipated rise in annual user charges that will accompany it. For those on fixed incomes or already grappling with the pressures of the cost of living, this increase could have severe financial implications. Like many, I am personally affected by this proposal. The thought of our community members struggling to meet these heightened costs is distressing. It is crucial that our voices are heard and that the council reconsiders the magnitude of this increase. I urge the Independent Pricing And Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to look at our concerns for a more reasonable rate adjustment to ensure that our Tamworth community remains affordable and inclusive for all. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Author name: C. Rankmore

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

The rate rise proposal is incredibly excessive. Council could cut costs elsewhere but refuse to do so. They want to hurt people when costs are increasing. I agree there should sometimes be a rate rise maybe more in line with inflation but not this high.

Author name: C. Smith

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I object under 2 criteria. Firstly. The impact on affected ratepayers must be reasonable, a one third increase in rates in a cost of living crisis is unreasonable. That is over 1000 dollars a year for people struggling with higher mortgages, higher food and higher fuel prices. This will break people. It will force low income families who are struggling with mortgage hikes to lose 2 to 4 percent of their take home pay on the hike. Secondly it breaches The need for, and purpose of, a different revenue path for the councils General Fund (as requested through the special variation) is clearly articulated and identified in the councils IP&R documen. Council are building a third aquatic centre. We don't need it. They want to build a new Arts centre..we don't need it when we have a cost of living crisis. Cut out these taj mahal grand arrogant visions in the cost of living crisis and just fix the roads. Stop replacing perfectly good roadsides with flash ones in a cost of living crisis. Seriously, council has had power go to their head. Wealthy councillors have no idea of the impact this whole thing will have on most of us. All they want is an AM and a plaque and glory at the expense of people choosing to put on the heater or pay the rates. Please stop them.

Author name: C. Sollars

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

With the already ludicrous high cost of living this ridiculously high rate rise is unacceptable. It would cripple many many home owners with many of them already struggling to make ends meet. This will lead to many hardworking people losing their homes! Where do you expect them to live? We already have a rental crisis as well! Doing this will force many young families and pensioners who have worked hard their whole lives into homelessness. This is a disgusting act of an incompetent and unfeeling council!

Author name: C. Summers

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Please do not allow this rate rise! Tamworth Council should be required to find cost savings and other means to ensure their economical survival. Over the preceding six years I as a rate payer have witnessed poor fiscal management and waste as well as the adoption of inefficient policies effecting public works. At the very least an independent review of expenditure should, in my view take place well before any increase to revenue.

Author name: D. Bennett

Date of submission: Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Just the amount off waste and incompetent staff I have heard about over the last five years the loss of the flight training centre
.the loss of the challenge recycling centre the number of consultants hired

Author name: D. Davis

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

Dear Sir/ Madam, I don't believe the TRC has grounds for a rate rise due to miss management and poor spending as too waste Rate payers money on studies and plans on such things un-needed ,;eg; Sky Walks -Tamworth Lake -Peel River -Round-a-bout Sculpture- Aquatic Centre as Tamworth has 2 well placed pools-Sir also poor work ethics such as sending multiple personal to do 2 men's work also a tax on a tax for waste at land fill

Author name: D. Foster

Date of submission: Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Tamworth Regional Councils proposal to alarmingly increase citizens rates by 36.3% raises concerns about severe financial strain on its ratepayers and residents, potentially loading them up with an unjustifiable economic burden. Residents will be affected by greatly increased rentals which could very likely drive them out of this city. With overwhelming opposition from 97% of residents, this move by the TRC demands careful scrutiny to ensure transparency, fairness, and consideration of the community's overall well-being. The proposed 36.3% rate hike not only threatens Tamworth's ratepayers and residents with unwarranted financial strain but also raises questions about the council's priorities. Taking into account the salary levels being paid to council executives, including the general managers \$400,000 per annum, the money they expect their ratepayers to stump-up seems totally unjustifiable. The 600 members of Council staff are all on salaries commensurate with the same level of pay that is given to council staff living in cities, like Sydney or Parramatta. The burden on a city of 50,000 to 60,000 people to support such high salaries is unsustainable, honest accountability is therefore required from the General manager, the mayor and fellow councillors, a reevaluation of the proposed rate increase is needed to alleviate both residents and the council's financial challenges. It seems to me that if we have to have a rate increase, it should be in the order of 10 to 15% and not more than double that.

Author name: D. Gaffney

Date of submission: Wednesday, 13 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

There needs to be a probe into the last 2 years of council projects with a costing breakdown from every aspect of the project and independently reviewed. Council can improve their reputation for efficiency which, like any large company would be relatively top heavy and what a time to do it. Im sure the people of the region would happily contribute more if they can see there money is already allocated in a reasonable manor.

Author name: d. golden

Date of submission: Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

If Tamworth council is granted a rate rise when will the Pensioner Rebate be increased. I do believe it has not been increased since it's inception in 1993.

Author name: D. Mullins

Date of submission: Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am against the rate rise for many reasons firstly because we had an information evening at the Playhouse in Barraba and it made no sense we were left with the feeling that they will be raising our rates and for that we will get nothing for our town !! we are just not in a populated area and they will only be doing stuff for the populated areas ,How can they raise our rates we have lost so much and now on top of this they want us to pay more for it our tip is a disgrace if you are a worker or play sport its not open enough to access it we no longer have a kerb pick up for excess rubbish and this is an elderly type villiage most of who dont drive so have to pay someone to take it away if they can afford it the rates rise will in my opinion drive people from their homes seniors and pensioners i also have been thinking of giving up my home and selling it i am only on a pension and while i am still paying of a morgage with the rates rises from the banks and now this i think i just cant keep my home why are they being so greedy i could understand a genuine small rise but that much why !!! is it to cover the huge amount of waste we have been seeing of late and all the beautiful upgrades in tamworth !! because we wont get that and their answer was we got 2 new bins on the main street well alot of good that is !!

Author name: D. van Aanholt

Date of submission: Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I have lived in Tamworth for many years. The current application for a rate rise is not acceptable. People are struggling to cope with the cost of living and cannot afford a rise of this size. They are trying to spend money on things that are not necessary. Eg a skywalk. Mismanagement of the council building is unacceptable. Also sending someone to America for a water conference. People on fixed or low incomes will not be able to pay with rate increases. Perhaps council should look at reducing some of the staff and tightening their budget during difficult times. Many people I know are concerned about this rate rise. Young couples within the community are going to struggle to pay rate rises and mortgages at this time. Consideration of mental health affected by financial stress is a real issue in our community at this time.

Author name: G. Branch

Date of submission: Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

As I am living in Barraba the rates variation should not be allowed. Tamworth council does not improve Barraba and most of the money goes to Tamworth facilities like the aqua park that is on their agenda. We are now having to pay for green waste at the tip, also our tip hours have decreased. We have to pay for any bulk waste to be picked up previously there was a bulk pick up twice a year now they supply vouchers what about the elderly who cant physically take bulk waste to the tip. My street is needing a repair urgently I told them but they said it is fine. They want the money but only do things for our town minimal repairs on the main roads not on any other streets or lanes. Gail Branch

Author name: G. Green

Date of submission: Thursday, 7 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am not a member of any political party so my comments are mine and mine alone. I have been in this lga all my life since 1963 and over the years have witnessed our council venturing into investments that should never be allowed at the expense of roads, rates and rubbish. The holding costs of real estate are not accounted for, not revealed and when asked for the details of operational and recreational land one gets no reply. How on earth are councils allowed to speculate on real estate where they have no expertise and those monies are quarantined whilst operational matters are left unattended. Our council has a media department larger than some public companies and they have no shareholders. Self promotion/protection at the expense of operational issues. Staff have car dedicated car spaces in areas otherwise available to the spending public. I understand these matters should be managed by our elected councillors however when pressed their response is "we are acting within the Local Government Act" The uncontrolled spending on peripheral activities has grown ██████████ in this lga. Nepotism is so rife it's common discussion that the only way to get an opportunity for employment or winning contractual opportunities is to have a "mate" inside. natural gas has been available here for many years however the roadworks uprooted when laying the pipelines has still not been remediated. In conclusion, please deny the rise sought so council and councillors are reminded of their responsibilities and perhaps the ACT needs a through revamp to stop the wanton waste of public monies on activities that restrain expenditure on the simple things

Author name: G. O'Neill

Date of submission: Sunday, 17 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

This rate increase is way over the top. We are pensioners and own our home, with other living expenses , it's getting very close to saying we can't afford this. Tamworth council, like us, must prioritise what they spend their (our) money on. At the moment there is a lot of waste, things that may not have been top priority , and may have been put on the back burner . Again I must say this submission is way too much, I realise an increase is inevitable to help with cost of living rises, but not this much.

Author name: G. Reeves

Date of submission: Friday, 1 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I feel the proposed 36% increase for Tamworth residents is totally unjustified. Feedback showed 97% of residents opposed the idea. Council did not take into account the opposition at the meetings they held. With the current cost of living many residents will not be able to afford such an increase. It appears TRC has mismanaged their financial affairs while boasting a windfall of rates from new subdivisions and the Global Gateway park. Paying consultants for Skywalks and designers for Aquatic centres. As well the mayor is going to America for recycling junket when all other mayors are staying at home. There should be more belt tightening at council level. At the council meeting last year the Tamworth Ratepayers representative was ignored and Cr Mark Rodda and Steve Meers who stood against the motion told to sit down. The whole situation has been badly handled and the mayor Russell Webb has lost touch with the community. We would agree to a more modest increase of 15% over 2 years.

Author name: G. Winter

Date of submission: Friday, 8 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

This is going against what most of the region is against. I received my information the day after the meeting and then the council had the hide to say not well attended As a single dad I cannot afford a rate rise. I could not ask my boss for a 36% pay rise because I cannot manage my current pay and I believe the council has no right either. This council needs to stop wasting money on unnecessary project and get back to basic. Why should I pay for their incompetence I cannot afford this rise Im already on the edge financially Thank you

Author name: H. Garske

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

The increase the Tamworth regional office is requesting is absolutely ludicrous. The money they have wasted in the last year needs to be scrutinized. When it takes 5 men (some smoking) to watch a post hole digger digging a hole while they have a chat, is way over the top. And to add insult to injury, up went the water rates. PLEASE (AS A STRUGGLING AGED PENSIONER AND RATEPAYER) as a lot of the residents are, DO NOT ALLOW THIS EXORBITANT 36.3% INCREASE TO GO AHEAD

Author name: H. Marshall

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

This council in my opinion has absolutely no idea how to handle a budget and wastes money left right and center and has done for years and to cover up their inadequacies are requesting a rate rise,they should all be sacked and an administrator put in their place.

Author name: H. Murdoch

Date of submission: Saturday, 16 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Kootingal is a growing suburb of Tamworth, and compared to other suburbs, it is poorly neglected. The current rates have no obvious effect of how Kootingal is cared for. - The walking tracks have tall grass growing over, increasing the risks of snakes and accidents. They get a small tiny strip mowed and that's meant to be good enough. -Kids used to love using the bike tracks and jumps, but are not able to now as there is prickly weeds grown over. They were sprayed once and that was your attempt at controlling the issue. -The creek is full of invasive weeds, the water hardly can flow, and what does is filthy. -The streets aren't maintained. -There's prickles all round the park, I can't walk my dogs there anymore or take my kids to the playground. -the ridiculous attempt at a graffiti wall has failed miserably, and is just an ugly eyesore. -kids don't use the skate park anymore because of the grass conditions around it. -the toilets near the skatepark aren't ever open, what's the use of them being there. -the basketball courts are falling apart. There's one tiny IGA meant to supply the growing suburb. -the swimming pool hours don't suit anyone through summer, and when it is open, it's taken over by my swimming club so no one else can go anyway.

Author name: I. Daniells

Date of submission: Sunday, 17 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I object to Tamworth Regional Council's proposed rate increase. I would expect TRC to cut spending on "glory" projects such as the proposed aquatic centre (we already have 2 swimming pools close to Tamworth's major centres). Concentrate on key functions of local government: roads, rubbish, water, sewerage, parks and gardens.

Author name: J. Back

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I very strongly oppose this Special Rate Variation. I have heard what Paul Bennett and the Mayor have said but the simple fact is that you can only spend the money you have. As a homeowner and ratepayer, I live on a budget. I can only spend within that budget. With the current increase in costs (mortgages, electricity, food etc.) I have to save money elsewhere. I understand that Council faces similar cost increases, but it has to absorb these and achieve only what it can with the budget it has. Councils cannot make a wish-list and then charge what they want to complete this. I am happy to have worse roads and less environmental controls, with less media and tourism events if this is what we can afford. But so far they the Councillors have said what they've said but not really listened to the feedback that we, ratepayers, can't afford this.

Author name: J. Christian

Date of submission: Saturday, 2 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Hi, Ive been a resident of Tamworth since I was a teenager. I am now in my thirties with three children and a mortgage for our home. I understand there is no agreement between the council and the home owners upon purchase of a house. However estimations on rates were in the equation for me when deciding my affordability. I didnt over spend, I spent under budget and am incredibly glad I did given where we are today. I try so hard to live within my means given my financial situation yet every time I try to step out of financial sufferance I am pushed back within the box of struggle. I pay my rates weekly so they dont catch up with me down the track. I do this to be responsible, just as I pay my mortgage, just as I refrain from pay day loans, personal loans and after pay service, as I know I cannot afford to pay them back; we simply go without. This is why Im the five years I have owned my house, we have not had tv service, I havent yet renovated the bathroom which is leaking and my roof tiles need work. With the increase to the cost of living some school snacks and every day food items have increased in price so significantly that I have had to resort to shopping at the food bank at times, cutting most meat and vegetables from our diet. I try to grow some vegetables but working means I dont have the option to do that well. Having suffered with anaemia previously I tend to fall back into iron deficiency easily, which has been the case due to diet changes. I saw that the council have taken our payments being paid on time as a sign we would be willing to pay more, it simply isnt possible. No consideration has been given to the percentage of people who already cant pay their rates or for people like us who are living on the edge as it is. I would buy a second car if I had the money to run one and pay the registration costs. I cant. I also cant afford this rate rise and am disgusted in a time of crisis for every day families, that the council has decided money lining their pockets is more important than the money that feeds those who work for it. I should hope investigations have taken place to oversee councils income and expense list. Why we need this increase in rates rather than a redistribution of expenses. I will never truly own my home, even once the mortgage is paid I have a subscription to council. But having no say or foreseeable steadiness in what that subscription costs the people, we are uncertain, we are unable to make ends meet. Quite literally as is the case for me and others like me. If paying my rates on time has given a false pretence of my financial security I shall consider paying them past due.

Author name: J. [REDACTED]

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

To say all levels of governing bodies are out of touch with the people they're "supposed" to represent is an understatement. We the people are disgusted with the attitude towards the every day Aussie in recent years and then, from our LOCAL representatives mind you, you add to the pressures of day to day life. So lets review the past few years shall we? Interest rates - tripled Food bills - doubled Elecrcity bills - doubled Fuel - doubled And rates? Well, we all know the answer to that. Its becoming increasingly evident that the plan for Australia is dictated by people who do not have Australians best interests in mind from local government falling into line and up. Smart meters for our power and water to monitor and control our usage, rate hokes to add to the pressures of life in an attempt to lead us to a digital currency and ID, a bank without cash?!.. From an ordinary Aussie father who is becoming fed up with the [REDACTED], give us a [REDACTED] break! Reduce the rates back to where they were and so something positive for the people. Imagine that, a governing body for the people?.

Author name: J. Hahn

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

We object vigorously to Tamworth Regional Councils proposed special variation to our annual rates. The Valuer General has already increased substantially the unimproved capital value of all properties in the TRC area which gives Council licence to already make a large increase in our rates without the need for any Special Variation. There is so much money wasted in Tamworth Regional Councils day by day operation which is disgraceful. If Council want to save money they should start at the top and cut wastage of ratepayers money. Savings made would negate any need for a special variation. We are farmers and have to watch every cent of expenditure. We have long been absolutely disgusted at the amount of wasted money by this Council. If Council was a private organisation it would have been bankrupt by now. They think the answer is to put the rates up every time they dream up another project we dont need eg the proposed Aquatic Centre, which will be enjoyed by a small minority of residents only, and we are sick of being this inefficient Councils cash cow. Council management should operate the same as all businesses and households do, and live within their means. This Special Variation will impose a huge financial burden on most of Councils residents, particularly low income earners and pensioners, who are already struggling with the increase in the cost of living, and will cause many more people having to seek help from charities just to make ends meet. We object very strongly to this proposed Special Variation of our rates.

Author name: J. Jones

Date of submission: Saturday, 9 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I believe these rate rises are abhorrent. Individuals on median to low class incomes are already on the precipice. These rate rises no matter what margin will cripple families and force people to take drastic measures to reduce expenditure. This in turn will have a ripple effect on the local community and ultimately benefit no one. Some ratepayers are already paying above their means for services that are poorly executed including the shocking state of our regional roads. There seems to be financial funnelling into the wrong avenues whilst fundamentals are being seriously neglected. Regional individuals and communities require far better support than inflating rates. Particularly when the median wage hasnt moved to reflect the current times. Tamworth Regional Council please do better.

Author name: J. PERCIVAL

Date of submission: Sunday, 17 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Dear Sir/Madam We are writing this submission in order to request that IPART wholly reject the application by Tamworth Regional Council for an SRV of 36.3%. Council claims that the SRV was to ensure they remain financially resilient and are able to continue to deliver the services and facilities their community have told them they want and need. TRC keeps telling the ratepayers that they need the SRV because of the cost shifting being forced on them by other levels of Government. We believe that Council needs to be more responsible with their ratepayers money, and work harder to balance their finances on what is NEEDED by the community, not the WANTS of the minority. There are far too many big ticket items that Council wants to deliver and the majority if not all of them are in Tamworth city area. Council should be servicing the entire LGA with rate revenue. If the SRV is approved, it will give Council a bigger surplus to splash on unnecessary tourist attractions in Tamworth City, while outlying areas are mostly missing out on basic services eg. Safe roads to travel on, weed control on road reserves. The big ticket items include: \$67 million aquatic centre within the NICSE near the Tamworth Sports Dome (to be the jewel in the crown) - this has now been revised down to \$45million. \$12 million year-round Adventure Pool aimed at boosting the attractiveness of Bicentennial Park. This is not Olympic sized with lanes or blocks where local schools or swimming clubs could conduct their swimming lessons or carnivals. It is more a lagoon style stretch of water which the public were told would be open all year round and free of charge. Council claimed that the current town Olympic pool at this site will cost too much to upgrade, so instead their plan is to demolish it and put this Adventure Pool in, once the Aquatic Centre at the NICSE is complete. This does not appear to make financial sense - surely an upgrade of the existing Olympic pool would be cheaper, and allow the fast growing residential areas in the north Tamworth area to still have a pool nearby where their children can have swimming lessons, train for competition and the like without having to travel to the far southern end of Tamworth. \$18 million Skywalk to Tamworth Lookout. NSW Government announced \$14.3million funding from the Regional Tourism Activation Fund to get started on designing the skywalk. How much more is the ratepayer expected to pay? Council has already chipped in \$3.7million for the project which 12 months ago was in the design phase. Construction costs will escalate and there will be another budget blow out of \$? There is already a walking trail through the bushland to the lookout - walkers do not HAVE to use the roadway which is deemed unsafe for them. Glen Innes Council have just completed their skywalk for \$2 million. \$2.5 million Entrance Strategy. In July 2023 TRC Councillors gave the tick of approval to the proposed \$2.5million Entrance Strategy designed to find the wow factor to make entrances to towns and villages more attractive. The Northern Daily Leader 21 November 2022 quotes to improve the attractiveness to tourists. It further stated that installing new entrance signs on Oxley Highway, New Winton Road, Armidale Road, Goonoo Goonoo Road and Burgmanns Lane are considered high priority with each sign expected to cost \$53,540. That equates to over \$267,000 for those signs at Tamworth alone, without the cost of any flora corridors or installing public art that will enhance the visitor experience, or signs for all the other towns/villages. \$9.543 million Country Road Roundabout in Tamworth which has now been completed with a \$2.4 million cost blow out. Even as recently as the last Council Meeting, 12th March 2024, TRC is spending more money and resources in Tamworth City by wanting to Complete a design for the extension of the Peel Street beautification plan from White Street to Murray Street as well as Seek Expressions of Interest to prepare design plans for the Stage 4 beautification of Peel Steet. Attached with our submission are our thoughts on Councils application to IPART, highlighted in red against each relevant criterion. We thank you for your time in this matter Anthony & Jan Percival 17th March 2024

CRITERION 1: NEED FOR THE VARIATION

Council Meeting Update 12 September 2023 – *"A report considered by Councillors detailed the financial challenges ahead and how \$7.9 million in annual savings and \$3.2 million in one-off savings have been found as part of cost savings and efficiencies. However, the report said, an increase to rate income above the rate cap is an option which must be looked at if Council is to deliver the services and projects the local community has told us they want and need."*

Surely the objections council received after announcing the SRV was going to be applied for, have shown council that the community has perhaps changed their views on their previous WANTS and would now like Council to look after their NEEDS. We believe that Council has promised more than it can afford, and the only way to get them out of their over capitalising mess, is to increase rates.

In Councils application to IPART Question3 – in part states: *"A significant component of the proposed SV is to ensure that Council has sufficient funds to maintain and renew its road infrastructure"*.

In September 2023 the NSW Government announced a new Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund (RERRF) with **Tamworth Council being allocated \$8,273,469**. The announcement also stated that the NSW Government will additionally create a new **\$334 million** Regional Roads Fund for councils to build new roads and roundabouts, replace or repair old bridges and improve safety at crash blackspots in rural and regional areas.

We believe that if Council charged **all** developers the appropriate contribution fees for roads, (instead of Council using grant funds or council reserves), there might possibly be enough money raised to deliver the required maintenance and renewals, when added to the above announced Government funding.

Council has now twice rejected a Notice of Motion put forward by a fellow Councillor regarding 'Transparency and Accountability'. The latest motion he put forward at the 12 September 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting was "for Council to develop a framework and smart device/laptop application that records and publicises interactions between developers, builders, their agents and senior council staff and Councillor(s) to provide clarity of decision making, transparency and accountability to ratepayers and residents."

WE NOTE THAT ONLY 2 COUNCILLORS VOTED FOR THE MOTION - the same 2 Councillors who opposed the SRV when it was dealt with by Council.

WHO IS SERVING AND LISTENING TO THE COMMUNITY? There were 9 councillors elected.

CRITERION 2: COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

Notices of Community Consultations were sent out by postal mail with the 2nd rates instalment notice, arriving in letterboxes AFTER the date of the community consultation meetings. Many people do not have access to (or choose not to have) social media to hear of the various meetings, consultations etc. and instead rely on the 'snail mail'. With the notices advising of the community consultation dates being issued with rates instalment notices, it meant that those ratepayers who had already paid their rates in full (not paying by instalments), did not receive any notification at all. The result from this form of 'notification' from TRC was that many ratepayers didn't receive a notice of the sessions at all, and those that did receive notice, it arrived AFTER the initial community consultations had taken place in Tamworth – so of course you are going to get low attendance. The community consultation sessions were presented by Morrison Low and consisted of a lot of graphs and charts etc. This was very hard for the lay person to get a good understanding what was being delivered.

WE NOTE TRC's COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY OUTCOMES REPORT attached to Council's application as Annexure 17, where it is stated on page 1 that the Key findings in an online survey were that:

97% of respondents opposed an SRV;

with most respondents raising concerns about affordability and increasing financial hardship;

and that 100% of the respondents that opposed the SRV understood that Council will need to review and potentially reduce services/levels and asset conditions;

and many expressed the view that Council needs to refocus on its core responsibilities and essential service delivery.

People will not bother to attend future Community Consultation meetings believing that they will not be listened to by their Council.

CRITERION 3: IMPACT ON RATEPAYERS

The SRV will impact only the 'General Rate' on our rates notice, but when Council adopts their annual rates and charges for 2024-25 water, sewer, waste - there is likely to be a huge hike in everyone's rates notice. No-one will be kidding themselves that those rates won't go up – and then there will also be the fees and charges for parking, sports fields, swimming pools etc. There will be a massive impact on ratepayers who (like Council and everyone else) are struggling with cost of living pressures.

WE NOTE that Councillors gave themselves a payrise in March 2023 with only 1 Councillor standing up to state it was not a 'good look'.

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN – (TRC's Attachment 12)

Council's 'Our Community Plan 2023-2033' document shows "COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT What you've told us. During December 2021 and January 2022, we asked our community members about their satisfaction with Council's services, and what they felt was important for the future of our region."

We do not know how many responses council received from the community, but believe that had Community Engagement taken place outside of the Christmas and School Holiday period there might have been a lot more responses and possibly a little less satisfaction with Council in certain areas.

HARDSHIP POLICY – (TRC's Attachment 19, 20, 21 and 22)

Many ratepayers and residents have objected to the SRV on the grounds of not being able to afford the increases. Some of those are on fixed incomes and Council believes that they have addressed that by increasing the pension rebate on their rates. They have not mentioned anywhere how they can assist those on fixed incomes that DO NOT receive a Government pension/income support payment – the self-funded retiree. A lot of self-funded retirees have investment properties that are rented out (and not necessarily to a pensioner) and will have to carry the burden of the increased rates (and charges) Council is wanting to inflict on them, without being able to increase their rent until the next lease agreement is to be entered into.

No-one knows by how much Council will increase their other charges such as water, sewer, rubbish, entrance and hire fees, etc.

Council's Policy states in part - "Eligibility 6. The application for hardship must be accompanied with supporting documentation which may include but is not limited to:

b. copy of recent bank statements for all accounts

c. details of income and expenditure

d. details of assets and investments

e. letter from a recognised financial counsellor, financial planner or community funded counselling/support service provider. The aim being to ensure appropriate financial support is available to all applicants suffering financial hardship.

A ratepayer is suffering hardship due to the unfair increase forced on them by council - now council expects them to pay more money to obtain the above information.

THANK YOU

Author name: J. Sandstrom

Date of submission: Friday, 1 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am a resident of Hanging Rock and for the past three years we have had a massive sinkhole here that the council has not repaired. The detour they made for us is used by so much traffic including heavy vehicles I have nearly had a head on a number of times. I have reported it to council a few times as they don't maintain the detour and not everyone at Hanging Rock drives a 4WD so our cars are getting more wear and tear and numerous stone chips. This morning I read on a public forum that last night an ambulance refused to come over the detour to attend a call. That is unacceptable. If the council kept our roads to a car worthy standard as we have to keep our cars roadworthy I would be more inclined to support their proposed rate increase. We also have council land outside our property that we maintain as whenever they are up here mowing they never do. It seems to us that Hanging Rock because it's a small population is not a priority for TRC. I do not support a rate increase.

Author name: J. Segboer

Date of submission: Saturday, 9 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I support the application. Tamworth Regional Council has engaged with the community well, I attended one of the community meetings offered and it was clearly explained why the variation is needed. In particular I learnt that our LGA has one of the largest road networks across the entire state. I strongly feel that it's important for the road network to be maintained ensuring our smaller communities have good access to the city of Tamworth. There are many reasons why the increase is needed and I understand some within the community are opposing due to cost of living pressures but the responsibility of easing cost of living is a state and federal government matter not local government.

Author name: J. Weighman

Date of submission: Friday, 1 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I cannot believe council are even considering increasing rates due to their mismanagement of funds. Creating too many internal positions without proper justification, over inflated projects in town (Fitzroy st plaza was criminal). How about making developers pay to fix/widen roads around new sub-divisions instead of letting them make a fortune and rate payers cover the additional infrastructure costs. How about a GM on \$400k a year and what do we have to show for it ? \$4000+ P/a to live in this area is insane. Many households are struggling but you know what they do, they make a budget and they give up things that are not essential to get by. Time for you to do the same, look internally at roles that are not needed or over resourced and cut them back, reel in excessive spending. What are we paying the GM for if he cannot stick to a budget ?

Author name: K. Buchan

Date of submission: Wednesday, 13 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I understand the cost of maintaining the council region is costly, however I have trouble understanding how a 36% increase is justified and fair. I am a self employed Allied Health Professional and have considered increasing my rate by 10%, however I know this only impacts my clients, whos income typically hasnt increased. I am strongly against such a high increase.

Author name: L. Boyland

Date of submission: Monday, 4 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

TRC management cant convince me that a sv rate rise is acceptable for Barraba.we have lost services since forced amalgamation with TRC,The attitude that they provide services in Tamworth is just down right rude.I attended the bogus talk fest that TRC arranged to allegedly inform rate payers as to why we need to try to pay a SRV rise.TRV could not give the correct amount of rates they already receive from Barraba.We were told the plans for Tamworth, what about Barraba we have bugga all here.There is neglect on our streets,TRC knocked back my request to have the medium strip levelled at the front of my home so I dont have to drag lawn mower backwards up rise! This SRV wont make a difference to me dragging a lawn mower backwards! Barraba does not get value for money from TRC, half the town wont be able to afford to get to Tamworth because the SRV will force people further into poverty.TRV need to provide services we pay for and stop wasting money on things that arent necessary during a cost of living crisis! From what I read TRC is wasting money and this needs to be addressed before a SRV is foisted onto cash strapped rate payers! I dont understand why TRC thinks its ok to operate in a closed manner and ignore the majority of rate payers!What happened to being open and transparent.If theSRV is approved not only will rate payers be affected, there will be a flow on affect to renters as well! Thank You.

Author name: L. Bridge

Date of submission: Sunday, 17 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I do not support this rate rise at all and not a single person I have spoken to in the Tamworth area does. Asking for a 36% rise is an absolute joke, and to use inflation and population growth as a reason is not good enough. The TRCouncil are the ones pushing for population growth not the residents of Tamworth! Not to mention that are rates are already on par with certain areas in Newcastle and Coffs and they have a lot more to offer. I think a review in to the financial department of the TRC is a more suited action as it seems they can't manage money and seem to waste a lot! For example- The Fitzroy St upgrade (given this is the most useful out of the examples) but still is not utilised and a waste of money. - The "Paradise recreation Park" down King George Avenue - there is one table and chair under cover, the shelter doesn't even cover the area and clearly money was wasted on the design of this "roof/shelter" to look "good" rather than be practical? How about a BBQ or something useful? Next is - the Art sculpture in Bicentennial Park - no offence to the artist but [REDACTED]! If the TRC is so broke why do this stuff, I would hate to know the actual price paid for it but heard around the 30k mark. This money could have been better used fixing our roads properly or bank it and put it towards doing something about our terrible drinking water! Our roads are always quick fixed, which in turn costs more for constant maintenance rather than doing it properly! Again our water is horrible. We now have to pay to dump green waste at the TIP. We no longer have bulky waste pick ups. And to me it seems a "coincidence" that the NSW land valuation that everyone received last year at an absolute ridiculous rise in "value" is coming off the buyers - supply /demand market (I understand that the TRC is " separate" to the NSW land valuer but awfully big coincidence that the rates go off this valuation and the rise was so high. So not only are we getting a rise on our rates now our land is "valued" more, they have the hide to ask for 36% over 2 years on top of this. It's a joke that they can continue to do and get what they want while wasting rate payers money on god knows what. This has gone on for too long. If someone from IPART was to walk down the main street of Tamworth asking the residents their opinions of the TRC, they would soon hear the truth. Thanks for hearing me out. Hopefully these reviews/feedback actually make a difference and put a stop to this.

Author name: L. Murdoch

Date of submission: Saturday, 16 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Being a suburb of Tamworth we haven't seen very much happening out here in Kootingal, even though our population has doubled in 6 years and further development is proposed. The reserve and the bush around is sadly neglected with weeds and invasive plants. It is left unmowed even though the tracks across the bridge are used by school children, the creek is overgrown with invasive weeds, the bike track around the skatepark cannot be used because it is overgrown with weeds and sticky breaks. The only source of entertainment being the swimming pool is overrun with Tamworth clubs and the infrastructure cannot keep up with the population growth. The council's pathetic effort of providing entertainment being the graffiti wall hasn't been touched since being erected 5 months ago, children have taken to throwing rocks and making holes in it, leaving an unsightly mess of Styrofoam throughout the park.

Author name: L. Patience

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Until council use current rate properly in areas that actually need to be I don't think there should be any rate rise if a council can't do the jobs properly in the first place.

Author name: L. Renton

Date of submission: Thursday, 7 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I object to the massive size of the variation. Tamworth Regional Council needs to be held accountable for the expenditure thus far for consultants/change in premises/wages & salaries etc. To increase the rates above CPI is detrimental to ratepayers, and will have a flow on effect to renters who are already in a harsh financial climate. My income has not gone up even close to the wage rise effective 1/7/23 and certainly nowhere near the rate variation that we are threatened with. To take such a big leap in rates whilst lowering the delivery or services within the current rating period is an insult to the residents within the scope of TRC. I work 11 days a fortnight to meet necessary expenditure as it is - what does TRC want from a 63yo, let alone those already struggling with the cost of living/home ownership et al? Step back and have a reality check - get rid of TRC excess expenditure on top-heavy admin, lurks and perks. Private enterprise has had to do the same, take note of the loss of so many small businesses withing the region who have trimmed their sails as much as they possibly can. TRC needs to lead by example, not by contributing to the demise of residents, ratepayers and small to medium enterprises within the region.

Author name: L. Wilkinson

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

Cost of living is rife at the moment & this severely impacts everyones household budget. Tamworth council hasnt done everything possible to cut waste, find savings and efficiencies like many households would do if they had a cash problem. Inflation is approximately 6% yet council want 30% plus rate increase to further burden our pockets. Maybe council should be audited prior to any increase to find any efficiencies in their budget first.

We do not support the proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV) based on the following concerns

1. **The average rates used by TRC in their draft Resourcing Plan don't truly reflect the rates burden being carried by some residential ratepayers.**

The TRC website quotes average rates across council areas as \$1270. 16 which is “significantly below the group average’. This presumably reflects the diverse nature of Tamworth Regional Council which includes Manilla, Kootingal, Nundle, Bendemeer, and Barraba, all locations with lower land values.

Increases on this average rate would be manageable. But the TRC rate calculator reveals that for our home, our INCREASE is greater than the base case for Tamworth Regional Council (TRC).

Based on our situation, I believe that median rates are a better reflection. I requested this information from TRC but didn't receive a response

2. **The impact on ratepayers is understated**

Consequently, the increase is also much more significant for many ratepayers. The draft resourcing plan states a \$434 increase on rates but, based on the TRC rates calculator, the estimated rate increase for our home (zoned as general residential) is \$1345. This will make our rates nearly \$6500/year. This increase is not sustainable and does not make Tamworth a “liveable city” for us.

Ironically, when I mentioned the value of our rates at the community consultation meeting, the Mayor, Russell Webb didn't believe we are paying in excess of \$5000. He also disputed the increase calculated on the rates calculator. Hopefully Mr Webb now has a better understanding that not everyone's rates are ‘average’.

3. **Capacity to pay**

In their submission to IPART, TRC quotes the following

The Tamworth CBD-Hallsville-Hills Plain grouping has the highest average residential land values and therefore has the highest proposed average rate increase, at between \$447 and \$496 above the base case by the end of 2025/26. This grouping contains the highest proportion of households with a mortgage, as well as containing 17% of the LGA's ratepayers. It also contains the joint lowest proportion of vulnerable households and has the highest overall SIEFA rankings within the LGA. There appears, therefore, to be capacity to absorb the proposed rate rises within this grouping.

As stated in this submission, our increase is SIGNIFICANTLY more than the above amount. To assume that there is capacity to absorb the proposed rate rises reflects an arrogance that is typical of TRC. I have also spoken to older residents, many who are on a pension, who feel that they are being forced out of their home because they can't continue to wear increasing costs.

Council's response to increase the pensioner rebate by \$50 in 2023/24 and by a further \$50 in 2024/2025 is laughable.

4. The proposed 36.3% increase is the sting in the tail

I have heard the arguments that rating is complex and that increasing land value does not necessarily increase rates. But the bottom line is that our total rates have increased by small amounts, every year, with a significant cumulative impact. I.e \$1281.37 or 25% over the last 5 years. Under the SRV the cumulative increase from 2018-2025 will be \$2631.66 or approximately 69%.

Example for 110A Raglan St

Date	Land value	Rates		Annual Increase		Cumulative increase	
		Ordinary residential	Total	\$	%	\$	%
7/2018	\$257K	\$2240.34	\$3822.34				
7/2019	\$257K	\$2311.66	\$3943.79	\$121.45			
7/2020	\$360K	\$2968.08	\$4625.08	\$681.29		\$802.74	
7/2021	\$360K	\$3083.81	\$4825.29	\$200.21		\$1002.95	
7/2022	\$360K	\$3154.44	\$4926.44	\$101.15		\$1104.10	
7/2023	\$522K	\$3277.12	\$5103.71	\$177.27		\$1281.37	
Ordinary rates estimated using TRC rates calculator – total rates predicted with no increase to other rates							
7/2024	\$522K	\$3965.76	\$5792.35	\$688.64	18.5	\$1970.01	
7/2025	\$522K	\$4627.41	\$6454.00	\$661.65	15.0	\$2631.66	

5. There are huge inequities in rates across the Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) area.

Because rates are calculated on unimproved land value, determined by the Valuer General (VG), some residents are bearing a huge burden. I fully support Manilla or Nundle or Woolbrook - or any outlying towns and villages - paying less rates. But there are also huge inequities in rates across the Tamworth area.

Recent residential property sales in some of the newest developments in Tamworth, using the publicly available VG land values and TRC rates calculator, demonstrate these inequities. Based on this, some houses selling for more than \$2m appear to be paying a fraction of the rates of equivalent properties a few kilometres away – because of a low VG value.

Example

A property at 16 Rodeo Drive, The Longyard sold for \$2.1M on 21st July this year ([16 Rodeo Drive, Hillvue, NSW 2340 - realestate.com.au](https://www.realestate.com.au/property/16-Rodeo-Drive-Hillvue-NSW-2340)). This property is located on a 4000m² block which is valued at \$382K. Using the TRC rates calculator, the base rates on this property would be \$2398.20. Ironically, Mayor Webb questioned the VG land value for these properties, stating that they were sold for more than this.

Our property at [REDACTED] is located on 3570m² block with a land value of \$520K. Using the TRC rates calculator, our base rates are \$3424.56 – over \$1000 more than an equivalent size block in a new development.

Admittedly, we have a large block close to the CBD, but when our house was built in the early 1900's it would have been "out of town". This would be the case for many of the older houses in East Tamworth.

Personally, I believe that a property that sells for \$1.7M or \$2.1M (at the Longyard or Forest Hills or any other new development) should be paying similar rates to East Tamworth. We all drive on the same roads, drink the same water, and use the same council services. We have no capacity to generate income from our home. We need to close the gap.

I understand that the system to calculate rates is beyond the scope of TRC. However, I believe that addressing these inequities should form part of the submission to IPART – should TRC proceed.

6. The Community is NOT WILLING TO PAY

TRC’s own community consultation has shown that the community IS NOT willing to pay as per the excerpt from Attachment 17 (TRC Community Awareness and Engagement Strategy Outcome Report).

3.1.2 Community willingness to pay

Council also used the survey to gauge the community’s willingness to pay for the proposed SV. The survey revealed that respondents were overwhelmingly opposed to Council pursuing an SV, with 853 of the 872 respondents (representing 97.0 per cent) indicating they did not support Council in seeking an SV. In contrast, just 29 respondents (representing 3.0 per cent) indicated support for Council’s proposal to seek an SV.

Arrogantly though, TRC use results from Attachment 15 (TRC Community Research Report - Feb 2022), stating that “the highest importance and lowest satisfaction area was maintaining the overall condition of local roads” as a rationale for the SRV. Presumably, these comments made in 2022 were not made in the context of a SRV. Respondents didn’t say they were prepared to support a major rate rise and, therefore, this information should not be used to support the SRV.

Evidence of community need/desire for service levels/projects and limited council resourcing alternatives.	The proposed SV is focussed on financial sustainability with adequate investment in renewal and maintenance of current assets. This involves maintaining current service levels and not increasing services or funding new projects. In undertaking the Organisational Sustainability and Improvement Plan (Attachment 14), Council looked at alternative revenue sources where possible for these services, including expansion of advisory services to other organisations, reducing Community Service Obligation (CSO) for sports facilities and increasing user pays fees, reviewing Developer Contributions Scheme, and reviewing pricing matrix for a number of fees for service areas. Council undertakes regular surveys of community satisfaction with Council services. The recent Community Research Report from Feb 2022 show while the community is generally satisfied with Council’s performance, the highest importance and lowest satisfaction area was maintaining the overall condition of local roads. This supports the proposed SV, which is focused on adequately funding required renewal and maintenance of road infrastructure and assets generally.	Attachment 14 – TRC Organisational Sustainability and Improvement Plan (pp. 15-18) Attachment 15 – TRC Community Research Report Feb 2022
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7. Community satisfaction with TRC has been declining

Attachment 15 – TRC Community Research Report – was conducted from December 2021 to Jan 2022 and is now 2 years old. At that stage, TRC concluded that “overall satisfaction has softened from previous years...” Has TRC conducted more recent community research? If so, I suspect the level of satisfaction may have ‘softened’ even further.

Not one person that I speak to is satisfied with the performance of TRC. Despite what any council report implies, many people feel disenfranchised. Residents and ratepayers resigned to the fact that TRC will do what they want, regardless of community opinion so they don’t even bother having a say. Similarly, the decision to proceed with the IPART application, despite 97% of respondents opposing the SRV, suggests that the whole community consultation process is another box ticking exercise.



8. Council has wasted funds on unnecessary projects

In my opinion, TRC has wasted money on unnecessary projects including the Paradise bridge recreation area and the wire “sculpture” in Bicentennial Park. These projects may be small, but they are reflective of a broader culture

I note in their submission (as below), that roadworks make up a ‘significant component’ of the proposed SV

A significant component of the proposed SV is to ensure that Council has sufficient funds to maintain and renew its road infrastructure. For the ten years from 2024-25, Council will need an additional \$8.7 million per year for capital works and maintenance on roads. This is supported by the recent 2022 Community Survey. “Maintaining local roads” was the area with the most significant gap (53%) between the community's level of importance (96%) and level of satisfaction (43%). In the same survey, 55% of respondents were also supportive of increasing rates to invest in new facilities and develop/maintain infrastructure and 63% supported rate rises to improve and drive economic outcomes. Refer to Attachment 1 – SRV Background Paper, p15.

Some of the recent roadwork in East Tamworth, in my opinion, has also been a waste of money. While some of these roadworks were long overdue, and necessary, others have been a blatant waste. I struggle to see the logic of ripping up perfectly good roads and leaving them in a worse state than before the project was started.

For example

Arunta Place that runs off Raglan St in East Tamworth is a no through road that services 10 houses. Despite being upgraded in the last few years, in the last few months TRC ripped up ¾ of the width of the road – not even the entire width of the road - and resealed it. I don’t understand the justification for this expenditure when it has taken TRC nearly 17 years to repair the significant road damage in Raglan St. I doubt that even the residents of Arunta Place would agree that this was a) necessary or b) money well spent.

More recently, TRC has resealed another no through road in East Tamworth that services a similar number of houses. That road was also resealed in the last few years. Another example of wasted money with no real transparency about how priorities are determined and funds allocated.

9. Council is pursuing grand plans that they can't afford given the current financial status

Council is pursuing projects like the Aquatic Centre, at all costs, at a time when they should be reducing costs.

I also think that the proposed Skywalk should be scrapped. Council may consider the \$3M price tag as a 'modest contribution' but I think many residents would disagree. Not proceeding with the Skywalk will save \$3M – or nearly half the \$7M projected additional revenue from year 1 of the SRV. That saving could offset the SRV.

"Adding to our regional attractions and offerings" as stated on the TRC website is a luxury that we can't afford given the current fiscal situation. It's time for TRC to live within their means, just like we ratepayers must. As a walker, I believe that people will not use the Skywalk as they enjoy the challenge of the walk to the lookout.

10. Developer contributions are lower than comparable councils

At the community consultation forum held on 17th October, Director of Liveable Communities, Gina Vereker stated that developer contributions from Tamworth are lower than comparable councils to encourage development.

Ms Vereker also stated that DCP are usually only developed every ten years and costings are outdated. This needs to be updated and contributions increased before ratepayers are asked to support a SRV.

It's all well and good to encourage development but not when ratepayers are subsidising this development.

11. TRC should be looking at all other options internally and only request a Special Rate Variation as a last resort.

TRC say that they have made significant cost savings but have they? The perception is no.

Councillor, Mark Rodda also stated the following in a letter published in the Northern Daily Leader on 9th March 2024

"I fear that if this increase is approved, it will be business as usual because NO significant savings, efficiencies or cuts have been made to the Council organisation despite the assurances made by Council's leadership. Our Council needs a focus on getting back to basics and prioritising core statutory service delivery. I have never thought that could be too difficult."

Anecdotally, TRC is over staffed compared to other Councils. The draft resourcing plan 2023-2035 (page 59) states that the TRC workforce comprises of 614 people.

12. TRC should follow the lead of Bathurst Regional Council

Bathurst Regional Council recently "ceased consultation" and dropped their proposed SRV after the community gave a clear message that they wouldn't support it. Why hasn't Tamworth Regional Council done the same, given that 97% of respondents don't support the SRV?

IN SUMMARY

As would be expected, TRC has cherry picked the facts that support their case and in, some cases, grossly understated the impact on ratepayers.

Increases should be capped for properties already paying rates over \$5000.

My research based on land values and property sales map (nsw.gov.au) shows that the *increase* in rates for properties above \$503K will be **greater than the average base rate** (\$1270.16). This will almost exclusively impact East Tamworth

If nothing else, I believe that rates should be capped for properties with an unimproved land value of \$503 000 or above and/or total rates over \$5000/per annum

Alternatively, I would like TRC to offer a rate subsidy for those residential properties paying over \$5000. Those who are willing to pay full rates can and others can apply for a subsidy to offset their costs. This represents a win/win.

At the community consultation meeting I attended, General Manager, Paul Bennet stated that TRC has the capacity to move distribution of rates to charge some areas more, but this would be “political.”

With the massive development around Tamworth, the desire to make Tamworth an attractive option for developers and the admission that TRC costs are cheaper than comparable councils, I seriously doubt that TRC would take such a fair approach. However, the reality is that the massive hit being worn by residents like us is really making Tamworth an “unliveable” city. TRC Councillors and staff really need to ask the question, is the current rating structure fair? I guess it depends where you live and what rates you are already paying.

Michelle and Warwick Mawhinney


Author name: M. Rawsthorne

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I, Madison and Dylan Fisher, property owners at [REDACTED], wish to express our strong objection to the proposed special rate variation. We firmly believe that a substantial increase in property rates would dissuade potential buyers from investing in the Tamworth area, ultimately rendering property ownership unattainable for many. One of the most appealing aspects of residing in regional areas like Tamworth is the affordability it offers, and we fear that this proposal jeopardizes that quality. Moreover, our disappointment with recent council spending is palpable. We urge the council to reconsider the ramifications of the proposed rate variation. Kind regards, Madison and Dylan Fisher

Author name: M. Rodda

Date of submission: Saturday, 2 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

From the outset I wish to advise that I am an elected councillor serving the fine people of Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) LGA. I am one of two councillors who voted against referring this proposal to IPART at Councils meeting of 28/11/2023. I did so because I felt the decision was premature, that my Council had not made the requisite cuts or savings to justify burdening fellow ratepayers with a 36.3% rate increase. TRC poorly consulted with the community on this proposal. TRC is a diverse community. Council utilised a number of options to promote its proposal. However printed invitations were included in rate notices received by ratepayers after the consultation meetings. Of ratepayers that provided feedback to TRC during consultation, 97% opposed. There were very few Tamworth residents at consultation meeting due to the poor advertising, coupled with the despondency of the community that feel Council doesnt listen to or heed advice. TRCs General Manager claimed Council had identified millions in savings, yet there had been no evidence of this in recent years. Furthermore the consultants Council contracted (Morrison Low) at a cost of approximately \$141,000 to justify the 36:3% rate increase, advised that Councils cash position had been worsening over five years. Why didnt the General Manager address that 5, 4, or 3 years ago? He made no changes to Councils spending habits. Many other rural councils of comparable size have around 100 less staff positions - 500. The wages bill for TRC is significant even before they start providing a service to the community. Council has not been honest to the ratepayers, hiding the fact that user charges such as water and waste will also likely increase as they do annually. When asked about user charges, Councils General Manager wasnt concerned that the true impact would be far higher and Council hadnt broadcast that to the residents and ratepayers. TRC LGA has a significant lower socio economic population with significant gaps between poor and wealthy as evidenced by Australian Bureau of Statistics SEIFA maps. This increase will widen the gap. On top of electricity, food, fuel and other expenses, a rate increase of this magnitude would be unsustainable to many ratepayers. Council has wasted significant funds on project cost blowouts and overspends, this increase is intended to conceal that incompetence. Without any changes such as cutting waste, identifying savings and efficiencies, it will be business as usual for this council and they will be asking for another rate increase beyond the 36.3% soon enough. As mentioned Councils staff is bloated, particularly senior staff, reflected in its wages bill and its fleet of vehicles excessive. Funds are mis-allocated to projects to build infrastructure that should be paid for by developers not ratepayers. For me and my family and I know many other families, it means another \$700 or so per annum I have to find when I already struggle to pay for food, electricity, heating/cooling gas, petrol, home loan repayments, school fees, insurances and many more incidentals. Unlike Councils General Manager I do not earn \$380,000 plus. I believe the leadership of Council are largely out-of-touch with fellow ratepayers and residents. I am concerned about the welfare of fellow residents and ratepayers, pensioners and businesses especially their capacity to pay. Council needs to operate within its means, as so many of its residents and ratepayers are required to do. This proposal will detrimentally impact many residents of this LGA and I appeal to IPART to oppose the proposal. Yours sincerely Mark Rodda Councillor

Author name: M. Smith O'grady

Date of submission: Sunday, 3 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

There is no justification for such a rate rise , 1/2 of our in town streets are pay as you go parks , People are already doing it tough So so we want more on the street ? Insurances have doubled , electricity , gas, food , fuel which we need to get to work , everything has skyrocketed BUT our wages have remained the same . Whilst I fear for all of us I especially fear for the ones who cannot earn anymore than we do already , unfortunately that it most of us . Look after your locals and Keep large scale renewables factories out of the tamworth region as this further escalated rising prices of food and crops because that precious land cannot be renewed .

Author name: M. Stass

Date of submission: Friday, 8 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Hi and thank you for the opportunity to express to the tribunal the absolute and resounding NO opinion shown by a huge majority of ratepayers that a special variation of rates is acceptable. Firstly TRCs notification to ratepayers on the issue was far too short for responses to be properly provided and show them even more so that ratepayers dont agree council should be eligible for the extravagant rate rise. When the shoes on the other foot council needs six months for events and similar to be considered. And here lies the first problem.. administration! It is not hard for the average ratepayer to see the waste and inefficiencies in council operations. I am not privy as most to internal operations but from what I hear from employees and some councillors, administration and moral are both very poor. An outside audit on operations could be a good start, put a stop to outsourcing simple tasks and consider hard the value of consultants before engaging at exorbitant cost. Off course what we would all like to see is the organisation operating at much more efficient levels and concentrate on providing the basic essential services firstly before engaging in non essential and luxury projects that more often then not go way over budget. I see a lot first hand that tells me any extra rates such as those proposed will only have TRC continue their poor practice and show even more disregard for how they expend their income. We all need to live within budgets and its dreadfully obvious TRC struggle badly to do so due to poor judgement and administration decisions. Thank you

Author name: M. Tagg

Date of submission: Saturday, 16 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

We are doing hard with the cost of living and feel the rate rise is not acceptable, but a smaller percentage could be justified as the councils costs also increased. Mark

Author name: M. Waugh

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

This rate rise is way too much. Ever since malgamation with Peel Cunningham there have been numerous people doing the same job. Why not cut these people back. There is Jo communicating or consultation with the community with council making their own decisions or if and when they give notice the day before or after the event. They do not meet the needs of the people in out lying areas that do not live in the Tamworth city. Such as Kootingal pool being only open 3hrs weekdays and 6hrs on the weekend. The library is only open 3.5 days. The recent road upgrade of main street Gate is deplorable. A waste of money especially when it really wasn't needed. If they managed their finances better they would not need a rise as steep. Mismanagement of the waste facility is another concern. We used to be able to drop green waste off for free but now there is a charge as the staff who formerly operated it retired and no one was trained to take over. Now a 3rd party does this job at an additional cost. The councilors and management need to foresee better the needs of our whole community just like they used to in the 1980's and 1990's when my father was on council.

Author name: N. Edwards

Date of submission: Friday, 15 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I dont agree with this special rates increase as we are not provided with town water they dont service our road half of our road isnt sealed then local RFS shed was donated by the local residents what would we get from the council in return for our increased rates?

Author name: N. Palmer

Date of submission: Thursday, 14 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

We cannot afford an increase in ANOTHER bill we have to pay, enough

Author name: N. Stocks

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Tamworth Regional Councils 36.3% Rate Increase. Council wishes to increase your rates by a massive 36.3%. This figure does not include annual user charges which are also likely to increase on 01/07/24 making your total rate bill far higher. this proposal is inopportune, many do not have the capacity to pay due to modest fixed incomes. Many are impacted by cost of living pressures, I know, so am I.

Author name: P. Gill

Date of submission: Sunday, 17 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Please receive my submission ref: 240315_IPART_SV Applications TRC 2024-25_Subm A supporting document ref: 231031_TRC_Proposed SRV_Redacted is attached. Personal details within this document have been redacted. The supporting document is the Submission I made to TRC during the Exhibition Phase pending the TRC application for an SRV. Yours
Sincerely Peter Gill

Peter Gill

31 October 2023

The General Manager
Tamworth Regional Council
474 Peel Street

TAMWORTH NSW 2340

Transmitted by Email: trc@tamworth.nsw.gov.au

Attention: Mr. Paul Bennett

Re: Special Rate Variation Proposal

Dear Paul,

I thank Tamworth Regional Council for the opportunity to make the following submission regarding the Special Rate Variation Proposal (SRVP).

The proposed SRV is strongly opposed.

The quantum of the SRVP is large at 36.3% (applied to Rates Component only) phased in over 2 years. There appears to be no explanation for the magnitude of this increase applied suddenly against a backdrop of many years at the rate peg. In 2022 I viewed and commented on the Draft (for Public Exhibition) "Our Resourcing Plan 2023-2025" which contained a Long Term Financial Plan. Nothing in that document indicated any such major issues at that time.

For those who earn a low wage, are retired or on a pension, my estimation is that at an impost of an additional \$500 per annum, the proposed rise will consume around 2.0 percent of their "essential/survival income" of \$25,000 per annum or reduce the endurance of this component their retirement nest egg by 2.0%. This "Rates" is not the only component of the increases faced, add Insurance, Energy, Registration, Rent, Food, Council Services etc. to the mix. The capacity of this cohort (probably 30% of population) to absorb the proposed SRV is non-existent, little wonder the Public angst being expressed.

I made enquiries about the value of the Morrison Low Consultancy engaged. I was advised this was \$141k. My estimation is that such Consultancies run at \$250 to \$300 per hour making the total time expended including attendance at the Public sessions in the range 50 to 60 hours. For my input into this submission, I estimate about 35 to 40hrs expended, reading, researching and composing. Whilst not disputing the claimed benefits to TRC from the Consultancy, I do question the robustness of the output for the amount of time.

I have attended the Public Information session held in Tamworth on 17 October 2023 evening session.

As a resident ratepayer from the TRC area, assessing the various information provided or publically available, I wish to note the following points relating to the SRV proposal and my submission:

General Points

- I do not have access to many financial details including those which are withheld for privacy or commercial reasons. Accordingly, I have made assumptions and judgements in interpretation of the provided/referenced information.

- From my observations it appears that the SRVP Consultancy worth \$141k was engaged without a formal resolution of Council. A further \$30k was spent by TRC Communications and Marketing for community engagement and media activities. Conversely a Tender valued at a few thousand dollars requires approval by Council. Whilst acknowledging that delegations of authority are used, is it not usual practice to at least require one level of ratification above a delegation?
- With Tamworth Regional Council covering a large and diverse area, the region sits in the lowest 23% of socio-economic cohorts (ref: Morrison Low report). This raises issues around capacity to pay, especial for those on low wages pensions or social security.
 - There would be a knock-on effect to those renting.
 - This is on top of COVID, drought, increases in cost of living.
- It concerns me that TRC, comprising Councillors and Staff, has resorted to the use of Consultants to “sell” the message for the SRVP. The SRVP is based on Budget. My viewpoint (from lived life experience) is that Budgets should be owned and embraced by all within an organization.
 - Anything else, in my view constitutes abrogation of a fundamental responsibility.
 - If those within an organization are unable to sell/justify their Budget with conviction, the question arises as to whether TRC has the right skillsets for and commitment to sound budgetary practices.
- At the presentation I attended, the representative from Morrison and Low (perhaps in a Freudian slip) mentioned that issues with the TRC Budget had been building over 5 or 6 years before coming to the head currently.
- Furthermore one of the stated reasons given at the Public Session for engaging the Consultants Morrison Low was that they had assisted other Councils in applying and obtaining an SRV.
 - Is this simply Council taking the path of least resistance, ie obtaining an SRV instead of doing other things to contain costs?
- Continuous Improvement
 - The Morrison Low report details a range of improvement measures which have been accounted for/taken up. It does not detail the time-frame of these nor the aggregated savings.
 - Given the current situation Council finds itself in
 - Effective Cost Management/Containment is an ongoing task. It should not be conducted on an intermittent basis.
 - My observation of Council Business observed at Meetings and from the Business Papers is that there is no regular or formalized reporting of cost saving initiatives or outcomes.
- Public Consultation and the Morrison Low Report
 - My impression is that the consultation being conducted for the SRVP is:
 - Too complex for many to understand.
 - Predicated/Biased to the option of seeking a SRV.
 - The period for consideration and comment is very short for the nature and complexity of the exhibition, noting that Public sessions did not commence until the latter half of the consultation period.
 - The timing around the SRV is such that everything is running to critical timing to meet submission dates (with Christmas in the remaining period) and as such will probably preclude any further rounds of Public consultation.
 - Does not detail the proposed future savings.
 - Projects as an Ambit Claim

- **Transparency**
 - I appreciate that TRC made a good attempt at setting up the Public Engagement, however, I believe there is a distinct lack of transparency around the SRV proposal.
 - It is acknowledged that TRC has made an attempt to provide supporting information to the case/proposal for an SRV.
 - Hopefully Councillors attending the Public Sessions have noted and will act on the Community sentiment.
 - Where I believe Transparency fails (despite efforts made) is in the ability to link and see detail through (especially with financial information). In this regard whilst not an Accountant, I have skills in tracking numbers through statements.
 - In this case within the confines of unfamiliarity and time pressures, I must confess considerable difficulty
 - It is my further view that many residents/ratepayers neither have the inclination, skills nor time to engage effectively.
 - As said elsewhere within, it is my belief that Budgets are owned by all within Council and that whilst the use of Morrison Low has been portrayed as having intangible benefit, the fact that they performed the presentation shows an abrogation of responsibility of those responsible for managing the budgets.

Some Additional Considerations

Compilation of this submission has obviously consumed my personal time. The scope of what constitutes a review is well beyond a single individual. However, the due diligence I have been able to perform highlights a number of areas which I believe should have been addressed before proposing a SRV.

- **TRC Road Network**

In recent years the formation and takeover of Heavy Vehicle functions by the NHVR has changed the landscape as to the management of access to roads owned by Councils.

Whilst acknowledging the need for uniformity in regulation and the removal of impediments to efficient transportation, the regulations seek to downplay the role of Councils in managing access to their road systems, making it far more difficult to deny access.

This also comes with larger axle loadings and dimensional configurations

I make the following points many of which relate to TRC

- The Access approval role appears to be managed by delegation. I have yet to see where Access Approvals are minuted or noted at least in the Traffic Committee Minutes.
- There is a very strong tendency to open first and worry about consequences later, with the attendant impact on maintenance.
- My deliberations here-in are not intended to prevent occasional non GVA or OSOM access for farm purposes, rather they are aimed at situations where Council roads may become part of “shortcuts of convenience” for line-haul freight which benefits some from outside the Council area. For example Appelby Ln/Manilla Rd, Davidsons Ln, Moore Ck Road, Moonbi Gap Rd as a shortcut NW bypass of Tamworth.
 - This situation is convenient and possibly a good thing in the National context, however, this seems to be funded piecemeal by government with TRC shouldering the majority of maintenance.
 - There is a propensity for Governments to fund the capital aspect without regard for ongoing maintenance.
 - Worse still there is the rubber-banding approach of achieving convenient access with a piece-meal funding approach.
 - The point made here is that TRC can/should negotiate harder by denial of access until all criteria are addressed to their satisfaction
- Many of the TRC roads have suffered from poor construction and maintenance practices. No doubt my representations over time have been noted. It is imperative that TRC build skills and performance in this area.

- There remains the historical aspect of the TRC road system, much of the TRC road system pre-dates the advent of the semi-trailer let alone the modern configurations of today. Scotts Rd was constructed at the time that 19m B-doubles were under trial on the New England Hwy and at that time 1994 was a temporary solution pending (15yrs timeframe) a New England Highway Bypass of Tamworth.
- In conclusion it is believed that TRC should:
 - Improve Construction and Maintenance practices and skills.
 - Negotiate harder with Government regarding NHVR access requests.
 - Ensure dimensional access is restricted to appropriate for the location, for example vehicles needing to occupy the oncoming lanes of Dampier Street to access a driveway.
 - My searches of NHVR access reveal that for example Road-Trains are not approved for Jewry St or Plain Street and if being conducted legally appears to be under permit.
 - I believe a stronger stance with Government (especially those wishing to open up access) could be used to advantage the TRC road construction and maintenance budgets.

- **Striking a Rate by Council**

As discussed at the Public Session the Valuer General provides an un-improved value for rate-able land. Council determines certain categories (classifications) and then strikes a rate in the \$ against those categories.

Some participants at the Public Session raised the subject of relativity between categories which Council representatives seemed to take on board.

- It is appreciated that TRC do not decide how properties are valued by the Valuer General (the methodology is based on un-improved land values and is used pretty much Australia wide)
- Taking this one step further:
 - Rates are Tax deductible for businesses and farms, however, they are not so for most owner occupied residential properties.
 - It appears that perhaps due to the Rates Struck by TRC (ie applied to the Valuer General's assessment) that Residential may be shouldering a larger proportion of the burden relative to Large Lots, Rural Residential, Hobby Farms, Business and Farming.
 - The fact that TRC touts a saving by converting TRC properties to non rate-able means that others are left to pick up the shortfall from TRC no longer paying these rates. (refer NDL Saturday 28 October 2023).
 - Services (Water, Sewer, Waste) are generally based on cost recovery and generally reflect usage.
 - It is fair to say that Business and Farming are responsible for the major portion of heavy traffic loads on roads, hence on a user pay's principle should shoulder proportionately more of road costs – the major driver for the proposed SRV.
- It thus appears leading into the request for a proposed SRV that TRC has not considered aspects around the "struck rate" and fairness across the board. Insufficient detail is available to the Public to comment further.

- **Developer Contributions**

The issue of the current adequacy of Developer Contributions was raised by myself at the Public session I attended. It was answered in that meeting by TRC staff that this was to be reviewed in the future, ie that it had not at this point been taken account of in computations of the SRVP.

- It is my observation that as far as road systems go there are many areas in Tamworth where the connecting road system is being overwhelmed by development.
- As far as I can determine, the required upgrades are not adequately funded (if at all).

- My view is that it is unfair that existing residents/ratepayers fund such shortfalls when the very need for such upgrades is due to the development itself.
 - This view should not be confused with maintenance although in some cases provision for maintenance can be applied to/offset costs of upgrading required.
- **Cost Control**
Over the past several years I am aware of several instances in construction (roads) where major budget over-runs have occurred, namely:
 - Campbell Rd Roundabout (\$2.0m over from original budget of \$800k).
 - Wallamore Road Drainage (\$2.5m over - from Roundabout Grant).
 - Country Road Roundabout (2.3m over – from Westdale Fund).
 - Additionally there was the saga of Werris Creek Rd where it seems that half the scoped 17km was completed for the grant money. (evidenced by materials supplied/delivered and then taken away). Hopefully there was no expenditure over and above the TfNSW grant.
 - The three projects totaled \$6.8m over budget. This overspend would mean other works would be curtailed or the cash position is worsened or both.

I do from time to time view the Meeting Business Papers. The reporting on projects is convoluted and difficult to follow.

Loss jobs impact the budget in many ways

- **Budgeting**
Reference is made to the Long Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2031/32 Planning Scenario at pages 15, 16 the various assumptions for variations are listed. Appreciating that these are budget figure assumptions, I comment that good practice demands the use of “best available information”. Working through the various information made available to support the SRVP and other self-sourced information I highlight the following as examples:
 - Looking at the tabulations, virtually without exception they are the same from year to year. There are resources which would be available to Council which better predict trends.
 - The Special Rates Variation – Public Forum October 2023 Power Point presentation states Payroll Costs have increased 18% over 3 yrs against 2.0% increase per annum shown in the tabulation (Note that Training, Superannuation and Workers Comp remain constant. Hence the modelling is incorrect against a known increase by 4.0% on an annual payroll of \$60m = \$2.4m under per annum.
 - In mid 2022, Interest Rates were extremely volatile and the information was publically available. It is noted a constant rate has been used year to year.

At the end of the day modelling and forecasting is only as good as the input and the effort applied to achieve the best possible outcome.

- **Tamworth Regional Council - Workforce**
The following observations are made regarding the TRC Workforce.
 - The Tamworth Regional Council “Workforce Management Plan 2023-2025” (at page 54) states there are currently 614 No. employees
 - In 2016 reference “Key change 2017 to 2021 Workforce Management Plan” (at page 6) states a headcount of 542 No. employees
 - This represents 614/542 ie 13.3 % increase in Employee Numbers (72 No.)
 - The question arises as to what has changed in the ongoing day to day affairs of TRC to justify such an increase from 2016 to now.
 - Referring to the Long Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2031/32 (at page 17) Consolidated Income Statement
 - Under Income Rates & Annual Charges \$ \$81,395,293
 - Under Employee Benefits & Oncosts \$58,777,928
 - The split of Income Rates & Annual Charges is not evident under that document. Reference to Our Annual Plan and Budget 2023/24 – Financial Overview (at page

76) see top pie chart provides a split of the Rates & Annual Charges (total \$83.716,917, Rates \$42,080,011, Annual Charges \$41,636,906.

- The point made is that Employee Benefits and Oncosts at \$59m exceeds Income from Rates \$42m and consumes \$59m from \$130m Income from Rates, Annual Charges and User Charges and fees.
- From publically information (for example at this link (courtesy Mr Google) [Council moving | Hundreds of staff at Tamworth Regional Council are being relocated after serious building issues were uncovered. | By 7NEWS New England | Facebook](#) 278 No. staff were to be relocated following the closure of Ray Walsh house
 - Considering this 278 No Staff and the fact that there are offices in outlying towns, depots/stores (eg procurement, depot and supervisory staff) a total number of 300 or thereabouts seems reasonable. From a total of 614 this leaves operatives not occupying an office desk at 314 no or thereabouts.
 - This gives a Staff to Worker ratio of 1 to 1 (or Chiefs to Indians) an alarmingly high ratio.
- The question arises as to whether TRC has a bloated establishment.
- What savings are possible in this area given the increase of 72No (circa \$7m cost) since 2016.
- It is noted that this area has not figured in the Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan.

• **Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan**

Whilst commending the initiative, I believe that this appears to be more reactionary than something which is a part of TRC’s ongoing culture/psyche.

Containment of costs is fundamental to any progressive organization. This should be a continuous process monitored on a regular basis.

The following comments are provided:

- An article published in the Northern Daily Leader on Saturday 28 October 2023 purports to have been at least somewhat based on discussion with TRC. This alludes to cost saving measures being applied dating back to 2006.
- Organisational Culture is a key driver to fostering Innovation and Cost Mindfulness. This both a function of Top Down and Bottom-up, with teamwork being key. Implementing this is no five minute wonder, time and effort are required along with learning and encouragement.
- It is noted (refer to the Power Point presentation slides for the Public Forum sessions) that on the slide regarding cost savings the Cost Savings begin in 2023/24 and run through 2026/27.



- It is noted that 2023/24 bears a cost of \$ 922k against savings of \$385k, and question whether this is a case of “conservative accounting”.
- In the proceeding slide there is mention of increased costs of Payroll, Bitumen Surfacing and Bridge replacements.
- It is important that context is maintained in making such statements.

- Payroll has been commented on elsewhere, there is no mention as to whether factors such as establishment growth are included.
- Bitumen Sealing is dependent upon the price of Bitumen and it is usual that such contracts contain provision for adjustment for Bitumen Cost. Without definitive information it is not possible to analyse this further. There is also the question as to who tendered (ie competition diversity) and what actions TRC took to drive the price down before proposing a motion for acceptance of the Contract.
- The rate quoted for Bridge Replacement Contracts in 2019 is in my view unsustainable. Again in order to make such statements the detail needs to be analysed to ensure valid comparisons are being made. In most cases bridges are unique to each location and the use of a Rate is fraught with great danger.
 - For example in 2010 dollars a 20m span x 5m wide rail bridge (Brownfield) (Sydney) was working out at \$500k per span ie \$5000 per m2 Direct Cost. The span and substructure were pretty much equal at 50% each.
 - The Direct Cost then needs to be marked up 50% to 60 % to achieve a selling price to include Indirect Costs Risk and Profit making a rate of \$7500 to \$8000 per m2 in 2010 dollars.
 - Again there is a component of individuality to each bridge, and making statements without ensuring valid comparison is fraught with danger and can be mis-leading
 - Perhaps some of the shock occurs because budgets are not review and adjusted regularly or contracts are not renewed frequently perhaps because their term has been extended.
- It is noted that Grants have been included as “savings”. Whilst this is a saving, is it a true saving due to the work and endeavors of TRC staff. For this criteria to be satisfied, as a minimum an application would have needed to be submitted.
- Some of the savings relate to rationalization of assets and utilization of plant resources. Whilst this is note-able, the question is why were these not realized sooner,
- Ditto such items as “sun-setting technology platforms no longer required.
- In the interests of Transparency it is believed that more detail needs to be provided to residents and ratepayers to allow better understanding and visibility.

In summary, for savings to become real they must be realized. Those listed here run into the future and beg the question of being able to be realized.

Furthermore due to the import of realizing such savings, there should be regular reporting demonstrating what savings have been generated, how these have been arrived at and evidence to support.

Additionally some of the touted savings relating to “improvements in efficiency/scheduling/utilization should have been ongoing and already in vogue if TRC is running at the “Best Practice” possible.

In closing, I strongly oppose the Special Rate Variation proposed.

I believe that points I have outlined above need to be considered and taken into account before proceeding to IPART for a SRV.

Residents and Ratepayers expend good monies to have a Council. Raising an SRV can be said to be the “easy” solution against the threat of scaled back services. Council is meant to have and be staffed with those with suitable skills to provide best practice management. It is my view that there remain areas of scope in TRC’s operation for further cost reductions. There is always scope for Council to negotiate harder with Government on behalf of Residents and Ratepayers.

It is my strong view that Councillors/Council need to more pro-active in questioning the Administration which appears to be largely devolved to management by delegation.

The responsibility of Councillors is similar to those of Company directors.

To this end I propose that a Notice of Motion be drafted and put that all delegations of Council undergo review. It is usual practice in my lived life experience that each delegation has at least one level of check sitting above it. Over time, I have observed meetings of Council and see very little questioning of financial matters.

This submission has been provided in good faith and I believe based on fact and experience. Hopefully some good comes of it.

[Redacted signature block]

Submission by Peter Gill Dated 18 March 2024

Lodgement via Webmail system: [Using Online Submission](#)

** To be Redacted

SPECIAL VARIATION APPLICATION 2024-2025 TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL (TRC)

This submission is lodged on a personal and individual basis. The context of my experience is as a resident ratepayer of Tamworth (33yrs). I graduated as a Civil Engineer in 1975 and worked in Construction (predominantly hard \$) with extensive experience in costing and budgeting in an engineering/construction based format.

Overview

I oppose the quantum of the 36.3% SV application. This amount is far in excess of annual CPI increases and appears to be either an ambit claim or one based catchup over many preceding years. I am retired and as such any increases in Rates have a more profound effect, as is the case for many others on limited incomes.

The magnitude of the rise sought by TRC appears at variance with the principles of sound fiscal management in that the thirty five (35) percent sought is a very large correction to apply as a single event against an illusion of sound fiscal management.

Concurrently with this submission I have also prepared and lodged a submission with IPART in respect to the Investigation of Council Financial Models in NSW. From information available, I believe there was no formally ratified resolution of Council that TRC make a submission to IPART regarding that particular review. I find this at variance with a Council which includes Rate Pegging and Cost Shifting as a reason for seeking a SV.

I approach this Submission from the point of view of an ordinary Ratepayer who has limits on available information and resources to compile and submit such a Submission. The information presented with the SV Application comprises edited/prepared presentation supported by high level representations of Financial Reports which require considerable interrogation and time input to understand. Many people are daunted by this and accordingly either do not bother, or gravitate to the easier paths ie basic surveys which are not configured to gather detailed information. I do not consider this information to be at all transparent.

Based on my observations and interpretation the primary driver(s) of the increase sought are:

- Developer Contributions
- Budget Over-runs
- Poor Execution
- Staff Costs
- Ongoing and Continuous Improvement

Part of this debate must also include the role IPART in that the Rate Pegging is determined by IPART.

- The TRC SV request and presentations to the Public have attributed part of the reasoning for an SV application to Rate Pegging and Cost Shifting by Governments.
- As a consumer, I do note a raft of increases to costs of living of recent times and ponder the timing of some around changes of Government. It is appreciated that the SV for TRC will be determined by IPART.
- Hopefully IPART is reporting the reasons for SV applications, the outcome of applications and background factors to Government for their action.

In my consideration and compilation of my Submission to the TRC Exhibition and now this Submission, I have noted and considered Cost Containment actions of TRC which could have been undertaken before this SV application. Two large ones would be a review of Developer Contributions and a review of Staff Costs.

1. The Consultation Process

Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) engaged consultants Morrison Low. This was done by delegation, not being ratified by Council beforehand. The Report seeking to commence Public Exhibition of the Long Term Financial Plan was tabled to Council at the meeting of 12 September 2023. This was the first advice to Ratepayers of the intent. After the closure of the Exhibition Period on 31 October 2023, a further report on the consultation was submitted to Council at the meeting of 28 November 2023 where-in Council adopted a resolution to apply for a SV. That application was duly lodged by TRC and is now the subject of this Submission.

I took part in the Consultation process, reading the information provided, attending an information session, making an online submission and providing a detailed written submission which I also circulated to individual Councillors. The point remains that since my submission and now (5 months), there appears there is no formalized appetite to engage in serious cost reduction efforts.

I have attempted perusal of the supporting information and make the following comments:

- The information provided is “High Level” without supporting lower level detail. This leads to a lack of transparency. However, I have attempted to work with that information provided.

Morrison Low were engaged and paid for by TRC. The scope of this engagement included (Extract from Email Response) :

The Morrison Low engagement has delivered a whole package of work that goes beyond the SRV and has assisted us in improving our asset management strategy and a number of key asset plans. This work is valuable regardless of whether Council elects to proceed with the SRV or not. The initial engagement is summarised below and it will depend on whether Council proceeds with an application as to whether we have them undertake any additional work.

• Review and update Asset Management strategy and Transport, Buildings and Technology Asset Management Plans	\$63,000	
• Capacity to pay analysis and report		\$14,500
• Organisational-wide service review/scan and development of the Improvement Plan	\$21,850	
• Review of Workforce Management Plan		\$3,750
• Prepare SRV forecasting model to finalise SRV options and documented outcomes	\$29,500	
• Project management and governance		\$8,750
Total		

The additional \$30,000 you refer to was for our Communications and Marketing Team to undertake the community engagement and media activities.

I do not believe that the points made within my submission were adequately reflected within the Attachment 17-TRC Community-Awareness-and-Engagement-Outcomes-Report. This report was compiled by Morrison Low for TRC, this demonstrating another case where TRC ownership of the budget process was delegated.

My experience in matters of Costing and Budgeting shows that “Ownership” is key to successful Cost and Budget management. This does not occur unless those accountable are directly involved in the process.

2. Developer Contributions

Whilst these are not regulated by Government, TRC have the ability to review these. From time to time we see TRC co-contributing to the cost of development by way of completing certain works and roadworks upgrades to subdivision works.

- Examples are: Calala Lane and Moore Creek Road where the areas have significant development requiring funding from the General Account.

- Arguably this matter may not be fully the remit of TRC without support of Government Legislation. What action has been taken by TRC in requesting change is unknown.

As at the time of writing there has been no formal resolution to conduct a review of Developer Contributions.

3. Budget Over-Runs

During the 2021-22 and the 2023-23 financial years a number of Construction Projects ran over budget. Whilst this is not perhaps the forum to debate the reasons for these, the fact that they occurred (to the amount of \$6.8m) is of concern as this over-run had to be funded. Another project over-ran by \$800k and was approved at the meeting of 12 March 2024.

In one case the work was for TfNSW and over-ran the grant without further compensation.

4. Poor Execution

A case in point is this photograph. The roadway was opened early October 2023 (a weekend overtime job). As at this date repairs to the trafficable surface remain to be completed. This renders the pavement subject to water ingress and the potential for more extensive repairs (and cost) in the future.



5. Staff Costs

At \$60m Staff Costs represent a third of the Balance Sheet before Capital Grants.

I have tracked the 10 yrs of budgets through the LTFP provided under the Attachment 03 Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) – TRC Resourcing Plan 2023-34 and these compute to the annual rise plus a 1% growth. This is not reconcilable against the statement that savings identified have been incorporated into the LTFP.

Reference the TRC Organisational-Sustainability-and-Improvement Plan (TRC OSIP) (Attachment 14 to SV Application):

- At Item 6.2 of the OISP

6.2 Present improvements

As part of the review, Council's senior management team identified, costed and prioritised 55 present improvements, which Council will be implementing over the next three to four financial years (with some having a slightly longer implementation timeframe). These will be included within Council's revised LTFP and any SRV application. The present improvements include cost savings, efficiency gains, revenue increases and key items that are necessary for long-term operational sustainability, plus additional items that have been grouped into major projects or form part of Council's Technology Blueprint 100 program.

The implementation difficulty of all the opportunities was considered by Council senior staff, with 14 of the present improvements considered easy to implement, 31 moderate and 10 hard.

Table 2 Digital Technology Strategy - expected benefits¹

Realisable savings	One-off benefit	Ongoing (per annum)
One off realisable savings over the next five years by sunsetting technology platforms no longer required	\$2.8 million	
Ongoing realisable savings from productivity gains from year five onwards		\$4.9 million
Total realisable savings	\$2.8 million	\$4.9 million
Non-realisable benefits	One-off benefit	Ongoing (per annum)
Ongoing efficiency gains through automation of manual/admin tasks, achieved over ten years		\$53.1 million
Efficiency gains from implementing remote technology and mobility solutions		\$2.4 million
Efficiency gains from self-service technology		\$6.5 million
Total non-realisable gains		\$61.9 million

I have been unable to track these savings into the LTFP presented with this SV application. (ie they do not appear represented in Staff Costs). Additionally I am at a loss to consider what a \$61.9 m Non Realisable Gain may look like if this regarded as efficiency gains without a commensurate reduction in Staffing Levels.

In my Submission to the TRC Exhibition of Intent to make Application for a SRV, I made comment regarding aspects of Staffing Levels:

- Growth in Staffing Levels from 542 No reported in 2016 to 614 reported in 2023 (see references in my response to the Exhibition). This represents almost double the 1% growth per annum of the current LTFP. Reasons for this are not explained.
- The Ratio of desk bound staff to operative staff at 1:1 seems extraordinarily unbalanced.
- I note attempts to justify Staffing Levels based on Benchmarking with other similar Councils, this is done at the high level of total numbers. As above more detail in this approach is necessary as perhaps (as witnessed in my travels) some Councils provide more field based services.
- Additionally Council Services (Rubbish, Water etc) generate income and have associated staff who are lumped into this simplistic Benchmarking analysis.

As at the time of writing there has been no formal resolution to conduct a review of Council Staffing.

6. Cost Savings, Ongoing and Continuous Improvement

A saving of \$ 600k annually on street sweeping costs (assuming a cost of \$120 per hour for a street sweeper) represents a reduction of 5000 hours operational time representing a reduction of 2.5No on an annual basis.

Savings of \$350k annually in haulage (assuming a cost of \$150 per hour for a truck and dog) equates to 2300 hours operational time representing a reduction of 1.2 No on an annual basis.

Given a lack of detail available it is difficult to further analyse such data for robustness and integrity.

The point remains whether such savings are a product of a variable workload rather than a saving through organizational efficiency.

Based on experience, when large numbers appear in savings the question must be asked whether such savings could have commenced earlier and as to the integrity and robustness of the analysis. From my perspective with the available information high levels of doubt arise.

Some of the listed "Savings" list Grants received as a saving. Whilst there is obviously work needed to apply for such, I contend that this is a case of "Business as Usual" and the use of Grants as savings constitutes embellishment.

- (example Arcadia Intersection \$1.4m (in 2017 I raised the issue of how this was to be funded as part of Development Approval process).

The lack of supporting detail reduces the ability to analyse the stated savings in detail. I remain unsure as to the reasons for this.

7. My Personal SRV Submission.

I have attached the SRV Submission I made in response to the TRC Exhibition of the Proposed SRV Application. Please see attached file ref: ***231031_TRC_Proposed SRV_Redacted***

I do not believe that the points made within my submission were adequately reflected within the Attachment 17-TRC Community-Awareness-and-Engagement-Outcomes-Report. This report was compiled by Morrison Low for TRC, this demonstrating another case where TRC ownership of the budget process was delegated.

It is easy to sit behind reports from Consultants as it provides an additional layer of shielding from directly dealing with Ratepayers.

In Closing

The submission made above has involved a significant input of my personal time and I appreciate the opportunity to comment.

It is held that action to curtail costs has sat with Council well before now and that the process of lodging an SV application is perhaps the most expedient course of action at this point of time.

The significant point(s) for consideration by IPART are:

- Whether action by TRC has been timely, during the Public Consult Sessions it was mentioned that the issues around the need for a SV Application had been in the making for 5 to 6 years.
- It appears to me that the significant budget over-runs in construction activities are a key contributor to the cash position. This was seemingly compensated for by reducing maintenance (particularly in roads).
- Additionally Developer Contributions with respect to Roads appear to be another source of budget bleed-off. Control of this sits with Council. There has been some resistance to this around the provision of "Cheap Housing". With Arcadia subdivision funding of necessary roadworks was a question I raised during the DA Exhibition process in 2017. Council were certainly aware of that point, yet here we are in 2024 with an Intersection being funded by a Grant (and this is now listed as a Cost Saving measure).
- As a Ratepayer, for the reasons provided, I am not convinced that TRC Finances are being managed as well as they could be.

- I believe it would be a grave travesty (appreciating the now current need due to mis-management) to provide for a 36.3% rise in one tranche as applied for. It may be better for Government to provide Grants for the actual work to be performed. It is considered prudent that any increase deemed absolutely necessary by IPART be spread over a greater period than 2 years considering that Rate Pegging is included within.

I would be happy to answer queries and to further elaborate on points made.

If necessary I am able and prepared to submit further supporting information to the points made here-in. I have not provided this for the sake of brevity and readability of this submission.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Peter Gill

18 March 2024

Author name: P. Grant

Date of submission: Friday, 15 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I am against the proposal to have such an astronomical rate increase the councils a lose cannon with spending and have not put forward any cost cutting measures , they had a public meeting which received the notice a day after the meeting which was delayed sending intentionally I believe , we cannot afford such a rate hike

13th March 2024

IPART
New South Wales

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Tamworth Regional Council – Special Rate Variation 2024/2025

I refer to TRC submission to IPART requesting a special rate variation to increase significantly rates by approx 38% over the next two years.

I wish to advise that as a rate payer I object to this rate increase on the basis that:-

- The rate increase is excessive in the current financial climate
- TRC have not provided adequate financial information in support of the increase. I make this comment on the basis that I attended the council public meeting which was conducted in the old council building and was poorly attended by the general public. The consultants acting for Council did the presentation which was very general in nature and provided no satisfactory outline of what efforts had been taken in curbing or reducing expenditure but rather basically took a general line that the cost of maintaining its property assets (currently not being maintained properly because of lack of funds) and general maintenance was taking up the balance of the available funds. Eventually, council will be running a deficit. Hence, ratepayers need to approve this increase to ensue that the budget stays positive. The consultants provided no comment from TRC to explain where pressure on the budget was coming from (ie wages, vehicle costs and what have been the main cost increases to council)
- The consultants basically told those at the information session that the increase sought was a “TREND” of local councils and we were at the lower end of that trend. Not really a comforting comment. I am sure they believe that we should be grateful.
- TRC have failed to provide adequate time or information to “ABSENTEE “ landlords in the information sessions. I think these people have also been forgotten by the consultants. Once again, this is consistent with a previous rate increase request for an event levy where they failed to realise that not all rate payers lived in the immediate council area.
- Council are making decisions which are not in their general remit or are not necessary in the current climate. Some of these matters will cost ratepayers a lot of money and are not being explained properly to all rate payers. The things I feel need greater explanation are:-
(1) Ray Walsh House – Rate payers were advised that the building had a maintenance issue and would need to be vacated and council staff relocated to fix the problem. The problem was not something unique to that building and the air conditioning duct work and replacement of the Insulation containing asbestos was not an uncommon problem for a building of that vintage. This was explained to rate payers and I believe everyone was in agreement with council’s decision to carry out the repairs. Now we are finding out that council is looking at the possibility of other sites for a new building Can’t keep a secret in a country town. This is absolute stupidity. This building has been paid for twice by the residents of Tamworth. Once

for the energy provider PCCC and secondly for TRC. The building is very modern and I believe fit for purpose for the Council.

(2) Council have supposedly sold the carpark adjoining Ray Walsh House. This would be the second sale of this carpark without any knowledge by ratepayers. We are still not sure whether this sale was for the freehold in full or for the air space above the carparks. Despite requests from the ratepayer's association to publicly confirm the status of the car park, we are yet to receive a comment. The sale of the carpark by council makes no sense at all. To think that this site which adjoins their own building is being sold shows the basic lack of skills by this entire council. The developer who is meant to have bought it didn't think it too shabby.-

(3) Council have approved a subdivision in South Tamworth called Acardia Park I believe. Despite objections from local residents, council have approved the subdivision and are using rate payers money to upgrade the existing road which doesn't even have kerb and guttering and was not built as an access road. Why should council use ratepayers funds when the obvious financial benefit is to the developer who will gain a better access for his purchasers and hence a better sale price of each lot adjoining the developer. For years, Tamworth has been able to attract developers to the city (especially from the Hunter) and developers have had to pay for all the infrastructure with no cost to ratepayers. These developers just want to avoid road costs.

I would like IPART to require council to provide more financial data to justify the increase. I would like capital expenditure to be separated from general running costs. We need to do this so that councils dream of building new facilities which are not a priority (Swimming Pool & Skywalk) are excluded until such time as adequate government funding is available. The council have been playing around with costings on this new pool and have now reduced the cost to approx \$45M. The general public are not confident that this project can be built on budget.

I think Tamworth residents are very proud of their city, however, Council needs to be more transparent to regain rate payers' confidence. Just putting something on a council website is not adequate. A certain percentage of our senior residents would never use the website and are not computer savvy.

Yours Faithfully



Peter Hillam

Author name: P. Shields

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Instead of rate rises maybe look into time theft within Tamworth Regional Council. I formerly worked for TRC for nearly 5 years and witnessed a [REDACTED] amount of time wasted first hand. I spoke to my supervisors and managers about the issues and was told to Look after my own backyard and try not to take notice of others. Another large issue was work being withheld until the weekend so staff could earn penalty rates. Our rates are already wasted because of this ideology that runs deep within council. Time theft is just one of the ways council wastes Ratepayers money. Personally I have seen staff outright steal tools and equipment that the ratepayer then has to pay to replace. Also entire sewer pipelines in new industrial estates near the airport not put in to level so the pipes fall uphill or have dips in some sections where it holds sewerage. Thrust-blocks not put on elbows for water mains which blow off when trying to commission new sections. Roads being refurbished or new roads not being done to the same standards that private contractors complete their work to. These are just some of the example I seen during my time at council, there would be many more no doubt. In conclusion, I think its time council looked at monitoring their staffs work output more and this would help with financial management with the rates as they are now.

Author name: P. Wright

Date of submission: Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

To say that I am extremely disappointed by this decision is an understatement. Sadly, I held the view all along that this was a foregone conclusion but that did not stop me making my own submission opposing this rate rise. Mayor Webb in his attempts to justify the decision has done nothing but gaslight residents, like me and 97% of other submissions that were against this special rate variation. He continued to denigrate us by saying we would have come to a different conclusion had we full access to the facts as he had. This only goes to support my view that this was tokenistic consultation at best, effectively saying council was not honest, by way of omission with its constituents. Hopefully it will see through this and reject this special variation outright. How can the residents have any confidence that all avenues have been explored when we receive widely costings on projects. Eg. Ray Walsh House asbestos remediation seems to have magically increased from \$27M to \$10M. Last year we were told \$1M had been spent to successfully remove asbestos from the building but it is now magically there again. What about the new aquatic proposal. What is not being put forward as \$40M by their own costings would have been less than \$30M when it was initially rejected. What about a Skyway to the lookout that no one was consulted about or wanted. What about Fitzroy Plaza resigned without any regard for our hot climate without adequate shade that now is estimated to cost \$3M in rectification. What about the fiasco of Dungowan Dam enlargement. Apart from tying all eggs to the National Party basket, its cost just kept on growing from initially \$200M to \$1.3B. No other options were ever considered despite community expertise suggesting many others such as industrial water recycling that is now on the table at a cost of \$100M if any confidence can be placed into this estimate. And then we staff that have accidentally signed off on a two year extension of the recycling contract when only a 12 month extension was approved by council. What about the new performing arts centre initially costed at \$70M, now apparently unaffordable leading to extending the lease of the Capital Theatre. What about the Flight Training fiasco. The airforce move their training to Victoria and we are left with a rate payer funded white elephant that has sat dormant until some recent use has been found, naturally commercially in confidence so rate payers have no transparency. The most damning of all though is that the firm hired to lead community consultation on this proposal was not able to consult on any cost saving initiatives just on a rate rise as the only way to achieve a balanced budget outcome. We have what at best could be described as a mediocre General Manager and senior staff. This has resulted in a demoralised, dejected workforce that see little point in presenting cost saving and efficiency initiatives as they know these will be rejected by senior management. This special rate variation should be rejected outright and the General Manager and council replaced immediately by an administrator.

Author name: R. Allen

Date of submission: Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

The VG price on our property has recently increased by 62%. I can only assume that others within this council have a similar increase. As the rates are calculated on the VG, surely this is a sufficient increase in the chargeable rates. The 36% that the council is applying for would double our council rates. Garbage and water are charged separately to council rates so there should be no changes to these services.

Author name: R. Andrews

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I, Ravinda Andrews of [REDACTED], do not support Tamworth Regional Councils (TRC) application or submission for the special rate rise. TRC have not provided a transparent and well explained plan as to how the additional revenue will be spent to provide improvement for all or the majority of its residents. On this basis I am led to believe TRC should not be granted a special rate increase to its property owners.

Author name: R. Gunning

Date of submission: Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am opposed to any special variation in rates by Tamworth Regional Council. Tamworth Regional Council are already wasteful of the ratepayers money and do not need a special variation. They just need to use ratepayer's money properly on providing services that people need. Not wasting vast amounts of money on pie in the sky projects such as a skyway to Oxley Park, totally confusing traffic roundabouts and pursuing development at all costs when Tamworth cannot sustain it.

Author name: R. Humphris

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

This rate rise is [REDACTED] and if they increase them by that much we will struggle to afford our rates and probably have to sell up with the interest rates up as well.

Author name: R. Ison

Date of submission: Saturday, 2 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Thank you for the opportunity to present my thoughts. I feel before an increase in rates that is unprecedented and as substantial as this, a review should be carried out to determine: + Cost saving measures available to Tamworth Regional Council (TRC). + What process does TRC engage to measure productivity and cost effectiveness of current practices. + The effect on the financial security of TRC rate payers. + An outline of projects / benefits TRC ratepayers expect to receive for a 36% increase in rates. Without a review of current spending practice, TRC ratepayers cannot be confident their contribution to TRC coffers is being utilised effectively. The charter of operations employed by TRC should be made public. The public should be made aware of current TRC spending, staff numbers and development plans over the next 10 years. In my career as Project Manager in the Corporate Sector I confidently say it is unheard of in any commercial enterprise to expect a 36% increase in budget without the items I have listed above being undertaken and made public. One does not ask for a significant increase in funds to be made available without a thorough review of current practices and a extensive plan for the future. The fear in my local community is that TRC is being poorly managed and that staff are not required to meet KPIs or their performance reviewed. I say this as communication from TRC in regards to these matters is non existent. In addition conversations to ratepayers from current staff members in regard to the workplace culture and practices indicates dissatisfaction with the current system. The fact that current staff are expressing concerns, it an indication that a review is warranted. It is unacceptable for TRC to ask for a 36% increase in rates, without providing a long term plan in regard to: + Cost savings + Plans to obtain project funding from State and Federal Government. + Projects that benefit rate payers + Staff, project and the overall performance and productivity of TRC, benchmarked to other councils. + Rate payer return on investment. These factors are included in AGMs that listed companies provide to the shareholder. I suggest a similar approach be applied to TRC to provide rate payers with confidence that the TRC is being managed in a cost effective way. The fact that such a substantial increase in rates is deemed to be necessary by TRC management indicates a lack of effective management and planning. Without the measures I have mentioned above being imposed it is difficult for ratepayers to draw any other conclusion than that TRC is extremely poorly managed from a financial perspective. To say costs have increased insufficient evidence for a demand for a 36% increase in revenue. Tamworth ratepayers simply want a thorough explanation for the proposed rate increase and assurances that TRC is managed in such a way that a (it would seem) a much needed boost in productivity and cost saving ensures a similar rate increase is not required in the near future due to miss management and waste. Regards Russell Ison

Author name: R. Johnston

Date of submission: Friday, 1 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Tamworth regional council need to have their expenses and estimates fully audited before they impose the 36% rate increase. This is not just about further cost of living impact to ratepayers, this is about waste and mismanagement and paying the boys club that exists in the upper echelon of TRC far too much to do far too little. Not 5 years ago TRC sprouted having a \$130M bank balance and now we're cap in hand to government for maintenance and repair and paying for the mayor to go to USA amidst all of this for a junket (and probably more than just this one example). National party influences with many councillors prevent any meaningful action from being passed in session to the detriment of our community. We as a family will plan to leave Tamworth if such inpropriety is to continue without genuine improvement in community resources for the additional outlay expected for the many years of fiscal debauchery that has taken place.

Author name: R. Johnston

Date of submission: Sunday, 3 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I would like Tamworth council to reconsider the rates increase due to the cost of living struggle we are all experiencing. Also all the other services provided by council will also go up eg water , waste etc.

Author name: R. Sharp

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am writing to express my concern regarding Tamworth Regional Council's proposed rate increase of 36.3%. This substantial hike, set to take effect on 01/07/24, is a significant burden for many of us, especially considering the anticipated rise in annual user charges that will accompany it. For those on fixed incomes or already grappling with the pressures of the cost of living, this increase could have severe financial implications. Like many, I am personally affected by this proposal. The thought of our community members struggling to meet these heightened costs is distressing. It is crucial that our voices are heard and that the council reconsiders the magnitude of this increase. I urge the Independent Pricing And Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to look at our concerns for a more reasonable rate adjustment to ensure that our Tamworth community remains affordable and inclusive for all. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Author name: S. Anderson

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

This special variation will negatively impact a vast majority of rate payers in the region. People are already struggling and council spends it's funds on frivolous amenities (eg. Proposed olympic pool when most of the regions pools are already unable to be open except for special times due to staffinf issues), rather than actual services for rate payers (waste disposal, water). We do not need this extra hardship cost on top of already having to pay to provide ourselves with services that should be provided. If the SRV is granted I believe we, as a community, should be doing away with council who are using our funds inappropriately.

Author name: S. Corben

Date of submission: Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I reside in a small town in the Tamworth region, Barraba. We receive fewer services than Tamworth city such as no green waste collection, very limited hours for use of the waste disposal facility and poor maintenance of footpaths and roads. We have an amazing pool initially built by the community but the council only allows it to be opened for limited access compared to Tamworth city pools. I believe if we pay rates like Tamworth city rate payers then we should have the same access to facilities as they do. The smaller communities miss out on the events and services and responses to concerns raised with the relevant people in council is met with the same argument that our smaller community doesn't warrant the service. We are a community with a lot of elderly citizens who are unable to travel to Tamworth and we pay increased fees for repairs, fuel and food. We do not have the capacity to pay higher rates. The consultation process was a farce with a presentation from an expensive consultant and council members didn't listen to our concerns but made excuses. They justified the increase by citing improved services which will only benefit Tamworth city residents.

16 March 2024

Carmel Donnelly PSM
Chair
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop
HAYMARKET NSW 1240

Dear Ms Donnelly

Tamworth Regional Council – Special Rate Variation Application 2024

Tamworth Regional Council

Special Rate Variation Application is for a permanent increase of 36.3 p-ercent over two years 18.5 from July 2024-5 and 15 percent foirm 2025-26

The proposal as submitted by Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) is to increase the rate applicable to business rates 36.3% above the rate peg over two years and to remain permanently after 1 July 2026.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION - Council must provide evidence that the community is aware of the need for and extent of a rate rise

1. The 24,073 residential ratepayers, Farmland ratepayers(as set out in the proposed Special Rates Variation TRC document Morrison Low Report page 17) ratepayers directly affected by the proposed special levy could have been directly contacted by mail with a description of the proposal and a survey response provided to those affected ratepayers at the same time.

2. TRC conducted eight (8) information sessions described in their fact sheet application. TRC is unable to provide numbers for attendances at those sessions of person who were actual business ratepayers.

3. In Tamworth, the number has been estimated as 14 at one of the meetings the Heritage Room, the Tamworth Community Centre at 6.00 pm on 17 October 2023 where about 30 people attended, the majority of whom were Council staff and Media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Tamworth has 19,428 residential properties (including Tamworth, Oxley Vale, Westdale, Hallsville and Hills Plains).

3. In Tamworth, the number has been estimated as 14 at one of the meetings the Passchendaele Room, Tamworth Town Hall at 11.30 am on 17 October 2023 where about 32 people attended, the majority of whom were Council staff and Media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Tamworth has 19,428 residential properties (including Tamworth, Oxley Vale, Westdale, Hallsville and Hills Plains).

4. In Barraba, 92 Kilometres north of Tamworth, the number has been estimated as about 120 people at the meeting at the Playhouse Hotel, Barraba at 12.30 pm on 18 October 2023, the

some of whom were ratepayers Council staff and Media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Barraba 2,457 residential and farmland properties (including Barraba and Manilla). Many ratepayers present were vocally opposed to the rate increase. Not one ratepayer spoke in favour of the rate increase. There appeared to be a high level of dissatisfaction with the proposal.

5. In Manilla, 48 Kilometres north of Tamworth, the number has been estimated as over 200 people at the meeting at the Manilla Town Hall, Manilla at 5.30 pm on 18 October 2023, the some of whom were ratepayers Council staff and Media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Manilla 2,457 residential and farmland properties (including Barraba and Manilla). Most ratepayers present were vocally opposed to the rate increase and dissatisfied with the level of services they were receiving.

6. In Nundle, 60 Kilometres east of Tamworth, the number has been estimated as XX people at the meeting at the Nundle Bowling Club at 11.30 am on 19 October 2023, the some of whom were ratepayers Council staff and Media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Moonbi Nundle 1,964 residential and farmland properties (including Moonbi Nundle and rural remainder). Most ratepayers present were vocally opposed to the rate increase and dissatisfied with the level of services they were receiving.

7. In Kootingal – Moonbi - Bendemeer, 21 Kilometres North East of Tamworth, the number has been estimated as XX people at the meeting at the Moonbi Town Hall, Manilla at 5.30 pm on 19 October 2023, the some of whom were ratepayers Council staff and Media and not owner's properties to which rates applied. Moonbi Nundle 1,964 residential and farmland properties (including Moonbi Nundle and rural remainder). Most ratepayers present were vocally opposed to the rate increase and dissatisfied with the level of services they were receiving.

8. We understand many ratepayers received the notice of the Tamworth meeting the day after or two days after the meetings were held in the rate instalment notice. We understand many Tamworth ratepayers were extremely disappointed that they did not receive the notices of the meetings before he date he meetings were held.

9. There was no mail-out to all ratepayers, with a reply-paid survey.

10. The online survey as reported by Morrison Low Report stated that 97% of responses were against the special rate variation increase of 36.3%

11. We are not aware surveys of ratepayers, random and appropriately stratified to capture the population characteristics of the local government area were undertaken.

12. Fact sheets and the Morrison Low Report was available on the website. The fact sheet glossed over the total funds to be raised and did not explain the key issues such as Invest in 'Councils Aquatic facilities', where current funding is estimated at \$60 million and his highly controversial, delivery of approved key projects including the Skywalk with Council borrowing \$3.7 million to complete it, and remediation of Ray Walsh House (RWH) the main Council Building valued at \$50 million and amortised to \$28 Million, is stated to be \$2 million to replace air conditioning and remediation of asbestos containing materials (TRC Draft Blueprint Resourcing Plan 2023-2025 P.17). Very recently it was being discussed that the asbestos remediation would cost more that and the possible sale of RWH was rumoured to be

considered. The voluminous information in the Council documents were not adequately summarised to contain key relevant information in the fact sheets.

13. The online information was available for people with adequate computer technical and research skills.

14. There appeared to be only one notification of the meetings in the local newspaper in Tamworth. The process of public engagement was perfunctory and lethargic.

15. The gross amount of additional revenue estimated at \$7 million in 2025 and \$14 million in 2026 was not included in the TRC fact sheet.

16. Even at the late stage, there are still many ratepayers who are not aware of the proposed SRV, from the feedback we have received from our main street petition gathering.

IMPACT ON RATEPAYERS -The impact on affected ratepayers must be reasonable

1. As noted in the report prepared by Morrison Low (commissioned by Tamworth Regional Council) the TRC region is in the lowest 23% of socio-economic cohorts. We therefore question the damaging impact of the SRV on a large proportion of lower income ratepayers.

2. The Morrison Low report on capacity to pay, pages 1 and 2 identifies the lower socio economic groups (SES) are Manilla-Barraba 7%, Moonbi-Nundle 15%, Tamworth Oxley Vale Westdale 38%, totalling 60% of the population. The higher SES tend to live in Tamworth CBD, Hallsville, Hills Plains and Calala. The report adds that property values on average align with the levels of advantage and disadvantage. Nevertheless it is contended that the rate increase will fall more heavily on the low SES as they will tend to have less disposable income to meet increased fixed costs.

3. The Morrison Low report has a detailed assessment of their estimate of the impact of a rate increase on the disadvantaged. The report supports the proposition that the impact will be felt mostly by the low SES.

4. Some of the TRC proposed facilities such as the Aquatic Centre, encompasses closing both town swimming pools and locating a new Aquatic Centre in South Tamworth that is relatively less accessible, at an estimated cost of \$45 million, for which there is state funding of \$15 million, and replacing the Tamworth City Olympic Pool located in the CBD with a splash area and lagoon area with limited swimming capacity, 25 metres with four lanes, at a cost of \$15 million, as yet unfunded. This will make swimming facilities substantially inaccessible for low SES people.

5. TRC has stated in their fact sheet that ‘...Unfortunately, the money is required to keep infrastructure adequately maintained so we can continue to deliver the same level of service that the Community expects. For those that are struggling, Council has a "Hardship Policy"...’. TRC routinely classifies assets as operational, so that it does not have to prepare a maintenance plan for each facility and adhere to it. As a result quite a few facilities have been allowed to be run down.

DEMONSTRATED FINANCIAL NEED - *Council must demonstrate the financial need for the additional income*

1. The fact sheet provided by TRC state that two thirds of the SRV will be allocated to road and transport networks. The fact sheet also states that TRC will invest adequately in its infrastructure to maintain assets at fit for purpose conditions.
2. Undertake key transport upgrades such as Jewry Street, Moore Creek Road and in the CBD.
3. Deliver the actions in adopted sports and recreation strategies and masterplans for key sites such as Victoria Park, Bicentennial Park and Chaffey Park.
4. Return key assets back to a satisfactory condition, particularly in stormwater and buildings (such as Town Hall, Community Centre and TRECC).
5. Invest in Council's aquatic facilities.
6. Deliver key approved projects such as the Skywalk and remediation of Ray Walsh House.
7. Build a new animal rehoming pound.
8. With the exception of road maintenance, which has been underfunded for possibly up to a decade, as stated by one of TRC engineering officers at the Tamworth Community Centre on the 17 October 2023, there is a concern that TRC will not adhere to these proposed plans.
9. TRC has been in discussions with developers to sell the Ray Walsh House Car Park and the Ray Walsh House itself over the last few months. TRC has had discussions with property owners in the CBD about the possibility of acquiring their property to build new Council offices and potentially a new Art Gallery, Library and Performance Centre. It is not that these proposals are opposed, it is that these proposals have not been made public and are not disclosed in the documents submitted for the SRV.
10. We raise the question, what other substantial infrastructure projects does TRC have in mind, which would be unfunded, even if the SRV is approved.
11. TRC in the DRAFT BLUEPRINT 100 Our Resourcing Plan 2023-2025 has prepared extensive estimates of the base case and scenario 1 and scenario 2 and scenario 3. While it is likely that proposals for roads and related infrastructure may be relatively reliable, we question whether some of the other infrastructure budgeted for, will occur as set out in these documents.

PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENTS - Council must explain and quantify the council's productivity improvements and cost containment strategies.

1. Morrison Low prepared a report entitled Organisational Sustainability Review and Improvement Plan.
2. TRC asserts that it has saved \$7.1 million per year at pages 6 and 7 of its report from past improvements.
3. TRC asserts that it can save \$1.649 million per year at page 9 of its report from current improvements.

4. TRC asserts that it can save \$4.9 million per year at page 10 of its report from present improvements from its digital technology strategy.

5. We do not have sufficient information to comment on these assertions.

6. We note from the workforce management plan that staff turnover is 16% per annum, and is approaching 40% in the 30-39 year category and that 27% of the workforce is over 55 years of age. Implementation of these plans is critically dependant on staff retention and maintenance of corporate knowledge, Our Resourcing Plan - Draft (Pp 60-63).

SPECIAL RATE VARIATION DISCLOSED - Council Documents must include the Special rate variation in all of its documents and exhibit them, approve and adopt relevant planning documents

1. Our observation is that all documents requiring publication as special rate variation documents were so published.

SUMMARY

1. TRC has conducted an opaque consultation with the community, which has not necessarily included all property owners that will be liable for the Special Rate Variation.

2. The Special Rate Variation will probably have a negative impact on the low SES property owners. The timing of the SRV in the middle of a tightening economy is poor.

3. We are not confident that the TRC will execute its plan as proposed given the proposal for new major infrastructure not disclosed in the TRC SRV documents.

4. Ratepayers are concerned that the eventual use to which the funds are put may be ineffective.

Conclusion

1. The community consultation engaged with only a small section of the ratepayers in what was a significant programmed attempt to run information sessions. The response to the information session was substantially ineffective. TRC could have easily circulated a written survey to each ratepayer and all probability got an acceptable response rate. The question must be asked 'Why did they not conduct such a survey?'

2. We are not confident that the TRC will execute its plan as proposed given the proposal for new major infrastructure not disclosed in the TRC SRV documents.

3. I do not support the proposed Special Rate Variation application.

Stephen Maher
TAMWORTH

Author name: S. MEARS

Date of submission: Monday, 4 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

As a resident of Tamworth Regional Council I have great concern for my, and many residents maintaining the capacity to remit their annual rates bill if these increases are supported. We currently live in a very low socio-economic area, an area of very low educational outcomes with many local jobs being either casual, part-time or residents suffering significantly from under employment. There is also a serious omission of data in the MorrisonLow report, pointed out in Council Workshops and meeting, in their section reading Ability to Pay. The data ceases as at 2022, which, has failed to take into account the multiple Mortgage and interest payments on borrowed money. Some 13 or more increases over from the end of 2022 until now, this has a significant impact of residents ability to pay, taking more money out of the pockets and/or savings of residents. Not only mortgagees will be affected, people renting (especially those on fixed incomes) will no doubt see associated rental increases. Businesses will suffer on two fronts, increased rates and residents with ever diminishing non-essential spending. We should also consider, until this year, record slow wage growth over the 10 years prior to 2022, major cuts to education spending and the availability to attend TAFE. I do not believe the residents have the capacity to continue to pay for services the State Government has cost shifted to councils. I have a well paying job and my councillor salary but being a single income household I am struggle already to pay my rates and maintain a reasonable life style. I can only worry seriously more for those on lower incomes.

Author name: S. Smith

Date of submission: Monday, 11 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

No I do not want this increase in rates. As a home owner of an investment property this will be passed onto to the tenants and drive up the cost of rent in Tamworth even more than it is now. Home owners want to see council reduce costs not pass them into home owners or you will see an increase in people moving away from the shire and investing in other areas of NSW. We are already looking at our options.

Author name: S. Watkins

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

The application to increase rates by 36.38% over two financial years is outrageous. Council is supporting its application by saying it will be unable to continue to fund items as expected by the ratepayers. I believe this situation has come about due to reckless spending and poor budgeting over the past several years. Savings could be made by being frugal and realistic, like the average ratepayer has to be in order to survive. Council does not need to keep paying consultants for every fancy idea they come up with. There's a saving. Don't build a fancy sign at the entrances to Tamworth to make visitors feel more welcome. What a waste of money. Stop funding grand schemes such as an aquatic centre, complete with beach, child minding, and all the other fancy ideas. The two existing pools in the city are within walking distance or pushbike riding for most residents - the aquatic centre is not. Don't have glass etched office dividers in Council offices. Don't pay to pave a hotel carpark so that Council staff have somewhere close to park. Council has said to ratepayers they are to use the public car parking areas already available and walk the extra distance to their workplace, so why can't their staff do this? Cut down on the use of fleet vehicles to be taken home. I could go on. My husband and I are on the aged pension - and I can assure you that has NOT gone up 36.38% over the past two years; nor has anyone's wages. This blatant grab for money due to bad budgeting verging on ██████████ MUST BE STOPPED. The cost of living gets a mention daily in the media - and this proposal will only make matters worse. Please think of the ordinary person out there and say NO to this proposal.

Author name: t. bowden

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

tamworth council needs to learn to live within their means. there is that much mismanagement of funds within the tamworth council - refurbishing Ray Walsh house, leasing the leader building for an exorbitant fee, not to mention numerous other projects that always seem to blow out over budget. the council employs numerous people who are genuinely incompetent when it comes time for them to do the roles they are supposed to specialise in they have no idea how to do the job so have to get consultants in, prime example of this is this rate increase they are proposing. they paid the consultant Morrison Low \$141,000 to justify the rate increase, surely this money could have been better spent on improving services or fixing the roads of the local council area? ipart needs to reject this application, how can the council be crying poor yet approving pay rises and funding overseas trips for themselves

Author name: T. Bridge

Date of submission: Sunday, 17 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I am on a carer pension with house contents and funeral and life insurance plus car insurance since the last land value the price of my land has magically gone up over \$140.000 which has already increased my rates now you want to up them 36% how much do you think people can afford before they have to sell their houses just for your greed we all pay more then enough now for everything with every company insurance and supermarkets trying to bleed us dry how about giving the pensioner's and hard working people a break!!!!!!

Author name: T. Capararo

Date of submission: Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I was once told by a very wise man, my grandfather, that you get what you pay for, well in Tamworths case, i`m not getting what i pay for, the control council exercises over it`s employees is minimal there is a great waste of resources in this area. Repaires to roads are poor and require redoing in a few months, i had a large pot hole near my property entrance i reported it to council and they left a witches hat in the middle of the hole, it was shattered the next morning no signs were placed to warn people, a neighbor put a old car door there with a warning written on it Point being council is not performing if they were it maybe a different story..

Author name: T. Dare

Date of submission: Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

The council can put forward as many contrived reasons why they need the exorbitant increase of 36+ %. If you lived within the TRC area you would witness the gross wastage of resources. The problems of this council will only be addressed short term by a substantial rate increase. They are led by irresponsible senior staff. Giving this council and senior management access to such a huge revenue increase would be akin to sending a group of kids to the shop to buy ice blocks, and giving them a \$100 note and expecting all the change. The mayor is on a self promotional mission to replace Barnaby Joyce as Federal member for New England. He doesn't miss any opportunity to get himself into the media. He creates opportunities for this even if it involves the council for his own benefit. This council doesn't need a rate increase, they need a full scale AUDIT. They have a "Fact finding mission coming up where they are taking an entourage to Nashville in America ,,, flying BUSINESS CLASS !!!! The council offices in Ray Walsh House were condemned as riddled with asbestos. TRC purchased this building from the NSW Government. They are now paying to rent office space at numerous locations across town. But surprise, surprise, the Mayor and General Manager and associated staff are renting the penthouse level of PRD Real Estate. Best view in the most prestigious building in town ,, WHY is this extravagance necessary ??? This council is a never ending series of extravagances. They spent tens of thousands of dollars doing a feasibility study on building a "Sky Walk" across the hills on the eastern side of town. To cap that they wanted to build a ski slopes type chairlift to transport people from the CBD up and back from the Skywalk. !!!!!!! Who comes up with these pipe dreams. ??? The same people who preside over the parlous state of our finances, to the point of needing 36% more income to make ends meet. There are 2 Olympic pools in town. This council is pushing ahead to build a \$67 MILLION ,,,, Aquatic Centre ,, out on the southern highway out of town. Not even a good idea if we HAD that sort of money, let alone that they want to press ahead with it AND put a gun to ratepayers heads to find it. I'm 69, and looking to retire in June this year. I simply will not be able to afford to live in Tamworth. I own my house, but have no superannuation. I will be on the old age pension. I have done a budget, and simply can not afford to live in the house that I worked so hard to buy. I am in renal failure and on Dialysis, which requires attending Tamworth hospital 3 times per week. So moving to a cheaper house in an out lying village is not feasible. Why should I have my whole life up rooted and turned inside out just to cover the gross financial inefficiency of this inept, borderline [REDACTED] council???? The General Manager is on a package of \$420,000 per annum. For WHAT???? He's obviously not fit for the job, otherwise he would have properly advised the councillors on what they could and could not afford. His lack of appropriate financial guidance is what has led to this current situation. I think he should be the first to go. He should pay the price of this fiasco, NOT RATEPAYERS.

Author name: T. Newton

Date of submission: Monday, 11 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Tamworth Regional Council have ignored the community consensus of a No to this increase and are attempting to bulldoze it through. They have provided neither sufficient justification for where they intend to spend this money, nor have they provided sufficient cost reduction reviews to demonstrate that it cannot be funded through savings and cost reductions. I request a full IPART audit of Tamworth Regional Council be undertaken to ensure that this blatant money grab is not indicative of [REDACTED] practices that threaten the community.

Author name: V. Kim

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Tamworth Regional Council council falsely assumes that land values will increase when in actual fact, values are driven by maintaining interest rates well below the rates of rising physical gold prices which historically speaking for the past 6000 years, is the true measure of inflation. The artificial increase of land prices through the suppression of low interest rates by a private central bank, does not warrant any increase in council rates because the council ignores the continual loss in purchasing power of the Australian dollar inflicted on rate payers. Most critically is IPART's unjustifiable references to laws created without referendums required for the rate payers to approve of by votes since the year 1973. By forcefully raising council rates to amounts that people can not pay back, this has granted the opportunity for councils and the state government to unlawfully potentially confiscate homes from residents who have purchased their property outright because title search warrants do not have the word "owner" on the the New South Wales Land Registry - Title search. It is also worth noting that the rate payer name on the Tamworth City Council Rate notices is different to the name of the of the names found on the New South Wales Land Registry - Title search. This raises the lawful question, Is Tamworth City Council allowed to get away with using fictional characters to justify financial growth? I vehemently reject rate rises of any nature. As a matter of fact, given the impending global economic collapse, I would expect the Council to drastically cut any form on non essential expenditure that reflects community sentiment about jobs and cost of living pressures. Otherwise, this only tighten further unlawful activities exploited by what can be regarded as a false government because nowhere in the Australian constitution is the word council found to justify the association of the word "council" with the word "government". The concealed nature of Tamworth City Council leaders makes it extremely difficult to hold decision makers accountable for bad decisions because over the past two years living in Tamworth, the Tamworth City Council does not communicate clearly via physical postal letter, names and contact number(s) as to raise questions relating to the law of the land that enables trust and confidence that paid council rates are put to good use. Because rates are rising, it is no different to raising taxes, thus fulfilling the Holy Bible's prophecy that taxes will rise and the wealth will belong to a small people in Daniel 11:20-23 quote "Then shall stand up in his estate a raiser of taxes in the glory of the kingdom: but within few days he shall be destroyed, neither in anger, nor in battle. And in his estate shall stand up a vile person, to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom: but he shall come in peaceably, and obtain the kingdom by flatteries. And with the arms of a flood shall they be overflowed from before him, and shall be broken; yea, also the prince of the covenant. And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully: for he shall come up, and shall become strong with a small people." Regardless if ipart or the council rejects Daniel 11:20-23, 1 Timothy 6:10 says quote "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." As a warning to those to reject the Holy Bible as the final authority for matters relating to life over death, Proverbs 13:13 says quote "Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded." A cut in Tamworth City Council rates will demonstrate that the council is not evil. A rise in Tamworth City Council rates will demonstrate that not only are they evil, but impending judgment is necessary by the creator of evil himself according to Isaiah 45:7 quote, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." and Jeremiah 9:27 quote "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." Thanks for reading my submission for your consideration.

Author name: W. Elliott

Date of submission: Thursday, 7 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

To impart.. I cannot understand Tamworth regional councils need for this rates rise given that we as a town have been getting let down in so many ways since they took over, and continue to be let down with even the basics that you would think councils are responsible for, for example our rubbish tip hours and costs for use, neglected rural roads and infrastructure, the keeping of our towns tidiness, mowing not done until it's high and unkempt, a huge percentage of our rates money being spent on Tamworth itself on unnecessary projects, where the money could be shared around the other towns under its jurisdiction, trips overseas for trivial meetings that could have been conducted over the internet, a big drop in service's just before and after the country music festival and a general mismanagement of funds across the board, we as a town don't ask for much, just a fair distribution of the rates that are acquired from this town and it is not forthcoming, we have and are facing a huge decline in service's since this amalgamation and to give them more money to use for the same if not less services is just legal theft, I, we ask that you keep the rate rise fair, that's all we want, I hope that you will give this serious consideration because we will only suffer not just financially, but our lack of basic services will only get worse. Yours sincerely,, Wayne Anthony Elliott.

Author name: w. painter

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

All the parkes and gardens a allready there. Also the state or federal govenment pay for roads not the council the money they are asking for is gust to mutch for rate payers. Iam a pensioner i cant pay that Thanks Wayne painter

Author name: w. peisley

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

My name is William Peisley and I reside at [REDACTED]. I am a home owner, an old aged pensioner and rate payer. I wish to advise IPART of my dissatisfaction and disagreement with the proposed special variation to increase council's income from rates. According to the criteria list regarding the assessment, I wish to state that the proposed increase of 36.3% will dramatically impact on my limited income, given the current cost of living crisis which incorporates ordinary day to day living expenses plus increases in home insurance - over three years, my home insurance premium has increased from \$1600 to \$2600. I have had to give up private health insurance because of high premiums. The proposed increase by Council is extreme, given the core rate pegs across NSW are in the range from 4.5% to 5.5%. If granted, the increase will directly impact on the quality of my life and will impact severely upon my ability to budget and pay other bills. My submission therefore states explicitly that I am very opposed to the special variation application as proposed by Tamworth Council. Yours sincerely,
William Peisley.

Author name: W. Perry

Date of submission: Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

TRC cannot provide services to manilla that are required now let alone putting the rates up we have a lane way behind our place witch has to be flushed every week because the water is so dirty and stinks like a pigsty and the road pavement is a disgrace they need to supply a decent service

Author name: N. Palmer

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

We live in Woolomin, we barely have any infrastructure here. With the cost of groceries and bills I fee this is another stab at us.
We cant afford the increases as they keep coming at us

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I believe that with the current economic climate now is not the time for Council to be increasing the rates so substantially. I also think the walkway project for the Tamworth Lookout is unnecessary and the project should be shelved to a later date. The roads are a priority not all these beautification projects. Council needs to get back to basics and fix all the road properly. Currently they spray some watered down tar on the road that never sets and makes a mess of any vehicle that travels on the road. A tarry substance is on most vehicles and is very hard to remove. When the temperature is high this tar melts very quickly. The roads that were built many years ago seem to last better than the ones that are newly constructed, obviously using cheaper inferior materials. I can't understand why Council's maintenance requires a person to sit in a vehicle while the slasher is operating. Surely signs, as where previously used is sufficient. What a waste of money. I think Council needs to be smarter about how they spend rate payer's money.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

The council in my opinion wastes enormous amounts of money already. Increasing the rates will only encourage this wasteful ideology. Show the ratepayers how you can show budgetary restraint by providing competent decisions. Roads rates and rubbish are the councils only concerns.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 1 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Families in the Tamworth Region are already experiencing great financial stress as a result of the increased cost of living. Providing for my young family is already difficult between food, fuel and childcare costs etc. Luxuries and eating out are no longer an option. Imposing the proposed rate rise is not viable for not only our young family but many others. It won't be sustainable for families to move to or stay in the area as it won't be financially within their means. I also don't believe council has adequately explained or provided enough transparency to the community around the reasons for the rate rise. Tamworth is also a rapidly growing area and I believe that although more resources are required to accommodate for the extra inhabitants, this is more than provided for in the increase in rateable properties being developed within the region.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 1 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Tamworth Regional Councils rate rise of 36.5 percent is ridiculous. With the cost of mortgages going up, cost of living and schooling at the rate it is I will not be able to afford to live in the house I built let alone pay my rates. For my family not only do I have my own rates to pay, I share the rates on my mothers house which is located in South Tamworth. This block of land is a large block as the house was built back in the 50s. If this rate rise goes a head I will be looking at leaving Tamworth after being 6th generation being born and raised with my children also being born here. As I am cannot afford to live. Please take into consideration how inflation is really taking the toll on people. Tamworth also has a housing shortage right now and a lot of people are living in their cars on the side of the road. This saddens me as I can see that this could very well be me and my family one day.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 2 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

This proposal to increase our rates by 33.3% over two years will put more strain on people and their families who are already struggling with the increase in cost of living and no increases in wages to compensate for this. But not only that what we are even paying for anymore the "services" provided by the council are getting less and less. All the important things to the community go unheard and no action taken but thank heavens the council could spend a whole bunch of money on smart water meters which the community didn't even get a say on. The council sinking ridiculous money into their council chambers building that is contaminated with asbestos who benefits from that other than the council themselves and who pays for it, the rate payers is who. This council consistently spends their money in all the wrong areas and when it comes to bigger projects there is no consultation with the rate payers and even if there is consultation it all just gets ignored from the council. But in the council meetings they are constantly increasing their salaries and this only requires the councillors to vote on it not the rate payers. Why can they vote on whether they get a wage increase to help with their expenses and cost of living and the rest of us get nothing. Despite the massive amount of rate payers who are so against this increase it has still made it this far which just proves the council doesn't care about its rate payers but only lining their own back pockets. If there is to be an increase a smaller one that won't bankrupt people should be considered. Think for yourselves if you were suddenly hit with such an increase in any of your bills regardless of them being rates or not would you not be angry and upset and worrying about whether or not you will be able to stay up to date with them, so please throw this whole increase out and look out for the people who are already struggling have some compassion and empathy.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 2 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I totally support this application. Tamworth rates are some of the lowest rates in NSW compared to similar sized regional cities. We have an excellent Council with some dedicated staff.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 2 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

This rate variation is a terrible idea, completely unaffordable to residents, who are already struggling financially due to interest rate rises and the cost of living increase. Tamworth regional council spends their money very inconsistently, with some areas receiving a lot of funding and some areas missing out, they seem to have priorities that do not align with a lot of the residents. Council should not be allowed to charge this 36 percent increase, its ridiculous and unfair on residents.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 2 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Rate rises are just not affordable We are in a living a cost of living crisis and it would put alot of people over the line and also people will not be able to support local small business,myself i support local business and am single so 1 income.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 3 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Before IPART approve any rate increases for Tamworth Regional Council I consider TRC should undertake a complete and thorough review of all current functions to establish; 1) If all of TRC's current functions and associated costs are really needed for the basic operation of a Regional Council, 2) Any functions that are deemed to be absolutely necessary to the basic operation of TRC are providing maximum productivity at minimum cost. When the outcome of this review is known then, if necessary, TRC can make another application to IPART for a smaller rate rise. Please bear in mind that TRC went ahead with this rate rise application to IPART when 98% of the Ratepayers surveyed opposed a rate rise of this magnitude.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 3 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

As a rate payer and pensioner I am against this rate variation. During this difficult economic time it is an expense none of us can afford. I would like to see a proper audit undertaken on this council as there appears to be an obscene amount of money being wasted and/or mismanaged. Tamworth Council have stopped services to the residents which particularly hurt the aged and disabled. Fees for the tips have been raised. Water rates have increased for water which many times throughout the year smell and taste like sewerage. The villages connected to this council are not considered. In my village council took over the Memorial Hall which was built by residents for the returned soldiers. Very little has been done as they had said. The hall is no longer able to be rented out for receptions/parties AND is not allowed to be used for preparing and serving breakfast for returned soldiers on ANZAC Day. Many roads which come under council are so badly in need of repair the wheel alignments are out of sync after using the road. I trust commonsense will prevail and such a high increase will not be granted. DAs are being approved in areas where the infrastructure cannot cope with the number of dwellings being approved. I feel strongly that Council should be audited and perhaps an administrator be brought in to see where all the money is going. Thank you.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 4 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

One of the main criteria is that the Impact on Ratepayers must be "REASONABLE". How can this level of increase be classed as reasonable? We are living in a post Covid world where the cost of living increases have affected disadvantaged people in a disproportionate way. We have a lot of low income people living in the Tamworth area and this level of increase will directly impact those people. Whether directly through rate increases or because their landlords will have to raise rentals to cover it. I guarantee there has been virtually no feedback from Renters in these surveys/submissions. They are not in a position to understand that this increase is going to make their lives harder. Tamworth council is actively encouraging more residential and commercial development but then expecting the existing ratepayers to foot the cost of the service upgrades. Things like street lighting and other services should be borne by the developers not the ratepayers. Where is the plan by council to increase revenues from developers, not just during the application process but during the actual project development? Also the council is conducting projects which have little real impact to the community but have significant cost. Example traffic islands in East Tamworth, months of work and tens of thousands of dollars. For what outcome? Some of the roads are four lanes wide and they have put in traffic islands on the sides. What benefit does this provide the community beside "window dressing". Renewable energy has been a joke with the council, they should put some of the funds towards solar power and reduce the ongoing costs to the community for running council facilities. I read a quote that the council received to add solar to the Trek, but it was ridiculously expensive, where was the oversight and long term planning when it was rejected? I have been actively following the East Tennis (Treloar Park) Park upgrade project. It has been severely mismanaged by council, with major cost over runs and the project running almost two years late. Where is the accountability for something like this? When there are roadworks being conducted all over town by contractors who rip up the road and then conduct a shoddy repair leaving the road severely damaged, who at the council is managing this and holding the contractors accountable? The council then has to spend ratepayers money to repair the repair over and over again.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am a Manilla ratepayer and would like submit my objection to the Tamworth regional council SRV. This council headed by GM Paul Bennett has wasted money for many years on infrastructure projects stating, it is what Tamworth WANTS. I always thought the council was tasked with giving the community what it NEEDS. Now the current councillors are being told by the GM there is not enough money to maintain the infrastructure the TRC currently has. All the while pushing ahead with more wanted projects. 20 years ago, Tamworth amalgamated with Manilla, Barraba, Bendemeer, Nundle, Dungowan, and several other smaller villages. During the consultation phase of the SRV submission in these communities the Ratepayers were not asked for an opinion, they were told of the dire consequences as in reduction to basic services etc, if the TRC didn't get the SRV. (Although we pay separately for services) There was an overwhelming move against the SRV because the council management could not prove they have done anything towards cost saving. There is absolutely no transparency in this council management. The GM has convinced a majority of the councillors that the SRV is needed, although there has been an overwhelming response against the SRV from the public, the council went against the general consensus after community consultations and voted to submit the SRV much to the shock of the community. (What was the point of the community consultation?) This council needs to be AUDITED not be given the opportunity to take more money off the community. Many of which are low income earners and pensioners for nothing in return for these community members. If the SRV is granted, the money collected in rates will be concentrated in Tamworth City. And there is nothing to stop the council from raising rates on services as in water, sewerage, and waste management. Which will put more burden on the community. I hope my submission will help in iparts decision on the Tamworth regional council SRV. Thankyou.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I oppose Tamworth Regional Council's proposed 36.5% increase in rates over a two year period, which they have proposed to IPART. Tamworth regional council is not aligned with the needs of the residents, and as such have a greedy approach to funding from ratepayers, before looking within their business for savings. The proposed Special variation will cause genuine financial hardship to many within the region. It was noted from the financial reports submitted that an average of approx 12% of rates invoices reached overdue status- suggesting an already strained ratepayer income base. TRC remains financially irresponsible with their allocation of funds and spending habits within the region. I believe that they should consult closely with the community to determine actual beneficial projects and infrastructure before committing to building underutilised assets. Unprofitable pools, under-utilised sporting precinct - just to name a few. Reckless spending is also seen - \$4.5m refurbishment of a 50m stretch of street (Fitzroy plaza), not to mention a proposed inner city tree planting project at the value of \$28,000 PER TREE. The future will also be bleak with an asbestos riddled council chambers currently mothballed, awaiting significant decontamination works to make safe, all the while accruing (presumed) significant costs for housing the workforce off-site. As a businessperson with 20+ years experience, and qualifications up to an including masters level education, I find it laughable how reckless the public sector can be. I truly believe that the council should be looking internally to solve any real or perceived financial concerns they have, before simply milking the public purse for a quick fix to their problems.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Tamworth Regional Council should be forced to look at ways to deliver services without such a drastic increase. They constantly waste money on things the community does not support. They poorly manage projects likely the Jewry road extension that had to be resealed straight after completion. A councilor made a comment that the rate increase is not necessary as the council have not even explored options to reduce costs without cutting services. They hire too many high paid workers to do jobs like mowing lawns on weekends. There is a joke between council staff about how easy it is to get on overtime pay for weekends.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Our rates continually increase above inflation rates and we still receive the bare minimum of services. I pay \$900 a quarter in Council rates and I have no kerb and guttering, no town water supply and no street lights where I live on a 35 acre farm. Council management needs to be audited in regards to their budget expenditure versus actual with KPIs aligned to employee positions or they need to be replaced. Rate payers need to ensure there is accountability as many cannot afford such significant rate hikes at a time where the cost of living is hurting many.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

My family live in a basic house in Tamworth. Rates are currently close to \$3000 a year. If anything it feels like we are losing services anyway. To have to pay too much more for what we get seems ridiculous. Paying to drop green waste to the tip! No bulky waste pickup anymore. Find some savings!!!

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Hello. Thank you for this opportunity. I would like to give my feedback in 2 parts. 1st - council has found itself in this situation by the mismanagement of funds, development approvals and over extending itself with infrastructure projects. Like any family budget council needs to live within its means and not make purchases or developments that it can not afford. If inflation has been at 7% last year then the upcoming deficit in funds can only be attributed to the mismanagement of the budget. 2nd - the relationship between council, councillors and prominent local businesses needs to be looked into. Family member getting preferential treatment for development approvals, private negotiated sales of council assets(old soccer fields next to the race course) and staff of council going on holidays and social events with business people who get these preferential treatment. If council had made decisions based on good business practices instead of favouritism they would not be in a position where they cannot fund infrastructure to support developments or mismanage the sale of public owned assets.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

The rate variation is criminal. TRC can not manage the city or assets properly. Councillors need a pay cut

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

the increase places an undue burden on residents already facing financial strain, especially considering Tamworth's rates are already amongst the highest in the state, and the economic challenges resulting from recent events. I also would like to highlight concerns about the lack of transparency in whether alternative cost-saving measures were thoroughly explored before resorting to a rate increase. Additionally, I strongly have questions as to whether the proposed services or projects funded by the variation are truly essential or could be deferred to a time when the residents are not already financially strained, or re-evaluate what is important in the region and its residents.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 7 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Im a pensioner. We have a mortgage we are struggling to pay for the first time in 20 years. The residential rates and water rates are through the roof already, and we struggle to pay them, having to constantly draw from our mortgages to make payments. The special variation will mean that we wont be able to pay the rates even with the payment measures in place. We are considering selling and moving to a locality with better rates charges.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 7 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I have been working for Tamworth regional Council for the last five years previously worked 21 years for another Council and since being here I found that the management is totally incompetent all the projects that I have work worked on for years now they're wasting millions of dollars i'm talking about the construction side of the council they have people that know what to do but they will not listen to them. They listen to inexperienced people and have to do things two or three times because of inexperience or too stubborn to listen to people that know and have been doing it for 20 to 30 years The management passes the buck down to people below them, or people that have left instead of doing the right thing. All these millions of dollars could have done the proper thing and save the need for a rate rise they need an enquiry into the council to see where all these millions have been wasted would be more important Thanks [REDACTED],

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 7 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I would like to say that I'm against the special variation to rate payers. As a resident of Tamworth for about 12 years, I have seen a number of projects that Council has undertaken and the money that has been wasted in fixing and refixing certain areas. That's rate payers' money. When I first moved into my home, I was paying \$50 a week for my rates as a direct debit. This was an easy way for me to pay my rates. I'd continue to pay \$50 for some years, then Council wrote to me to say they would increase my payment to \$60. I thought and said that was a huge increase. Nothing was done and I continued to pay this amount until early this year when I received another letter from Council to say that my payments will be decreased to \$47. What the!!!! Contacted Council, which the lady that answered was quite rude to me and said, fill out the new form by a specific date. Asked her have I been paying too much for my rates? Said that I had paid all of February, when it was early January.... this Council really needs to be investigated. Other residents had received the similar information about what they have paid and how their rates decreased... everyone is feeling the pressure of the cost of living, except the Council. I just hope this Council will be audited. There are a lot of residents in and around surrounding areas of Tamworth. What are they doing with all the money?

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 7 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

This rate variation request has already been vehemently opposed by local residents, as evidenced by the overwhelmingly negative feedback council received even 'consulting' the community. Council disregarded submissions from the community in regard to the timing of this variation request. We are currently in a cost of living crisis which has seen a rapid increase in the number of people seeking government and community housing due to the increase in house prices and rent prices. With the recent surges in housing and rental prices, why would council think now is an appropriate time to create even more financial pressure on those in the rental market? The cost of an increase in rates will undoubtedly be passed on to tenants, many of which will not be able to afford the increase. There is a time and a place to be increasing rates to accommodate long term budgets, now is absolutely not it. This increase will hurt families if it goes ahead, and the priority of council should be the well-being of its most vulnerable community members. 97% of the community responded to council's request for submissions with a nay vote; that should be enough to override the 7 councillors who want this.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 8 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am writing to put my objection to the rate variation that TRC is applying for. I feel that this rate variation is over the top especially with how the economy is at the moment. Unfortunately TRC seems to have abandoned small towns in their Shire. I have lived in Manilla for over 50 years and have never seen it look so sad. I live behind Rotary Park and love taking my grandchildren to the park for picnics or just to play on the equipment and watch the fish in the fountain. In the past 12 months pigeons have taken over the area and it is very unclean. The sitting area has been destroyed and the fountain needs lots of work. Have contacted TRC several times and they give it a Band-Aid fix. Years ago the park would always be filled with families or children having birthday parties, not so anymore. They have been promising to update our welcome signs to the town for several years. Seems all our rate money gets spent in Tamworth on things that are not essential. Our main roads are dreadful. They need to listen to the people in the smaller towns. Our back lane is disgusting, once upon a time the shops were empty up our end of town but now there are lots of shops and they all drive up the back lane to park behind their shops - dont begrudge them that but Council needs to update the lane for extra traffic. Water is a precious commodity and our water pipes need flushing every couple of weeks so we can use it. Needs to be fixed so we dont shower in stinking brown water. I know this sounds like they might need to apply for more rates but they need to prioritise what they spend their money on.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 8 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Rates are already high, cost of living is high. Tamworth council are doing less with out money and taking away services and want an insane 33% increase in rates. We live 40mins out of town... the only service we get is bin pick up. In the recent floods 2 years ago we got no support. In fact Tamworth council couldn't even update their records properly to include our phone number in the Dyngowan Dam watch list when we bought our property... so we didn't get a the warning when they opened the dam and flooded half of our property costing us tens of thousands of dollars in clean up and fencing and we almost lost our livestock. I chased them for 2 months until they could figure out and confirm they added my number correctly to the warning list. Until they can show better stewardship with the huge amount of money they are getting they do not deserve more. Tamworth council is also failing to provide reasonable car parking in the middle of town. There are so many businesses where staff need to park to get to work, customers need to be able to enter and use a business, and barely any carparks. They are making basically all the carpark spaces paid parking. It is getting impossible for me to find a park within 500m of an emergency service where I work, and I have had to walk back to my car uphill alone in the dark as a very pregnant woman. I tried to go to the dentist the other day. There was paid parking in the whole street and surrounding streets. I had to pay for 3 hours parking as I didnt know how long the dentist would be, and I ended up being in there for 30mins. Every other parking meter is also broken. Council need to prioritise maintenance before adding new equipment. They need to support small business by providing free or very cheap effective parking so people will stop and spend money. The amount of times i have given up going to businesses as I didn't have the time or energy to find a park, and find a working parking meter, and spend more money to check if a shop has what i need, or to browse for a gift. So shops are losing out. Try parking like this 10 times with a brand new baby, with kids, heavily pregnant, unwell, diabled or elderly. It is not working, it is not fair. We already pay very good money for our rates and we want tp see them improve the existing infrastructure and provisions befre we could entrust the council with more money.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 9 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Please do not approve Tamworth council rate rise. They continue to waste money, rate payers money and it has to stop. Rather than rate increases they need to start managing money better like Tamworth residents are forced to do.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 9 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

This proposal will harm the welfare of many TRC residents and I am concerned about their capacity to pay. I fear that if this increase is approved, it will be business as usual, because NO significant savings, efficiencies or cuts have been made to the Council organisation despite the assurances made by Councils leadership. Our council needs a focus on getting back to basics and prioritising core statutory service delivery.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 9 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I dont believe raising the rates is the best idea for tamworth at the moment, people are struggling to make rent and ends meet, and this will only make it harder which will result in the crime rate going higher and we already have one highest crime rates in the state and increasing costs will only make the situation worse

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 9 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

This council is irresponsible. They want to live a "Champagne lifestyle on a Beer budget". Most of which involves self promotion and personal agendas and interests. If and when they focus and deliver on the core objectives of a regional council, then the running costs will decrease accordingly. This council needs a clean out of both elected councillors and the grossly overpaid and under performing senior staff. The General Manager is a total waste of space. Perfectly exemplified by the fact they now require a 36% rate increase to continue digging a deeper hole. Where was the GM's financial guidance and counselling ??? I'm an aged pensioner. If this rate increase is approved, MORE than a quarter of my pension will go towards council rates. I will have no choice other than to refuse to pay. Why should I have to sell my home and move to somewhere outside of Tamworth just because the irresponsible [REDACTED] who run council can not live within their means ??? And the final straw to that,,, I am in stage 5 renal failure, I'm on dialysis. If I have to move to Werris Creek or similar, will council be providing a vehicle to come and pick me up at 6.00am the drop me at the hospital. Then pick me up at 12.00pm and return me home,,, THREE DAYS PER WEEK ????? Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays ??? I think not. So regardless of council's application and your decision, I'm staying right where I am, and NOT paying a single cent more to do so.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 9 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

The variation that Council seeks is a significant one especially at a time when a lot of people are already heavily affected by the rising costs of living. It seems that Council are expecting rate payers to pay additional rates to compensate for the shortcomings in the day to day running of Council and the lack of financial awareness that this council has. A rate rise this significant seems outlandish at best. Imagine if every other council requested a similar rate rise, would you allow that if it was state wide, or would there be state wide outrage. I'm thinking the latter option would be the case. Our council seem to do a really good job of spending the money without looking at improving the efficiencies and outcomes of the money they are already spending.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 9 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I object to TRCs special variation to Rates. As a landlord who is paying of 3 unit blocks, at high rates interest rates, providing accommodation to 17 tenants, the increase to each of these rates cannot be passed down on to tenants without making rents unaffordable. These rate increases in the current economic climate are irresponsible for a council. These increases equate to over \$12000.00 for us as landlords, on top of 7.5% interest rates.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 9 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Our council constantly wastes money by fixing roads that dont need fixing and ignoring the areas that do yet they want more money from us. Already our budgets are full from every other avenue without our pays going up so another bill going up with increase homelessness, close down shops that people cant afford to shop in anymore and much more. We have 3 working adults in our home and we are struggling, 99% of our incomes seem to go to bills with nothing left for fun or pleasure, no wonder suicide is also going up, what is there to live for and what future is there for our children. Thanks for helping with the cost of living crisis like you promised [REDACTED]

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I live in a small village which falls within TRC jurisdiction. TRC is rarely, if ever, proactive within our village. Volunteers mow all council maintained areas. The only time they are ever seen is when there is a special occasion on in one of their parks. It takes multiple submissions, often for many years, and by many members of our community, to get anything in the village fixed or maintained. We pay our rates, as does everyone else, for what feels like very little. An extra rate rise for our community, and the wider TRC area, is a low act in a cost of living crisis when the council is already bolstered by so many under appreciated volunteers. The council should perhaps look to minimise spending on other unneeded projects and their councillors salaries rather than take money from already struggling community members.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

As a landowner at Loomberah I am opposed to a Special Variation Rate proposal that would personally increase our payment by \$300 yearly. This is too stiff an increase at a time when cost of living and drought are already putting pressure on Tamworth ratepayers. I fail to see how this fits TRC's plan of creating a "resilient community"! Why has Tamworth Regional Council spent an exorbitant amount of money on an independent consultant to come up with the solution of a 36.3 per cent over two years rate increase? What guarantee have we got that TRC is managing money efficiently when we get hit with such a phenomenal proposal? Why should ratepayers be the sole contributors to future projects when TRC apparently failed to apply for grant funding when they had the opportunity? Otherwise why would we be in this situation? TRC doesn't look at ways of saving money by cutting on current expenditures. TRC seems intent on chasing up costly fanciful unnecessary projects (lagoon in drought prone Tamworth, skywalk rather than better road maintenance, new performing arts centre when existing facilities aren't running at full capacity.)? The management of current assets also leads to further questions, as demonstrate the saga revolving around the fate of Ray Walsh House. It's a public asset that was going to be refurbished or possibly demolished but now could be sold to a developer at a fraction of its value. While we have been issued with a "fact" sheet re SRV proposal, there is no link to cost of future projects or future TRC revenue so residents would have a better idea of how TRC actually plan their budget. Shouldn't this be supplied? Questionable lack of transparency. Maybe rather than cutting services if the SRV is not approved, TRC could function like any other business and plan operations on the income they have: prioritizing necessary services and outsourcing grants to fund other projects. Despite 97% of ratepayers, who lodged a submission, to voice their opposition to the proposed SRV, 7 out of 9 Councillors disregarded public opinion and voted to apply for a rate increase. According to me that's 7 Councillors who don't seem to apply logic to our current conundrum, fail to listen to the population they are meant to represent and instead blindly trust one supposedly independent consultant's advice. Is community consultation only a box ticking exercise for these 7 Councilors and TRC's General Manager? I do hope that IPART will scrutinize how Paul Bennet, TRC's General Manager, has been handling finances for our region. Rate payers deserve transparency and accountability! Thank you. Regards, [REDACTED]

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am writing to inform you that the proposed rate increase is a step too far ,during this time in our economy. It's is simply unaffordable. If you have to reduce services ,then this needs to happen. Thank you [REDACTED].

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I feel this is unfair and with the living and cost crisis happening at the moment, it is going to make living in my home very hard after we have worked so hard to be able to buy our home etc. very disappointed in councils decision. Where will this extra money be spent? There seems to be a lot of charges for not much gain these days and it just makes them very greedy. I say no to the rate rise on already struggling families.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

The rate increase requested by Tamworth council is crippling. As medium wage earners looking after a large family we would not be able to meet the rates payments each quarter. We would need to take on extra job or not be present for our children when it is most needed while they are young. Instead we would have to find care which is already at capacity and again very costly. This rate increase would disadvantage the region and turn future residents from moving here. The implications of that would be even more detrimental to the region.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

We live 7kms out of town . All we get is our garbage collected ! No water , horrible roads and my son can not access any of the youth services cause the do not cater for people with disabilities! The rubbish we drive by everyday is horrible! Families are at braking pt ! Why should we do this it will break many in the community and we see nothing for our dollars

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

The proposed rate rise, whilst advertised as a 'fair' rate, is absolutely absurd. In the current economy everyone is more than aware that most households are unable to keep up with their everyday household bills as it is let alone 36.3% increase in residential land rates and this doesn't even include annual user charges. How does council expect people to now cut yet other essential items out of their budget to pay for their land rates. What should they exclude from their budget? Food? Power? Give the Tamworth community a bloody break. We are the highest proposed rate increase in our region. To be honest our council spends money on frivolous things where necessary things are neglected. Instead of welcoming people to our region you will be driving them out. I'm sorry but the councillors....you people....are a bunch of [REDACTED] if you let this proceed

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

This increase is very high, especially considering council seems to be profitable and has a very strong balance sheet as per their own financial statements. Families are struggling enough due to the cost of living crisis.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Hello, My family are unsure how we will be able to pay and afford the proposed rate rise. We can barely afford to pay our bills as it is. We are finding it already so difficult due to inflation. Do not hit families with this rise. You have the choice, make the right one.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Such a high increase is not justified. Paying bills is hard enough at the moment, there are thousands of families who cannot afford this.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

The councils proposed rate rise has come at a time where many residents are struggling with the cost of living increase. This will push many people beyond their level of affordability. Living in the small community of Kootingal, I cannot justify the rate rise as the facilities and areas of our town are substandardly maintained. Parks are old and run down, grassed areas are regularly overgrown, some main roads do not even have curb and guttering. The paddock at the end of my street is regularly overgrown. If council want to increase rates, they need to start putting back into the small communities that fall under TRC, not just Tamworth itself. The local pool is only open for short hours of an afternoon, limiting access for families with young children to take their children swimming in the morning, when it is cooler.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I think council should be looking in their own backyard and cut costs where possible, the absolute waste of our money on things such as getting cars detailed costing hundreds, why can't the lazy [REDACTED] that are allocated a car clean it themselves, on certain road jobs in Tamworth I've noticed a council owned watercart sitting idle as well as graders when sub contractors machines are being used like what the [REDACTED], this council is a joke the way they waste our money enough is enough I'm sure a rate rise inevitable but NOT 36%

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Having moved from the Central Coast to Tamworth some years ago we were shocked with the high cost of Tamworth town Rates. Rates in and around the immediate Tamworth area are still 2-3 times the suburban rates of the Central Coast when there are less services offered and less public facilities to provide/maintain here in regional NSW. I strongly protest the currently proposed huge rate increase. How will people cope with such an increase when so many are barely making ends meet now? Social, financial, emotional damage done by such a huge increase in Rates will outweigh any benefit! Common sense, good judgement, and human decency needs to prevail.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

To whom it may concern, the idea of an over 30% increase on our rates is unfathomable. In the current financial climate I would hope you'd consider making this easier on families and reducing the increase. Surely you can stagger it over a few years rather than a massive hit in one go. Sincerely a very concerned born and raised Tamworth citizen.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

With the cost of living increasing and wages staying the same how can normal rate payers be expected to cover all these extra costs? The councilers no doubt will get a payrise also. We now pay for everything with council. We used to have free large waste collection and free green waste at the tip. Now we pay for it all. The council is meant to work for us not cost us. If Tamworth council increases rates and associated costs this will push families below the poverty line.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

We vote NO. Doesnt mean it will be NO forever but give your shareholders a break, the cost of living is at breaking point and you will drive away locals to bring in immigrants. We vote NO.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am against the proposed increase in rates. With the cost of living crisis this is untimely and completely unnecessary. It will put too much pressure on ours and alot of other people's budgets.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I strongly object to TRC intention to increase our rates. The amount they are wanting to increase is an exorbitant amount, totally in excess of what one would call reasonable.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

As a 1 income household who is very much struggling at the moment Im a bricklayer by trade so yes I do work hard for my money this rate increase would just take the little bit of money Im trying to put away each week for a rainy day I only get my bins emptied once a month but I dont ask for a discount and the roads around my house are absolutely terrible so dont put the rates up until you can fix a few things around town and not spend money on stupid ██████ like new trees that cost \$27,000 each tree

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am against this rate variation as the Tamworth council continue to waste the money they already get. Instead of building bigger structures around Tamworth replacing buildings that are already adequate they should stick to basics like maintaining the roads and providing water and waste facilities. An example of their extravagance is building AELEC and moving Tamworth Show from the showground to AELEC. This has ruined the annual show costing people more to exhibit and attend. Attendance is down now and instead of being the Royal of the North the show is smaller and only goes for two days. This has been caused by the council and their extravagance. With the rising cost of living which is causing everyone to cut back on their spending, why can't the council do the same. If our rates are increased where is everyone going to find the extra money to pay the new fees. All those with mortgages are already under pressure without this grab for money.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Good evening, I wish to write to you about the special rate variation that TRC wishes to implement. I work at the local hospital in the emergency department as a nurse, and I fear the rate increase will have extraordinarily negative impacts on our community that will continue to flow on through the generations. Families are doing it tough. The cost of living, fresh fruit and vegetables, fuel prices and general needs (electricity etc) have risen markedly in the last 12 months. We are seeing more and more unwell patients through our doors due to these factors. Not being able to provide a satisfactory diet to loved ones, neglect in a family due to financial constraints, increase in domestic violence, homelessness. I can go on for hours. In the 2023 winter season, we saw an increase in presentations of cold sepsis in the elderly due to their inability to afford heating in their home. One lady told me she was on a payment plan from her last winter so now she doesn't have heating as she cannot afford it. She had a 6 day stay in hospital as she further developed a hospital acquired infection. This is avoidable. The rate increase will hurt all members of our community and the local services that work tirelessly to help. Considerations should be made due to our rural funding for community services to adequately serve the population who will be directly impacted by a simple rate rise. Services that have 9 month wait lists, services that are only available Mon-Fri 9-5, services that require GP referrals (which mind you, are now costing individuals \$100 for a GP appointment!). The flow on affect will hurt everyone. Please do not allow this to be passed. Tamworth and surrounds will hurt.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Whilst an under funded Tamworth Regional Council can justify an overseas trip for a water conference in the USA. Tamworth ratepayers are struggling to make ends meet in a record high cost of living crisis A 36%+ special rate variation increase is to ratepayers unsustainable. Tamworth Regional Council are out of touch!

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Rates in the tamworth region are already extravagant enough especially with interest rates and the costs of living. This extreme rate rise is not necessary and is just a means to give pay rises to those members of council. The infrastructure and roads in tamworth have been in a poor state for years and arent being fixed properly with rates. Everything is increasing with no benefit being given to tamworth regional council residents across the area. This needs a stop put it now as tamworth council are greedy and charge more for doing less. I strongly apose this rate rise from Tamworth regional council.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Tamworth regional council should be audited on their activities. They are operating a major annual ten + day event, that rate payers should not have to foot the bill for. How much does it actually cost to hold this event? Many employees are on \$200k a year and TRC hire their mates, usually unqualified. Openly managing funds wastefully. They won't share with rate payers where all the income is allocated. My rates are \$2,600 p.a. and they introduce fees within my rates that shouldnt be there. And TRC are removing services, one being the annual 'rubbish on the curb for collection' where every other city has this and the town is unkempt, main street seating disgusting with graffiti, main street pavements filthy and slippery in winter, tree pruning throughout the city forgotten. City water disgusting. TRC need to operate as a business for the community and not an events platform for tourists. I do not support the rate increase. Thank you. [REDACTED].

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

an increase of such a large amount is awful, especially for a local council who do little to nothing for the actual people that live here. the money paid is spent on 80k metal statue that is considered a local eyesore. the community in tamworth and surrounds are already struggling as it is, especially the younger generations who have moved out of home. the minimum wage, cost of every other bill rising now the council rates is hard to keep up with, and will lead to many more cases of mental illness. it should be highly re-considered to ensure everyone is looked after fairly, not just the council men with heavily lined pockets.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Tamworth residents have had countless services removed all while being charged extra and now we will be charged to the point of near homelessness. Council have made zero effort to cut costs, instead they continue to charge the already struggling ratepayers more. This increase must not be approved.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I strongly object to this proposal due to already exorbitant rates in our area and cost of living pressures on the greater community at large. Council is generally poorly regarded by its constituents regarding councils expenditure and this proposal is beyond what many residents can pay.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I am writing to express my concern regarding Tamworth Regional Council's proposed rate increase of 36.3%. This substantial hike, set to take effect on 01/07/24, is a significant burden for many of us, especially considering the anticipated rise in annual user charges that will accompany it. For those on fixed incomes or already grappling with the pressures of the cost of living, this increase could have severe financial implications. Like many,, I am personally affected by this proposal. The thought of our community members struggling to meet these heightened costs is distressing. It is crucial that our voices are heard and that the council reconsiders the magnitude of this increase. I urge the Independent Pricing And Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to look at our concerns for a more reasonable rate adjustment to ensure that our Tamworth community remains affordable and inclusive for all. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I don't believe Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) has proven it has cut costs. I also feel that given the increases in the cost of living we are currently dealing with this increase in rates will cripple families financially. I believe the survey TRC has used for consultation is suggesting a reduction in services that survey participants have to tick if they object to the rate rise. This is inappropriate. I am concerned that our local councillors, with the exception of Mark Ronda and another who voted against the increase, are not considering their constituents at all.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Why would a local council want to increase our rates when so many are already struggling to pay their bills. Our council has made some ridiculous decisions in the past few years and cut back services like bulk collections. NO RATE RISE WHILE PEOPLE ARE STRUGGLING

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Unfair and unrealistic submission from Council given the huge cost of living that all rate payers and renters have already experience over the last year few years. How many Tamworth residents get an income increase that comes close to matching the asking rate rise? Submission needs to be rejected in its entirety not just reduced to half which I expect is the councils true rate hike figure and still unfair and unrealistic the current economic climate

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Im a self employed single parent raising two children and the cost of living and the drop in my clientele due to their cost of living has already impacted my financial position dramatically. I am in a lot better position than most people but a 36.3% rate rise will cripple me to a point that I will not be able to afford the basic necessities of raising my children. I ask on behalf of many that you please consider an independent review of the Tamworth Regional Councils proposed rate rise and their spendings as I believe this 36.3% rate rise to be nothing more than a greedy council who cant manage the communities monies and dont listen to what the people who pay their wages are asking. At the same meeting that the Tamworth Regional Council approved this rate rise they also approved a 6% pay rise for themselves. Tamworth and its region is growing so fast with more and more sub divisions and housing popping up what seems like monthly, surely with all the extra rates they are receiving from these sub divisions, which might I add are small blocks squished onto land that was previously zoned for bigger blocks, surely they are receiving more rates and therefore there is no need for this rate rise. Tamworth Regional Council wastes so much of the ratepayers money on white elephants like the wire sculpture in a local park, the velodrome and sporting complexes (now the original sports grounds and infrastructure arent used) these things suit a minority group. We as rate payers havent asked for this and even if we do object at the council meetings the Council doesnt listen and just moves ahead with this senseless spending of millions of our dollars. It seems the current councillors and Mayer have no consideration and dont want to listen or negotiate with the ratepayers. From just one struggling mother I beg of you to please knock this 36.3% rate rise on the head before it cripples our town.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Please review the special variation rate rise that TRC is imposing on the rate payers. I dont believe it is truly justified as many of the projects TRC claims it is needed for come with significant federal grants. Plus there has been no real attempt to cut spending in other areas, or at least they havent shown evidence of this before imposing this rise.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

How with the cost of living and low wages can the council think that residents like myself that can barely keep heads above water pay this kind of increase the way the council have gone about this is so wrong and against ipart guidelines. PART can approve a percentage increase to minimum rates above the statutory limit that differs from the proposed special variation percentage increase as long as the council has justified and properly consulted on that percentage. Please TRC show that Tamworth Regional Council has justified it. Ive not received any justification of note in the mail so I dont see how there is any justification. Furthermore when I was to voice concerns through the TRC app I had to tick a box to say if I opposed what services I understood would be lost. That in itself opposes free engagement as Im sure people backed away from opposition. PART can approve a percentage increase to minimum rates above the statutory limit that differs from the proposed special variation percentage increase as long as the council has justified and properly consulted on that percentage. Please TRC show that Tamworth Regional Council has justified it. Ive not received any justification of note in the mail so I dont see how there is any justification. Furthermore when I was to voice concerns through the TRC app I had to tick a box to say if I opposed what services I understood would be lost. That in itself opposes free engagement as Im sure people backed away from opposition. IPART can approve a percentage increase to minimum rates above the statutory limit that differs from the proposed special variation percentage increase as long as the council has justified and properly consulted on that percentage. Please TRC show that Tamworth Regional Council has justified it. Ive not received any justification of note in the mail so I dont see how there is any justification. Furthermore when I was to voice concerns through the TRC app I had to tick a box to say if I opposed what services I understood would be lost. That in itself opposes free engagement as Im sure people backed away from opposition. Under the guidelines it says ipart can approve a SRV if the council has shown Justification. Tamworth council havent shown any justification the only thing that is guaranteed is the councils pay rises they award every year. This SRV is just a money grab from Tamworth Council

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 10 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Rate increase is not appropriate. TRC wastes a lot of ratepayer money on ill considered projects that have little or no benefit on the populace in general, TRC needs to be able to explain to the ratepayers what the increase covers until then my response is to say no.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 11 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I consider the proposed Tamworth Regional Councils proposed rate increase of 36.3 % to be totally outrageous & unaffordable for the majority of the affected residents. My general rates are already \$4,074.42 plus other service fees of \$2,001.00, a total of \$6,075.42 which is currently a struggle to find never lone an extra 36.3% increase on top of that plus yearly increases in service fees. We estimate in 25/26 well be paying approximately \$5,552.41 just in general rates plus the increased service fees which are totally unsustainable for us & the majority of other residents we have spoken to & will force many people to sell up & relocate to a more responsible cost efficient council. Ratepayers havent been shown justification for above acceptable rate rises. Its time the Tamworth Councillors listen to the ratepayers & cut back or postpone some of their proposed outrageously expensive infrastructure such as the Aquatic Centre which we dont require due to already having two perfectly good Olympic Pool complexes plus many more dream projects. Times are tough & we all need to tighten our belts until the economy recovers from the current slump & that includes Tamworth Council to cut back expenses where possible & postpone any unnecessary new infrastructure. I urge IPART to look at the concerns of the vast majority of Tamworth ratepayers for a more reasonable rate adjustment to ensure our rating system is affordable & inclusive for all. After speaking to many other residents whom are all very angry & concerned about the rate increase proposal the majority seem to consider a rate rise equal to inflation would be a more acceptable & fairer proposal.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 11 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Following consecutive wage freezes post-COVID, coupled with a mere 2 percent annual wage increment and the impact of inflation, I find myself in the worst position of my life to handle substantial rate hikes. It would seem morally and ethically imperative to initiate an audit of the council's financial management over the relevant past period and evaluate the current body's capacity to navigate future challenges before justifying a special variation in the current economic climate.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 11 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Tamworth rate payers already paid some of the highest rates in NSW. The council never save on costs for any thing it always seems to be more

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 11 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I believe the Tamworth council 36% rate rise has not been justified or proven in anyway to be necessary. Especially to be such an exorbitant amount which with the cost of groceries and amenities constantly going up with no wage increase to make the price of living affordable for the average family will lead to people losing there homes Im sure. I would like for the council to be transparent in what this increase would mean for us rate payers and also previous cost cutting measure they have supposedly taken already.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 11 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I dont believe this council has the residents of Tamworth best interests at the forefront of their agenda

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 11 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

If I understand the effect of the approval TRC's submission, my rates for an average suburban property within the Tamworth city limits will increase between \$850-1000. Exactly what extra services or what improvements to existing services will be available to me for this extra expense? When my employee pay increase was around 3%, the Living Cost Index (LCI) increase for employees over the last 12 months was 6.9%, how can the TRC possibility justify a rate rise of 38%? Where do they imagine this money will come from? TRC should provide residents with detailed documentation on what cost cutting has been undertaken already, what services will be affected if rate rises occur at the normal level, and what possible justification there could be for a rate rise 6x larger than normal or expected.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 11 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

Those in the position of deciding this increase is necessary need to have a well overdue performance review. If the council was run like a proper business there would be savings to be had by trimming some fat from the top management positions if they did not perform.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

People in Tamworth 2340 already can't afford to live while we watch our mayor wine and dine. A rate rise will force more people into poverty. There needs to be a commission into where council is wasting money. The amount of extra houses being built here should be enough to help with the extra money needed. It's a disgrace to expect people to afford this. You're KILLING people

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Please write your submission below:

I implore IPART to really think about Tamworth Regional Council's application and the rate payers of TRC before approving this application. The TRC community research project alone shows that the council is not truly, actively seeking feedback from their ratepayers. If they were, they would look at online surveys, etc rather than outdated phone surveys. The documentation TRC have provided a party of their submission have clearly left out the surrounding areas of Tamworth in their policies. They talk about our culture but after white settlement came to Australia, Tamworth was built and funded by the agricultural community, and still is to this day. With this being the case, why isn't there support for the agricultural community in their documentation? Rather, it is focused on the community of Tamworth city along. TRC has an opportunity to review their zoning to be more fair with increases made to some specific areas to bring them up to the exorbitant rates done in Tamworth are already paying. I would encourage IPART to suggest this to TRC rather than raising all rates. TRC rates are already very high in comparison to other regional towns, yet TRC are reluctant to inform the community where our funds are being spent. An independent audit is required of our council and our councillors before they are given any more money to squander on poorly designed roads and unwanted infrastructure for the minority. The ratepayers need to see the current rate money spent wisely before we will have any faith that additional funds will go towards quality work our community needs rather fluff and bubble to make our councillors look 'fancy'! The funding from rates is already increasing at a rapid rate with many subdivisions progressing. TRC should live within their means if they expect their rate payers to do the same. TRCs priority should be to look after locals first.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

This increase will see investors and home owners leaving the region, to areas with more affordable living. It will severely impact lower income owners and pensioners who are just holding onto their homes with the interest rate rises and cost of current cost of living. As a potential investor looking to invest soon, I will not invest in Tamworth if this goes ahead. This will ultimately exasperate the rental shortage in the area for affordable housing. As a farmer, we are already struggling with interest rates and the current economic climate. Give us a break. The council needs to look at the expenditure and potential cuts, instead of trying to fleece the residents of their hard earned income.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 13 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

1 -The proposed rate increased is being put up as required for repairing Tamworth's roads. I question why are they short of funds to do this, because the road network as not increased, but the rate income from the many new homes and subdivisions in Tamworth has grown considerably over recent years. As developers pay for new infrastructure in these subdivisions the main areas that council need to maintain the arterial roads and they are currently not much better than a goat track and they already receive the extra rates. 2- A three bedroom home in Camden NSW , current rates on that property are almost half of what a two bedroom apartment in Tamworth. 3-Also I question why Tamworth Council are involved /funding an industrial subdivision would this be better left to developers. 4- Councils involvement in managing infrastructure such as Equine Centre , Entertainment Center , Sports dome, Theatres are also a drain on councils funds, time and core business. 5- I am sure that there could be savings the organizational structure if the council went back to focusing on their core business.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 14 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Pensioner, cannot afford rates rise tabled. Tamworth Regional Council is not making sensible decisions in light of the current cost rises. Councillors seem to be above the constituents and take an autocratic manner in dealing with issues. Council goes ahead with unnecessary projects and do not complete their core responsibility of safety for residents and adequate attention to the exploding housing estates being approved with no footpaths, school safety crossings and roads for increasing heavy traffic in growing areas, but then spend huge amounts on artifacts, projects that never come to fruition.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 15 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

This is a cost imposition that will be very difficult for ratepayers to manage. Council should instead be looking at better cost saving measures as any other business or household would when facing difficult economic times. As a salary earner I cannot simply say to my employer (which ratepayers are effectively to councillors and council workers) that I need more money so they must provide it. State governments should also be more responsible in regional areas given the much larger road networks and the smaller ratepayer base. An example of poor decision making can be made about the pipe dream of a large aquatic centre and huge redevelopments, as opposed to simple upkeep of existing facilities. This should have to pass more than 9 councillors to be enacted. This kind of spending puts heavy burdens on council budgets and does not necessarily fit with what locals want. Further, creating a new staff position with an advertised salary of \$80 000 just to look at getting funding for such a build is one example of a cost saving which could have occurred. This council is openly ignoring the view of its ratepayers in seeking this rate rise as local polling suggests that 97% of ratepayers are opposed.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 15 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

This Rate increase is ridiculous people are struggling, council needs to cut costs in house. Overpaid managers lazy workforces. 36% is criminal

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Friday, 15 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Good evening, I write opposed to the rates increase proposed by Tamworth Regional Council. Our rates in Tamworth are already very high for a residential block at 3000 per year. With the high cost of living, this will put unbearable financial strain of households and businesses. Please don't allow this Increase. Council are putting poor management of their current funds onto rate payers when they should work out how to use funds and resources more efficiently.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 16 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I would like to put forward my submission in regard to Tamworth council's intention to increase rates. Since moving to Tamworth in 2005 I have not yet seen evidence of a council that listens to the needs of its community and more often blatantly ignoring their rate paying residents and businesses. Tamworth has some of the highest rates in NSW yet they are unable to provide quality services in many instances. In recent times they have taken away the bi annual curb side pick up and also increased tip fees and charges. With a population that is continuing to grow therefore providing for more rates payers I fail to see the justification in needing to raise the rates by such a dramatic increase as the amount of rate payers is already increasing anyway. This outrageous increase is only going to increase pressure on the residents and business's of the Tamworth community. It has the potential to cause business's to close and residents to leave town as they can no longer sustain the cost of living in this great town. We have a great community here if only our council would listen to what their community want. Sadly the notice of meetings regarding the proposed increase was very poorly advertised, many residents not getting the notice until after the meeting date had passed! A reflection of the way the council is managed. Rather than an increase in rates I think it would be more beneficial to have the council budget and expenses reviewed to see exactly why they are not able to manage their finances with in means of the income council receive. I've never done this sort of thing before but I hope that I have covered relevant points for the purpose of the review. Yours sincerely and with great concern a rate paying resident.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 16 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Dart IPART, As a community member I feel the evidence of need and purpose for the rate increases have not been well communicated with the public. The input from the 872 survey responders is not likely to be reflective of the wider community and note the limited time and avenues for feedback. While a forecast of costs has been provided, there is no evidence on demonstrating appropriate efficiencies of maintenance of assets to a benchmark over previous years leading to the backlog of maintenance. This is would add value to understanding why such a large increase is needed. Also while general increases to costs to council have been communicated, nothing specific to community as examples has been communicated that Ive heard. It states in the proposal the economic status of some LGAs within the council area likely to be less able to afford the increases - while pension \$50 rebates will be made available it does not provide for others in the council area with a fixed income to absorb the costs. A specific initiative to accommodate costs increases for these LGAs and others on fixed income that are not pensioners needs further consideration and action so not further disadvantaged.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Saturday, 16 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

My concern as a renter that the increase will make investors increase rates in this cost of living crisis. From what I can understand it is not for infrastructure or roads but a skywalk, a wading pool and other things the town don't want. 99 percent of people voted against this so I think that says it all. Thankyou

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 17 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Tamworth Regional Councils consultation has been near non-existent. The information presented on Councils website as part of their consultation (<https://haveyoursay.tamworth.nsw.gov.au/srv>) does not match the information submitted to IPART. My main concerns with the proposed special rate variation are (SRV):

1. The information presented during Councils consultation does not include costings or timeframes for any projects proposed to be funded by the SRV.
2. The proposed special rate variation is permanent but nearly one third of the funds are earmarked for one off projects. It would be inappropriate to permanently collect funds to deliver one off capital projects. Council does not appear to know what the SRV will fund after the current list of vanity projects is complete.
3. Councils transport asset management plan appears to be the main reason for the SRV but it was not included on councils website as part of their consultation.
4. Councils transport asset management plan points to Climate change and stormwater as likely causes of poor road condition but stormwater drainage upgrade and maintenance is not touched on. The stormwater asset management plan has not been submitted to IPART. Stormwater renewal has not been included in the SRV despite being part of the solution to extend the useful life of roads and reduce roads expenditure. The amount of money proposed to be spent on roads renewal should not be supported without significant spending on stormwater drainage upgrade and renewal. High profile projects should not be funded out of a permanent special rate variation.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Sunday, 17 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Firstly, this application did not receive a unanimous vote in favour by councillors. Council rates are not an equitable tax because residents receive varying degrees of benefit ranging from very little to a considerable amount. I am a farmer paying considerable rates and receiving very little in return. Our rates are in the vicinity of \$24000.00 so an increase of 33.33% means an increase of \$8000.00 which is a sizeable amount. Our benefits are very little because our main road the Oxley Highway I believe is a State Highway. The majority of the farming community receives very little benefit but pays very dearly. Roads are supposed to be one of councils core responsibilities but in this area the maintenance and repair is extremely poor of all the country roads. Our council seems much happier spending a lot of money in town on frivolous projects boosting their egos. Tamworth Council seems hell bent on increasing the number of residents to 100000 and in doing so are neglecting the requirements of the existing residents. Bigger does not mean better and in fact the existing residents are putting a strain on all public services. The drinking water is of very poor quality, the sewage system is old and failing and the roads are in a very poor state of repair. Tamworth Regional Council is failing to maintain its efficiencies and is becoming very inefficient in managing its workforce. Governments including councils are taking less responsibilities for the maintenance of its assets and passing this responsibilities to ratepayers to ensure that work is done. The main area in which we are effected is with the bio security which is basically non existent although this is perhaps the States responsibility on the road sides, major harbour for pest animals and weeds. The Council is encouraging new businesses without due consideration for the extra traffic that this creates. An example in this region is the chicken industry. They have farms scattered all around the area thus are putting huge pressure on the country lanes with masses of heavy truck movements every day. As a consequence they wreck the road for everyone else that uses the road. We are finding it harder to enjoy any of the benefits of our city and believe that users are the people who should be the people paying. It is getting harder to find workers who are prepared to work and set a good standard. Most small businesses cannot compete with the wages mines and government bodies pay who do not expect a high standard of achievement yet have very good conditions. I believe councils need to realise they are using public money and must get back to their core responsibilities and leave the rest to private enterprise. They also need to be much more open and transparent with the use of public money. There are so many projects declared confidential that I believe they hide behind which causes much distrust. The Effluent Reuse Scheme in Tamworth is a classic example of this. It is in direct competition with farmers in what it buys and sells but no one can get any information on how it functions. In the past when Tamworth was a separate council and Parry was the surrounding council the respective ratepayers were served much more equitably, now all the money goes into the city and very little comes out to the region and villages. Tamworth Council must work within its present budget, as all its ratepayers have to do, and stop pleading to other levels of government to support their wastefulness and lack of economic management. Thank you for your time. Regards [REDACTED]

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Rather than raising rates, start looking at cheaper options. I have spoken with people that have worked for the council both on wages and by contract, and one thing they all have in common is that they are aware that the council is a gravy train. Every single person seems to have a huge amount of knowledge on how to take tamworth council for every last penny. They know they can over charge because the people making decisions seem to have done 0 research on what things should cost. While its a problem taht people are taking advantage, its an even bigger problem that the people in position to hire these companies are oblivious or dont care. Cut some red tape and let people get through kobs quickly rather than an endless charade of paperwork and approvals costing time and money before a shovel even hits dirt or a road repair truck leaves a driveway. Our rates going up while services go down is outrageous, large trash pickuo leaving is absurd when so many people dont have the means to do a tip run. Retreiving tip vouchers is a convoluted mess and would be dam near impossible for anyone thats even a little computer illiterate. If we must have a rate rise, bring some comforts back. There are alot of simple people that pay the rates in this town and they're being forgotten. I should say, i am computer literate, i do have a ute and am perfectly able to do my own tip runs etc. So my complaint here is not personal, its just ridiculous to look out at so many people asking for help for things that our xouncil had always provided and now they have stopped that help and want to charge more. Now wonder people are upset.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I request that the rate increase is not granted. As a business owner and rate payer I have seen costs sky rocket in the past 3 years (insurance, interest rates, cost of good & services). For any business to remain viable these costs must be passed onto already struggling consumers. Council should look at their expenditure and make cut backs to help cover the shortfall. Residents will leave Tamworth to find work in areas where rates are lower, crime is lower. TRC needs to listen to its residents - we say no!

IPART Submission of Objection of Tamworth Regional Council Application for a Rate Variation.

I am an elderly pensioner ratepayer of Tamworth Regional Council and I object to a rate variation of 36% being granted to Tamworth Regional Council on the following grounds:

1. Council must demonstrate the financial need for the additional income;

Council can demonstrate the financial need for the additional income on paper, or on reports, however that does not follow what happens in reality councils' financial sustainability problems reflect unnecessary spending and potential mismanagement Sustained delivery of services that meet their communities' needs requires good long-term planning and prudent financial management. Ratepayers need to be provided with information so they can hold council accountable.

In the past Council have veered of track from the core services neglecting these services for tourism, sponsoring many annual sporting, horse and music events while employing extra staff to service these streams, all at extra cost to the ratepayer. These extras come at a cost to the core streams as well with a reduction in allocation of funds impacting on a poor service delivery or lesser service of Council core services such as road maintenance.

This impacts on the annual cost to the ratepayer with Council requesting rate variation as they become operating towards the red.

Council have allowed developers to not contribute to headwork charges on subdivisions etc instead have placed caveats on the land so that the purchaser plays. This has placed Council in situation when land is slow to sell or the subdivision takes a couple of years to finish, Council has little monies to go necessary works for current infrastructure for the subdivisions, borrowing monies at a high interest rate placing extra burden on ratepayers (example outlook estate, council asking for 2.2 million in extra rate variation).

Our Council is oblivious to our diverse communities and protection of the interests of current and future ratepayers from unnecessary impact and burden on peoples' cost of living.

Council have set up as a country music capital, tourist and sporting destination, costly operations to finance for little or no return.

Mostly Council infrastructure projects that ratepayers have to pay extra for now and the future loans are for projects design for the above and little thought has gone into how they are to be staffed or maintained or the impact this is causing ratepayers now and will be impossible to keep funding let alone their upkeep.

Our Council performance is not monitored with most in local community depending on their councillors, who staff swamp them with all sorts graphs and documents that are too complex to understand. The average councillors rather than speak up go by the staff recommendations as an easy solution.

Our council bases performance to their 100K Blueprint plan that people have little understanding off. This 100k Blueprint is working to future population and services that is full of estimations that may never eventuate due to the world tendency to shop via internet and the tightening of finances.

Most Budget new works provision or ideas do not have a business plan that out lays the costs or has the asset management including along with running costs.

Most construction works seem to almost double the estimate once the work has been completed and an excuse given to Council that becomes acceptable.

Council documents that are presented are all hairy fairy projects or way of league of ratepayers' affordability or are in less practical.

2. Council must establish that the impact on affected ratepayers is reasonable, in terms of percentage increase and ratepayers' capacity to pay;

Council has 3 large abattoirs in our main town that use over 50% of town water, usage of 65% of sewerage costs, are rate subsidised (charged at cheaper farm rate not commercial), employ over 6000 workers of which 90% are from overseas that use all of region's facilities (doctors, hospitals etc) and have priority over housing rental market. This all adds extra costs and strain on the ratepayers' capacity to pay.

Rental costs are extremely high due all transit workers coming into has created an extreme shortage and with Council rates increasing to over a third extra this will drive up rents even higher. This leaves families that are on the bread line towards homelessness. Tamworth region's homelessness has risen significantly in last 3 years following expansion of the abattoirs and the hospital upgrades that require extra staff accommodation to house these employees.

Pensioner or people on fixed income who own their own home are finding it difficult to pay the new rate cost, even after government rebate on pensioner rates will be swallowed up with proposed rate variation. Council's way of levelling the rate increases by Council's Consultants Morris and Low's affordability derived from the Government statistics, where you see pensioners like myself with small 2-bedroom fibro house on (400m²) block in North Tamworth paying the same about as a wealthy person's mansion on (2000m²) block in East Tamworth. While Hillview suburb of expensive houses is paying less rate variation than North Tamworth pensioner. This rate variation is hardly equitable across the council region.

3. Council Documents must include the Special rate variation in all of its documents and exhibit them, approve and adopt relevant planning documents;

The Integrated Planning and Reporting process is too complicated for councillors to comprehend let alone allow councillors to communicate it to the community (Councils should adopt the KISS methodology). Our council budget is in 3 parts and it

is hard to colligate between the three, due to the change of names for different division for example liveable environment section.

As a ratepayer in a Council that has no wards where there is no specific ward councillor, where all correspondence goes through council to get to a councillor under council's comms department, with the councillor when reached is unable to fully explain your questions and has to refer you back to a staff member. It is very frustrating and in most times is still unanswered. Unless you know a councillor personally, or in the same sporting club they are complete strangers to the community.

Council's community communication is being lost now as Council having abolished the ward system, set up 365 committees made up of all the different communities and activities. Now Council have abolished the 365 committees and only maintained main streams ones.

By doing so Council has lost the main stream of communication.

Even though Council has an elaborate communication plan, Council staff don't seem to use or aren't trained in it. Council plan shows the streams how they are to communicate. If ratepayers have no internet there is virtually no Council communication to what is happening.

4. *Council must explain and quantify the council's productivity improvements and cost containment strategies.*

Council brings out fancy documents that explain their savings through productivity in the budget papers that read well. Unfortunately, that has not been delivered down the chain of command.

Ratepayers repeating see management outcomes like when there are 3 persons in a large driving around the streets including the main street, 3 people in a large truck turn up to paint two seats with the truck driver standing there not doing any work, as he is employed to drive the truck only, 3 large trucks, backhoe, bobcat 8 men turn up to fix a leak in the water main. When in years gone by 2 men fixed the leak mainly using manual labour in the same time.

Council staff spraying weeds in the pouring rain, when questions were asked of him said he was ordered too.

In 2014 ratepayers supported a rate rise to bring Council plant etc up to date. Then you go past Council construction sites and the plant is sitting on site for days not being used. Why can't this plant be transferred to another site if not required.

Council tells us, what productivity improvements they will be making, however this has to go down to the grass roots of where the problem lies and applied

In the past Council have veered of track from their core services, neglecting these services for tourism, sponsoring many annual sporting (20 K for rugby game to come play in West gambling venue), sponsoring horse and music events while employing extra staff to service these streams.

All at an extra annual cost to the ratepayer, all with little or no benefit to the ratepayers. These extras come at a cost to the core streams as well with a reduction in allocation of funds impacting on a poor service delivery or lesser service of the core services. Council seems to lack an asset management plan to ensure our assets

are maintained for years ahead. This impacts on the annual cost to the ratepayer with Council requesting rate variation as they become operating towards the red. Council staff having long service leave, 9-day fortnights etc has a great effect on low productivity performance of Council.

We may also consider anything else we consider relevant

Council has entered into major works in some form with developers on large industrial subdivisions such as Intermodal / Gateway and large residential land subdivision using ratepayers' monies and borrowing monies;

- (a) To buy the land
- (b) To pay for construction water, sewerage and electricity services for these industrial and residential subdivisions.
- (c) To pay for the subdivisions' infrastructure such as road and drainage.

Council does not appear to have any transparency with these operations as when it comes up in Council it is discussed behind closed doors citing commercial in confidence as the reason.

With the intermodal Gateway subdivision land purchase, council took out a \$15 million in a loan to pay for that land not including \$2.2 million for the intermodal works. This will take years to sell with ratepayers picking up the cost until all the blocks are to pay off the loan. Ratepayers have been told Council will get \$10 million return on the investment. This is great for Council's partner developer as it appears to share the profit with no usual outlay costs.

Council has been using ratepayer's millions of dollars to purchase several commercial properties for reviving inner city living projects all in secrecy

Council also paid millions of dollars in acquiring land for residential subdivisions.

If these projects are so lucrative for Council, why haven't developers been lining up to carry out these industrial and residential developments instead of using ratepayers' monies

Since the amalgamation of neighbouring Councils to form Tamworth Regional Council during the first 8 years, Council had enjoyed extra funding to bring it in line with other regional councils.

Every year since that funding ended Tamworth has applied for extra rate variation. Why is this so? At the amalgamation Council had 506 employees, today that has swelled out to 650+ employees. Is this because Council has taken over Country music festival and Destination Tamworth booking management? As there aren't any other new extra services.

Tamworth Regional Council General Manager and Directors should have the experience to develop planning and associated programs for infrastructure construction development without paying consultants millions of dollars to do their Council duties. Maybe it is time to invest in better management.

Classic examples of this, is for an indoor swimming pool that started before Council was amalgamated with employment of Consultants, Architects and purchase of George Street property. This has been in every variation Council has had and is still in the current rate variation of 36%.

The money spent in Consultants, Architects, land purchases could have built the indoor pool.

Tamworth City has 2 pools that Council want to change to one pool on the out skirts of Town that has no transport to it, pools incorporate with private enterprise for \$47 million. When other councils are spending \$12 million for similar pools.

I urge IPART to refuse the variation or else Tamworth Ratepayers will have a large interest bill to pay, while Tamworth executive staff move on and continue their wrecking ball of another Council.

Yours Sincerely





Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

My husband and I are aged pensioners, we are struggling with our bills now and just make it through each quarter, if there is such a rise in our rates it will end up being a decision for us to sell our property and try to find a cheaper one in another council area that have reasonable rates. We just can't go on this way with things rising all the time every time you turn around food costs more, utilities cost more, the cost of living should be renamed the cost of SURVIVING because that's what it has come down to....we are only just surviving from day to day. I don't know what else to say without sounding like a whinger which I am not and hope never to become but the government needs to see how it is hurting people and ease off. Stop giving money to stupid 'causes', stop giving money outside Australia, just stop giving the taxpayers money away to places that should be able to fend for themselves rather than rely on other countries to support them. If our government gave enough money to the local areas to do what they have to do, then they wouldn't have to ask for rate increases surely?? If Tamworth Council gets this rate increase I can assure you that very little of it would go to fixing roads, providing footpaths or slashing the sides of narrow roads because it doesn't happen now, or very rarely. They will spend it on stupid things to make the city look important to visitors. They want to big note themselves by trying to show they are a forward-thinking city providing for its citizens....people who live here can see straight through that knowing that all the necessary things are just not getting done from one year to the next. Please don't let Tamworth Council be granted this increase, it will not only be the end of us living on our property we have had since we moved to Tamworth in 1996 but it will also put a lot of others out of their homes when they just can't afford to pay the 'cost of surviving' anymore.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Before increasing rates by a huge percentage I believe there are many areas within council that money can be saved. 1. There is a lot of middle management - every department seems to have a director, senior manager, manager, team leader then the employees that are actually doing the works. 2. Government vehicles used to be a pool of Toyota Camry sedans and the odd 4wd or utility when required. These were booked out to staff when required. It now seems every second employee has a company vehicle which might be on a lease system but its still an extra cost that isnt needed. 3. Parks and gardens used to be maintained by employees of council - now most people working on maintaining parks, gardens and roadsides are contractors. Another extra cost. 4. Landfill - I know for a fact that the landfill is a profit making facility so I do not know why we now have no roadside pick up, we are charged for green waste and our recycling is only collected once a fortnight but we can get into trouble if recycling materials are in our general waste. I understand there is always a need to keep up with CPI but this council is out of touch with reality and some heads need to be let go which will save a lot of \$\$\$\$\$. I hope IPART do some serious research into Tamworth Council!

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I'm opposed to this rate rise. If tamworth regional council can not operate within budget they should be sacked or resign just like any other company would do in this country.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I fully understand rate increases over the years however with the cost of living already so high and people struggling in rural areas especially the proposed increase for Tamworth is way too high, unrealistic and unfair to local rate payers. Im disgusted.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Considering the terrible financial crisis that is hitting our community with residents already having to sell their homes due to the interest rate rises and the general cost of living, the rate rises will be the cherry on top for many of the remaining home owners to push them over the edge to have to sell their family homes, investment homes and potentially be homeless as the rental properties in our region are few and far between. I understand the council wanting to complete lavish upgrades however considering the rates that the home owners already pay are going towards additions rather than fixing what is already broken does not give me confidence with our councils ability to be able to handle how to use this increase. My faith in our local council members is fading fast. I refuse to believe that our local council members would allow their own community to have to be crushed any further by the horrid financial situation that many of us are in to take more and take what we have worked so hard for. I am 100% against the rate rise and I hope that the council consider the wellbeing of our community before making the decision.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

TRC is gouging its residents with a proposed rate rise. Rather than reigning in spending its choosing to take the easy route and charge higher rates. While Ray Walsh houses is being remediated, TRC is choosing to rent office space in town rather than use existing vacant office facilities at the airport (ex BAE flight training facility.) This is just one of many examples of TRC mismanagement of rate payers money. At this time of growing pressure on peoples finance they should be subject to the same austerity measures their rate payers are facing.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I strongly oppose the special variation for Tamworth council. I don't believe that appropriate cost saving measures have been investigated or implemented and the rates increase will only be a bandaid fix if the culture of the council is not changed. I have heard from multiple current and former council workers that the council will hire contractors to complete works while the full time staff are there watching or having an extended lunch break. There is nothing wrong with hiring contractors when necessary but not when the full time staff are capable of doing the work and have the time to do so. My partner worked at the council for 8 weeks last year and left due to the lazy culture, boredom and frustration with the wastage of rate payers money. The wasted money by Tamworth council needs to be addressed before a special variation is forced upon residents during a cost of living crisis.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I absolutely disagree with the increase in our rates by 36% over two years. Homeowners, farmers & businesses do not need the extra expense now. With all the other expenses on top of one another such mortgage rates, home & business insurance. People are struggling now, think of the pensioners, how are they going to come up with the extra cash. The council has taken our kerbside waste away from us, this was an essential for people who couldnt get to the tip, or have access to a trailer, car or truck. We are charged so much to take our green waste to the tip, along with other stuff. Where we live we do not have street lighting, kerb & guttering or sewerage, not that I care that much about it, but you cant expect people to pay a 36% increase over two years, do you. What are you going to provide to the homeowners & businesses, farmers, more services. Because there has to be something in return for the ratepayers. Im sorry to say but there are heaps of things to me around town that are an eyesore. With our reputation with the CMF it would be great if council could keep the grass mowed instead of letting it get too long. Start asking yourselves why have we got two main pools, etc. the town pool & scully park, is it feasible to have two pools, how many people use the pools, which one is least used. This is what we need to think about. Take a good look around town, some of the buildings need to be spruced up, take for instance the old cinema opposite the town pool. Its really en eyesore as you come over the bridge, its needs something to make it more modern & appealing to look at. When tourist are approaching Tamworth from the south, north, west, east the welcome signs also has to look attractive to the eye, more facts & information about Tamworth with paintings & culture of our indigenous people, & various attractions in the area. We need to start thinking about being more creative in the way we do things. By increasing the rates by 36% over two years is not the way to go. There has to be a better way.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I refer to Tamworth Regional Councils proposed 36.3% rate increase. I believe the proposal is premature because Council hadnt investigated alternatives such as seeking efficiencies, savings and cutting dead wood. Rationalising Councils bloated executive. Eliminating generous subsidies to developers in terms of them not having to provide expensive infrastructure during construction of residential subdivisions such as roads, roundabouts, kerb & guttering, footpaths or streetlights transferring the burden to our ratepayers. Reduce councils fleet of vehicles. Does Council need more than 30 engineers? Councils wages/salaries bill has increased by 13% since 2017, that is significant, possibly around \$4.2 million extra annually. Surely there could be savings there. Another concern is the impact of annual fee & charges increases which will occur in 2024 and 2025 etc. This was not mentioned by the proponents of the rate increase but will have a detrimental impact on the annual rates accounts of every ratepayer, renters, residents, pensioners and businesses. I cant think of a worse time to raise this issue during a cost of living crisis in light of fuel, food, electricity, interest rates all going up. For me it will be detrimental to my family and Council has not demonstrated that it has made enough changes to avoid having to ask for more funds in the future.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

Hello, The rate rise suggested by council fails to meet criteria in a number of areas, first and foremost the impact on the ratepayers! To suggest an increase of 33% + over 2 years is reasonable is ridiculous, it would most certainly be felt by ratepayers who are already struggling. What other providers increase the cost of their to this extent!!!! Additionally, for the average ratepayer to fund the inability of council to budget is grossly unreasonable. We see projects going way over forecast costs in many of councils activities, while basics are being overlooked in favour of glamorous projects. TAFE NSW campus having no footpaths or curb and guttering along the majority of Janison street despite high volume of foot traffic by staff, rodents and visitors. Yet we see funds being spent on overseas trips, Skywalks, Leisure Centers and cultural precincts? Whilst these may be worthy, surely the basics of economy is to allocate what you have to essential services, and not to expect the battling homeowner to fund councilors pipe dreams? We see gross mismanagement of the airport precinct with a large reputable flying school being ready to establish and boost the economy over a year ago, but council holding out in the dream they would secure a major airline training center. Tamworth is fortunate the Sydney flying school overlooked being snubbed and indeed graced us with their business in the end. The gross mismanagement of a once bustling Country Music Festival also illustrates the lack of skills the TRC have in developing events with available funds. It has dwindled to a shadow of its former glory due to busking restrictions, blowouts in council charges for vendors, restrictions on parades and lack of support for local performers and businesses. And they are asking us to give them more out of our pocket?? Yes I know it is easy to be critical of councils, but one can weather the day to day decisions they make by holding onto the hope they ultimately benefit the local economy. But this claw being forced into the wallets of ordinary citizens is unacceptable, and I hope due consideration will be given as to its effects. I know for one that as a property owner the increase will most definitely be felt and felt hard. Thank you for allowing my opinion to be expressed.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

This proposed rate variation is unfathomable! Australia currently suffers the highest cost of living pressures in the world and these clowns in the council want to add to those pressures. They say that the increase is NEEDED to allow completion of planned projects, but they never talk about how they have saved money - because they don't know how. They want to turn Tamworth into a "smart city". Nobody with a brain in this community supports that. Council should stick to the basic services and stop pedalling nonsense about increased costs due to climate change. I do NOT support the proposed increase in any way. Most of us can barely pay our bills as it is. I ask that ipart hear us in the community and put a stop to this rubbish before it ends up costing people their homes and sanity.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Monday, 18 March 2024

Please write your submission below. (Before starting, please ensure that you have chosen the correct council from the dropdown list of councils, at the very top).

I am a 60yo Tamworth resident, 4th Generation Australian citizen of Scottish descent with qualifications in building, construction management, town planning, real estate & housing. The rate rise is unwarranted and unwelcome by rate payers whom the council is paid to serve; ie. TRC are servants of the public & accountable to them. The amount of 36% is exorbitant, greater than 1/3rd INCREASE. What business or service-provider could ever expect such a massive increase to be absorbed by its customers?? This should be viewed in light of TRCs astonishing track record of failures and faux pas: A velodrome that was TOO STEEP TO RIDE ON, left languishing for years Country Road roundabout \$2 MILLION OVER BUDGET Werris Creek Rd redevelopment OVER BUDGET and ABANDONED Fitzroy Street project STALLED with almost \$1 MILLION in added expenditure due Council over-staffed by as many as 100 TOO MANY EMPLOYEES adding financial pressure Roads that are incomplete, with a lack of line-markings causing confusion and danger Traffic management oversights, lack of turning lanes causing delays and bottlenecks Faded road marking that pose potential danger to drivers especially at night and when it rains, particularly for elderly and visiting drivers Incomplete sections of road left without any line markings for long periods of time and roadworks without any night lighting nor any slow down signs (danger!) Long overdue resurfacing work needed in Peel Street between White St & Roderick, this is a bumpy embarrassment especially during the festival when caravans bounce around dangerously up & down that section Similar issues in Carthage St, Kathleen St, Marius St North and Calala Lane. All carry high volumes and have school zones without NO TURNING LANES. They are shared by busses and trucks and its anyone guess as you make your way day after day. Will Council ever get round to adding lane markings along CALALA LANE as its width varies unevenly along its 3 klm length? What about the drainage issues that cause flooding & road closures every time it rains heavily, stranding THOUSAND OF RESIDENTS Inconsistent water quality causing health concerns and high demand for bottled water The endless water supply debacle over the Peel River catchment distribution/dispute The failed HYDROLOGY MANAGEMENT that keeps a massive section of Tamworth City for farming while its citizens have to drive right through the middle of it (Scott Rd) Excess gravel being routinely strewn across suburban streets as a quick-fix solution; endangering children, cyclists and motorcyclists at street corner and clogging drains Sections of roads left without curb & channelling, eg. Hilda & Olive Lanes, Armidale Rd, Panorama Rd, Marius St outside McDonalds North the streetscape left unfinished Unsealed streetscape at 359 Goonoo Rd with a wide gravel section traversed by heavy vehicles night and day, casting dust in the dry and turning to mud in the wet. This is our major inroad, setting a shoddy example for visitors and dangerous at night What about the Town Planning FIASCOS? Approval & development of an entire suburb which is served by only one road, that frequently floods ie. Calala/Lampada Approving an aged care facility in the middle of an Entertainment Precinct with major event centres TREC, ARLEC, CIRCUS and LONGYARD HOTEL nearby Approving a childcare centre on BRIDGE STREET which carries HEAVY VEHICLES and that site has extremely limited parking, located adjacent a set of traffic lights and the busy shopping centre. Parents have to drop off babies & toddlers in safety General Manager on \$380,000pa Q. Do they work extraordinarily long hours to earn astronomical wages? Do they contribute astonishing high productivity, innovation or excellence, especially in light of the long list of TRC ERRORS & ISSUES? This rate flies in the face of common decency and concern for the community, amid a national cost of living crisis that already burdens rate payers and cripples local businesses. The degree to which rate payers can tighten their belts is already at its maximum and this austerity comes at a time when our public servant cohort is insultingly asking for more. Perhaps the best action is to seek the support of state parliament to bring a class action. This would be welcomed by the community, given the weight of concern. TRC management could be placed under review and see rates frozen until these issues are assessed independently. Thank you

Verbal submission made by NAME SUPPRESSED to IPART regarding Tamworth Regional Council's SV application.

Previous SVs

- The council has already been approved for numerous SVs in the past.
- What this says to me is that they spend up big in TAMWORTH then keep coming back to their ratepayers to bail them out.

Community consultation

- The community consultation from the council was not adequate.
- The council presented rates data that did not include the more expensive rural rates. Thus, the presented rates data to the community was understated and misleading.

Capacity to pay

- The council has not considered the capacity to pay of its residents. For instance, I am a small farmer whose income has dropped by 60% in the past 12 months. Also, we are currently in a cost-of-living crisis, which has not been factored in by the council.
- The council has however provided a small reprieve to pensioners.

The council is mismanaged

- If the council was better managed it would not need to apply for an SV.
- The council is too top heavy. They have lots of highly paid bureaucrats and not enough people on the ground to deliver services, also they employ very few locals in the smaller towns.

The council should focus on core business

- The council should focus on core business like roads instead of niceties. For instance, the council is planning to fund a sky walk, children's adventure pool \$60 million swimming complex and a performing arts centre all in TAMWORTH. Furthermore, the council on numerous occasions has given the Tamworth Club \$3000 to host football games.

The council's spending ignores the outer villages

- The council is focused on Tamworth CBD and not the outer areas within its borders.
- For instance, recently, Barraba has received much needed major roadworks for the first time in 20 years.

Productivity and cost-savings

- The council has not communicated the dollar figures attached to past productivity improvements and cost-savings to the community.

Miscellaneous

- The council has communicated why it needs the SV. However, I disagree with why the SV is needed.
- The council has also communicated the percentage of the proposed SV to the community.
- But they have not convinced me of the necessity for it. They need to tailor their expenditure to their income like we have to. Also 97% of their ratepayers were not convinced by their proposal.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I object to Tamworth Regional Council's rate variation for the following reasons: - they have not tried to cut expenses from within without reducing services - they already don't provide adequate service to the community, fixing roads, mowing grass etc. These services have deteriorated over the years and now they get sub contractors in (at i'm assuming greater cost) to mow roadsides etc for them?? - they are too top heavy with managerial staff and not enough workers on the ground - too many subcontractors to do jobs that council should be able to complete in house (road works, footpath construction, mowing etc) This is costing rate payers - when council does do a job they have 6 people to do a 2 person job. Outrageous. - Too many overseas trips for councillors. One councillor is slated to go overseas to look at water?? The list goes on. They need to cut spending from within, get rid of managerial staff who serve no purpose other than to have a fancy job title. It is beyond a joke.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

TRC should have been aware that they were operating that were operating unsustainably and taken action to correct that instead of taking the easy option of putting up rates and placing unreasonable burden on their residents already struggling with the high living costs Also the Councilors have a number of very expensive projects that they want to pursue at a time that they clearly can't afford to do, but they are determined , like all councilors their ego clouds their judgement , but if they delayed those projects they shouldn't need such a high increase . The GM gave as a reason for the rate rise the increased cost of wages and salaries, but they increased by 36% so why not a SV of 3.5% to cover that . We are farmers already struggling to remain profitable with the increased costs of inputs so a rate rise to level requested will make our business unsustainable. Why do they employ senior staff on such high salaries and then engage consultants to tell them how to do their job and not control their budgets at a sustainable level

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

With the current cost of living crisis I am concerned that the additional proposed increase will hit extra hard as our land values have also increased substantially in the latest NSW valuation. These rises might not hit at the same time but our property value according to the valuer general is a considerable amount higher than it was a year ago which will eventually be reflected in the ratable amount as it is.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I believe Tamworth council should be ashamed of themselves, they have increased the price at the local tip to almost double what it use to be, they now charge for green waste that they mulch up and sell on for a profit. They have removed our kerbside pickup and issued useless vouchers instead, most of my street are elderly and cant drive, they use to all make use of the kerbside pickup but now cant even get rid of bulky rubbish ect. Council have kept building useless monuments in the town without consideration to the rate payer and if we actually want them to spend our rate money on it. They consistently remove services and increase pricing wherever they can. They have just sold \$5 million dollars of land at the global gateway park, all for a profit. So why would they need to increase our rates while our community is struggling to pay our power or get groceries to feed our kids every week, our wages are stretched as it is and they arent providing anything for the increase that they are wanting. Even the roads have been seriously neglected, major intersections near the Abbitors (our biggest industry) have been left to rot for years, one section on Goddard lane and wallamore Rd is badly disformed, I drive cattle trucks over it on a daily basis and it is extremely bumpy for atleast 100mtra of the intersection. It is doing harm to the cattle in my truck and also damaging my truck, council have been notified but continue to ignore it, its not potholes but huge bumps formed from disformed road. Council have been splurging on rate payers money while ignoring our problems, another major issue the whole town has is the drinking water, it comes out of taps brown and smelly, it has a strong chlorine smell but the council say nothing is wrong, if nothing is wrong why is it brown and smells like chlorine. And that isnt just in the Tamworth area its in Moore creek, hillvue ect, every single suburb in town

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

Council did not give enough time for ratepayers to respond to the rate increase. Examples are they didn't release dates of when people could have their say until the day before or the day of. These times were also around 6pm where families with kids couldn't attend due to timing restraints. I don't believe council has handled money and budget well to be asking for more money, they have cut services left and right but we can't see where the money has gone for these removed services. Example being tip service price increases, now charging for green waste as well as then charging again for selling the mulch from green waste. No longer having road side collections to help residents with costs to remove bulky household waste. Roads have been disguising and difficult to drive on due to potholes for many years with minimal to no maintenance while sports areas get weekly maintenance through the whole year.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

The rate increase that the Tamworth Regional Council is requesting is far beyond the level that residents can be expected to pay under current economic conditions. The TRC has lost its focus and is more concerned about expanding the city to reach the magical 100,00 residents than providing the services that is supposed. Our road maintenance and the provision of rubbish tip facilities has declined significantly over the past 2/3 years and yet they are quite happy to send a team over to the US to do a water study that no other council is attending. There are numerous big projects being carried out to support major growth in the town at the expense of providing the "bread and butter" services that a Council should provide. Lets get back to basics before we ask the residents to pay more for the TRC's big dreams.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

This request for TRC to increase our rates is an absolute scam. They have struggled to do the right thing with water, charging us fortunes for horrible water (blue green algae announcement not long ago). They then go and waste more water than the people of Tamworth do on gardens and parks. My rates have just gone up 33% at the start of this year and all of the services this "gets me" are worse than other towns I've lived in. The roads are awful, they do 'maintenance' on them and they are just as bad in only a few weeks. Sandy road or porcupine lane, for instance, are both awful after recent work. All while the councillors pay themselves fortunes, it's a joke. They are now considering approving 43 blocks averaging 350sqm in Kootingal which will make the services even worse.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

When the general population is scrimping and counting every penny, Tamworth council continually wastes money on unnecessary things. They have no idea how to prioritise their use of funds. Instead of another unnecessary rate rise, council needs to go back to basics and STOP WASTING OUR MONEY. Much could be achieved with already available money without the need to screw over already struggling ratepayers. This proposed rise is criminal.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I understand the reasoning behind the request, but feel it's too much too soon. Households just can't afford this addition to the cost of living. In a village area that has little services to begin with (no curb and guttering, no water management plan, over development with very small blocks, limited waste management, poor road maintenance) there is a lot of resistance locally to this rise.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

The variation request comes at a time that will compound maximum pain onto local homeowners, and by proxy, renters due to severe cost of living constraints, which do not look like easing over the next 12-24 months. Significantly, with this council, it appears that not enough has been done to reel in spending from areas such as over staffing, not doing more to extract the maximum price for council land sales, renting premises in the main street (at significant cost, does not need to be in such an expensive area) while current council building is being renovated, and excess waste on unnessecary things such as study trips and other 'meetings' that could easily be completed by online conversations with overseas parties. This is just a small snapshot of why this 'special variation' is completely unwarranted and if approved would simply give licence to the current councils poor use of public funds and allow it to continue into the future. If for some reason this 'special variation' is approved it should only come after a full independent audit of council spending over the past decade to ensure it is required. If this audit finds there were more funds available to council through spending restructures, etc then the current council executive and General Manager should be dismissed immediately as they will have been found unable to manage the local budget effectively. Thanks for your time.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

Please do not pass this - the council has done nothing but take away services and now want more money - we have no council pick ups anymore -the road are fixed with pebbles that damage cars and cause motorcycles to skid and flick up and hit pedestrians if they are close to someone driving - the crime is ridiculous and they dont appear to be trying to get something done about it - our bins are never emptied correctly and are always left knocked over in the street - I have emailed council about dangerous parking signs outside a school 3 weeks ago and still no response- they are not doing anything that justifies needing this rise

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I find this application for a special variation rate rise to be excessive, unnecessary and likely to inflict financial hardship upon many individuals. This, if implicated, will not only affect rate payers but tenants also as the associated property rents will increase. It demonstrates complete mismanagement of current funding which has been expanding exponentially with the city population rising for years. I sincerely hope common sense prevails and this application is rightfully rejected.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

Because we have had a recent rise in the value of properties in this council area (tripling the value of our property) the council will already get an increase in rates received as they will be using this valuation for the first time this year. Why do they need to add 30 odd percent to this natural increase. In my opinion this council is not efficient with the money they already receive which is shown by them stating how much money they have 'made' by cutting expenses. Why was this money wasted in the first place.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

The increase is cruel and on my current wage of \$750 net a week in the current cost of living crisis I'm struggling to keep up on all bills of not just the current rate charges, an increase of any amount would put me in a very precarious financial position all round. I live very frugally as it is and on my own, every cent seems to go on bills, I have no way of paying an increase of rates as well. Please do not allow this increase, so many people are now the working poor, please do not send us broke.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I shall keep this simple. Council should reconsider this in respect for all of the electorate in this difficult time period. We have all had to adjust our spending to our income by revising our budget. Council please do the same. You cannot spend what you dont have and asking your people to suffer further is not ethical. [REDACTED]

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I would like to vehemently protest the proposed rate increase put forward by Tamworth council. Tamworth region already pays higher rates than most NSW council areas. While rate payer money has been used to improve upon some public spaces, it is important that the council maintains an appropriate budget for the cost of living for the Tamworth Region that fits with the current rate standard.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

I vote against the increase of rates by this much! We are already paying a fortune and have less services to show for it. Council need to spend our money more wisely.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We live in/own several residential properties in tge TRC area. We invested and moved here some 7-10 yrs as the rates were reasonable and TRC seemed to be doing a good job of managing essential services ie roads, garbage, water, planning. Something has changed and investigation by IPAART is needed to see if it is financial mal-administration, over expenditure in capital developing large new industrial and transport hub areas, or, is it significant cost transfer from State Govt in matters associated with water costs, road maintenance insurance etc. Either way the ratepayers cannot be expected to wear the cost transfer to them as they have not been responsible in why the council now needs extra revenue. Look to cause and fix that first. If it is due to State Govt cost transfer then the cost pressure needs to go back to NSW Govt , not ratepayers Councils already benefit, every 3 yrs, from increased rate revenue from Land Valuation increases made by State Govt departments. The ratepayer can not absorb increases in significant multiples of CPI as wages, superannuation and govt welfare benefits do not increase at the same rate. I definitely reject this application by TRC. Thank you.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

Tamworth council needs an investigation on there miss spending of the tamworth peoples money before this application is considered

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

37 percent in a cost of living crisis?!? That is a ridiculous ask and only the poorer end of town will suffer for it.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 29 February 2024

Please write your submission below:

We live 10 klms from town & get absolutely nothing for our rates. A road that is very rarely graded & wrecks our vehicles and spews dust. No water supplied, garbage service we pay for. We already pay too much for nothing except wasted money in town. We are self funded retirees & cannot afford the extra cost.

Author name: Name suppressed

Date of submission: Thursday, 14 March 2024

Your submission for this review:

We have a small farm at Upper Manilla in the Tamworth Council rate area we have irrigation and cattle with the price rises to power and the drop in cattle prices we would struggle to pay our rates if the council received the rate hike they are asking for. We receive no services from the council