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Submission:

Dear Sir/Madam

Regarding the proposed rate increases by Shellharbour City Council we wish to submit that we feel the increases are excessive and we believe some moderation should be applied to the increase sought by Council.

The ratepayers have recently been subjected to large increases in energy costs, water prices and other important cost of living increases and for Council to imply that Shellharbour residents have an increased capacity to pay is clearly untrue in our view. Whilst some high end salaries have increased dramatically, the vast majority of wage earning residents have been subjected to draconian curbs on wage increases with many going backwards in their yearly earnings. This situation is clearly unsustainable in maintaining a reasonable standard of living for Shellharbour residents and to allow the exorbitant increases sought by Council will only exacerbate the situation with social consequences to follow.

We do not intend to deny the, in all likelihood, valid reasons for a variation in rates in Council's submission but point out that such large increases are inappropriate given current financial circumstances faced by the vast majority of Shellharbour residents and that a more modest increase should be considered.

We strongly believe that Council's workforce do a fantastic job and that they are capable of completing tasks in a competent and efficient manner. To blame the working people, as has been the case in other submissions is counterproductive and amounts to attacking an easy target. Perhaps if they were paid more they would better be able to afford to pay their rate bills !.

We feel some consideration should be given to increasing efficiencies by merging or sharing resources with adjacent Council's or investing in ventures that deliver revenue streams to Council that would offset the need to seek high rate increases that are unaffordable by their constituents.