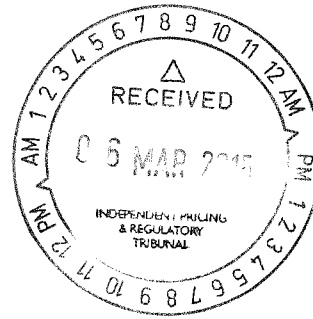


Bernard Rivas

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2015



Local Government Team  
Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW.

***Subject:- The proposed increases in Council Rates by the Blue Mountains City Council. i.e a 40% increase in residential rates over 4 years.***

Dear Sir/Madame,

I'm writing to you as a concerned, long term resident and rate payer in the Blue Mountains Council area. I wish to express my concerns about the BMCC's intent to increase Council Rates in accord with Option 1 (the most expensive option) of the 'Resourcing Our Future' plan. Unfortunately only 4,000 ratepayers took the time to reply to a survey put out by the Council. A result that I suspect, our Council had anticipated! However, considering that there are approximately 35,000 ratepayers in the BMCC area, I hardly think that this was a democratic result. I doubt that most people fully understood the ramifications of the Council's proposal. As a self funded retiree, I don't receive any reductions in my Council rates. Of course the people most affected by this proposal will be those on low and fixed incomes. Considering the Council's financial situation I did propose that the Council consider requesting the State Government's help to stabilise wages. The State Government has restricted pay increases for Public Servants to 2.5% in order to help bring the State Budget into line. I'm sure with corrected legislation, Councils could do the same.

This Council has shown itself to be an inadequate financial manager. It has no doubt given in to pressure from staff unions and has failed to do adequate reviews of staffing costs over a number of years. Millions of dollars could have been saved in the construction of the new Civic Centre in Springwood, had the council agreed to involve private enterprise in its construction. Instead Council gave into minority pressure groups in the local community. It's clear that local business groups simply didn't want real competition in the Springwood business district. This decision has not only cost ratepayers dearly, but has been a missed opportunity to help reduce the cost of living in the area. I have requested the Council to have a rethink and come up with some alternatives for cost savings rather than ratepayers having to face spiralling rate charges into the future. I'm convinced that the term 'Our' in the 'Resourcing Our Future' proposal, refers mainly to the Council's and Council Staff's financial comfort, rather than the financial welfare of ratepayers.

Yours Sincerely,

