

From: Pete and Donna
To: [Local Government Mailbox](#)
Subject: Submission against Port Stephens SRV
Date: Friday, 8 March 2019 8:12:00 AM

Hi,

I have just attempted to lodge my submission on your website and it has responded with these two error messages

Error: Please specify the author type.

Error: Please specify the confidentiality.

Therefore, please find attached below the content of my submission, thanks.

I am writing in opposition to the Port Stephens Special Rate variation as it is not financially sustainable for the majority of the local population.

Australia has been deemed on a per capita basis to now be in a recession.

<https://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-06/gdp-q4-2018/10874592>

Since 2013, excluding inflation, Australian wages have dropped by 0.5% in real terms; we have less money to live off than we did 5 years ago, despite council rates being pegged with inflation. This is evidenced the number of wage cases being presented to the Fair Work Ombudsman that are asking for minimal (on average 3%) wage increases. This does not keep up with the real cost of living index.

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.news.com.au/finance/work/at-work/the-three-reasons-wages-in-australia-are-not-going-up/news-story/b891e324fe7511c372ccf505a37e8ce6>

A 7.5% rates increase annually for 7 years (leading to a 65% increase in rates over 7 years) would have a debilitating impact on many families who are already doing it tough. This is not financially sustainable for the ratepayers; a key consideration if approving the rates rise.

This is especially unfair considering residents are not having the same improvements to their salaries.

The SRV was put to a vote with the ratepayers of Port Stephens, and overwhelmingly the response from rate payers was that they could not afford this rate rise (over 70% of ratepayers).

The ratepayers, as key stakeholders, have made their wishes well known:

this rate rise cannot be afforded and will have a knock on effect for the local economy as families have to cut back on basic necessities to afford the rises.

The fair solution would be to listen to the rate payers of this community. We voted against a rate rise, and we request that rates rise no more than to keep them in line with inflation. They would still be doing better than the average rate payer salary.



Cheers,

Pete Symes
Port Stephens Ratepayer