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Submission: Dear IPART as a ratepayer within the Blue Mountains City Council area I am concerned at the continual cost increases to our rates (which already do include extra levies). Council recently asked for feedback on the proposed rate increases offering various options . The proposal of 40% increase should be seen in the light of Commonwealth Government cutbacks to local governments and the ability of ratepayers to be able to pay such excessive rate increases. Ratepayers on fixed pensions which although indexed to CPI (at least for the short term) will struggle to meet any increase in rate costs especially when other rates (such as energy and water) are also increasing. How a pensioner can be asked to continue to pay any increase even with the discount given would be a miracle. The BMCC rates in the lower mountains (such as Blaxland, Glenbrook and Lapstone) are inequitable when compared with those in the upper mountains areas such as Springwood and further west. The lower mountains is excessively penalised (paying for example \$2500 p.a. rates in Glenbrook) for the same services in Springwood with much lower rates possibly around \$1800 is ludicrous. The same comparison can also be made with the rates applied by Penrith City Council. It could be said that the lower mountains does the "heavy lifting" in rate payment. Those that live in the BMCC area recognise its uniqueness and the need for essential services (BMCC does a good job with these overall) but the rating system is inequitable and excessively costly for those in some areas and dependent on fixed incomes. It would be incongruous to have to sell one's premises when it becomes impossible to pay the required rates. For your consideration