

**DAVID HARRIS MP
SHADOW MINISTER FOR CENTRAL COAST**

**IPART
DECISION ON RATE RISE SHOULD BE VIEWED
WITH CAUTION**

IPART's decision to extend the rate increases for Central Coast Council to the full ten years should be of concern to struggling local residents.

Coast ratepayers have been subjected to the costs of an unsuccessful merger of their local Councils by the State Government resulting in significant cuts to services and higher rates and charges and now they will be hit with a permanent rate increase for a further seven years.

Central Coast Labor MPs are calling on the NSW Government and IPART to monitor closely the performance of Central Coast Council with a view to review this decision if the Council is not meeting its stated targets and service delivery.

Coast Labor MPs are also calling on Central Coast Council to review its hardship provisions for people who will struggle with paying higher rates over the longer term.

"The current financial situation for many ratepayers is dire given the increase in interest rates, higher inflation and the pressure on mortgage and rent payments." Said Mr Harris.

“It is more important than ever, that Central Coast Council, has generous provisions in place to assist people in genuine need when it comes to rate payments. There needs to be sympathetic treatment via payment plans and other strategies to ensure no ratepayers are disadvantaged through no fault of their own and Council needs to articulate through a communication plan what avenues are open to assist people and families who are struggling.” Mr Harris said.

“With rising costs of living, stagnant wages and now increasing interest rates these rate increases could not have happened at a worse time.” David Harris said.

ENDS

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