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Submission: I object to the rate rise on the following grounds:

*** Affordability. We live in a low income area for the most part. Many residents will not be able to afford the rise. They came here because of the lower rates and lower cost of housing. To suggest that rate relief will help such residents is not a solution. Rate rises feed into rent rises and increase costs across the board for those that can least afford it.

*** Lack of Consultation. Almost all meetings were started and held during normal working hours. One cannot claim to have consulted the community when people who work would have little or no chance to attend.

*** No-one on council campaigned for a rate rise in the last election. In fact, the councillors specifically rallied against the proposed merger with Newcastle council on the grounds of a rate rise post merger feared by most residents.

*** Lack of experience and expertise before asking for 66% rate rise. 50% of the Councillors are newly elected. Councillors job is to prioritise and manage community needs within the budget allocated. Spend time operating within budget before asking for \$50 million dollars extra for extras that residents dont need and have not requested.

*** Undemocratic. Three councillors are against the rise, voting that they are abiding by their constituents wishes. The others are ignoring the almost 70% vote against the rate rise in the submissions.

*** Unsubstantiated claims for the rate rise. Councillors for the rise stated in public that they had consulted widely with community groups in the area (I have not heard of, or seen any submissions for ideas of additional specific council projects) and they have received support from them for the rate rise. These verbal and unsupported claims have been given equal or more weight than the written submissions from the consultation process. No written evidence of support has been provided for the rate rise from any group with which they claim to have consulted. None whatsoever.