

Special Rate Variation Submissions

Name [REDACTED]

Postal Address [REDACTED]

Email [REDACTED]

What activities, capital works and new initiatives would you like to be considered in the Draft 2019/20 Operational Plan? No Special Rate Variation

IP Address 124.169.105.207

User-Agent (Browser/OS) Apple Safari 8.0.3 / OS X

Referrer <http://www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com/draft-operational-plan-2019-20/>

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, 13 December 2018 9:44 AM

To: Lithgow City Council

Subject: Tax (rates) increase

So far this year council has diverted money away from the Caper tee-Glen Davis road sealing and has failed to keep up with the deterioration of the existing section. That is about the only place I see results for my rates and there have been none. I remind council that we were promised that this road would be fully sealed by 2000 - over 18 years ago now!

I am opposed to any increase, special or otherwise. Particularly I do not see why rates should normally increase at a rate greater than the CPI.

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, 11 December 2018 2:42 PM

To: Lithgow City Council

Subject: Srv19-20

Laughable at the least raising the rates a bit like the banks fees for no service !!!

Unless you are deemed under the new rule of who you know not what you know

Back lanes fixed and tarred for people that do not use them ???

And others where at least SIX rate payers are left with a deplorable nearly unusable back lane not touched in 20 years

Jamieson St for example

The front road is a disgrace after the last FIX up that was done in a NOT professional manner

It was just added to the old road surface in doing so created problems with power lines being taken out frequently and storm water entering

property's and also loose gravel on the sides causing window damage during mowing BY the owners because council staff are rarely seen.

SO in conclusion

IF you want to raise the rates RAISE your game

Yours regretfully

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, 10 December 2018 4:28 PM

To: Lithgow City Council

Subject: Proposed Special Rate Variation

I refer to the letter under the above topic dated 4th December 2018 and signed by Cr Thompson.

Firstly I wish to register my dissatisfaction that you refer us to a website that is unprotected and carried three cookies when I brought it up on my computer. Another failure by Lithgow Council in dealing with ratepayers and dealing with personal confidential matters. I will point out that past surveys conducted by council have failed to deliver the promised feedback and I must assume the same consultant is engaged and will fail in the task of presenting a fair view of responses.

From the first reading of this letter I gained the view that this is another mushroom job on residents and seeks to whitewash the clear intentions of council not to reveal any details of the planned use of the extra funds sought. Wordy platitudes promising to meet the needs of the community are vacuous in the extreme. Past experience shows that resources and funds are directed to areas of interest to few but those in niche circles. Despite the clear opposition to the nonsense expense of some projects like the swimming pool to the

disadvantage of more fundamental needs like roads council has played smoke and mirrors with budgets and plans for too long.

This letter seeks to indicate a wish list of non specific areas of expenditure that you could fly a jumbo jet through. Council needs to accept responsibility for specific budget and delivery of projects not some amorphous bucket of niceties. Take for example the resurfacing of Coxs River Rd, Kanimbla Drive and Megalong Place at Kanimbla (as well as other roads in the area). Announcements never fulfilled or if at all only in part. We have to beg to get a patching crew to come and do their half baked effort at repairing potholes that make the road only slightly more trafficable. Recent work on Coxs River Rd was substandard and penny pinching in the extreme.

Now your scenarios are poorly structured and given to be not able to be verified. You should outline in greater detail the facts of each case. Numbers and percentages to not align and you appear to ignore the benefit of the 2.7% in case 1. A proper outline would indicate the base case (total revenue) and the variations with a demonstration of the difference then with percentages.

Your second case has a pea and thimble trick in it as you carefully ignore adding the 2.7% to the combined 9% to indicate the true increase of potentially 11.7%

Furthermore you do not specify which assets are at risk nor indicate the budget for any maintenance or renewal which should be outlined at least for the major items. Again no responsibility to deliver on specific works.

Your rates calculator is meaningless for other than the specific cases shown. In our own case the annual rate exceeds by a significant margin for residential or farmland cases. Based on the correct impact of case 2 the rise in rates for our property will be \$187 per annum -- again higher than your case examples that should be intended to reflect the true impact. Added to this situation there will soon be a new Unimproved Valuation and council offers no guidance on this effect on rates.

Council also has the responsibility to outline in detail the effect of not getting approval of these initiatives and whether there is in fact any effect of ratepayers not agreeing to these proposals and how that will be activated.

It is time for Council to get a more real understanding of ratepayers expectations and needs. Past Councillors have waved off "The Villages" as irrelevant to the whole process of delivering your much vaunted ideals for the future of Lithgow. Fanciful schemes are of little relevance when it is believed that council is only good for collecting garbage and maybe fixing potholes poorly. I suggest that you make an effort to meet the locals outside of the town and understand our priorities not just impose your fanciful visions.

What about some shed meetings with people who live under the council umbrella and are getting wet.

I do not support the rate variation as presented.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation.

Your submission has been noted and will be included amongst submissions received as part of the public exhibition process in the Agenda to the Extra Ordinary Council meeting to be held on 29 January for consideration.

The Council Agenda will be available online by close of business Thursday prior to the meeting and may be viewed on Council's website www.council.lithgow.com go to the Council drop down menu and select Council Meetings/Business Papers and Minutes for 2019.

You will be advised of the outcome of this submission following the Council Meeting.

Council has completed a Draft Works Program for Transport, Buildings and Stormwater Drainage which is attached for your information. The draft works program is subject to the consideration and approval of Council as part of the 2019/20 Operational Plan and will not be adopted until June 2019.

If you have any questions in relation to this matter please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned on 02 6354 9999.

Dear [REDACTED]

I acknowledge your reply which must have taken you at least two minutes to compile.

Sadly I regret your lack of comprehension of the matters raised and the failure to consider the idea that I might -- just might have raised a valid question or two.

You have provided a document that only adds to the questionability of Council's capacity to manage the finances they seek to extract from ratepayers.

You have failed to address the points I raised in my letter pertaining to the quantum of the base rates revenue, the value of the works (partly given in your reply but we will visit that in a minute), and the calculation of the effect of the changes in potential rate revenue, and still not the effect of not getting the increased rate. Nor have you given a response to the way the dollar amounts in the initial letter from council are derived in plain English and numbers. I request that you do so in any reply you may send.

I put it to you and Council that the statement should specifically list out the way you arrive at the numbers.

Let me refer to your very interesting document attached to your reply.

To keep it simple and without debating the merit or otherwise of expenditure I refer you to the amounts earmarked for transport on page three.

Even a simple person like I can detect what appears to be a gross error or a falsehood. The very colourful presentation and format lists headings and total for such. Then the breakdown is shown below. The only thing is that you show \$360 K as works complete and then add that in to the total to arrive at a total of \$725 K and this is then carried into the mail out as the total to be completed. Now is the work done or not and is the money needed or not? It would be considered very creative accounting to add it in for this section only and not the whole of all other items in the plan.

I require a considered reply to all the matters I have raised and failure to do so will cause me to send a copy of all correspondence to IPART and the local press.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Thank you, once again for your correspondence regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation.

Your submissions have been noted and will be included amongst submissions received as part of the public exhibition process in the Agenda to the Extra Ordinary Council meeting to be held on 29 January for consideration.

The Council Agenda will be available online by close of business Thursday prior to the meeting and may be viewed on Council's website www.council.lithgow.com go to the Council drop down menu and select Council Meetings/Business Papers and Minutes for 2019.

You will be advised of the outcome of this submission following the Council Meeting.

Written submissions may also be made to IPART in writing or online at www.ipart.nsw.gov.au.

- IPART, PO Box K35, Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

Regards

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, 13 December 2018 9:52 AM

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Notification - No Support Proposed Special Rate Variation - [REDACTED]

Well [REDACTED] you seem to be getting even more patronising as we go along.

No doubt you have some very interesting qualifications to secure your position but clearly comprehension and mathematics are not included. You have not answered my specific questions.

So to assist this process I have enlisted the assistance from The Minister For Local Government and the office of IPART (as you suggest)

Your failure to provide simple factual responses to my simple questions amounts to avoidance and obfuscation. Clearly you see yourself as the brick wall to stop any challenge to this SRV Application and you clearly have not passed my questions to the responsible council officers to deliver the clarification needed. A simple response would have been enough but you have chosen to just put my email in the bin.

I am inclined to wonder if you are the author of the Mayor's letter and the false document outlining the spending plan and are engaged in some defensive action.

You may rest back now and we will see how we go from here.

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, 18 December 2018 2:06 PM

To: Lithgow City Council

Subject: no. SRV19-20

Dear Council

I thought I'd give you my thoughts on the proposed special rate increase.

1. As a general comment, the volume of data is too much for a ratepayer to read through and interpret. Council should have summarised the position covering all relevant documents and made its case clear. As it is, Council leaves it to the ratepayer to search out the data – there are many documents and it is wrong to expect the ratepayer to review those reports and understand them. If Council wanted to get its message across, it has gone about it the wrong way.

2. **I'm not one for supporting increased household bills** – we seem to have far too many of these across the cost of living spectrum. But in the case of Lithgow Council, I do understand the necessity given the Fit for the Future assessment and the fact that Council needs new funds to carry out certain asset renewal/maintenance works. But the way Council has communicated this to the community is rather poor. I received a 4-page letter from Council outlining the proposal but there is no substance in the document supporting the extra SRV request.

3. The Scenario 2 worst case is a nightmare – in 2019/20, a householder could pay rates which are 11.7% higher than today. And they could well be paying this higher rate each year thereafter. There is no sunset clause mentioned. Even if the current SRV is jettisoned but the new permanent SRV is accepted, the rate increase (with the rate peg) is still at 6.9% per year (more than double the inflation rate). But the intent by Council is to have two SRVs plus the rate peg – a gigantic rate increase relative to CPI (each year). **Where's the value in all of this** – this is not explained fully.

4. I took time to read through the Long term Financial Plan which does explain the position facing Council now and in the future. And there is some good coverage in that Plan which should have been brought to the attention of ratepayers. In particular, the base case scenario with improvement initiatives – this is before any SRV addition. In that Plan there are 3 scenarios but only two are proffered to ratepayers – the do nothing approach and the SRV approach. Not sure why this occurred.

5. As already mentioned, the 4 page letter from Council detailing the reasoning for Scenario is sketchy. The advice to householders deals only with the coming 2019/20 year impact on rates. I appreciate the rate impact varies according to residential/business. But the Council rates are just one of many cost imposts facing the community and business. The other related issue is the question of what occurs in subsequent years – how will households / business be impacted – this is not explained in the communique by Council. This to me is the most worrying aspect to all of this.

6. I believe Council should have included 4 options not just 2; they being:

- base case (do nothing other than the peg rate increase) – to me this is unsustainable at 2.7%
- base case with ongoing improvements – **Council can 'survive' along with taking ongoing business measures**
- base case with one SRV – say 7% increase – Council can operate successfully
- base case with 2 SRVs – say a 11.7% increase – Council has enough funds to enable rates to reduce or not increase in the long term

7. I have completed the on-line survey which to me is quite basic – all it says is which Scenario you support and why. A rather lacklustre survey.

8. While the community expects its Council to be proactive and profitable, this does not **mean that Council has to 'do everything'.** **Council can't do everything and it shouldn't** - any non-core activities should be spun off or ceased.

9. **I don't believe the 11.7% rate increase is justified; I'm happy to** consider say a 7% increase as a short term measure (say 4 years) but that Council focus on taking costs out of

running the organisation. It is clear that over 50% of the cost of running Council activities are related to salaries and overheads plus purchases/materials. I would like to see better procurement practices introduced where savings are derived year on year and, a short-term freeze on salaries rather than a 2% plus annual rise (not too many people have been given pay rises in recent years). Unless Council can demonstrate to ratepayers how it is endeavouring to reign in costs and keep the cost structure as low as possible, then ratepayers, like me, will be suspicious of any rate rise proposal.

Happy to discuss any of the above with you.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ph: [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, 19 December 2018 3:45 PM

To: Lithgow City Council

Subject: Rate rise

18/12/18

Dear Sir / Madam,

As a resident of Lithgow for the past 5 years I would ask you what the reasoning is for raising rates and further, raising them beyond the cap for Lithgow only?

I have read the reasoning on your website and I would argue that this is not good enough.

Throwing money at a problem is not addressing the root cause of the problem and will in all probability only exacerbate the problem further.

Lithgow is almost one of the highest rated municipalities in NSW which seems out of all kilter to the infrastructure provided and the culture of the town.

There has been a fortune spent on the salaries in Lithgow Council.

Paying someone \$160k as a town planner for a small town like Lithgow seems ludicrous.

Oh wait, we now have a new town square to show for it. This is a concrete slab.

Is this what our rates pay for? If so, it is a travesty.

When you first drive into Lithgow it looks like a slum. Why not plant rows of blossom trees **similar to Leura at each entrance? It's not rocket science to make things more attractive!**

The pubs here are painted black and grey and look about as inviting as a slaughterhouse. Why not declare the area national trust and paint the main street in heritage colours?

Once more these ideas are simple yet practical. I cannot understand why the money spent on salaries is not reflecting any simple value. If you can point out this value to me, please do.

The existing roads and footpaths infrastructure is disgusting however, pouring more money into a problem without looking into the root cause is no solution. The infrastructure has **been left to run down over a substantial period of time and something that didn't just occur overnight.**

Where were the checks and balances when this was happening?

Has there been benchmarking done against other similar size councils?

Has there been a justification for the return on investment undertaken?

And the more important question; do these balances exist now? My thinking is that if it does then this rate rise would not be happening.

Why not instead reduce staff and salaries and invest the money wisely to attract more industry to Lithgow? Look at how Mudgee has gone ahead, with industry in place there is a tax base to actually start improving things instead of taxing the poor and elderly. Set up a subsidised business park.

In speaking with many businesses today they find it cheaper and easier to set up in Bathurst rather than Lithgow. This is a sad indictment.

Raising rates appears to be **completely out of touch with people's expectations and is an anathema** to promoting Lithgow as a go ahead town. The only thing this will encourage people to do is leave.

This decision to raise rates will make council more irrelevant to people than it already is.

If you are serious about developing Lithgow you need to change your priorities and start thinking about the future and what could be. It's not hard and it doesn't cost a lot of money.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 1 January 2019 2:24 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: special rate variation

Hello Lithgow City Council

As a rate payer in the Lithgow City Council region I wish to provide some strong feedback to Council's proposal to apply for a special rate variation and subsequent rate increase for the ratepayers.

I am strongly against this proposal and wish to register my displeasure with this suggestion

The Lithgow City council rates are already excessively high and amongst the highest in the state of NSW. Any further increase will put the rates into a bracket where we cannot afford to pay and will be forced to sell up and move to a different location with a more reasonable rate system.

You cannot simply continue to put up rates to a level where they are unaffordable. Alternate approaches to the issue need to be explored.

If as claimed the council's financial position is not sustainable due to ageing infrastructure which needs replacing then council needs to look seriously at its long term future. Options such as take over by another council, forced merger and / or totally dissolving the Lithgow City Council region need to be explored and implemented.

Thank you for considering this feedback.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 2 January 2019 11:08 AM
To: Lithgow City Council
Subject: reference no. SRV19-20

I am writing with regards to reference no. SRV19-20

I am a Lithgow rate payer, and I do not believe that we need to pick up the tab from all of the money wasted by Lithgow City Council, if they were more responsible with the money, there would be funds for the projects that they say will be covered by the rate rise.

I don't believe that the entire rate rise will go to these projects anyway, because Lithgow City Council have been known to blow out costs on projects, and get themselves into situations where they just need more and more money.

We have higher rates than Bathurst, our water costs more than Bathurst, but our services are less and our water is often of lesser quality than Bathurst. I wish we amalgamated when we had the chance so we could have some real leadership and direction in this town.

As a rate payer, I am voting NO to the rate rise special variance.

But, this is Lithgow City Council, and they do whatever the heck they want anyway, that's what got them into this mess! I hope some of the councillors take note of what the people are saying, and act, so they can keep their jobs as councillors after the next election!

Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 22 December 2018 6:04 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Council Feedback Form Submission

Title [REDACTED]

Your Name [REDACTED]

Address Line 1 [REDACTED]

Contact Phone Number [REDACTED]

Email Address [REDACTED]

Specific details of incident Re proposed special rate variation 2019/20
Recd your info re this subject and would OBJECT to such a proposal.
If the council has failed to adequately provide for ageing infrastructure then why should current rates payers cope the increase.
I do not want to endorse a policy of incompetent management which this levy seems to support. Please Council lift your game and stop slugging rate payers for you past mistakes.
Stick to the basics,,,,rates ,roads and rubbish ,,,,and stop wanting to hit the rate payers for extras that cover past errors. Very disappointed ratepayer.

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, 7 January 2019 3:38 PM
To: Lithgow City Council
Subject: attention Graeme Faulkner, haveyoursay

Dear Mr Faulkner

As I have been unable to access thehaveyoursay website , I am emailing you to register that my vote is for scenario 1.

My address is [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

with thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 5 January 2019 8:44 AM
To: Lithgow City Council
Subject: Special Rate Variation

No!!

There should be no revision of rates upwards.

Council needs to focus on finding more efficient ways to provide better services at less cost like everyone else in private enterprise has to rather than just reaching further into rate payers' pockets.

Council does not need more money to spend unwisely.

This is a grubby & greedy move by council that demonstrates a lack of imagination and lack of focus on efficiency.

I do not support the application.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 10 January 2019 6:01 AM
To: Deborah McGrath
Subject: Draft 2019/20 Operational Plan submission

Name

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Address

[REDACTED]

Email

[REDACTED]

What activities, capital works and new initiatives would you like to be considered in the Draft 2019/20

Stop harassing land owners and spending 3000 chasing 800 dollars debt that was being paid off anyway. Council should be lowering rates in the area as in the last 15 years no improvement near my property have been made and rates are too high. Council also needs to calculate rates by property prices correctly instead of random prices that do not reflect current land prices.

Operational Plan?	Council is being miss managed and have even wasted police time sending them to my property which I have been inform is not part of their duties and responsibilities. Once council stops wasting tax payers money and time on things that are not legal they may have more money to spend on actually doing some infrastructure.
-------------------	--

IP Address	120.18.166.172
------------	----------------

User-Agent (Browser/OS)	Google Chrome 34.0.1847.76 / Android
----------------------------	--------------------------------------

Referrer	http://www.haveyoursay.lithgow.com/draft-operational-plan-2019-20/
----------	---

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 9 January 2019 2:35 PM
To: Lithgow City Council
Subject: special rate variation

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please note that the IPart website is not active and could not be reached.

I object to any increase in my rates as I receive no benefits from Council.

The rates are now [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 9 January 2019 11:22 AM
To: Lithgow City Council
Subject: Rates Increase

I, [REDACTED] Don't agree with council increasing our rates ,for the simple reason Council has enough funds to waste now . We only have to look back at the Main St and how that went absolutely discussed with that waste of rate payers funds . Then on top of that the business's that it put out of business.

Iam thinking very much like Mr Kerry Packer told the government a few years back (I don't like the way that the government spends my tax so I pay as least I can) I don't like the way Lithgow Council wastes rate payers money . So why give them more .

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 10 January 2019 1:50 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Gravel roads

Hi [REDACTED]

The roads in question are Vulcan rd which comes to three properties The other is Macdonalds Hole rd Which also goes to properties this road I asked council to grade two years ago so as to save the gravel that council put on being washed away

Regard [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

The Council doesn't want to care for a gravel road that they have been doing so for fifty years that goes to the back of my property . My access road to my house is far from being good ,so they need to show us how giving more funds is going to improve anything .

Concerned rate payer

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 11 January 2019 9:57 PM
To: Lithgow City Council
Subject: Special Rate Variation submission: reference no. SRV19-20

Dear Lithgow City Council,

Special Rate Variation reference no. SRV19-20

This submission is private and confidential - not for publication

My submission is against the the implementation of the special rate variation proposed by Lithgow City Council.

My reasons are listed below:

1. The current economic situation of LCC combined with the deteriorating state of assets has evolved over a long period of systemic neglect and poor management. *A long succession of Councillors and General Managers are at fault and responsible for this NOT the residents of the Lithgow community.*

2. It is abhorrent that the community is given only 2 options to choose from - acceptance of the SRV or the option of managing risk and possible closures of the unsafe assets and a reduction of services. (One could say the choice we are given equates to a Trumpism).

The action you wish to take with the SRV is too little too late and I believe it will not provide enough funding to achieve the desired result.

Two options only, also gives the impression to the community that acceptance of the SRV proposal is the only way to fix our roads.

3. There is a general lack of confidence in Lithgow City Council by the community in general and a sense that mismanagement financially by LCC is a major contributor to the current situation - how could it be otherwise?

Other concerns include:

- lack of transparency with all Council expenditure including Councillor expenditures
- out of date Councillors creating divisions in the town by supporting coal mining and neglecting the environment and health issues associated with the production of coal powered energy
- former General Managers suing LCC or receiving big payouts when they leave their position

4. Lithgow City and the LGA are deemed to be a very high disadvantage socio economic region per the SIEFA index of socio economic disadvantage. It is unreasonable to increase rates beyond the rate peg as it significantly impacts on those with low incomes who are barely making ends meet.

5. The period of consultation over December - January is not the best time for community consultation regarding this issue with holiday closures of LCC, IPART and with the general community on holidays. It made it difficult for community members to consult with the relevant offices and disrupts research required and many may forget dates pending with family commitments. I believe some people will miss this deadline.

6. There was a lot of confusion understanding the SRV in principle. The "permanent / one off increase" is a description that is very hard to comprehend as a concept. I had difficulty and needed to read Facebook posts, phone a friend and ring LCC. It is not hard to misunderstand that this is not just a one off increase. I

believe many members of the community will find this whole process unfathomable and not to contribute their opinion on the SRV at all.

7. Finally - make some significant cutbacks from within the operations of LCC. No Halloween, no Lithglo and more internal cut backs where possible - put things on hold for 2 or 3 years and then review the state of play. Cut salaries in senior management just a teeny bit. No fringe benefits. Take a cut from the payments to Councillors.

8. Business improvement efficiencies ie investment in technologies like renewables to reduce energy and operation costs is a great idea. This has been suggested to LCC for years and NOW it becomes doable in an act of desperation. Bathurst Council have paid off their solar system completely and Lithgow is just now starting to think about acting on it? I believe there is funding available for new projects such as solar panels that could be sourced by LCC rather than the SRV for such projects.

In conclusion - LCC should've done something about this situation before it escalated to where we are today. It is unfair to put the monetary burden onto ratepayers. It may, if we believe how it was put to the community by LCC as only a small increase on our rates; a small amount from the Council viewpoint maybe, but, it is significant in dollar values to individuals. It also holds symbolic significance that the LCC are really not fit for the future.

LCC staff and Councillors need to be made accountable for all financial expenditure and for it to be transparent and available for the community to see.

I do not agree that the SRV is the best way forward.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 11 January 2019 7:31 PM

To: Lithgow City Council

Subject: SRV19-20

Dear Councillors

Re submission for proposed special rate variation

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed rate increase.

I am a Lithgow rate payer and I object to the proposed rate increase. I DO agree that roads and basic infrastructure are the top priority but believe that the money needs to come from elsewhere.

I wasn't aware of the proposed increase until 7 December 2018 and given that given that council was closed from 21 December to 7 January and people (rate payers) were also on a Christmas break, I don't think that we have been given enough time to make an informed decision. That gave us three weeks to navigate the vast and confusing amount of information on the have your say link. I also didn't receive a letter in the mail until 12 December 2019. I was informed via the councils Facebook page that media releases are sent out to local media however, I don't recall seeing anything highlighting the rate increase in any media.

There's a lack of trust in the council's ability to manage funds that they already have and the ability to effectively implement and prioritise plans within the community. I would like to highlight the CBD revitalisation as a glaring example. I believe that this was supposed to fulfil one of the objectives in the community strategy plan toward 2030 - to attract business and tourism. I think it is obvious that this a complete fail and has in fact has had the polar opposite effect. Businesses have suffered and many closed down leaving the CBD even less appealing than before the 'revitalisation'. I find it disgraceful. I would like to see Council earn back the trust of the community before we commit to a permanent rate increase. Again I would have appreciated more time and perhaps community meetings to get a better understanding how council planned to move forward.

There is a high level of economic disadvantage in the Lithgow community. The costs of living keeps going up and is becoming a considerable burden. I already dread the bills coming in and struggle to juggle our finances. As a result our family has progressively reduced our spending to mostly essentials. I believe that I am not alone in this and this means reduced spending locally thus hurting business further. I'm aware that there is a hardship policy but believe that is for extreme circumstances. I have finally applied for a pensioner discount that until now was too proud to ask for.

It is unlikely that council has an accurate understanding of the community's willingness to pay higher rates. The have your say survey was complex and confusing. I did fill one out online and found some of the terms misleading or confusing. I can only imagine how difficult it would have been over the phone. Of particular concern are the words 'one off (permanent)' in the option to

increase rates. The councils Facebook page comments indicated that this was confusing to at least one person who was then given the incorrect information from the surveyor.

"So I just got rung up by the consultancy firm. After a very long spiel most of which immediately went out of my head, it all boiled down to 2 questions, i.e. are you for or against a rate rise? To my question 'will this be for just one year?' the reply was 'I don't know but yes I think so'. In this smoke and mirrors survey, I now read in the other comments that the rise is to be PERMANENT. This survey needs to be hugely simplified or no one will understand it and the results will be false." Comment sourced from council's Facebook page.

The two options presented in the survey were limited. I would not be happy with either option and believe it was a poor choice of options. The option of not accepting the rate rise came with the implication that if chosen it would mean people's roads would not be repaired and the town would fall into disrepair. I find this to be a rather threatening option. Instead there could have been the option to cut spending on non essentials. It would have been interesting to know the community's thoughts on reduced spending on Halloween and Lithglow etc. Perhaps the community would have accepted less spending in Libraries and town revitalisation? These are things that I enjoy and are excellent but don't see as a priority. Perhaps the council could charge more for camping at Wallarang and other services. Again, I haven't had enough time to properly look at all the information and options but common sense says there are other places where there is non essential spending and other avenues to raise revenue.

I would be interested to know the results of and council's response to the online survey and would also appreciate a reply to this submission.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 11 January 2019 7:12 PM
To: Lithgow City Council
Subject: SRV19-20

To whom it may concern,

I wish to write today to advise i totally disagree with the proposed rate rise in the LGA. In my opinion Lithgow City Council has mismanaged funding and squandered opportunity. LCC has not maintained infrastructure for at least 20-30 years. In the time I have lived in Lithgow I have observed that if it was not for State and Federal Funding this council would be in administration, my question is when will this happen. I was against amalgamation or administration however Lithgow needs to go down one of these roads.

Our children have to move away to gain work or education, LCC has mismanaged the LEP which has stopped investment in the area. The LCC has wasted at least up to 5 million dollars in the past 5 years, some examples are the CBD Revitalisation Project and the sacking of the previous General Manager.

If the LCC was a business it would have closed long ago. When will those who can change our current situation going to stand up and do what is right for the ratepayers of the LGA?

Thank you for your time.

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

21 DEC 2018

Doc Set ID

GA Ref

Years

The Mayor
Mr Ray Thompson
Lithgow Council

Dear Mr Thompson.

We write in response to your letter regarding the Proposed Special Rate Variation 2019/2020.

Having lived here for a short period of 7 years, we have observed some changes which occurred in Lithgow, namely work done by Lithgow council. A recent addition to the walking path along Farmers' Creek is a great improvement however during our walks we noticed that weeds are slowly creeping over the edge and the railing is being overcome with long grass and weeds too. Another noticeable improvement is the set of lights at the Great Western Highway. It was a long time coming but the area near the Post Office is now tidier.

As pensioners we can barely afford to pay the current council rates of \$2256 every year. With the projected increases we will be struggling to pay the required increases.

It seems that the increase of 2.7% is added to our rates yearly regardless of our opinion and that amount should be enough without further rises.

We can fully understand the need to maintain all community assets and our rates are specifically used for this purpose. So if these assets are regularly maintained and upgraded, why are they deteriorating? They should be in fairly good condition as expected if they were looked after.

At a guess, we estimated that Council receives about \$20 000 000 - \$30 000 000 per year through rates. This is a huge amount and if properly budgeted, it should be more than sufficient to support any work that need to be done by Council.

We agree that we should encourage and support business improvement initiatives but why should we have to pay for them.

We don't understand why there is a loss of rates revenue because of the expiry of the current SRV on 1 July 2019. Can this be explained in layman's terms.

There have been no mention of any State or Federal grants applied by Lithgow Council to help support the upgrading of our assets such as roads, pavements etc.

As with all organizations and particularly where public money is concerned, there must be accountability. Just from casual observations, we notice that as we pass an area where council workers are supposed to be engaged in performing a task, many are standing watching one or maybe two actually doing a job.

Another observation is that the pavement sweeper who operates the cleaning machine is often missing from his machine which is often parked outside the Tatts Hotel. We estimate that it would perhaps take him an hour to sweep each side of Main St so what does he do with the rest of his day while the machine is parked outside the hotel.

During trips to town, we noticed that there is a lot of pigeon mess at the Tatts hotel and pavement outside as well as further up in the lane beside Barratt and Smith.

The plane trees along the swimming pool road are dangerous. Large branches often falling creating trip hazards on the path. Severe pruning is needed and dead branches cut off. Pavement and kerb stones have lifted in Main Street opposite Lean and Bennett thus making it another trip hazard. Also there is a lot of debris from falling twigs along the footpath stretching from Lean & Bennett to nearly MacDonald's. This is the main thoroughfare through town and is an eyesore to the many motorists passing through. What an embarrassment .

How can Lithgow boast of a Tidy Town Award when people do not even mow the kerbside outside their properties. Those who make an excuse of an effort leave their grass cutting in the road and expect the rain to wash it away thus messing up the road and congesting the drains.

Main Street pavement outside the banks area is a disgrace. Why were the paving bricks not restored to their original condition when they were removed for work to be done underneath. Instead an unsightly and unprofessional mess of tar have been left in its place. What we want to know is, will the pavements be properly renewed but not at our expense. At present it is yet another trip hazard for Lithgow residents.

These are only some of our opinions and observations. There is a lot more we could write about but we'll leave that for next time.

Sincerely,



[REDACTED]

17th December, 2018

Cr Ray Thompson.
Mayor,
Lithgow City Council.
P.O. Box 19,
LITHGOW. N.S.W. 2790

Lithgow City Council

Scanned ☐

07 JAN 2019

Dear Sir,

Doc Set ID.....

GA Ref.....

Years

Reference: SRV19-20

I wish to register my objection to the proposed Rate Increase for 2019/20.

I am 83 and a pensioner who is already forced to pay for a Garbage Service I cannot use.

My house at [REDACTED] is on a sloping 5 acre block that is closer to the Highway than [REDACTED], so that my drive is long and fairly steep, so dragging those garbage bins up and down is impossible for me. Nor is there a place where I can leave them by the gate as the slope makes that also impractical. I would have to leave the bins on the road which would impede traffic and would probably be unlawful.

My rubbish is mainly cardboard and paper, which I can dispose of in my AGA type stove, green waste I compost, so I find Council's "One Size Fits All" policy unfair, an imposition and undemocratic.

[REDACTED]

27.12. 2018

Lithgow City Council
Mort St.
Lithgow 2790

Lithgow City C
Scanned

07 JAN 2019

Doc Set ID
GA Ref
Years

Re: Proposed Special Rate Variation 2019/20

Dear Sir,

We strongly oppose any variation in our rates, they are already excessive. If you cannot balance the budget, then cut services, starting with wages at the top!

Faithfull yours,

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN AT COUNCIL.

DEAR SIR/MADAM.

I AM NOT IN FAVOUR OF ANY
RATE INCREASE. THE PROPERTY I HAVE IN CAPERTEE
VALLEY IS UNECONOMICAL FARM LAND AND IS USED
FOR PASSIVE RECREATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY.
I DON'T REQUIRE OR RECEIVE COUNCIL SERVICES.
I REGARD THE CURRENT LAND VALUATION AS BEING
EXCESSIVE. MY RATES ARE HIGH ENOUGH AS IS.

YOURS FAITHFULLY

Lithgow City Council

Scanned ☐

07 JAN 2019

Doc Set ID

GA Ref

Years

9-1-2019.

10 JAN 2019

Doc Set ID

GA Ref

Years

Ref. S.R.V. 19-20.

Lithgow City Council.

In regard to the proposed special rate variation.

I hope that it can be avoided.

The last 12/12 have been particularly hard financially for residents on rural blocks due to cost of water cartage & a high increase in cost of fodder.

Your solution to budget pressure appears to be -

- Same rate + normal increase = less services.
- Increased rate ++ = Same services

There is a 3rd approach that could be considered by your managers.

- Same rate + normal increase + more efficient use of funds, resources & human resources + minimal waste of same = better services.

While saying more money is needed, council appears to be keen to hire (at cost) consultants, researchers & outside firms instead of using available staff or unemployed Lithgow citizens or Lithgow companies. e.g. One would think that a letter to rate payers & local area publicity would have negated the need (especially when money is short) to hire outside assistance to communicate to rate payers. Outsourcing might be trendy but it is costly.

What.

10 JAN 2019

Doc Set ID

GA Ref

Years

23-11-2018

Dear Lithgow City Council,

I'm a reply to your recent letter putting up Rates to beautify Lithgow Area, Lithgow Councillors.

This idea was not mentioned when you stood for election, and to bring it on over the holiday period. When a lot of people are very busy or holiday is a sneaky way to go.

My road comes through Mudgee Shire and meets Lithgow City Council Area at my boundary.

I probably have to maintain approx 400 metres of road in the Council of Lithgow. My road has not been graded by Lithgow Council for 30 or more years or a shovel full of gravel put on it.

How about some thought for me & others like me who always pay their rates on time.

I certainly do.

I ask that you read this letter at next Council Meeting

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,



10 JAN 2020

Doc Set ID

GA Ref

Year

Lithgow City Council.

P.O.Box 19,

Lithgow, 2790

Re: Special Rate Variation 2019/20 Re SRV 19/20

The General Manager,

Lithgow City Council,

Lithgow 2790

Dear Sir,

As a ratepayer of Lithgow City council at Round Swamp, I wish to strongly oppose the proposed rate variation for 2019/2020.

I am a farmer and have experienced the worst drought in the 43 years I have lived in the area. During the past year I have spent \$170,000 on hay and cottonseed to feed stock and have been forced to sell all of my stock except 200 breeders for little money because of their poor condition and the proceeds have all been spent to keep the breeders alive. Currently I have zero income and as I have only 51 calves. I will have little income for over twelve months. I have NO capacity to pay any increase in rates. In fact I believe that there should be a redistribution of rates among the rating categories so farmers experience NO increase in rate, not even the rate cap for 2019/20.

As a substantial ratepayer of Mid Western Regional Council I have examined for that shire the effect of rate increases for the various rating categories. Because residential valuations are less than farmland valuations a rate increase has far less effect on residential properties than larger farms.

What is needed before any decision is made are several rate models to be prepared and considered by Council before any decision is made. One of these models should be with no rate increase for 2019/20 for farmers.

Also on a comparative basis Mid Western Regional Council has not sought a rate variation and has remained within the rate cap as set by Government. MWRC has a much larger area and only slightly more population and more roads.

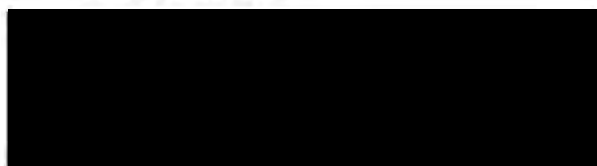
That Council has been very proactive in obtaining revenue streams from other than rates, This has included revision of fees and charges, investment resulting in substantial rental from a shopping centre complex, tendering for RMS and other VPA works, revision of Council policies re road maintenance, no further sealing till backlog of assets brought up to scratch, possibility of town improvement rate for stormwater drainage and buildings.

A rate rise above the cap should only be contemplated once the above issues have been researched and/or implemented.

Many farmers who own land in two council areas do not use the facilities in both areas but are rated as if they do which is unfair.

I hope you will give serious consideration to my submission. I am happy to discuss should you desire.

Yours faithfully,

A large black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.

10 JAN 2019

Doc Set ID.....

GA Ref.....

Years.....

Wednesday
Jan 9th.

Dear Mr. Mayor,

Thank you for the letter about the Proposed Special Rate Variation for 2019-20, which I received on the 10th December. I also got the survey call from Micromex the very next day. I have written to Mr. Neil Derwent, with some pretty obvious questions (on December 13th or 20th) - but so far no reply.

Now regarding your letter. That list on page 1 of the many and varied Council responsibilities in modern days, does look impressive. And I for one would be very sorry if there had to be any cuts to the Library services, for example.

By the way, I have never understood "Fit For the Future", how ~~it~~ the concept was

defined, or how the assessment² worked for us (or any L.G.A.). At an early stage after it was announced, it sounded as if Lithgow made the grades; then after some months it seemed we hadn't.

My main problem with Scenario 2, Page 2, is the confusing language, and meaningless percentages (what are they percentages of?) And for goodness' sake, is the increase being applied for really a One-off, or isn't it? If it's permanent, does that mean it will keep being applied, year after year, in fact cumulatively? (the 2.7% is hardly a rate peg at all, merely a token increase allowed between Valuer General's 3-yearly updates. But, that takes the whole rate hike closer to 11% or 12%, rather than the quoted 9%).

Also on page 2, when you focus on where the additional expenditure

is most urgently needed, it's very 3
much the physical conditions of 3 or 4
main categories. Probably just as
well - what on earth is a "business
improvement initiative" after all.

Currently I am paying \$85-00
per fortnight; cunningly aligned with
Pension pay days. My total annual
Rates charge for this financial year
is \$1,789.17 (I've forgotten what it
was, the previous year; but I used to
pay \$76-00 a fortnight, so that's al-
ready a \$9 rise on each instalment.
The rates in recent years have been
successively going up, and seemingly
by bigger amounts.)

all right, when can I expect a
reply to my request for an estimate,
not an exact quote, of my future
Rates obligation - broken down into
manageable payments that I'm now
accustomed to, and appreciative of.

Yours sincerely,



Cr Ray Thompson
Mayor
Lithgow City Council
Via email: council@lithgow.nsw.gov.au

Dear Cr Thompson

Proposed Special Rate Variation 2019/20

I am writing regarding your correspondence of 4 December 2018 regarding the proposed Special Rate Variation.

This is not a “rant against the proposed changes” – I can see the issues outlined in your letter and understand that at times there is only so much that can be done given available resources. Hence, in completing the survey I was “mildly supportive”.

However, there are a few points that need consideration.

I do find it manipulative that there is no “**Scenario 3 – Maintain the current SRV + 2.7%**”. Obviously the council officers wanted to push for an “all or nothing play” with the second SRV added, with the only other choice for ratepayers being the “no SRV scenario one” with a poor likely outcome. “10% increase or the sky falls in”.

Perhaps the right answer is my Scenario 3 where the Council maintains the current SRV and looks closely at where expenditure can be saved. It is always easier to simply raise more revenue than take hard expense saving decisions. The limited two Scenario choice offered is cynical at best.

One suggestion I do have is considering **different charges for property owners running heavy vehicle businesses** from their property. In Banners Lane and tributary streets there are a number (five or six?) property owners running heavy vehicle businesses. B Doubles and earthmoving – not smaller rigids. Large potholes open and the driveway entrances are usually potholed and broken from the weight and friction of non-steering wheels being “dragged” over the bitumen. These vehicles do the majority of road damage, perhaps they should pay proportionately?

On the subject of transparency, your letter provides comprehensive details of the risk of the current or future shortfall in revenue to services. Shortfalls come about from either/or inadequate revenue and excessive expenditure. Particularly in light of recent revelations in both the public and private sector, and in order to present all the data, I request council publish on their website:

- The total value of salary, bonuses, benefits, superannuation, expense reimbursement and any other compensation paid to the five highest paid executives on the Council payroll

- The total value of all payments to councillors, be it for expenses, home office costs, internet and phone, motor vehicle use, travel and any other items
- The total value of all costs incurred at council meetings for catering, beverages and any other costs
- The total value of all payments by council to external consultants and advisers in any field, be they lawyers, accountants, engineers, marketing firms or any other external service provider.

Such data will provide ratepayers with greater transparency to gauge their support for the rate variation proposal – surely a good thing.

The final issue I have is the ongoing “Lithgow-Centric” nature of Council. Our home is in Little Hartley, with unformed gutters in the street and a significant erosion problem on the street side. The erosion is so deep in spots I believe it would cause a vehicle that ran off the side of the bitumen to potentially roll over. I will leave it to the council to determine potential liability if such a situation were to occur.

After a request, Council merely dropped some gravel into the problem area, which in turn created a greater erosion problem next time it rained. To call it an “ill-suited” fix is an understatement. I haven’t complained again for one simple reason – I don’t think it would change anything.

While a section of Banners’ Lane was resurfaced recently, “folklore” says the Moyne Farm developer paid for it. Unfortunately and as already mentioned, the heavy vehicle businesses are already cutting the road up again, especially in the driveway turn-ins.

I frequently see Council vehicles all over Lithgow – the only council vehicle I see in Little Hartley is the garbage trucks, and they are contractors and outside the scope of the SRV in any case.

So, for me to support the proposal on rates, I would need some commitment that Little Hartley residents are more than simply “\$1,500 a year each to support Lithgow”. We have poor roads too, no gutters and erosion problems.

Perhaps cynical, if the SRV application is successful, my concerns are

- Too much of it will go to Council “managing itself”
- We will see no change in service provision or road quality in Little Hartley
- Living here will simply cost more for no visible benefit

A commitment from the Council on those matters will ease concerns and strengthen my support.

I am happy to wait for a response to this letter before taking any further action. As I said at the outset, I am empathic to the difficulties of a large LGA with small-ish population.

Thanks and regards

██████████
 ██████████
 ████████████████████

To whom it may concern.

Reference SRV 19/20

Please accept this submission regarding the additional rate increase above the Peg for Lithgow City Council.

I write in connection with the above notice of special rate variation increase. I have examined the plan and I wish to object strongly, to the additional increase of rates above the peg tare for the Lithgow LGA. The reasons for objection to the rate increase are base around the Lithgow City Council (LCC) allocation and undertaking of works funded by the Lithgow LGA.

In the Draft Transport, Stormwater Drainage and Buildings Program for 2019/20 it is stated, **“The assets in their current state are deteriorating and require ongoing and costly maintenance. To improve our public assets we need to spend more money on maintain and renewing these assets to ensure they meet the needs of the community”**.

This statement I can agree with and the assets are in need of maintenance, this however is a common issue for all councils within NSW; So why is LCC different and require the rate payers to provide additional revenue?

In relation to maintenance of assets I cannot agree to providing council with more revenue to carry out maintenance works which begin to show signs of failure not long after completion. I also have to question the logic behind the allocation processes, planning, cost, quality of end product and timeframes which it takes to complete the works.

Below I have listed some questions and areas of concern that council should address prior to asking the Lithgow LGA to provide additional funding.

Planning

- Has the LCC questioned and carried out investigations as to why the assets are deteriorating at a rate that requires the rate payers of the LGA to provide additional revenue to maintain and renew assets. In relation to the road network there is no denying that traffic volumes have increased which have attributed to the increased rate of deterioration for the network.

This is the same for every council in NSW and Australia, but they are not asking for additional funds to maintain their networks. So why are you?

- How did council reach the decision to request the rate variation? What Information, investigation and evidence was this decision based on? Is this information going to be provided to the public?
- I also have concerns regarding the maintenance decisions made by LCC which have resulted in mismanagement and wasting of council funds through recent and past completed works in the LGA.

For example 1: Hot Mix Asphaltting of Methven street Lithgow. It was not that long ago that these works were carried out, yet the pavement is already showing sign of distress and failure. It was noted prior to the works there were areas in Methven Street where water was seeping through the pavement. What measures were taken to ensure the water was

controlled and drained from the sub base pavement before placing new pavement layers over the base? Or was this a mill and re-sheet with no drainage treatment or foundation treatment? Has the area of distress been identified and picked up by the LCC council asset inspectors? If so what is the reason behind the failures happening so soon? What was the planned/expected pavement life prior to the works being undertaken? What investigation and pavement design was completed to determine the suitability of hot mix asphalt resurfacing?

Example 2: Wallerawang Main Street is showing signs of significant pavement distress in a number of locations. These works would be around 2 years old and already have significant sections of block cracking and signs of pavement failure. Again have these areas of distress and failure been identified and picked up by the LCC council asset inspectors? If so what is the reason behind the failure? What was the planned/expected pavement life prior to the works being undertaken? Will the planned pavement life be achieved? What investigation and pavement design was completed to determine the suitability of hot mix asphalt resurfacing? Was the subbase inspected prior to placing the asphalt and if required, treated? What quality system does council have in place to ensure that the LGA receives a quality end product? What Australian Standard or industry code of best practice did this work conform to? Is there a maintenance standard that council are using? At an estimated cost of \$300,000.00 to completed the asphalt works, this was a significant outlay for the LGA that has performed poorly and will require significant maintenance cost in the future.

In the Draft Transport, Stormwater Drainage and Buildings Program for 2019/20 it is stated, **“Increasing the funding for these assets will allow council to renew those that are currently in a poor condition. It will also ensure that the number of assets in poor condition will not continue to grow”**. The examples outlined in the above paragraph are a contradiction of this statement and are proof that the planning decisions, processes and work methods by council need to be questioned as the supposed renewal works are creating more areas for future maintenance with very little value for money to the LGA.

So the questions are:

Does council believe that this was an appropriate use of public money?

Does council believe that the LGA would be happy with spending a significant amount of revenue on a repair to be back there in two years' time to carry out maintenance work?

Does Council believe that the community would agree that the LGA have got value for money with these repairs?

Is council content with the performance of these pavement repairs?

Can council see a trend here?

As a rate payer of the Lithgow LGA, I don't believe that there is any value in having to repair costly works within such a short timeframe from completion. If this is the planned intention then council need to seriously review this approach.

I also have to question how council plan and identify areas that require maintenance works and logic behind the decisions for the treatment for the areas that have been identified.

- Example 1: How did the council maintenance planners reach the determination that Elizabeth Street Wallerawang required a full pavement treatment and reseal? What was the logic behind this decision when Elizabeth Street services around 20 houses, Yet Burnett Street which services Elizabeth Street and also caters for Mountain View estate (50+ Homes only receives an intersection pavement repair and an overlay reseal of the existing sealed pavement which was in the same condition as Elizabeth Street.

Wouldn't logic state that Burnett Street which has a higher traffic volume as it is servicing Elizabeth Street and the Mountain View estate should receive the full pavement treatment and Elizabeth Street would receive the reseal?

It makes no logical sense to complete a full pavement repair for a street that services 20 homes, and complete a patch job on a street that has double the traffic volume, more pot hole repairs and pavement failures.

How did council determine that this was the correct treatment for these two areas? What investigation and assessments were completed to determine the pavement treatment? E.g Average daily vehicle count.

This is an example of a decision by council that may have maintenance and cost repercussions because all of the factors were not fully considered and a logical decision reached.

With the above information as examples I have to question how council has determined and reached a decision that in 2019/20 operation plan First Street in Lithgow is scheduled to have hot mix asphalt reseal at a cost of \$140,000. Based on the performance of previous hot mix reseals there is little evidence that the LGA will receive a quality product that will provide performance and longevity to the rate payers of Lithgow. Is this the right approach? Does this area of pavement require a full asphalt reseal?

From previous asphalt works and information provided above what lessons have been learnt to ensure that the previous mistakes will not re occur? What quality systems and checks will be incorporated to ensure that the pavement performs as planned? How can the LGA have confidence that they will receive a quality product once the work is completed? These are key question that council needs to be address prior to undertaking of the works.

Processes/cost

- Questions have to be answered regarding the processes and timeframe for works to be completed.
During the full pavement repair at the intersection of Henrietta Street and Burnett Street Wallerawang it had taken council 7 working days to complete the pavement works for an area of around 462m². The works involved removing the base pavement to the subbase level and replacing the base layer with a granular road base material.

This intersection was then left as a trafficked granular surface for around 5 weeks until the sealing was completed. During that time a water cart and operator watered the pavement once or twice a day including weekends and public holidays.

It was great to see that council were actively preventing dust from the granular pavement bothering the local residents as per environmental plans. It is unfortunate that during this time there were rain events which resulted in sediment laden material running from the granular pavement and entering the clean storm water system which was due to a lack of sediment controls. What would happen if this sediment laden material had come from a residential site? Council would investigate and potentially fine the land owner.

The issue with leaving a trafficked granular surface in a high stress area for so long is that the pavement begun to ravel and segregate which caused the aggregate material to be plucked out due to turning traffic. Minor pot holes that developed during the rain events were not reworked and just filled. It was also noted that the area was not reworked to ensure the road base was homogenous prior to sealing. Will this have an impact on the performance of the placed engineered material?

Also noted during the 5 week period was the interface joint to the asphalt on Henrietta Street developed a depression. This was not rectified and now has district bump at the transition that ponds water after rain.

Leaving open granular pavement seems to be a common occurrence for the LCC with the Rydal/ Wallerawang Road heavy patching being left as a granular surface for a significant period. Portland road Wallerawang (east of the railway crossing WB lane) pavement repair being left for a considerable amount of time (weeks). The patch on the Portland road completed in the last 12 months has consolidated and corrugated showing signs of pavement distress.

How long until it requires repairs? More money wasted.

Leaving these granular surfaces open to the elements for such a long time also has implication for the longevity of the repair works and cost associated, as the area may require to be reworked as the pavement can develop pot holes, corrugation and segregation prior to sealing.

So the questions are:

Why did it take so long to complete the intersection work at Henrietta Street? Every time you drive past there was nothing happening- No work. There were a lot of inefficiencies observed.

Why does LCC wait so long to complete the sealing of the granular pavements? What is the reason/purpose for this?

With Granular pavement is use of stabilisation agents considered as a treatment option for patching works? If not why?

What was the cost of having a water cart operate for 5 weeks including weekend and public holidays to wet the pavement?

Does council consider having the water cart operating for 5 weeks an efficient use of finances and resources?

What checks, testing and inspection were carried out prior to sealing these works?

The information and list of examples above could go on and on if the public checked past works. These are some of the reasons for objection to the additional rate rise proposed by Lithgow City Council. How can LCC expect the rate payers of the Lithgow LGA to provide more money and have it wasted through inefficiencies, poor quality products, flawed process and repeated failure of new works and repairs that result in the same poor performance and longevity issues?

Throwing more money at the deteriorating assets without reviewing the reasons why they are deteriorating and repeating the same process over and over again whilst expecting a different result is a definition of stupidity.

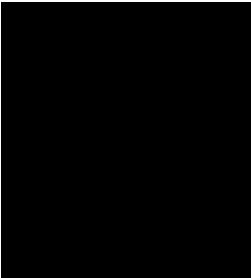
This is the reason why the assets are in such a dilapidated state. Years of poor practices, mismanagement and a failure to keep up with industry best practice have resulted in the current position for the LCC LGA. By asking the LGA to provide more money council is taking the easiest option available.

Council should first conduct a review of its procedures, processes, planning and decision making to identify the inefficiencies within the organisation in order to improve the productivity of the organisation and improve the use and efficiency of the rate payers' money.

Once council have completed the review and the community can see that council is operating efficiently, only then can the application of rate increase be explored.

Let's face it, if council were using the money efficiently and the community could see the improvements and benefits of that use, then you would have very little objection to a rate increase.

At this stage and based on the above information I cannot see that council are spending the money in a competent manner that would make me want to give more and for that I strongly oppose the rate increase above the peg.



The Mayor,
Lithgow Council,
PO Box 19,
Lithgow,
NSW 2790.

Reference no. SRV19-20

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to you firstly to say I agree totally with Option 2 of the proposed Special Rate Variation 2019/20. The maintenance of any Local Government Area assets is an essential priority of the respective governments.

The proposal options clearly highlight that only one has any merit in ensuring the assets of roads, drainage and buildings meet the immediate needs of the community and those persons that transition the LGA on daily business or pleasure. In particular, the LGA's future asset needs are an essential goal of this proposal. There is organic asset growth in all parts of regional Australia and the LGA of Lithgow is no exception in this growth. With regard, to the revenue rate breakout of the proposal, I feel that the council is doing its self a disservice in not extracting greater revenue from the mining sector.

The Lithgow LGA has a number of mines operating and let's not kid ourselves the wealth they generate comes from resources which are the sovereign assets of the Australian people. It is my belief that the council should be seeking to retrieve a greater part of this wealth for the LGA community. The option 2 rate increase is miniscule for the mining sector. The new SRV should be double the proposed new SRV.

The mining sector benefits greatly from any infrastructure asset improvement or replacement. They are the users of roads. The mining sector gets a free ride from numerous Federal and State tax breaks to supposedly assist it in starting up and operating. The assets they sell, which seems predominately to be to overseas markets, are a 'one shot' event, in that they are not replenished and once it is depleted and becomes uneconomical it shuts down. The LGA then loses the advantage of the revenue.

The wealth they create for share holders is significant, yet in comparison governments get only a small percentage. You have indicated that there needs to be an SRV in 2019/20 to keep the programme of asset repair, upgrades and replacements just ahead of the game. Any less will see it literally become a negative retreat of these activities with dire consequences in the future. It would be a dereliction of the council's duty to go with Option 1.

Option 2 is the viable option, but I recommend that the rates for the mining sector is established at the current rate SRV of 4.77% plus a new SRV of 10.23%, as well as the rate peg of 2.7%. The mining sector should be doing the heavy lifting across Australia to ensure this country has sufficient wealth generated to create a viable future and it is not only the Federal and State governments that should

benefit, but also the LGA's such as Lithgow where they have such an opportunity. As a citizen of the LGA I expect to do my bit in assisting in financing the assets which benefit all of the community, but I will not stand by and let wealth produced from mining, which belongs to all Australians be lost because governments do not have the mettle to seek an equitable and commensurate share.

Yours Sincerely

