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Submission: Despite running a public consultation process and the result being that the ratepayers did not support a special rate variation, Council has decided to apply for a variation of 7%. While ratepayer support for the variation is no doubt only one of the aspects considered by Council, I must make mention of the complete disregard of pursuing more efficient operation of Council as a way of avoiding the need to increase rates. When I suggested that Council had not included efficiency measures or working more productively as one of the options, the General Manager routinely dismissed my comments and said he could not work the Council staff any harder than they presently do. This comment reflects the disgraceful and totally unacceptable culture for which Local Government is renown. To work more productively or efficiently doesn't mean working longer or harder. It means working in a way that increases output or service delivery, finding solutions as opposed to putting up barriers, but it is a cultural issue that Wakool Council and many others have. As a taxpayer and ratepayer I want to see efficient use of the money I have no choice in contributing, to be coming back time after time with cap in hand has got to stop. Wakool is a small rural shire and I know many of the people who work at Council, they are good hard working people. I know Councillors who have attempted to change the culture of Council but it is so ingrained that perhaps only a period fiscal asphyxiation will have the desired affect, although as was conveyed during the public consultation "if we don't raise rates we will have to cut services". It is time for the Wakool Council to get serious about working smarter because the ratepayers can't afford more of the same.