

Nev HILLENBERG

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7th September, 2016

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

I refer to the article which appeared in the Coffs Harbour Advocate on 24th August, 2016, which relates to *"seeking feedback on potential changes to the local Government rating system, which aim to provide councils with more options to levy rates, while ensuring ratepayers would be protected against excessive rate increases."* The article went on to say *".....recommendations are designed to improve the equity and efficiency in the way rates are raised."*

I am an owner in a block of 36 individual units, known as "Platinum" with address shown above. This letter is not intended as a complaint, but rather to highlight inequity which I believe relates to multiple occupancy units.

WATER:

You will notice from the attachment, that water costs payable by Individual Owners **and** the Owners' Corporation amount to not less than \$45,702 per annum. We pay \$143pa x 36 units (\$5,148) for WATER ACCESS, In addition to Owners' Corporation WATER ACCESS of \$288 per annum. Similarly, for Sewer Access AT A COST OF \$29,016. Whilst it is recognised that these charges must apply, surely there must be some form of lesser charging, FOR THIS ONE PARCEL OF LAND, AT THE SAME ADDRESS.

Domestic Waste Charge

Individual owners pay \$636 x 36 units (\$22,896) waste collection services. This too; means that Owners are contributing more to local government services, than that which applies to a suburban household.

In addition to the \$68,598 described above, collected by Council, Owners pay the "normal" Special Rate – Environmental Base Levy, the Ordinary Rate – Residential Base, at an approximate cost about \$26,243. Total cost for Council services \$94,841 FOR THE SAME PARCEL OF LAND, AT THE SAME ADDRESS.

The Executive Committee have recently resolved an issue with Coffs Harbour City Council, where there was serious overcharging of services for water. After a period of ten weeks of negotiations with Council, it was discovered that Platinum had in fact been charged twice for water useage - once through the two inlet meters to Common Property, and again for separately metered units. This resulted in a refund of over \$6,000 to the Owners Corporation. I am very surprised that this matter was not identified by the Council Auditors, since it had been going on for 3 years. The disturbing issue about this is; that Council believe this may be happening around the State, because of inadequate computer programmes, which are poorly equipped to render Invoice detail for water useage.

Yours faithfully,

[REDACTED]
Nev Hillenberg [REDACTED]

COUNCIL CHARGES FOR THE		
PROPERTY KNOWN AS "PLATINUM" 101 Ocean Pde		
Coffs Harbour - Strata Plan 86869		
(36 Units contained in the property)		
Water - Individual Units Owners		
Water access charge \$143pa x 36 Units	\$5,148	
Storm Water Management 36 x \$12.50	\$450	
Sewer Access per unit \$806 x 36	\$29,016	
PLUS ESTIMATED USEAGE FOR INDIVIDUAL		
Units 36 x \$150pa	\$5,400	
Water - Owners' Corporation pays:		
Water Access charge	\$288	
Common Property water ESTIMATED 36x\$150	\$5,400	
TOTAL		<u>\$45,702</u>
Domestic waste charge - Individual Unit Owners		
36 Units x \$636		<u>\$22,896</u>
TOTAL WATER AND DOMESTIC WASTE CHARGES		<u>\$68,598</u>
Save as: rateswater		