



The Hon Barbara PERRY M.P.  
Minister for Local government

Email to:  
[office@perry.minister.nsw.gov.au](mailto:office@perry.minister.nsw.gov.au)

Copy to:  
[mark.hely@dlg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mark.hely@dlg.nsw.gov.au)

And  
[damian.walsh@dlg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:damian.walsh@dlg.nsw.gov.au)

[lindsay.ewens@dlg.nsw.gov.au](mailto:lindsay.ewens@dlg.nsw.gov.au)

July 06, 2010

**Re: Application by Port Stephens Council for a special variation to general income under Section 508A of the *Local Government Act 1993***

Dear Minister PERRY,

The Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association sent you several letters earlier and a formal submission on this matter dated June 02, 2010. We received acknowledgement from your staff that you would be considering our submissions in your final determination of this application.

**Firstly we would like to thank you on behalf of our organization, and others that we have consulted, for not approving this unfair impost on the ratepayers of Port Stephens.** We hope that the points that we made about the poor business case put forward, the lack of consultation with the community and the lack of serious investigation into alternative measures that we had pointed out to the Council, had some bearing on your decision.

The Mayor in particular has reacted badly to this decision in the media, blaming the State Government for "Cost Shifting" and "minority pressure groups" for opposing his proposition. He is saying that \$2 million dollars of basic services and infrastructure is now unfunded and would have to be forgone, or more money would have to be borrowed to complete the forward works program. We knew from the outset that there was no "plan B", or any sign so far that they realize that they have to manage costs, avoid bad investments and get back to providing basic services to their community, within their budget. They are flying to Brisbane this week on a jaunt to look at shopping centers! They have no concept of financial responsibility.

A cursory examination of the pretty basic application form that Council staff filled out showed us that they had failed to make a convincing case, or satisfied your required criteria. Council staff is telling Councilors that *“the reason for refusal provided by the DLG was that Council’s Integrated Planning & Reporting process and documentation contained a number of weaknesses. It is extremely frustrating that the DLG has provided minimal guidance during the introduction of the Integrated Planning & Reporting process and made no requests for clarification during their assessment of our application, but is now being critical of Council’s first attempt at reporting under this new regime, despite the extent of community support received for the special variation through the HVRF survey. Council will be responding to the DLG in relation to the perceived weaknesses of our process and documentation.”* Can’t fill out a form, no community support!

Minister, the first casualty in these matters, particularly in the local media is the truth. Could you please furnish us with any details you have provided to Council on why their application was not approved so that we can correct any of the spin that is starting to surface on this topic in our local media?

Thanking you again for your assistance on this matter.

Yours faithfully,

*Dick Appleby*  
*TRRA Sec/Coordinator*  
*Acting Chairman*  
*[info@trra.com.au](mailto:info@trra.com.au)*