

24 April 2011

The Hon Don Page MP-*

Minister for Local Government
Level 33
Governor Macquarie Tower
1 Farrer Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Sir

As a ratepayer and a pensioner I am writing to you to raise my objections to the proposal by Bega Valley Shire Council to apply for a rate variation of 2.2% pa over a period of 20 years.

Ratepayers in the Bega Valley Shire Council have had rate variations applied over and above the allowable CPI rate increase for the last five years. Since 2003 my rates here in Tathra have increased by 91%, admittedly some of that is attributable to the UCV on my land, but the majority is because of rate rises.

I am also concerned about ratepayer funds being given to projects or causes without ratepayers being advised beforehand and being told they are surplus funds, then being told we need more money from rate increases for infrastructure, Merimbula Airport and tourism.

I have facilitated a petition to Council seeking a period of consolidation for ratepayers of two years and a request for more consideration of their proposed application with extensive community consultation. Attached is a copy of this petition with some 366 signatures from concerned residents.

People are still trying to recover from drought over a period of ten years and recent floods and it has a flow on effect to the whole community. There are groups, in particular retirees both self funded and pensioners and others on fixed incomes who are really struggling to cope with rising costs and to have to face a 5% total rate increase p.a over a twenty year period will be totally unsustainable.

I respectfully ask you to take into consideration my request and the request of the signatories on the attached petition when considering Council's application for a rate variation.

Yours faithfully