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Submission: I am writing in opposition to the Special Rate variation as it is not financially sustainable for the local population. Australia has been deemed on a per capita basis to now be in a recession.

<https://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-06/gdp-q4-2018/10874592>

Since 2013, excluding inflation Australian wages have actually dropped by 0.5%; we have less money to live off than we did 5 years ago, despite council rates being pegged with inflation.

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.news.com.au/finance/work/at-work/the-three-reasons-wages-in-australia-are-not-going-up/news-story/b891e324fe7511c372ccf505a37e8ce6>

A 7.5% rates increase annually for 7 years (leading to a 65% increase in rates over 7 years) would have a disastrous impact on many families who are already doing it tough. This would not sound financially sustainable; a key consideration if approving the rates rise.

This is especially unfair considering residents are not having the same improvements to their salaries.

The SRV was put to a vote with the ratepayers of Port Stephens, and overwhelmingly the response from rate payers was that they could not afford this rate rise (over 70% of ratepayers).

The ratepayers; key stakeholders have made their wishes well known: this rate rise cannot be afforded and will have terrible knock on effects for the local economy as families have to cut back on basic necessities to afford the rises.

The fair solution would be to listen to the rate payers of this community. We voted against a rate rise, and would appreciate if the rates were only kept in line with inflation. They would still be doing better than the average rate payer salary.