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Submission: Our community has had a very hard few years first with the mining downturn and then this terrible drought that if you ask most elderly residents, is the worst they can remember. The pressure on our local mining and farming families has been considerable. Wages have dropped, jobs are harder to come by and farmers have spent so much just trying to buy feed to keep animals alive. The huge rate rise proposed by the Upper Hunter Shire Council will just add more pressure to a community that needs a break, it just goes to show how out of touch with our community the UHSC is. For me personally, this rate rise would make life very hard as we struggle to pay our existing bills. The last 5 years has seen my families income cut by 20% due to the mining downturn, yet in that time all of our bills have continued to climb. The pressure is crippling and I can only imagine there are many more like us in the UHSC area. This is a greedy move that is vastly unpopular with the local community. This is also terrible timing considering what our community has faced in recent years. It's time for our council to wake up and listen to it's rate holders.