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Submission: I own and live on a small rural property in the Upper Hunter Town of Blandford. Blandford and the surrounding district are in the grip of a severe drought, we are unable for the 2nd time in 6 years to pump water from our usual/only source, the Pages river. Water must be bought in via truck at a current cost of \$290.00 a load (10,000 litres), to get this water, there is often a 3 week wait. The last thing that the people in the small villages of the upper Hunter need is a rate increase that serves them no benefit. By no benefit I mean not a single cent spent in Blandford, Wingen and Parkville. We need water infrastructure badly, this has not been budgeted for, nor considered, even in the ongoing development of the Scone to Murrurundi pipeline. It would appear that the Upper Hunter Shire Council believes we that inhabit these Villages should fend for ourselves. It is my opinion that the improvements that this special rate rise is to pay for, are unnecessary, and, when compared to the needs of so many others that are expected to foot the bill for this, irresponsible. Regards, [REDACTED]