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Submission: Port Stephens Council Special Rate Variation.

This application should be rejected. The council previously opposed merging with Newcastle, partly on the grounds of a probable rate increase. Now they seek it themselves.

There are many rate payers on fixed incomes including age pensioners for whom this increase will be intolerable. Pensioners get some relief but other low income superannuated people are not so lucky.

The proposals for spending the increased revenue are ill defined. Any increase compounding to between 55 and 77 percent over seven years is too much and is probably an ambit claim by council.

Perhaps a lower increase for a shorter period could be approved, if there were offsets for the less well off.