

[REDACTED]

3 March 2021

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal  
2-24 Rawson Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

It was suggested by my local councillor that I should write to your Tribunal.

For some time, I have been complaining to the local council, Inner West Council, about the interest rate charged for overdue rates.

The truth is that being an aged pensioner, my wife and I applied in 2000 or so to the then Leichhardt Council for a rate relief for the above named property. We had been given the understanding that Leichhardt Council would waive property rates for aged pensioners (like it used to do) but somehow that in 1998 an interest rate was to be levied against ALL arrears payers whether aged pensioners or not. I don't know how an interest rate came about but rumour has it, that the Supreme Court of NSW triggered such an event and the rate was fixed by the Reserve Bank of Australia.

The rate then was 10%, then 9%, then 7½% and is now 7%. In view of commercial interest rates for term deposits hover around 0·3% or less and that the RBA has just kept rates at 0·1%, I consider that such interest rates for arrears on council rates now being charged to be outrageously excessive.

The Inner West Council have replied that they are powerless to grant compassion to aged pensioner which I consider to be a load of hogwash. Of course they can. Not only that, the quarterly council rates notices show the amounts as owing and treat aged pensioners such as myself at council rates defaulters. The council even sent a letter of demand for payment!

I am nearly 88 years of age and I recently lost my wife. We have been living at the above address for the past 50 years. We purchased the property for (then) £12,000 which, with some scrimping and saving, we eventually paid off the mortgage.

It was said that the eventual sale of the property would permit repayment in the future but I would rather the proceeds go to our children instead as they are also doing it tough during these times.

I appeal to the Tribunal to give council rates relief to aged pensioners. The waiving of council rates for aged pensioners altogether would be a great act of compassion.

Yours sincerely,  
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