



## Hepburn Shire Council higher cap application

### Submission received via email

Date submitted: 6 April 2025

Submission written by: Name withheld

As a longstanding resident and ratepayer of Hepburn Springs I strongly object to Hepburn Council's application for a 10% rate increase for the 25/26 year.

Council's application is disingenuous in many ways. The ESC should not punish ratepayers for Council's financial mismanagement.

Our community has a much higher proportion of aged people than the state average. Many of us are asset-rich, according to property valuations, but are cash-poor. We live off the pension and superannuation. We cannot afford a 10% rate increase.

What will Council spend the 10% extra income on ? According to their own advertisements they will spend extravagantly on Daylesford town hall on a project that is mostly not needed and certainly can wait.

They claim that their capital works program will be centred on renewals only but that is false. They have the Daylesford town hall project and several in Clunes to build new assets. They Just splashed \$10m a mountain bike track in Creswick, wasted \$6m on the Rex and built a raliway station in tiny Bullarto that no one uses.

Theirack record shows they do not manage projects well, do not prioritise or manage money well and do consult the community properly. They be trusted to use money wisely or on essential services.

Their application's most outrageous, unsupported claim is that 61% of the community support an increase above the cap. That is nonsense and offensive. 61% of survey respondents said they may consider an increase IF IT MEANT ALL SERVICES WOULD STILL BE PROVIDED.

They are asking for a 10% rate hike but refuse to say which services will be cut. How is that fair ?

They have no mandate from the community. Only 300 responded to their dodgy survey.

Surely the ESC must force them to declare the service cuts AND demonstrate they are efficient. They spend money on circular economy, Greens projects and fancy events.

They have relatively low borrowings. That's how they should do the town hall and other projects.

What have they done to sell surplus assets ?

To find new revenue ?

I implore the ESC to reject the 10% increase until such time as they show true efficiency, focus on key services like roads and consult with the community properly.

If the ESC does grant an increase then make it less than 10% and spread it over 2 or 3 years.

And if you do grant any increase then make it tied funds. Restrict how they can use the extra revenue. Don't just let them waste it. Put conditions on it.

Granting a full 10% increase to a wasteful council in the middle of a cost of living crisis would send an appalling message to the local government sector. Keep wasting money on your pet projects, don't worry about efficiency, the ESC will bail you out and you can use the extra \$ to do what you like.

Have a very careful think about opening the flood gates with this application.

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