



## MEDIA RELEASE

12 May 2017

### ***IPART FINDING UNFAIR***

Lockhart Shire Mayor, Cr Rodger Schirmer, remains disappointed at IPART's decision not to approve Council's application for a special rate variation above the rate peg.

However what Cr Schirmer has found particular upsetting is IPART's finding that in its community consultations the Council did not effectively communicate the cumulative size of the rate increase. IPART concluded that the consultation materials focused on the annual percentage increase of 4.6% and did not provide adequate information on the cumulative percentage increase of 37%.

Cr Schirmer said that, "*Council takes great pride in the lengths to which it goes to consult with its community and the extensive consultation that was undertaken during both the Fit for the Future process and the more recent consultations focusing specifically on the Council's Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Plan and special rate variation proposal.*"

...2/

With respect to explaining the full impact of the rate increase to ratepayers the Council's consultation materials, including its website fact sheet, newsletter article and Powerpoint presentation at the community forums, did include a rates table outlining the cumulative dollar increase in rates between the first and last year of the special rate variation, as well as the annual average dollar increase in rates for the various categories of rateable land.

Cr Schirmer said, *“Council believes that demonstrating the cumulative dollar increase, and the actual impact of the special variation in dollar terms, was much more meaningful and transparent and for IPART to suggest otherwise is unfair.”*

*“Council's Integrated Planning & Reporting documents, prepared in consultation with the community and publicly exhibited before being adopted by Council, also clearly explained the extent of the rate increase”* he said.

The proposal to seek a special rate variation was born out of the Council's Fit for the Future community consultations. The special rate variation became a key action in the Council Improvement Action Plan submitted as part of the Council's response to the Fit for the Future process.

According to Cr Schirmer, as it stands now, IPART's Determination will prevent Council from implementing a key action contained in its Improvement Action Plan.

Ends.

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