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Submission:

Sir/Madam,

I am a ratepayer in the Gosford area. I am also an aged pensioner. How in the hell are we expected to absorb a 53% increase in water charges over the next four years?

It's so very hard as it is now. The electricity costs have forced us to live like cave dwellers. We dare not use heaters in the winter. Airconditioning is no longer an option in summer. And so many of us are now forced to come to a weekly or fortnightly repayment arrangement with our energy suppliers. The same will happen with the water charge increases. I've had to let my lawns die off. I just cannot afford to pay for the water to keep them alive. My wife and I take very short showers, and we wash our clothing twice a week. It's like being a prisoner in your own home.

Mark my words, if these increases are approved (for the benefit of many generations to come, not just the present population), the council will be left with huge unpaid and irrecoverable debts, as us older people pass away. The Gosford area is home to a very high proportion of aged pensioners.

Can you explain to me why the water charge increases are proposed for a four year period only? Why not 10 or 20 years? The council isn't that strapped for cash !!!!

And my final comment is this. Will these price increases be passed on to the multinationals, like Coca Cola, which are stealing good, pure water from our aquifers, at prices we can only dream about? I bet not. There'll be clauses in the contracts to avoid such penalties.

I am so very disappointed.

R H Whitting