



Local Government Team
P.O. Box Q290
QVB Post Office NSW 1230

Further to our telephone conversation today I now enclose a copy of correspondence forwarded by 'Express Post' to Michael Whittaker, General Manager, Wyong Shire Council on Friday 8th February, 2013.

This letter was sent in response to a general communication by council to ratepayers that they intended to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal for an increase of up to 9.5% per annum in rates for the next seven (7) years and a request for ratepayers to indicate their opinion. (Please refer to attached copies of these notifications from council.)

Although our letter was forwarded to Michael Whittaker in an 'Express Post Guaranteed Next Day Delivery' envelope which was clearly marked to his attention and stamped 'Confidential' we have not, to date, received even the courtesy or an acknowledgement of its receipt. I believe that this is an indication of the character and competence, or incompetence of the senior people in charge of Wyong Shire Council.

An article in the 'Central Coast Express Advocate' today advises that council has now applied for an increase of 6.9% per annum for the next seven (7) years and if approved, we are concerned that council will simply waste this increase as it has done with its funds over past years.

In conclusion we are seeking your departments' assistance in obtaining a reply to our correspondence to Michael Whittaker some three (3) weeks ago.

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE MATHESON

Mr Michael Whittaker
General Manager
Wyong Shire Council
Box 20
WYONG. NSW 2259

Dear Mr. Whittaker

RE: WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL RATES

We are the owners of the subject property and have lived there since the completion of our new home in April, 1991. We are writing to you in response to your recent communication advising that council has notified the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of its intent to submit an application for a special annual rate increase of up to 9.5% per annum for the next seven (7) years.

Council also advises that this could take the annual rate increase well above the maximum rate increase allowed by the N.S.W. Government each year of "around three (3) percent" and is requesting ratepayers to indicate which one of two (2) options put forward by council would be acceptable/preferred, in an effort to prevent council exhausting all available funds by 2016, as advised by the N.S.W. Treasury Corporation last year.

In reply we submit the following information and comments.

We enclose a complete analysis of our rate notices for the last seven (7) years which itemises each category – please refer attachment (1) - and over this seven year period the total dollar increase and the percentage is as under:

	\$	%
• Ordinary Rate Residential	570	50.7
• Ordinary Rate Residential – Base Amount	34	25.4
• Domestic Waste Management	211	84.7
• Waterways Environmental Levy Residential (New charge from 2007)	25	N/A
• Waste Service Charge 20mm meter	75	81.5

• Sewerage Service Charge Residential	95	25.8
• Drainage Service Charge Residential (New charge from 2010)	90	N/A
• TOTAL ACCOUNT CHARGES	1,100	55.9

The foregoing figures indicate a total percentage increase of 55.9 over the last seven (7) years or an average of 8.0% per annum which would appear to be way above the maximum average "of around three (3) percent" allowed by government.

Would council please take particular note of the extraordinary increase in 2010 of 30.6% in total rates and 45.1% in relation to the ordinary rate – residential which resulted in a total increase of \$664 over the 2009 rate notice. Did council receive approval for this huge increase?

At the time, we queried this increase and were advised that the reason for the increase was due to the increase of our rateable value from \$426,000 to \$521,000, however in 2013 the rateable value has decreased from \$521,000 down to \$447,000 which resulted in a decrease of only 4.5% of our ordinary rate – residential and an overall decrease of .02% in the total amount of the rate notice. This decrease equates to just \$6 compared to an increase of \$664 in 2010 for comparable increase and decrease of the rateable value.

- Would council please advise regarding this obvious anomaly?
- Would council also please advise regarding waste serve charges which in 2011 increased by a massive 16.2% and again in 2012 by the same percentage as there has been no change to the service provided to us to justify these increases.

Since we moved into our home has been re-surfaced on one (1) occasion, with an unsatisfactory combination of bitumen and loose gravel only. Our section carries an above average amount of traffic as it leads to the reserve at the entrance to The western end of is an absolute disgrace.

That section of carries the Red Bus Service, however the road was designed to carry light residential traffic only. It does not have the road base to carry heavy traffic and the present condition of the road surface is the result of this misuse.

In general the condition of most roads in is very poor indeed.

In addition, no kerb and gutter is provided by council in Our property and the adjoining property at are the only two (2) properties in this section of with kerb and gutter and this was paid for by ourselves, with council approval, over 20 years ago.

In 2010 a Drainage Service Charge was introduced by council simply because our property is connected to council's water supply, however in reality no drainage is provided in our section of this street.

Over the past 20 years nothing much has improved in _____ generally, particularly in _____ but rates have risen dramatically in the last seven (7) and now council is proposing even steeper increases over the next seven (7) years.

Our current annual rates for 2013 are \$3,067 (excluding water) and as a comparison we have attached a list of some (40) Sydney suburbs and the annual council outgoings charged (excluding water) – please refer attachment (2) -. This information was obtained from the McGrath Real Estate Weekly Magazine published on 1st December, 2012 and is in relation to houses only – it does not include units, villas or townhouses and covers properties ranging up to \$3,000,000.

By comparison our existing council rates appear excessive so how can council justify further massive increases.

Council states that it cannot maintain its existing assets to a satisfactory level with its current level of income and that it is under pressure because population growth and expected additional growth in the years ahead.

Surely more population would equal more housing which in turn would equal more rates – so what's the problem?

With regard to councils request regarding the two (2) proposals put forward we would advise that neither option is acceptable to us and we look forward to the results of the review and / or audit of council's finances by the N.S.W. Treasury Corporation when and if this becomes available.

In conclusion we believe that the only realistic solution to council's current financial crises would be for an Administrator to be appointed and for council to operate under administration until such time as its financial situation is stabilised to the extent that council can resume to operate independently and provide an efficient level of service to its rate payers.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely.

GEORGE MATHESON

MARGARET MATHESON

WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL RATES

TYPE OF RATE	YEAR ENDING 30 th JUNE							
	2006		2007		2008		2009	
	\$	% inc	\$	%inc	\$	%inc	\$	%inc
ORDINARY RATE – RESIDENTIAL	1124		1,100	(2.2)	1,137	3.4	1,173	3.2
ORDINARY RATE RESIDENTIAL – BASE AMOUNT	134		139	3.7	144	3.6	149	3.5
DOMESTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT	249		267	7.2	281	5.2	295	5.0
WATERWAYS ENVIRONMENTAL LEVY – RESIDENTIAL	N/A		25	Nil	25	Nil	25	Nil
WASTE SERVICE CHARGE 20 MM METER	92		107	16.3	111	3.7	112	.09
SEWERAGE SERVICE CHARGE – RESIDENTIAL	368		380	3.3	398	4.7	413	3.8
DRAINAGE SERVICE CHARGE - RESIDENTIAL	N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A	
<u>ACCOUNT TOTAL</u>	<u>1,967</u>		<u>2,018</u>	<u>2.6</u>	<u>2,096</u>	<u>3.9</u>	<u>2,167</u>	<u>3.4</u>
RATEABLE VALUE	\$277,000		\$426,000		\$426,000		\$426,000	

WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL RATES

TYPE OF RATE	YEAR ENDING 30 th JUNE							
	2010		2011		2012		2013	
	\$	% inc	\$	%inc	\$	%inc	\$	%inc
ORDINARY RATE – RESIDENTIAL	1,702	45.1	1,754	3.1	1,774	1.1	1,694	(4.5)
ORDINARY RATE RESIDENTIAL – BASE AMOUNT	154	3.4	158	2.6	162	2.5	168	3.7
DOMESTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT	321	8.8	358	8.4	417	19.8	460	10.3
WATERWAYS ENVIROMENTAL LEVY – RESIDENTAL	25	Nil	25	Nil	25	Nil	25	Nil
WASTE SERVICE CHARGE 20 MM METER	117	4.5	136	16.2	158	16.2	167	5.7
SEWERAGE SERVICE CHARGE – RESIDENTAL	429	3.9	437	1.9	450	3.0	463	2.9
DRAINAGE SERVICE CHARGE - RESIDENTAL	83		85	2.4	87	2.3	90	3.4
<u>ACCOUNT TOTAL</u>	<u>2,831</u>	<u>30.6</u>	<u>2,943</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>3,073</u>	<u>4.4</u>	<u>3,067</u>	<u>(0.02)</u>
RATEABLE VALUE	\$521,000		\$521,000		\$521,000		\$447,000	

WYONG SHIRE COUNCIL RATES

TYPE OF RATE	YEAR ENDING 30 th JUNE	
	TOTAL INCREASE FROM YEAR ENDING JUNE 2006 TO 2013	
	\$	%
ORDINARY RATE – RESIDENTIAL	570	50.7
ORDINARY RATE RESIDENTIAL – BASE AMOUNT	34	25.4
DOMESTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT	211	84.7
WATERWAYS ENVIROMENTAL LEVY – RESIDENTIAL	25	N/A
WASTE SERVICE CHARGE 20 MM METER	75	81.5
SEWERAGE SERVICE CHARGE – RESIDENTIAL	95	25.8
DRAINAGE SERVICE CHARGE - RESIDENTIAL	N/A	N/A
<u>ACCOUNT TOTAL</u>	<u>1,100</u>	<u>55.9</u>

IN THE SEVEN YEARS TO JUNE, 2013 OUR TOTAL RATES HAVE RISEN \$1,100 P.A. IN TOTAL AND 55.9% OR 8% P.A. ON AVERAGE.

COUNCIL OUTGOINGS OF SOME FORTY-THREE (43) SYDNEY SUBURBS.

<u>SUBURB</u>	<u>ANNUAL RATES</u>	<u>SUBURB</u>	<u>ANNUAL RATES</u>
ANNANDALE	1,320	GLADESVILLE	1,526
ARTARMON	1,382	GORDON	2,653
BARDWELL PARK	1,774	GRAYS POINT	1,488
BEECROFT	1,802	HUNTERS HILL	1,541
BEXLEY	1,127	HURSTVILLE GROVE	1,700
BOTANY	1,295	KOGARAH	1,462
CARINGBAH	1,931	LEICHHARDT	1,500
CARLTON	1,316	LILYFIELD	1,750
CARSS PARK	1,584	MARSFIELD	1,415
CASTLE COVE	1,320	MATRAVILLE	1,810
CHATSWOOD	1,418	NAREMBURN	1,403
CONNELLS POINT	1,700	NEUTRAL BAY	814
CREMORNE	2,304	OATLEY	1,315
CROWS NEST	819	PAGEWOOD	1,114
CROYDON PARK	1,390	RIVERVIEW	2,102
DENISTONE	1,288	ROZELLE	1,424
DULWICH HILL	1,624	RYDE	1,556
DUNDAS VALLEY	1,415	SANS SOUCI	1,883
EARLWOOD	876	SOUTH COOGEE	2,869
EASTWOOD	1,360	TAREN POINT	1,673
ENMORE	1,719	WILLOUGHBY	1,356
ERMINGTON	1,292		