



# ***RICHMOND RIVER CANE GROWERS' ASSOCIATION LTD***

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Monday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2017

General Manager  
Ballina Shire Council  
PO Box 450  
Ballina NSW 2478

Dear General Manager

## **SPECIAL RATE VARIATION**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to the Special Rate Variation (SRV) being proposed by Ballina Shire Council (BSC).

Last Friday I was approached by a group of Cane Farmers from BSC area regarding the SRV that has been proposed by Ballina Shire Council. Over the weekend I conducted lengthy conversations with Growers and Board members regarding the proposal. I was asked to submit feedback on the request for Ballina Shire Council to add a further Special Rate Variation (SRV) on to its current rates.

The key issues from our growers and individuals are as follows.

1. BSC Already has a SRV in place for the Ballina and Alstonville pool structures that have under gone works during the last 2 years. This rate has not been removed or replaced but instead compounded on top of the already increased rates.
2. Growers who form a part of this Association have been working tirelessly on their land to ensure that water runoff from their farms is as healthy as possible when it reaches the river. They maintain and clean drains that feed into the river on farm. They and I have been fighting for years now to get works completed in the drains that lead into the river to ensure that what does go in there is healthy without any luck. Now this isn't the fault of the BSC it largely falls to the Rous County Council (RCC) who many years ago took on the cleaning and maintaining of these assets from the Drainage Unions, this maintenance has fallen by the wayside and caused large amounts of deoxygenated water to flow into the river after heavy rains especially after east coast lows which we had many of over the last few years.
3. On farms our farmers have protocols and regulations that they need to follow as part of their farming practices and work closely with the agronomist at Broadwater mill to ensure that the Acid Sulfate Management plain is in use and productive. Some of these practices talk to the types and quantity of sprays used in close proximity to drains and water ways, they talk to the right plants to enable bank stabilization and best practice works for Acid Sulphate Soils.
4. There is a belief that fixing the river at this end is of no use if up river and high land crops don't have the same form of on farm regulations and protocols to ensure things like soil runoff isn't an issue. After large rain events aerial photos are proof that upstream high land crops cause large issues for our clean river system.
5. There is also the financial burden that this SRV will have on farmers who are already stretched thin with trying to ensure that they comply with regulations and best farm practices without adding significant costing to their rates.

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So again I will state Richmond River Cane Growers Association after consultation with Cane Growers in BCS region can see some merit in wanting to clean up the river but not at the cost to growers through a Special Rate Variation.

I look forward to receiving feedback on the progress of this draft and can be contacted via email [richmondcane@gmail.com](mailto:richmondcane@gmail.com) or by phone 0266 834 205 to discuss Richmond River Cane Growers Associations submission

Tracey Doherty  
Manager



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## Sandra Bailey

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**From:** Monte Fairhall <montefairhall@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 8 February 2017 1:39 PM  
**Subject:** Proposed Ballina Shire Council Rate Increase

Hi Carolyn

Thankyou for giving me the opportunity to submit my opinion on the above, albeit after the closing date. My husband and I have lived in the Ballina Shire for 10 years. Generally we have been happy with the council amenities but I have to say that as a grandparent now I am very disappointed in the lack of interesting playgrounds for toddlers and young children.

The Missingham Bridge facility is an example of a well designed play area with shade and a range of equipment for varying ages. The problem is that there are not enough of these in town.

I live in Eyles Drive East Ballina and there is one small play area near the lake that is really only suitable for older children and even then doesn't offer much of interest. I know from experience that an outing to a playground is an important source of interest (and relief) to young mothers (and babysitting grandparents) who are largely at home with their young ones. But they need to have a variety of interesting play equipment to suit various ages and, desirably, be within walking distance from home thus obviating the need to pack children and paraphernalia into a car. And of course some at home parents may not have access to a vehicle.

I am opposed to an extra rate increase: I don't see the Shire being particularly innovative with their facilities. I do applaud the bike path to Lennox - the walk/cycle to Sharpe's Beach so far is a pleasure and is used by an increasing number of locals and visitors. But, if money is tight I don't see the need for an ocean pool when there are already safe areas for people to swim in salt water and the dredging of the waterways is not urgent: it certainly hasn't been for the ten years we ahve been here. And I am bitterly disappointed in Council's decision to put in shark nets.

Our council rates have more than doubled over the last ten years: I doubt if many people's salaries have done likewise.

I think it is important for Council to use its existing funds wisely - inevitably there would be savings to be made - and not impose further financial burden on its long suffering rate payers.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Fairhall

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03/02/2017

Ballina Shire Council

40 Cherry Street

BALLINA NSW 2478



To Whom it may concern:

Re: 16/108302 - Possible Special Rate Variation for the three year period from 2017/18 to 2019/20

With regard to the proposed increase in rates ( an extra 1.9% in 2017/18 and 3.4% in 2018/19 and 2019/20

As a ratepayer from South Ballina I don't see any justification in an increase over and above the standard rate pegging increase of 1.5% for 2017/18 as advised by IPART. IPART has also verbally advised that NSW councils should assume that the standard rate pegging increase for 2018/19 onwards is an estimated 2.5%

The South Ballina Progress Association in the past had asked the Ballina Shire Council for an Amenities Block to be built near the Caravan Park, rubbish bins placed at strategic spots around Mobb's Bay and along the South Wall. Visitors (Tourists, Fishermen ) just leave their rubbish wherever. If council wants to improve the quality of the Richmond River here is a good place to start.

Having said that, apparently the South Ballina Progress Association had sent a submission to Council Re the Amenities Block, The Rubbish Bins, Also a Boat Ramp, Jetty and Parking Area near the end of Keith Hall Lane. This was passed by Council but nothing has been forthcoming.

The only service we get from council is the waste and recycling bins once a week.

Until I see some extra services supplied for South Ballina I am not in favour of an extra rate increase.

Regards

Ray Levinge

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ray Levinge".

## Sandra Bailey

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**From:** Ian Paxton <ipaxton@gotalk.net.au>  
**Sent:** Thursday, 9 February 2017 4:46 PM  
**To:** Councillors  
**Subject:** Council Proposed SVR Increase  
**Attachments:** Ballina Council rate rise.pdf

Good afternoon Councillors,

The attached letter is self explanatory, please give it consideration before making your decision.

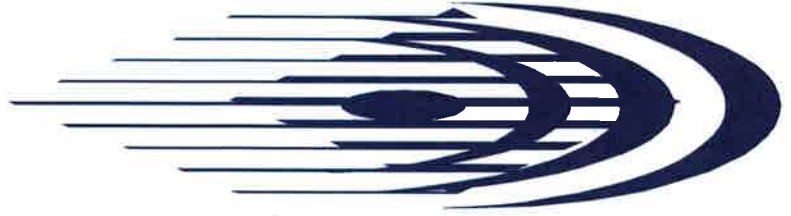
Regards..... Ian Paxton

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**I D Paxton**  
**P O Box 552**  
**ALSTONVILLE NSW 2477**  
**MOB: 0466-055-527**  
**PHONE: 02-6628-3829**



8 February 2017

Ballina Councillors  
Ballina Council

via email - [councillors@ballina.nsw.gov.au](mailto:councillors@ballina.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Councillors,

**RE: Proposed SRV increase**

Thank you for your letter outlining the proposal to increase our rates.

It is my opinion that due to the Northern Rivers diverse population it is important that Ballina Council stands alone to serve the local community.

However what is also important is that Council finds a better way to be financially viable other than to continue to increase rates above the mandatory pegged rate.

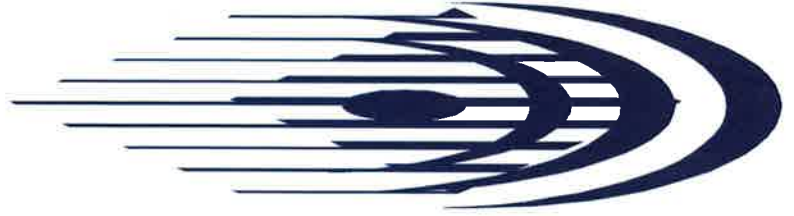
The information provided within the letter and accompanying brochure did not provide the following -

- Income to costs breakdown, past and present
- Inflation and CPI averages compared to Council's last 5 years rate increases
- Any definitive cost cutting measures being carried out by Council management.
- Annual income (profit/loss) from Council's non Community held assets.
- A programme in which a review is conducted annually of the General Managers performance and Council's Heads of Departments.
- A review of why the current asset renewal fund is unable to maintain Council assets.
- Whether Councillors are supporting the SRV.

Without this information, I am perplexed as to how you believe rate payers are able to make an informed decision.

Notwithstanding this, I read in a recent media release that Ballina Council is spruiking that residential development is bounding ahead. This raises the question; what is Ballina Council doing with the increased revenue from the Shires residential growth. It is my understanding that with very little movement in wage growth and other fixed costs being stagnant or cheaper than past years, Council should have a very healthy balance sheet assisted by this continued development and new land releases.

**I D Paxton**  
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As for the Healthy Waterways Program, should it not have been more financially constructive to consult the Councils that the Richmond River also flows through to see if they are receptive to funding a joint programme. Otherwise how can you stop polluted water flowing from up river into the outlet that you are asking Ballina rate payers to keep clean. Sounds like a hiding to nothing.

In reality, a SRV is a handout that creates laziness and arrogance.

It is my opinion that in asking rate payers to accept this SRV, it is an admission that you are lost, out of your depth and unable to re invent the Council so it is financially sustainable and the requests for SRV's, are in essence, protecting your jobs and others within Council.

Council has an approved annual rate increase so work within that.

If it means that you as Councillors and the General Manager and Council staff have to work harder then do it, or to minimise working harder, try working smarter.

As the saying goes, welcome to the real world. You owe it to the rate payers that fund your salaries.

If you believe I am an aggrieved rate payer sounding off, then you are wrong.

Time and time again I hear of Government institutions wasting tax payers/rate payers money, so much so that in todays world, people seem to accept it as the norm.

I don't and if you are of the same belief then vote no to the SRV.

If you need some realistic simple ideas to boost the Council's balance sheet, give me a call.

Always happy to help where I can.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Paxton

## Sandra Bailey

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**From:** Penelope Gibson <pgibson@bigpond.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 February 2017 10:05 AM  
**To:** Councillors  
**Subject:** TRIM: Rate increase

**HP TRIM Record Number:** 17/10889

To all councillors:

May I first apologise for my lateness but for personal reasons I have not been able to. However, I wish it noted that I do not believe in this levy you are proposing to discuss and vote on today.

I have had a fixed income for 15 years and over time I am feeling it! Nothing goes down but many costs are rising. I have lived in the district for many years and I don't want to have to consider moving because of the stress on me when it comes to an ever increasing rate charge.

I believe state government and those directly involved in the use of the water should be responsible for the health of the river. A sensible plan should be made and instigated by them, accountable to a body, probably state run.

I pay for many things I don't use in this shire....I even pay more times than not a \$2 charge for a book delivery to the library, entrance to the pool when I'm just going in to supervise my grandson etc. leave it at that please. Once again I say NO to this increase to cover cost for our river system.

Regards,

Penny Gibson

Sent from my iPad

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