

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, 19 February 2017 4:13 PM

To: IPART Mailbox

Subject: Shoalhaven City Council's application for 26% increase in rates over next 2 years

Topic: Shoalhaven City Council's application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a 26% increase in rates over the next 2 years

I am a resident of the Shoalhaven and am writing to voice my opinion on the matter of the Above inflation and peg proposed rate rise, as my voice is being dismissed by the current council I have choose to go direct you (Ipart) in the hope that you will consider my view when looking at the proposal.

I will briefly tell you about myself and why I am against the rate rise of such a large amount.

My Partner and myself are paying off a mortgage in the shoalhaven (Bomaderry), we are both in our late 20's

we have 2 children (9 and 3 years of age) my partner is ex army and was medically discharged 2 years ago. He is on a white card and unable to work, we currently get paid [REDACTED] of his army wage and a part pension (totalling [REDACTED] a fortnight) till he enters work again which is at least another 12 months and another operation off. however We are better off than a lot in our area, we have a taxable income and a mortgage we are managing to pay, though most months we are over due on a bill or two we still manage to keep our head above the rising tide of expenses. I am unable to work at this time due to the care my partner needs and caring for our son, as my partners issues are in his foot (multiple fuses) he is not always able to stand and never able to run so unable to tend to our son longer than an hour or so by himself.

the job prospects in the shoalhaven is not high anyway and those jobs which are going are often low wage. Its great to say the government subsidises low income family but a lot of people in our area cant afford the \$5 a week extra, you know the insulting "its a cup of coffee" comparison the council love to tell us when we express our inability to pay that. Most of the councillors I have spoken to are nurses, teachers, educated uni degree workers and are in the age groups you would have expected have paid off their mortgages and when we explain to them the local worker only brings home [REDACTED] a week they shrug it off, rent in the local area has sky rocketed as is, with a rate rise of 26% we are looking at rent going up again, as a mortgage holder I at least can say my mortgage is cheaper than the rental market, but as someone who knows a lot of people struggling to pay rent at the moment I at least understand how hard these people will find it, again that cup of coffee that might be the only spare \$5.00 after a week of hard budgeting may need to be used on childrens pain relief or fever relief one week, or on antibiotics, or on school excursions considering the government has taken away the back to school bonus for families, see that \$5 they seem to think is so easy to come by isn't for most of the people in my area who are struggling pensioners, unemployed, or low income tax payers, I'm not in the nice part of Nowra or the upper class part so maybe council don't understand how hard their lower class citizens are facing it but they wont understand if they keep refusing to listen.

Maybe it would not be so insulting if council didn't sit there telling us this rate rise was only to cover current expenses not to improve or enhance what we are currently paying for. Maybe it would be easier to accept if they didn't blame all the councillors before them whilst sitting down with those same councillors and teaming up with them to force this rate rise onto us. Maybe it wouldn't be so wrong if they actually looked at cutting back expenses on things only being utilized by a minority and that isn't the responsibility of rate payers or even the renters who these rates will be passed

onto things such as a childcare offer only being used by around 200 people, but being subsidised by rate payers. Maybe if they didn't supply food at every meeting, or maybe if their survey they insulted us with had more than just 60% - 45% or 26% as an option they would actually understand that the community would be willing to pay little just not this extreme.

Nowra is the home of the navy base HMAS albatross. The defence one of our largest employers the defence personal had to fight for an increase of 3% to their wage, this was doled out over a few years 3% vrs 26%. Councillors are in denial if they think that the community can afford such a high hike. If they had of come to us with a more reasonable sum such as the peg plus 2-3% (TOTAL) as well as some cuts and an open audit to show the people where the money is all going too than maybe I wouldn't be writing to you right now asking you to consider the low economics of the shoalhaven and the low income most workers bring in.

I hope this has been sent to the correct department and I am sorry for the rant. But thank you for taking the time to read this email.

██████████