

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop
NSW 2340

25 January 2021

Dear Sir or Madam:

IPART will have received a few thousand letter, mine included, regarding an application by Central Coast Council to IPART to permanently increase our rates so Council can pay off **ITS DEBTS** (not Mine)

Mr Hart, Acting CEO for Central Coast Council (who is paying his wages????) sent a letter to ratepayers and I quote, in part, to his second paragraph "We have a legal obligation to reimburse restricted funds unlawfully accessed by council employees"

"RATEPAYERS DO NOT HAVE A LEGAL OBLIGATION"

Council's fault

Council's responsibility

Certainly **NOT** Ratepayers

We DID NOT unlawfully access funds

Council Unlawfully accessed [REDACTED] funds, Council employees who got themselves into this mess should face the full consequences of the law (white collar [REDACTED]) and be prosecuted as such.

If any member of the public were to be in this situation, the law would certainly not hesitate to prosecute, what makes council employees exempt from being j [REDACTED] from ratepayers. Absolutely **NOTHING**. [REDACTED]

And then without any hesitation promptly decide ratepayers can pay and they can go merrily on their way to defraud elsewhere. How absolutely disgusting and low can this [REDACTED] council go [REDACTED] from ratepayers" and they go off scott free.

I sincerely hope (???) that the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal reviews this ludicrous (unlawful) proposal and keep in mind that we as ratepayers and retirees should not be made scapegoats and the Central Coast Council **MUST** pay their own selfish and totally unlawful [REDACTED] of funds.

I might add that I am 72 years old and the debt will still be there long after I have gone. Will you be charging my estate ?? Or will this be something you have not considered as yet. Am I being offensive, no, I am furious and angry that I personally have been put into this situation whereby Council has stolen funds assumes its OK to try and make ratepayers responsible.

SHAME SHAME SHAME on a [REDACTED] council!!!!





4 December 2020

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop
NSW 2340

Dear Sir

In Coast Community News Issue 270, 27 November 2020 on the front page "Rate rise on the cards .. Central Coast Council held a special meeting on November 26 **to give itself permission** to apply for a rate rise, even though the Council hasn't decided as yet if it wants one."

This of course is all to do with the massive debt Council has run up, with no one in Council held responsible for this debt and so, we ratepayers, through no fault of our own will be forced by Council to bail it out of its own horrendous misuse of funds by applying to IPART to double dip rate increase!

Attached are Internet extracts relating to Gosford Council's catastrophic financial gamble in 2009 resulting in my redundancy as well as many many thousands of Australians who also lost their jobs. And not having learned their 2009 lesson, we now have merged Central Coast Council's even worse disgraceful performance.

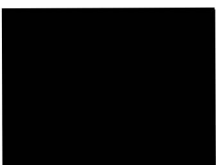
Now I am a pensioner. Because of 2020 Covid, the Federal Government will not be increasing our bi-annual pension. We just have to battle on with what we have. I cannot go to our Federal Treasurer, Mr Josh Frydenberg and ask for an increase in my pension on the grounds of my incapability of balancing my pension. However, Council's irresponsible behaviour has landed them in a massive debt and their solution is, oh well, we'll just apply for a rate increase and the ratepayers can lump it - that will fix it. Until next time.

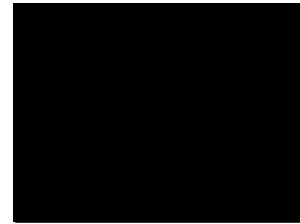
Why cannot those in Council responsible for this outrageous debt, pay for it out of their own salaries, their superannuation, their savings and their assets?

It would be wonderful if we as ratepayers refuse to pay the increase in our rates? But then we would be taken to Court by the same Council who put themselves in debt.

Now would be the perfect time to consider the abolition of the third tier of government, namely Local Government. An opinion voiced by many.

I cannot sign with the usual "Yours faithfully" as I have no faith whatsoever in the outcome which should benefit not penalise RATEPAYERS by the appalling conduct of Council.






As a long term resident of the Central Coast first in the south (previously known as Gosford City Council) and now the north (previously know as Wyong Shire Council), I would like to express my concerns over the current situation and the more than likely effect ratepayers will be submitted to.

From social media reports, newspapers, radio and lately in a letter received from our Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mr Dick Perrson, we are being asked to accept a 15% rate rise to "secure our future".

Mr. Perrson states that we have a legal obligation to reimburse the restricted funds that were unlawfully accessed. My confusion centres on the 'We'. 'We', the ratepayer had a legal obligation to pay our rates, these rates were then supposedly used to carry out projects that benefit our whole community. We did that. The ratepayers did not a) Use restricted funds amounting to some \$200 million for other purposes, which I believe is in breach of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. This is not alleged, this is clearly stated as a fact by Mr. Perrson. The ratepayers did not then continue carrying on as if they printed money to achieve a debt of \$500 million plus.


I strongly believe that this community bailout will not solve the systematic failure of the council, going back many years where Gosford City Council is concerned. Mr. Perrson assures us he has found no evidence of fraudulent activity or corruption - rather negligence, incompetence and misuse of funds - but what has been found? This cannot be swept under the carpet, the very least that is warranted is a full and open investigation into how this debt of over half a billion dollars was incurred as it certainly was not used to the betterment of the Central Coast

If we are to carry the burden of this negligence, incompetence and misuse of funds the very least we deserve if full transparency. Let's begin wiioth this - according to the Total Governance and Administration Expenditure Schedule, Central Coast spent \$272+ M, Sydney \$205+ M and Newcastle \$50+ M. This can only mean that our model is flawed or the council is 

I would ask that this situation be investigated fully and those who are responsible be held accountable, not slapped for being incompetent. Where have the funds gone?

Yours faithfully,





25 January 2021

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop
NSW 2340

Dear Sir

By now IPART will have received a few thousand letters (and mine) regarding an application by Central Coast Council to IPART to permanently increase our rates so Council can pay off its debts.

Mr Hart, Acting Chief Executive Officer for Central Coast Council sent a letter to ratepayers and I quote, in part, to his second paragraph "We have a legal obligation to reimburse restricted funds unlawfully accessed by Council employees". **RATEPAYERS DO NOT HAVE A LEGAL OBLIGATION** Council's fault, Council's responsibility NOT ratepayers. Council got itself into this disgraceful mess and Council should get themselves out of it and NOT by forcing ratepayers to have our rates **permanently** increased. **And why permanently? WHY?** It means that effectively ratepayers will be paying all our lives for Council's debt. And as if the impending horrendous increase in our rates is not enough, I can guarantee that in a few years' time, or less, Council will again be asking IPART for a rate increase.

If Council's antics were in the private sector they would be taken to court, prosecuted and where appropriate, imprisoned.

My letter will make no difference whatsoever to the decision already made by Council. However, IPART needs to understand my outrage in being forced to pay a government body's unlawful debt. If an Australian citizen incurred a debt, it is that citizen's responsibility to pay their debt. Obviously government bodies, in this case, Central Coast Council has no such commitment believing that ratepayers can pay their unlawful debts.

I sincerely hope that the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal looks at this situation with the ratepayers in mind and not Central Coast Council. Council and only Council should pay its debts.

Yours faithfully




3/2/ 2021

The secretary,
IPART.

RE Application by Central Coast Council for Special Rate Variation of 15%

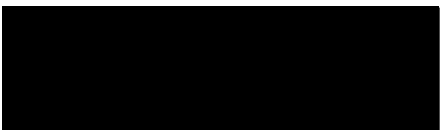
I am a ratepayer living at my property in  and I wish to comment on the above issue.

I have worked in Local Government, later in very senior positions, and I am aware of the apparent difficulties faced by the Administrator of the Council in attempting to bring the budget back to balance. As you know steps have already been taken in, a number of areas including staff reductions, asset sales, reduction in budgeted expenditure etc.

My issue is that the reasons for a rate increase of this proportion has been poorly communicated to ratepayers and is resulting in a considerable level of anger and frustration in my view. Comments in Local newspapers, on the Administrators Facebook page etc will testify to this.

Some community repair is required here while at the same time recognising the need to fix the budget position.

I am not privy to the submission by the Council and cant comment on specific issues. My view is that the Council should be granted a 10% increase only and be required to trim its budget further to compensate for the remaining 5%. Such a decision will give the Council additional income while at the same time helping to placate current community feelings. If we are to see the political process to succeed in the future, we need some level of community support going forward.





29 January 2021

Dr Paul Paterson
Chair
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal
PO Box K35
Haymarket Post Shop NSW 1240

Central Coast Council
Proposed Application to IPART for Permanent Increase in Rate Income
Section 508A local Government Act 1993

Dear Dr Paterson

The Central Coast Council wrote to you on 26 November 2020 and 18 December 2020 concerning a proposed application under Section 508A of the Local Government Act 1993 for a Special Variation of the Council's general income. I note that the second proposal does not comply with Section 508A and enclose a copy of my letter to the Administrator in that regard.

From the IPART website I see that Special Variation application forms are due to be submitted to IPART by 8 February 2021. Presently the deadline for community submissions is 1 March 2021.

The information presently available to Central Coast Council ratepayers is that it will not be until a meeting on 8 February 2021 that the "Council", through the Administrator, makes a final decision as to the precise terms of the proposed Special Variation application.

The Council, in its letter of 18 December 2020, has foreshadowed that a complete application may not be lodged with IPART until early April 2021. The Council has sought an exemption for that purpose.

I enclose a copy of Council's letter dated 13 January 2021 to ratepayers from which you will see that Council has foreshadowed to the community two possible, and quite different

applications that may be put to IPART. Ratepayers will not know until Council submits its final application what the ultimate proposal will be.

Procedural fairness requires that the Central Coast community and ratepayers have a reasonable period of time in which to consider and respond to what ever may be the Council's ultimate proposal, which it seems will not be known until 8 February 2021 at the earliest. In many cases a Special Variation of the nature foreshadowed will cost individual ratepayers hundreds of dollars a year in increased rates, with no increased services or benefits as a consequence of an absolute debacle that was not the responsibility of the ratepayers.

The IPART website indicates that the community is allowed a period of three months, from 1 December to 1 March the following year, in which to make submissions about Special Variation applications. Clearly that period is not appropriate here, when the Council has foreshadowed that its application will not be complete until late March 2021, at the earliest.

Taking account of the reality of the need to fund the ongoing operation of the Central Coast Council, a period of at least six weeks from the date Council completes the lodgement of its Special Variation application should be allowed for community submissions. Anything less would be a denial of natural justice

Please confirm that you and the Council will give public notice of such an opportunity for submissions.

Yours faithfully



Independent Pricing and Regulatory

2-24 Rawson Place

SYDNEY NSW 2000

10th February 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

WHAT A JOKE

How can Mr Michael Baird combine two Councils, when Gosford Council was in a very poor financial position? Rate payers should have had a say by referendum regarding amalgamation.

We have received a letter dated 13th January 2021, how has the Central Coast been affected by dam levels, bushfires, floods and COVID-19?

Dam Levels are currently at 52%?

Bushfires 1 at Charmhaven/Blue Haven how has this affected the whole of the Central Coast?

Floods WHERE?

Coastal Erosion, the people who have built homes with Council Approval choice to live there with the threat of erosion, so why should the rest of the Coast have to pay for their problems.

COVID-19 It took the Council from March 2020 to October 2020 to put soap into Public Toilets.

The CCC has [REDACTED] resources from the ratepayers for the last four years by not providing a standard of service to the community.

Someone or some ones should be facing criminal charges for Misappropriating Public Funds. How can a Council get into Half a Billion Dollars Debt?

The Council seems to buy or build a hell of a lot of Real Estate at the expense of rate payers.

Why are we paying managers and overseers when these have been neglected for years? Taking money under false pretences.

Roads – Oakland Ave THE ENTRANCE, roadwork has been completed however where the equipment was parked, the road is appalling for one block between Manning Ave and Entrance Road and Manning Ave.

Gavenlock and McPherson Road Mardi you can't even see the guide posts for over grown weeds. Also very dangerous unable to see traffic when entering McPherson Road from Gavenlock Rd.

Wyong Road and Bryant drive roundabout is so dangerous for motorises, as you cannot see the oncoming traffic because of the vegetation which is too high and too thick. It will take someone to get seriously hurt, then something will be done about it.

The pot hole which is pictured in one of the photos on Manns Road West Gosford, if someone was to hit it, there would be severe damage done to their car.

Various roads around the whole Central Coast need work (pot holes). You cannot tell us that one of your managers haven't seen or felt the pot holes in the roads. If they have and have just purely ignored them they should be sacked from their position.

Vegetation – Weeds, over grown trees over roads and footpaths. Leaves in gutters and drains which all end up in the lake.

Picnic Point Boat Ramp and park the gutters are choc a block full of pine needles and leaves. The road has sunk near the curb creating a trip hazard which has been for years and has been reported.

Marine Parade THE ENTRANCE along the board walk has several trip hazards which also have been reported years ago, STILL THE SAME.

You see all these Council trucks driving around with thousands and thousands of dollars worth of equipment and two sometimes three staff, but nothing ever gets done. Where is the street sweeper? You never see it out working! Are these vehicles tracked?

So until the Council sells off our underutilised assets and reducing workforce (being paid but doing nothing) and reducing spending on infrastructure, materials and contracts the Council is cracking jokes about an increase in rates.

I would be willing to come and pick you up and show you some of the problems that your highly paid staff can't seem to see.

Being a Central Coast Rate Payer, we would like to see a copy of the list of properties which the Central Council Council own. Which we are entitled to.

We pay rates on the following four properties.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

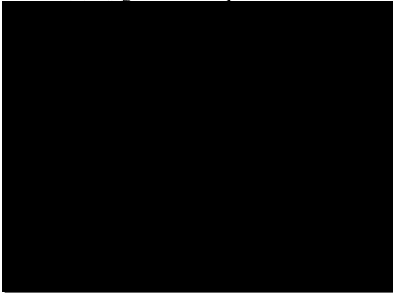
[REDACTED]

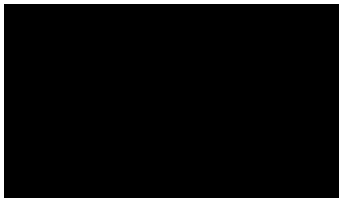
[REDACTED]

THE CENTRAL COAST IS AN ABSOLUTE [REDACTED] We as in rate payers are certainly not getting value for money apart from weekly Garbage Services. SOMEONE NEEDS TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE DISGRACE.

Please find enclosed various photos of some problems which need attention ASAP. 2/3

Yours sincerely





12 February 2021

IPART

Independent Pricing Regulatory Tribunal

State Government Office

Level 15, 2-24 Rawson Place

Sydney NSW 2000

PO Box k35

Haymarket Post Shop

NSW 1240

RE: CENTRAL COAST PROPOSED RATE INCREASE ABOVE RATE PEG.

Dear Sir/Madam,

As a Central Coast Ratepayer since 1986 we strongly object to the proposed 10% or 15% rate increase set out by the Central Coast Council Administration. It should remain at the pegged rate only.

Attached is our letter sent to Central Coast Council where we vehemently object to the proposal as the forced amalgamation of both Wyong and Gosford Councils and mismanagement of Ratepayer monies has caused this extraordinary financial problem.

There is a discrepancy in what rates are paid by the Ratepayers of the previous Wyong and Gosford Shire Councils. This should be addressed immediately to even out the playing field. Why is the Gosford area paying less than the Wyong area and all the wishful infrastructure and improvements being spent mainly in the Gosford area? Fixing this discrepancy would bring some funds back into the system along with reducing management staff and their inflated wages.

As residents of the previous Wyong Shire Council we remain one of the highest areas for Annual Rates and should not be penalised any more than the Rate Peg. Central Coast Council needs to put on hold **all** wishful infrastructure (e.g. elevated walkway between Terrigal Beach and The Haven, also, the rerouting of the streets in Terrigal CBD several times in the past few years) and only pay attention to maintaining core community needs such as garbage collection, roads and footpaths, parks and sportsgrounds and community assets (sell off what is not needed like two council chambers) till they manage to get back on track with the financial situation.

The State Government should also take some financial responsibility for the situation on the Central Coast due to amalgamation. The money offered to Councils who amalgamated appears to have been redirected to the wrong areas like Hornsby. Hence with a bonanza off Stamp Duties paid in the Real Estate Market especially on the Central Coast the State Government needs to alleviate the financial burden on the residents of the amalgamated Central Coast and contribute financially to the debt which seems to be continually rising in every report.

The new administration appears to be on track by cutting oversized management staff and curbing inflated/exorbitant wages that have appeared since amalgamation. It may take longer to recoup losses but certainly will be easier on the community who live in and support this beautiful Central Coast and pay their annual rates in good faith expecting in return that they will be managed in an honest and proper manner to provide services and comfort for the needs of its residents.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature Block]

INDEPENDENT PRICING AND
REGULATORY TRIBUNAL OF NSW
P.O. BOX K35
HAYMARKET POST SHOP. 1240
DEN SIR

25/2/21

APPLICATION BY CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL FOR 13%
SPECIAL RATE

I DO NOT WISH FOR THE ADMINISTRATOR TO USE
THE WORD "VARIATION" IN THIS APPLICATION FOR A
SPECIAL RATE CHARGING OF 13%.

I DO NOT WISH FOR THE SPECIAL RATE COMPONENT
TO BE INCLUDED IN THE COST CATEGORY ON LINE 1 OF
YOUR RATE NOTICE THAT CATEGORY BEING "ORDINARY RATE
RESIDENTIAL".

I WISH FOR THE ORDINARY RATE RESIDENTIAL TO
RETAIN ITS SEPARATE IDENTITY AND INTEGRITY.

I WISH FOR ANY SPECIAL RATE TO BE LEVIED TO BE
SEPARATELY ITEMISED ON A LINE 2 OF THE RATES
NOTICE. THIS IS IN ACCORD WITH PRECEDENT AND
PRACTICE AT CITY OF PARRAMATTA COUNCIL. COPY OF A
RATE NOTICE ATTACHED

CEO RIK HART CAME FROM PARRAMATTA TO THE COAST
AND HAS OVERLOOKED THAT EXAMPLE IN CONCERT WITH
ADMINISTRATOR PERSSON. THIS IS UNSTOWARD.

IF THERE IS NO LINE 2, LINE 1 WILL PERPETUALLY
BE INCREASED, ONGOING, FOREVER BY MR PERSSON. A COST
LOADOUT ON LINE 1 WOULD NOT BE TOLERATED BY
RATEPAYERS, THERE HAS TO BE AN END READILY
IDENTIFIABLE TO PAIR UP WITH ASSET SALES, IF ANY.

WYONG RATEPAYERS OF OLD ARE CONSIDERABLY OUT OF
SIGHT ON THE 6.7% INFRASTRUCTURE BACKLOG PROJECT OF
40-45% FOR FOUR YEARS TO 2016 DUE TO COMPOUNDING
THE SPECIAL ~~AND~~ RATE VARIATION UPON THE ORDINARY RATE.
RATEPAYERS MUST BE ABLE TO LIVE IN HOPE OF REVERTING
A HISTORICAL ORDINARY RESIDENTIAL RATE

I VIEW THIS COUNCIL OF NEVER BEING SPENDTHRIFT AND
MIX ORDINARY RATE AND SPECIAL RATE TOGETHER EXCEEDS
RELATIONERY GUIDELINES. I DO NOT SUPPORT PERSSON'S APPLICATION.
I AM FAITHFULLY

INDEPENDENT PRICING AND
REGULATORY TRIBUNAL OF NSW
PO. BOX K35 HAYMARKET POST SHOP. 1240
APPLICATION BY CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL 15% 28.2.21

IT APPEARS THAT ADMINISTRATOR PERSSON STATES IN HIS MEDIA
RELEASE 9/2/21 THAT HE PROPOSES TO LOAD THE SPECIAL RATE
LEVY IN WITH THE ORDINARY/BASE RESIDENTIAL RATE AS
ONE FIGURE WHICH IS ALWAYS THE CARRY FORWARD FIGURE
IN CALCULATIONS IN THE RATE NOTICE FOR THE NEXT
FINANCIAL YEAR.

THEREFORE RATEPAYERS WILL INCUR A PERPETUAL
FIXED COST FOR THE SPECIAL RATE LEVY IN EACH
RATING PERIOD TO FOLLOW CONTINUOUSLY WITH NO END
IN SIGHT.

THIS IS DESPITE AND WITH GROSS CONTRADICTION TO
THE FACT THAT [REDACTED] STATES IN HIS MEDIA
RELEASE 9/2/21 THAT THE SPECIAL RATE LEVY WON'T BE
CHARGED AGAIN AFTER 2020/21. [REDACTED] IS MISLEADING THE
RATEPAYERS.

IN FACT THERE SHOULD BE A SEPARATE LINE ON
OUR RATE NOTICE FOR THE SPECIAL LEVY TO CONTINUE
TO BE ABLE TO DISTINGUISH IT FROM THE ORDINARY/BASE
RESIDENTIAL RATE COMPONENT. DISCLOSURE AND TRANSPARENCY
AT THE FULLEST IS IMPERATIVE IN ALIGNING WITH PROPOSED
CUTTING MEASURES, AND ONGOING RECONCILING.

THERE SHOULD BE AN INTENTION TO REVIEW THE
~~NECESSITY~~ OR OVER ADEQUACY OF THE SPECIAL RATE LEVY
ON AN ANNUAL BASIS PENDING PROGRESSIVE REDUCTIONS
IN COUNCIL'S DEBT LEVELS.

IT IS UNETHICAL FOR COUNCIL TO COLLECT/CHARGE
THE SPECIAL RATE LEVY ON SUCH AN AD-HOC BASIS AS
PROPOSED AND FOR THE EXACT AMOUNT OF THIS COMPONENT
TO BE HIDDEN IN ONLY ONE COST DESCRIPTION IN
ONE LINE ONLY ON OUR RATE NOTICE.

RATEPAYERS SHOULD BE AFFORDED A SOUND OPTION

2. (CENTRAL COUNCIL
15%)

THE 15% SPECIAL LEVY INCLUSIVE OF THE USUAL ANNUAL RATE PEG TO BECOME A VARIABLE RATE AND NOT A FIXED RATE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL'S REVISED DEBT POSITION IN ^{DEBT} REDUCTION PROGRESSIVELY DURING EACH FINANCIAL YEAR.

THE SPECIAL LEVY IS BEING IMPOSED TO ASSIST 'PAY DOWN' COUNCIL'S ENORMOUS DEBT BURDEN AND IS IN SOMEWHAT LIKE BRIDGING FINANCE WHICH CAN NEVER BE HARD LOAN AND ^{FOR} WHICH THERE HAS TO BE A CORRELATION WITH REDUCED SPENDING, ASSET SALES AND COST CUTTING ETC.; BUT INSTEAD ADMINISTRATOR PERSSON'S INTENTION IS TO INFLATE THE BASE RATE FURTHER WITHOUT ANY RESPIRE.

SUMMARY.

IF COUNCIL'S DEBTS ARE TO BE WRITTEN DOWN PROGRESSIVELY THE EXTENT OF THE SPECIAL RATE LEVY SHOULD BE CONSTANTLY ALIGNED WITH SUCH WRITING DOWN PROGRESSIVELY.

CONCLUSION.

FOCUS ON THE SPECIAL RATE LEVY COMPONENT NEEDS TO BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE AS COUNCIL TRADES ITS WAY THROUGHS THE BLACK. IT IS MOST CONCERNING THAT THE ADMINISTRATOR HAS FAILED TO GRASP THIS MOOT POINT.

THE ADMINISTRATOR HAS NOT ESTABLISHED A STRATEGY ~~WHICH WOULD CORRELATE~~ -URE WHICH ENTAILS A VARIABLE AND REVIEWABLE SPECIAL RATE LEVY WHICH WOULD CORRELATE WITH REDUCING DEBT LEVELS IN TERMS OF THE PROPOSED FINANCIAL RECOVERY AT CCC.

RECOMMENDATION:

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE SPECIAL RATE APPLICATION TO PART BE DECIDED. ESSENTIALLY DELEGATIONS HAVE FAILED ~~THE~~ MRS HANCOCK THE L.G. MINISTER & DEPT OF LOCAL GOVT; AND YOURS FAITHFULLY [REDACTED] STILL CONTINUE TO FAIL