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Date of submission: Thursday, 29 September 2022

Your submission for this review:

One of the key concerns IPART takes in regard of the rate peg increases is "...protecting rate payers from excessive rate increases...". So I take the Blue Mountains City Council (BMCC) as an example. Some 5 years ago, the BMCC lobbied for a 40% increase in rates and got it, despite 2 councilors resigning over the flawed process and many letters of concern raised. Then in 2020/2021, the Valuer General raised property values to full blown market values resulting in many land valuations and subsequent rates rising by 100% or more in many cases. Many of these valuations including mine were not based on proper research but based on a street or location. My direct neighbor's corner block valuation doubled because his address was on the main street but the opposite corner block was only a modest increase because it's address was on the cross street. In the end, the BMCC received a rates windfall from this exercise. Yet still not satisfied and still crying poor, the BMCC lobbied for another increase the following year, above the original 2022/2023 rates peg and got it. All up, over the past 8 years, my rates have more than doubled and I consider myself lucky. Many people in my area have had a doubling and more in just the last 12 months. How is this fair? My wages, when I was working, haven't increased in the last 15 years and now, retired I'm just eating my savings. Not to mention recent inflation pressures! The big issue is the grotesque amount of money being wasted by the Council with little or no oversight. Basic services like roads are being neglected while they spend millions on pet projects, commercial enterprises, and a ridiculous \$42M+ payroll. As part of the rates methodology, IPART should be considering what actions are being taken to create efficiencies and prioritise basic services over nice-to-have projects. We have to belt-tighten, so should they. We are not a bottomless well of money to draw from. Please, look at both sides of the argument.