

Hepburn Shire Council higher cap application

Submission received via email

Date submitted: 31 March 2025

Submission written by: Bill Forrest

I write in support of Hepburn Shire Council's application to increase rates by 10%, and would make the following comments.

- My wife and I are ratepayers and our property in the rural north of the Shire has been in the family for around 100 years.
- the projection of unrestricted cash without an increase above the rate cap is unsustainable and irresponsible. It is equally irresponsible to cut services and programs below community needs and expectations to fit within the cap
- the Shire has in it's submission demonstrated due diligence and outlined the measures taken to cut costs and raise alternate sources of revenue,
- the Shire has already taken decisions that I think represent unacceptable trade offs in order to keep within the rate cap up to this point; for example reducing the opening hours of swimming pools and restricting the capital program to maintenance. The vision and aspirations of the Hepburn community I don't think sets it's horizons so low as to be only base minimum (at best) levels of service provision and no new capital or capital upgrades. Even if grants can be sourced from other levels of government they invariably come with a requirement for a matching contribution from Council - meaning Council rates.
- the Shire has undertaken community consultation and I think maturely presented the issues and options and when push comes to shove, an informed community accepts that rates have to rise above an arbitrary CPI figure that demonstrably does not reflect Local Government cost increases, if the quality of life enjoyed in this community is to be preserved and enhanced

Regards