

Sent: Saturday, 6 April 2013 9:55 AM

To: Local Government Mailbox

Subject: Objection for Special Rate Increase Submission by Wyong Council

To : localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au.

RE : Special Rate Increase Submission by Wyong Council

To whom it may concern,

We have recently broken out of the rent cycle and purchased our first home after years of dedicated saving. It was hard to save while renting, especially as the rent we were paying continued to rise, almost forcing us into hardship to maintain our savings schedule.

After researching the housing market and considering our single-income status, we decided that the Central Coast was the only affordable place close enough to my husband's place of employment in Hornsby. We our decision to buy was right, especially as rent money is 'dead' money. We now have our own place, and although we pay a mortgage, it is cheaper than our previous rental rate. For this last year we have been happy new home owners. However, we did not imagine that Wyong Shire Council would propose an increase in the rates higher than our previous rent increases had been.

They informed us about this rate hike with heavily weighted advertisements, full of misleading graphs and statements informing us that this is the rates increase 'we simply must have'. They proposed three options, the first being a 12.5 % increase, the second being 9.5%, and the third being 3.5% (this being the rate peg). Ratepayers by majority chose 'No Increase' or the 3.5% option. However, Wyong Council has decided to apply for a 6.9% increase to rates (this excludes the 3.5% cap and to my understanding this will mean a 10.4% increase). Wyong Council wants this to be an ANNUAL INCREASE over the next seven years. The Council doesn't want to take 'NO' as the answer, even though it has come direct from us rate payers. Why have they bothered to send out brochures asking ratepayers' opinions if they had already decided on their own answer?

We have tried to understand the reasons for the proposed increases, having examined their recent expenditures along with their proposed budgeting forecast, but cannot understand the claims they are making or the predicament they find themselves in. We conclude that there has been a gross mismanagement of rate payer's monies.

As a single-income family we had few options other than buying in Wyong Shire. We have now learned that we have fewer options as Wyong Council seems to operate under their own mandate rather than that of their electorate.

If Wyong Council is in such financial distress, then why would they put an airport development in their agenda or propose to buy dredging machinery for the dredging of Tuggerah Lakes to double the collection of wracks? (a decision not supported by studies performed by the CSIRO - please see attachment 1 and last proposal in 1997 was rejected by NSW Fisheries - please see attachment 2 at page 49). Surely there needs to be a financial audit before Councils application to increase the rates is assessed? No matter how much revenue they rise from rates increases, if there exists a propensity for wasteful spending and mismanagement of revenue, any increase above the rates cap will be retrograde by nature and force ratepayers like us into selling our house and become renters again.

Please consider low income earners like us who's trying to break the rental cycle, the rate pegging for Council Rate is designed for reason. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,