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Submission: Dear Ipart, I write as a member of the Bellingen Shire Residents and Ratepayers Association - Local Democracy Matters, in objection to the Bellingen Council's proposed Special Variation Application for rate increases. Our Council previously increased rates without the consent of the residents and ratepayers and continues to make policy decisions against the interests of the majority. Many residents and ratepayers in our shire struggle to meet the costs of living being pensioners and unemployed (we have one of the highest unemployed rates in NSW on the mid-north coast) without additional rates. Furthermore our council is laden with administrative staff which continues to grow in spite of being approximately 50% higher in number compared to our neighbouring councils. What is urgently required in an Administrator while a forensic audit is conducted to reduce staff numbers before new elections. Regards, Julian McKinlay King, Urunga