

**EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL**

**PUBLIC FORUM**

All members of the community who have registered have been advised that they have a **maximum of five minutes** to put their case.

Ordinary Meeting of Council on 26 May 2015

Name	Subject/Comments
<b>Public Access Session – 9:30pm</b>	
Nil	
<b>Agenda Items – 10.00am</b>	
Owen Cartledge	GMR15/011 Special Rate Variation for Community and Transport Infrastructure Projects
Kerry Foster	GMR15/011 Special Rate Variation for Community and Transport Infrastructure Projects
Ian Hitchcock	GMR15/011 Special Rate Variation for Community and Transport Infrastructure Projects
Patricia Hellier	GMR15/011 Special Rate Variation for Community and Transport Infrastructure Projects

Owen Cartledge

5 NIOKA AV  
MALVA BAY  
NSW 2536  
26 May 2015

Good morning, my name is Owen Cartledge and I am a ratepayer at Malva Bay. I present the following thoughts as part of the democratic process and I hope they show respect for democracy.

Firstly, congratulations to the G.M. who carried this exercise with John Howard persistence, jumped over about 126 hurdles and then discovered the final high jump was a sinecure. All 22 councils, bar one, got exactly what they applied for. Some such as Wollondilly received SRV's in excess of 50%. Who would have thought such an outrageous SRV ambit bid would be granted. One questions the purpose of IPART. Given this it would be nice for Councillors to take ownership of the SRV decision. Also Councillors rather than the G.M. should initiate the SRV process.

I make the following observations,

① What did the confidential submission to IPART by Councillor Harding say. Why was it confidential. I find such a submission shows a strange respect for the democratic process. It makes one wonder if some of the other anonymous and confidential submissions to IPART were submitted by other elected representatives.

- ② IPART's determination noted that
  - Ⓐ the ESC is overstaffed and
  - Ⓑ this overstaffing provides scope for future savings

IPART's determination also noted the future recruitment of two project managers for the next three years. I say, this is inconsistent with Ⓐ + Ⓑ above.

We were told at a feedback session at the Batemans Bay library

late in 2014 that any SRV money would be spent on infrastructure and not increased staffing.

(3) The ESC process provided ratepayers with exact dollar increases for average valuations. Increases in other components of our rates notices (such as water) will be showing an upward movement in 2015 and remain a mystery beyond this date.

Finally

(4) Our two Councillors who are concerned about respect for the democratic process got their facts wrong in a recent letter to BayPost. Shoalhaven Council applied for and received a 3.89% ~~SRV~~ SRV, not 50%.

K. Foster

## ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING 26 MAY 2015 - PUBLIC FORUM PRESENTATION

GMR15/011 Special Rate Variation for Community and Transport Infrastructure Projects has four recommendations.

I wish to speak specifically to **Recommendation 4** *THAT Council "Note the beneficial impact the Special Rate Variation will have on the NSW Government's Fit for the Future criteria and Council's continued efforts to identify, implement and measure efficiency savings."* (Page 5 of GMR15/011).

With regard to Recommendation 4, it is improbable that Councillors have sufficient information to *"Note the beneficial impact the SRV will have on the NSW Government's Fit for the Future criteria"* without first considering the merits of Eurobodalla Shire's Fit for the Future (FFTF) proposal due to iPART by 30 June 2015.

The subject report informs Councillors that Council (staff) are preparing an **"initial submission"** to the NSW Government's FFTF. The use of the term **"initial"** suggests something less than a critical milestone.

iPART's Independent Expert Panel will rate Eurobodalla's FFTF proposal **'fit'**, **'not fit'**, or it will be **'deemed not fit'** if council does not submit a proposal by the 30 June 2015 deadline.

To describe Eurobodalla's FFTF proposal as an **"initial submission"** conveys poor understanding of the iPART Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals.

The subject report refers to the seven FFTF criteria but overlooks the additional three criteria that the IPART Expert Panel will also use. It fails to tell you that the Expert Panel will rely on the evidence provided by councils through the online submission process, **and importantly, additional relevant information.**

The subject Report, and in particular Recommendation 4, highlights more than any other public or written statement by council the poor understanding of FFTF strategic objectives, and possible consequences for Eurobodalla Shire. Such lack of understanding brings risk to the shire's future.

It is evident that Council has assumed 'no change' based on its Group G rating in the Independent Local Government Review Panel report. However, like all good strategic policy, there is "wriggle room" – a bureaucratic technical measure that enables the government of the day to achieve its political aims.

I have listened to the case why council does not need to consult the community. However, in my view this has been a mistake. IPART's Expert Advisory Panel is authorised to consider "*other factors that may influence ...overall assessment of whether council meets the FFTF criteria, namely:*

- *the social and community context of the council*
- *the nature and quality of the supporting information, including the rigour by which ILGRP's preferred options for scale and capacity were explored by the council, and the robustness and consistency of the assumptions underlying the council's forecasts*

- *how the council consulted with its community regarding its proposal or alternative options as relevant, and the outcomes from these consultations, and*
- *the impact of the council's water utility business on its General Fund performance, where the council also serves a water utility function.*

In my judgment, it is unwise to assume that Eurobodalla's Group G category is unchangeable. The Report of the ILGRP states that, "*Group G is the remaining 28 larger councils, all of which appear likely to be sustainable in their current form for several decades. In some cases, however, they could be considered as merger partners for councils in Group F, and may need to be reviewed in that context some years from now.*"

In the law of unintended consequences, it is probable that Eurobodalla Shire Council's SRV application has affected Eurobodalla's **Group G** rating, and in my judgment, Council's SRV has opened a window of opportunity for the State Government to consider Eurobodalla Shire as a merger partner.

I have little doubt that the infrastructure information contained in GMR15/011 will appear in the Eurobodalla FFTF Proposal. However Councillors, have you considered the cost of doing business in the new **mandatory** Joint Organisations, and how Council will meet regional strategic planning requirements? When did the SRV become, among other things, a replacement income for "flat lining Federal Assistance Grants"?

This report, should it go forward is *mana from heaven* for an IPART Expert Panel assessor. It highlights too many wrong reasons why the SRV was necessary. Compounding the quality of this report are the opening **ERRORS**. Apart from misspelling Collaborative, the Delivery Program Link and Operational Plan Link are both wrong.

C2.1 Activity in the Delivery Program 2013-2017 (including special rate variation) refers to: "Provide quality, timely and accessible information to the community."

C2.1.1 Action in the Operational Plan & Budget 2015-16 (including special rate variation) refers to: "Manage Council's media relationships and provide timely and accurate information."

I have always believed that if you cannot get the little things right then the probability of getting the big things right is IMPROBABLE.

**Recommend that Council:**

1. Withdraw GMR15/011 from today's agenda
2. Require the General Manager to bring the Eurobodalla Shire Council Fit for the Future proposal to Council for approval
3. Require the General Manager to make the Eurobodalla Shire Council Fit for the Future proposal publicly available
4. Require the General Manager to inform all Councillors when, if the IPART Expert Panel requests additional information, and or a meeting with council
5. Require the General Manager to advertise that public submissions on Eurobodalla Shire Council FFTF proposal CLOSE on 31 July 2015



## APPENDIX A

Councils within the mandatory South East Joint Organisation include:

- **Palerang**, which is in Group E council with an option to merge with Queanbeyan
- **Queanbeyan**, which is in Group E, with an option to merge with Palerang
- **Cooma-Monaro**, which is in Group D, with an option to merge with Bombala and Snowy River
- **Snowy River**, which is in Group D, with an option to merge with Bombala/Cooma-Monaro
- **Bombala**, which is Group B, with an option to merge with Cooma-Monaro/Snowy River or become a Rural Council within the South East Joint Organisation
- **Bega Valley**, which is Group G in South East Joint Organisation
- **Eurobodalla**, which is Group G in South East Joint Organisation

## APPENDIX B

Box 1.1 Panel tasks in Terms of Reference - Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals IPART page 3

## APPENDIX C

Fit for the Future proposals based on scale and capacity - Methodology for Assessment of Council Fit for the Future Proposals IPART pages 4-8

- See Table 1.1 Fit for the Future Criteria and Measures p.5
- See Figure 1.1 Proposed assessment process for councils' FFTF proposals

Ian Hitchcock

**PRESENTATION - COUNCIL MEETING 26<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2015 – AGENDA ITEM GMR15/011 – SPECIAL RATE VARIATION**

MOST OF THE COUNCILLORS IN THIS CHAMBER HAVE REFUSED TO LISTEN TO OVER ONE HUNDRED REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE EUROBODALLA BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

SO FAR, THE SAME GROUP OF COUNCILLORS HAS IGNORED THE PLEAS OF OVER FIVE HUNDRED RESIDENTS, ANGRY OVER YOUR FAILURE TO REPRESENT THEIR INTERESTS.

NOW, YOU ARE ABOUT TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION OF A TWENTY PER CENT RATE RISE, THAT OVER TEN THOUSAND PETITIONERS HAVE ASKED YOU TO REJECT.

WHO DO YOU LISTEN TO!

I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO LISTEN TO ME. BUT YOU MIGHT LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE THAT IPART RELAYED THROUGH SYDNEY RADIO STATIONS LAST WEEK, AND I QUOTE:

“IPART HAS APPROVED 21 OF THE 22 SPECIAL RATE APPLICATIONS WITH A VIEW TO HELPING THESE COUNCILS MEET FIT FOR FUTURE CONDITIONS AS REQUIRED BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT”.

WHILE YOU ARE PATTING YOURSELVES ON THE BACK FOR MAKING A SUCCESSFUL BID, IPART IS TELLING YOU THAT IT HAS AGREED TO FORCE RATEPAYERS TO BAIL OUT SOME OF THE WORST PERFORMING ECONOMIC MANAGERS IN NEW SOUTH WALES LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

YOU MIGHT ALSO LISTEN TO THE MESSAGE THAT IS INCLUDED IN THE ATTACHMENTS TO THE IPART DETERMINATION. THE GRAPH ATTACHED TO THE EUROBODALLA DECISION, TELLS US THAT THIS COUNCIL HAS A COMBINED WAGES AND CONTRACTING BILL THAT IS 4.5 MILLION DOLLARS PER YEAR ABOVE THE STATE, AND GROUP 4 COUNCIL AVERAGE. THIS TELLS US THAT YOU ARE OVERSTAFFED TO THE EQUIVALENT OF 68 FULL TIME EMPLOYEES. A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT MESSAGE TO THE ONE YOU HAVE BEEN RELAYING TO THE EUROBODALLA COMMUNITY.

THE GRAPH ALSO SHOWS THAT THIS COUNCIL IS WELL BELOW THE STATE AND GROUP 4 AVERAGE FOR EXTERNAL CONTRACTING.

PLEASE TELL ME WHAT COMPETENT BUSINESS MANAGER WOULD DELIVER ITS SERVICES “IN HOUSE”, WITH AN AVERAGE WAGE BILL OF SIXTY FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS PER HEAD, WHEN THE AVERAGE WAGE OUT THERE IS ONLY THIRTY SEVEN THOUSAND DOLLARS. IT SHOULD BE QUITE EVIDENT THAT PRIVATE CONTRACTORS IN THIS SHIRE ARE FAR BETTER PLACED TO DELIVER COST EFFECTIVE COUNCIL SERVICES, THAN IN HOUSE STAFF.

SORT OUT THESE TWO ANOMALIES, AND THERE ARE IMMEDIATE AND ONGOING SAVINGS OF BETWEEN FIVE AND SIX MILLION DOLLARS PER YEAR, THAT COULD BE CHANNELLED INTO THE DELIVERY OF BETTER COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

IF YOU ELECT TO PASS TODAY'S RATE VARIATION MOTION, YOU MIGHT AT LEAST DEMAND URGENT STAFFING CUTS AND A REVIEW OF "IN HOUSE" CONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS.

THANK YOU.

Prepared and presented by:  
Ian Hitchcock, 47 Myuna Street, Dalmeny  
Tel:44 768821

Patricia Hellier

Good morning Mayor Brown, Councillors and all of those people at home that are "Live Streaming".

My name is Patricia Hellier from Batemans Bay I would like to inform this meeting on behalf of the Hon. Andrew Constance MP member of the Legislative Assembly, Member for Bega, and Minister for Transport and Infrastructure will be presenting the Petition of 10866 signatures that wholly reject the Special Rate Variation on the steps of the NSW Parliament today Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

Given that this item NO .10 GMT15/011 is on today's Agenda I am asking on behalf of all of these signatory that the Councillors in their wisdom defer their decision on this issue.

As you are aware there is to be a deputation which is to be led by Andrew Constance to meet with representatives of this Council shortly.

We are asking that this Council show the Community that you are prepared to work with the Community and this will hopefully help restore confidence that is currently lacking in this Council.

This petition represent one third of the Eurobodalla population.

As you are all aware a Public Meeting was held on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2015 which was attended by 504 members of our community, this meeting was organised in just over a week and a half's notice and those that spoke at the meeting showed genuine concerns as to the welfare of the whole of the EUROBODALLA SHIRE.

We therefore ask that you defer your decision here today and show that things can happen if people want them to happen and we all need to establish a can do approach and find a way to work together to take this community forward.

I Thank you.