

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Local Government Mailbox](mailto:ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au)
Subject: Submission Objecting to Port Stephens Council Rate Variation
Date: Thursday, 7 March 2019 5:06:55 PM

I request that this submission replace my submission of 5 March sent to ipart@ipart.nsw.gov.au rather than the above email address. This submission is slightly extended. Thank you Margaret Lamond OAM

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW

I am writing to the Tribunal to seek rejection of Port Stephens Council's (PSC) request for a rate increase well outside the cost of living. The rate sought is 7.5% each year for the next 7 years. This represents an increase of 65% in that time far beyond the cost of living index. I have mainly stated the case for older residents but I believe young families are battling with wage stagnation and both parents working to save for a mortgage and meet their household expenses.

As the wife of a self funded retiree who has chronic health problems which incur relatively high medical and pharmaceutical costs we do not have the luxury of supplementing our income to cover additional expenses. Also in the event of my husband's early demise my income will drop to 5/8 of our current superannuation income.

The committee will be well aware that interest rates are very low so that invested funds are not providing income that is equal to inflation.

As a female professional my opportunity to accrue any significant superannuation was limited. Circumstances caused me to move employment from NSW State, to private, to Commonwealth employers and time out for child rearing was not conducive for building a superannuation account. Also while a casual Commonwealth employee I was forced to pay into a designated superannuation fund, whose practices used up the larger portion of these contributions in charges!!

In addition, along with other septuagenarians in our Community I volunteer many hours each week in work for the Council and have done so since 1995. This work saves PSC thousands of dollars each year. I find it galling that the Council then demands additional funding in inflated rate increases. Better management and planning on the part of some staff could reduce costs and inefficiencies to achieve a better outcome for the Community. The PSC could not even get the date and address for submissions to ipart correct! Improved communication between various departments of the Council could result in savings.

A number of my friends and associates are widowed and some are on pensions. Their situation maybe more precarious than mine and it seems that PSC does not consider their situations. The Council may not have considered that more than 50% of older residents are female; and as statistics by the Commonwealth Statistician reveal most women receive lower wages than their male counterparts and have disruptions to their careers which mean lower amounts invested in superannuation for their retirement. Should already disadvantaged groups be further penalised by significant unnecessary rate increases?

Please consider rejecting these rate rises in the light of these and other community concerns.

Margaret Lamond OAM
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

7 March 2019