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Submission: I would like to know how Newcastle City Council or any other council has the capacity to increase rates when the Australian constitution states that there are only 2 levels of government with commonwealth and state. This makes Local Council non existent. If there was such a 3rd level of government and council was to exist as a level which they are not, why in 1988 (and other times) was there a Referendum to ask Australians to vote if they would allow councils to be recognised as a level of government in Australia. The resounding 60%+ of Australians voted NO and yet the state government illegally went and did whatever they wanted and increased the illegal powers of local councils. Rates are purely voluntary and extortion. Why should we purchase a block of land outright and then have to pay rent of the land for as long as we own it. The small amount of rubbish removal cost included of around \$300 per year is fair and I am happy to pay this, but \$2000+ per year in rates is disgusting.