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Submission: Newcastle Basketball operates a community facility seven days and nights a week for more than 2500 members, almost half of which are junior players under the age of 18. As a not-for-profit organisation we pride ourselves on offering the community a fun, safe and friendly environment, but we are also very conscious of cost. Many juniors play junior club and representative basketball and the costs can be a bit overwhelming for the parents. Newcastle Basketball keeps costs to a minimum as reflected in our modest operating surplus of about \$50,000 each year that is directed into capital works projects the following year. Our facility is almost 50 years old and the budget for repairs and maintenance takes up the majority of any surplus gained the previous year. It is for these reasons that Newcastle Basketball simply cannot afford to pass on even more costs to the community in the form of increased council rates being proposed by Newcastle City Council. The rate hikes are outrageous and should not be considered now, or any time in the future. Thanks.