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Submission: As proud long term residents of Port Stephens, I have seen much change over the past 28 years of living here. I understand that demand on council to maintain roads and provide and upkeep infrastructure for this incredibly fast growing area is increasing. However, it was with utter dismay I heard that Port Stephens council has voted on such a huge rate rise for constituents. A 7.5% rise compounding over 7 years is a massive rise.

Already, we as a family, are struggling to meet all our expenses and maintain a mortgage. Our budget is stretched to the point that it is straining, and once bills are paid - there is nothing much left for anything else. I know we are not alone in feeling the squeeze just trying to live a very simple lifestyle. The news of this rise has left us totally bewildered as to how we can afford this proposed rate rise and I know that we are not alone in feeling this way from speaking to other locals.

I ask that you listen to the real voice of Port Stephens - not elected representatives, but the actual residents whose hip pocket will be adversely affected; and veto the recommended rate rises as they stand.

If any rise absolutely has to occur - may it be a far more considerable and workable rate that average blue collar working people have a chance to be able to afford.

Thank you for your time and consideration.