



ASK YOUR COUNCILLORS SOME TAXING QUESTIONS

OPEN FORUM 19TH APRIL 2010

The proposed 8.66% rates increase for Port Stephens residents will again be top of the list for discussion at TRRA's next meeting on Monday 19 April. The Council proposed this extraordinary increase after the NSW Government had already capped the increase to 2.6%, and despite the fact that Council has already imposed a 9% increase on ratepayers over the last two years.

And what have we got for our money?

'If Council hasn't got the revenue to maintain and upgrade infrastructure, and to fund good service delivery, then it needs to carry out some considerable belt tightening and make substantial cutbacks to eliminate wasted ratepayer dollars,' TRRA Chairman, Bob Young, said.

'Since this council was elected, debt has almost doubled from \$25 million to \$46 million and is expected to increase further this year, to in excess of \$50 million. Surely responsible and prudent financial management by Council is far more important than another rate hike. Council needs to rein in debt, reduce expenditure and stop this unnecessary wastage on questionable business ventures that do not deliver one cent back into the community.'

'Tomaree residents already pay one of the highest rates in NSW, and Port Stephens has been identified as the highest mortgage default area in NSW. How much more of a financial burden can the Council expect ratepayers to carry when the community is already over taxed?'

'TRRA has repeatedly said, when council can demonstrate that it has the will and the way to reduce its own overheads, and get back to its core business of looking after this community, that's the time they should come back to the residents with any revised rate proposals.'

To give the community the opportunity to debate the pros and cons of the rate increase, TRRA has invited the Mayor, Cr MacKenzie, and the East Ward Councillors – Deputy Mayor, Bob Westbury, Sally Dover, John Nell and Frank Ward to the meeting.

Open Forum: Monday 19 April at the NELSON BAY BOWLING CLUB at 7.30PM

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