

Author name: Anonymous

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Submission: I am making a submission to oppose the Port Stephens Council special variation application, As a middle income earner trying to raise a family, I currently struggle to pay my current land rates as it is. I cannot imagine how difficult it will be for those on a pension or a lower income than myself to meet their payments once this increase takes effect.

As a family, we don't go out to restaurants or to the movies or participate in any other activities that may put a strain on our already tight budget. My husband and I don't drink alcohol or smoke or gamble or partake in other leisure activities that will cost money, therefore I cannot see any way that we can make cutbacks to come up with the extra money to pay for this increase.

I have recently noticed that this council has resealed roads that have been resealed not all that long ago and did not need redoing, while other roads are atrocious and laden with potholes. To me, this simply tells me that the council cannot effectively manage the funds that they currently have and are wasting it in areas that don't need it. Maybe they just need to learn to spend their current budget appropriately and wisely rather than throwing money at things that don't require the attention and then expecting their rate payers to happily oblige with their want for more money.

I am seriously concerned that if this proposed rate rise goes ahead that we as well as many other struggling families and pensioners may be forced to sell our homes that we love and move to an area within a different council that does not carry such ridiculously high land rates.