

Author name: Anonymous

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Submission: I am writing to you against the special rate variation as I cannot afford a rate variation. Over 72% of residents were against a rate rise, this was in direct contravention of public consultation wishes.

When the average household income of Raymond Terrace is 50k per year, in the 10% of poorest towns in Australia, this will disproportionately affect people who cannot afford it; especially when the lowest option of SRV was 6.5% and what is being asked for is 7.5%. Both lead to over 50% increase to council rates over the 7 year period which is unreasonable.

Additionally, the proposal is poorly planned; Medowie is being offered a new "heart of the town"

This has not been adequately described; no plans or detail could be provided what this multimillion dollar plan constitutes.

Additionally, the anticipated SRV plans include provisions of funds for projects which have already been approved; resurfacing and fencing for Medowie tennis club. This has already been approved and it would be misleading to include this in rate variation plans.

There are also questions raised about whether rates are being fairly distributed through locations; a large amount of proposed works are for Nelson Bay. This does not benefit the rest of the council except for Sydney holidaymakers and developers in Nelson Bay. Additionally, the Mayor Ryan Palmer is a known member of Nelson Bay now; a group of individuals with a vested interest in the development of Nelson Bay. This would indicate a lack of impartiality, and risk of bias from new Mayor.

Ultimately, the residents of Port Stephens have spoken. They are overwhelmingly in opposition of the SRV. This should not proceed as it would be in blatant opposition of the wishes of residents.