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Submission: SRV Rate Rises

Very simply, a rate rise of this scale is unaffordable for the majority of people. It is out of reach of people on fixed incomes.

Wages in Port Stephens do not nearly equate to those in Sydney. The SRV Rate Rise is not proportionate to wages in the Port Stephens area at all, not to mention those on pensions and fixed income of all types. Employment is not at a premium these days and wages are not increasing.

Even Sydney people are struggling financially. Household bills have increased but wages have not. Latest GDP figures reveal that Australia is nearly in a per capita recession. It has been observed that retail spending is down as is purchasing of cars (ABC news 7/3/2019). This all indicates there is no justification for rate increases, let alone for new projects.

The reality of the majority of people is that they have to live within their means, acquiring necessities first, then saving for what may be wanted after that, instead of going dangerously into debt. The same applies to Councils and their projects. It is not right or fair to impose hardship on members of the community, especially to the extent that the current proposed SRV Rate Rise does.

It is not so long ago that Port Stephens Council announced that increases in rates would not be required for some fifteen years, that Council was doing well financially. Now all of a sudden steep rate rises beyond affordability are being requested. This suggests that projects may be being pushed ahead too quickly at an unsustainable rate.

Most people, looking at their own finances have to slow things down and not proceed with purchases or works until they can afford the extra expenditure.

It has been suggested that to help those who cannot afford the SRV Rate Rise that the rates could accumulate and be paid out of the Estate when the person dies. Add interest to that and it is an extremely unfair scenario. A person should not have this situation forced upon them by excessive rate rises.