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Submission: Gosford Council proposed a storm water charge

The council proposes a storm water charge that bears little or no relation to the cost of them providing storm water management services.

In particular they propose to levy a charge on all land including that outside of urban areas based on land area rather than costs of provision of services.

This would result in a charge to farms over 5 hectares a total of \$5,427.81 a year ( up from \$124.64) whilst providing little or no storm water services and is completely unjustifiable.

It is not acceptable simply to levy the charge on farmers and then say that a separate assessment can be applied for. Furthermore the local government guidelines are that storm water charges should only be levied on developed properties within urban areas specifically a city, town or village and where actual services are supplied to the property in question. They should also not exceed the actual cost of dealing with the storm water from that particular property. As a general rule it is in farmers own interest to minimize storm water damage and catch run off from the land so that it would be less than from unmanaged bush land. In the country a significant amount of the storm water is from the councils own roads which are impervious. In many cases this runoff is left for the farmers to deal with with no compensation from the council.

The guidelines say that the charges should only be for providing additional services to eligible parcels of land, and where these do not exist no charges should be applied.

The idea that all property should be taxed based simply on the area that rain falls on and without any additional provision of services is not just.

That the Central Coast Council should propose such an unjust method of raising funds is outrageous and they should be asked to come up with a fairer more equitable solution and one that certainly does not result close to a 'fee for no service' outcome. ( like the onsite sewage disposal fee)