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Submission: I was shocked to learn that our council (who has claimed to be in support of local businesses and farmers) has lodged a submission with IPART for new storm water pricing for non-residential properties. The areas west of the M1 that will be mostly affected by this change have had little to no consultation despite what the IPART submission says. The community news which covers much of the area has had no public notice placed to inform the residents of any information sessions. In Yarralong they had one notice placed days before ONE information session which fell on the 29th of September (the long weekend). The express advocate isn't delivered in these areas either. A quick scroll through your Facebook page shows one information session (the above mentioned). Were there others held?

It is my understanding that the storm water drainage charge is to cover the costs of storm water drainage services. West of the M1 the amount of storm water services are best described as non-existent with landholders left to maintain road side drains that run along property fronts. There is no curb/guttering and no drains installed to divert water so what exactly are they paying for? The privilege of rain falling on the soil that they own to grow fruit/veg/livestock for our nation? I see there is an opportunity for non-residential customers to apply for a low impact rate. Will those who already fall under this banner continue to be considered low impact? Or will they again have to waste time jumping through hoops?

The more I read over the proposal the more I feel that "Storm water Drainage charge" needs to be replaced with "Primary Producer charge". Essentially a tax on agricultural land for a service that this council does not provide them. Recent rain aside farmers are struggling with the drought. I urge you to act against this proposal and use a common sense approach.

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