

## **SUBMISSION to IPART – Regarding BVSC proposal to raise the rates**

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Dear IPART,

I am writing this submission in regard to the proposal by the Bega Valley Shire Council to raise rates.

I am a disability pensioner who is also a single parent. I struggle to afford the existing rates and simply cannot afford an increase in rates.

I am studying part-time towards completing a teaching qualification which I hope, will, along with my science degree, enable me to gain employment as a teacher. But this is still some way off and I have other rising costs (including food, essential services, and fuel). I also assist my eldest daughter who is at University with some of her living expenses (such as car registration). My youngest daughter has needs involving her schooling (excursions) and extra-curricular activities (soccer, horseriding, gymnastics) for which I pay. I live very simply myself economising on food, clothing and home heating except when my children are with me. I do not want them to miss out because I have to pay more rates to the council who should economise more themselves.

I am aware that the Bega Valley Shire Council has wasted thousands of dollars in its operations - hurriedly engaging a contractor to clear weeds and silt out of watercourses because they had to spend the \$50,000 before the end of the financial year, yet because these works were done without any proper planning or follow-up works, I watched the weeds simply regrow and begin to trap silt again. The main effect of the works was to cause an algal bloom degrading downstream water quality in local wetlands.

Discussions with council engineering staff on-site and in-office revealed their lack of relevant knowledge in regard to water quality issues, vegetation management, and the design and construction of drainage works. This instance of wastage of financial resources has occurred within the last twelve months. Whilst the Bega Valley Shire Council has yet to get its own house in order in regards to wise use of scarce financial resources, it should not be able to raise rates further increasing the burden upon ratepayers.

This is a low socio-economic area where many people struggle on part-time, seasonal or occasional work while a significant number survive on benefits alone. The local council should not be able to raise its rates beyond the capacity of local people to pay. I cannot afford a rise in the council rates.

Please act to reject the application by the Bega Valley Shire Council to raise rates.

Yours sincerely,

5<sup>th</sup> April 2013