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Media Release: De Luca against Sports Fee Hike

Warringah Councillor Vincent De Luca has announced he will vote against Warringah Council's proposed increase in sporting levies.

"Last year Cr Virginia Laugesen and I were successful in overturning other Councillor's decision to take away the second parking sticker, I believe this is a similar case and not in the rate-payers' best interests" Cr De Luca said.

"I do not believe the increase is fair on players and particularly families where there are more than one child participating".

"Furthermore, unless a Memorandum of Understanding can be entered into between Council and the sporting user groups guaranteeing standards of maintenance and that all funds raised from the levy, including interest on the levy, will be allocated to maintenance of sports fields I cannot support the increase".

"As I have said again and again, we need to look inside the organisation before slugging ratepayers. Last year alone rate-payers paid \$990,993 in salaries for the General Manager and three Directors of Councils. Council also incurred an increase of over \$2.4m in salaries last year from \$37,505m in 2008/2009 to \$39,905m for 2009/2010."

"Following the ICAC investigation into Burwood Council, a full restructure of that Council was undertaken and Director positions abolished. Two Deputy General Managers were appointed with responsibility for Land, Infrastructure and Environment, the other Corporate Governance and Community. While I have nothing against our three Directors at Warringah, I do think their roles could be merged into two which would save on salaries. I am also concerned that some Team Leaders at Council are paid in excess of \$130k a year and rationalisation needs to be considered for those roles as well".

"Sporting organisations have also contacted me concerned that the Council Officer position and associated costs created to collect the sporting levy, instead of the Sporting Union, will actually exceed the increase in the levy".

"There are numerous areas where savings and money can be made instead of slugging rate-payers, I am willing to accede to some of the General Manager and Mayor's proposals to sell Council land and assets, however, I will not support the sale of the Oaks Avenue car park at Dee Why and proposals to allow high rise development on the site to make it more valuable" Cr De Luca concluded.

For more information, please call Vincent De Luca on 0408 650 651