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Submission: Newcastle Council have applied for an 8% rate rise in our area. I would like to submit my strong objection to this rate rise. Small business in Newcastle is already in a downturn with numerous businesses going into receivership, bankruptcy or closing due to unsustainability with our customers not having funds for non essential items. Youth unemployment in the Newcastle area is (real rate) at approx 18% and further job losses on the increase. I believe that if Council are successful with their increase this will place a further strain on all businesses within Newcastle, further depress our market and lead to greater numbers of job losses. Our own business employs 25 people and we work on a very small profit margin which if the rate increase goes ahead will reduce to a figure that is very close to non viable resulting in either an increase our prices or we will have to lose staff. Increasing our prices in a market that is already in crisis will only further diminish our customer base and still result in job losses within our business. Community consultation within Newcastle indicated agreement to a rate increase of approx 6% per year which has been blatantly ignored by our Council. Regards Jennie Lyons