

Sent: Wednesday, 11 March 2015 5:14 PM
To: IPART Mailbox
Subject: blue mountains city council rate increase

Good afternoon,

I am writing to voice my concerns regarding the plans the Blue Mountains City Council has for increasing rates by 10 per cent per annum for the next four years.

The Council claims that when they surveyed the community they received support for the increase, but to my knowledge only something like 445 people responded to the survey, hardly a large number considering the population of the local government area is over 70,000. I wouldn't be surprised, in fact, if most respondents to the survey were Council employees, though, of course, there is no way of knowing this.

This rate rise would result in a 46% increase in rates after four years, meaning that many people would struggle to pay their rates, and would no doubt lead to many people falling behind in rate payments and be subject to collections action and possibly lose their homes. I read an article in the Blue Mountains Gazette recently stating that Council are already wanting to take action to sell up to 40 residents' homes due to non payment of rates. Also, there are many people in the area on low incomes. This rise is way above the rate on inflation, and also comes at a time when wages are stagnating.

Another point I would like to make is that there is no guarantee that even if the Council is successful in securing such a hefty increase in rates that the money would be spent wisely. Council services in this area have never been considered to be great. For example, there is no footpath or kerb and gutter outside my house, not unusual for this council area. Many would argue that the Council has not had a very good track record at managing its expenditure in the past, so what will change?

I feel that it would be ludicrous if Blue Mountains ratepayers end up paying much more than ratepayers in urban council areas in Sydney who have much better amenities and services than us.

Kind regards,

Karen Gray

