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Submission: Regarding the proposed rate hike of nearly 50% over four years, I have spoken with many people in the Southern Highlands, not one of whom agreed with this astronomical rise. The first point is that clearly your "community consultation" process is an absolute farce. Secondly, you are putting the less wealthy ratepayers under such stress, that they will have to look for second jobs, and cut down on essential living expenses to meet this unreasonable demand. Offering low interest rates etc. is of no use as it just puts people more in debt. I would like a transparent and public declaration of how much of a wage rise that councillors and the general manager are going to buffer themselves with over the next four years. Many of us feel that this should be taken to a higher authority, as the wellbeing of Wingecarribee ratepayers are being sacrificed on the altar of Council's bad business decisions, and lost court cases. To this end we will be sending a petition to the Minister requesting that this special variation be refused. You will no doubt recall that last time the 10% special rate variance was put to the ratepayers, there were many promises made - very few of which were delivered. A list of these will be included in our submission to the Minister.