



13th of October 2022

Tenterfield Shire Council  
Daryl Buckingham - CEO  
and all Councillors  
Tenterfield Shire Council  
NSW 2372

By email

## **IMPROVEMENT AND MONEY SAVING IDEAS**

Dear Councillors and TSC Administration

On behalf of the OSOCI members, supporters and the wider community affected by the financial mismanagement and misappropriation of community funds and assets as well as the proposed rate increases, we hereby respond to the question asked by the mayor at the September Community Consultation Meeting:

### **“What can council do to improve and save money?”**

The following is a list of actions put together after consultation with the wider community. The consensus is that the Tenterfield Shire Council Administration and Councillors should – **BEFORE considering rate and fees and charges increases undertake / implement ALL of the below:**

1. Change focus from a “Value for the Business: Council Administration” spending approach to “Value for the community”.
2. Develop and pursue “a can-do attitude”. To date TSC keeps repeating “we can’t do this, that, anything...” – “WE MUST have 104.49% in rate rises”.
3. Develop a Customer FOCUS – away from “self-serving / growing / pay increase” and “rate payers have to pay for everything regardless”.
4. Develop “visibly felt leadership” by Councillors and Council staff – departing from the ‘them and us’ mentality and defending Council against the residents and hiding the failures.
5. Develop a meaningful long term Community Strategic Plan – which actually suits the style / type and demographics of the Tenterfield Shire.
6. Reduce the number of councillors from 10 to 5; then the OLD 5 COUNCILLORS take responsibility for their failures and step down.
7. Establish a more appropriate income / pay for Council Staff - Reverse the recent pay rise (staff and councillors) and instigate a voluntary pay reduction by management and staff of 20% to show leadership. Sliding scale down to 8% for the lower pay grades.
8. Contract to a healthy size and operation, this is not the Gold Coast or Brisbane and should not be reflecting in either spending or staffing. Reduce spending by 20% and realise real saving across the business – by bringing the Council administration back to a minimum and reasonable level appropriate for a 7,000 residential community.



- Minimise reporting – shorter reports – less reports – more common language – push back on NSW State Government reporting requirements.
  - Eliminate waste – e.g. better quality assurance of contract / project delivery, fix a pot hole once properly instead of 5 times while it remains a pothole indefinitely.
  - Concentrate on core business – hand over non-core business activities to community groups.
  - Stop unnecessary trips by staff and councillors – e.g. to conferences.
  - Stop council staff and councillors using council fuel cards and vehicles on weekends and for private travel.
  - Roll out meaningful performance reviews 6 monthly, prioritize positions, responsibilities and roles within council staff.
  - Increase productivity by business process reengineering.
  - Revisit all contracts and projects, reduce spending and efficiencies and find better ways of delivering capital projects.
  - Reduce operational spending – maintenance activities (longer cycles) – refurbishment instead of replacing.
  - Schedule maintenance – short term and long term, with reviews and reporting by status.
  - Reduce complexity
  - Initiate lower cost operational cost vs high capital and operation cost for oversized infrastructure – e.g. solar as part of the new WTP.
8. Engage with, include and listen to active community members with relevant experience – hand over non-core business to community groups.
9. Openly include the true community representatives in workshops, committees (if needed) and stop RULING the community from a point of weakness.
10. Expect community consultation by councillors and require it to be mandatory – the community when reaching out to their “representatives” need and deserve more than an email saying “we will consult and get back to you” – which hardly ever happens – and response are usually meaningless.

**Given the Council Administration is a business (not a level of Government) and the community can choose to or reject to contract with the Council Administration, it seems appropriate for this business to modify its ways of operating and cost management in order to stay viable and attractive for the residents and rate payers to trust it going forward.**

Respectfully submitted on behalf of its members and the supporting community members by the OSOCI Executive Team

Pamela Lee  
President

Christian Uhrig  
Vice president

Note: This letter will also be made available publicly via website and other media as well as to stakeholders