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Submission: Dear Sir/Madam, I would like to voice my opposition to the Bellingen Shire Council's application for a special rates variation. the Bellingen shire residents are a widely disparate demographic, with a large proportion being from a low socio-economic group. The Shire's ongoing requests for rate rises (and being compounding and cumulative) above the peg, place a huge financial burden on a vulnerable section of the community, these people are already in a fragile and tenuous financial situation. The councils primary function should as a utility provider and perhaps Bellingen should model themselves on the nearby Nambucca Shire's fiscal policies, including a restructure of the ratio of internal to external staff.