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Submission:

I would like to briefly express Council's concern in relation to the BoCs proposed concept that, for land areas under 2 hectares, councils collect a NRM / environmental rate on behalf of LLSs.

Many councils, including Woollahra, already have in place an environmental levy that sees ratepayers paying for a range of relevant local environmental and sustainability programs. The impost of the suggested NRM / environmental rate on behalf of the LLS would undoubtedly be seen by ratepayers as simply an additional charge imposed on them by the council. There is a potential lack of transparency in this regard.

It is Council's strong view that it is not local government's role to be the collector of funds on behalf of other levels of government, government entities or other organisations and bodies.

Further, such a concept would also appear to be inconsistent with the view expressed in the Tribunal's draft report that impactors, risk creators and beneficiaries should pay the cost of LLS activities.

In relation to the collections of such a rate, Council supports, in principle, the submissions made by Local Government NSW, particularly in relation to any automatism of councils collecting "some special purpose rates". Collection services should only be undertaken by councils if they agree to it.