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Date of submission: Sunday, 5 March 2017

Submission: As a retired person, I find that costs are always going up for me, but my income is reducing as interest rates go down. I am against the additional rates increase that Byron Shire wants to impose beyond the minimum suggested by IPART. We were told we had to have a massive increase or else our shire would be amalgamated. Now that the new premier is in office, amalgamation for us is no longer an issue. Our council canvassed rate payers, and the large majority were against the additional rise, but Council ignored those findings and applied for the 7.5% increase anyway. Late last year, Council established a pay-for-parking scheme in Byron Bay and told us this would bring in many millions, making excessive rate rises unnecessary. Soon after, they hit us with this additional increase, claiming that the shire would deteriorate badly if we didn't cough up a lot more money. They've now extended pay-for-parking to other shire towns to increase revenue. It's clear they don't know what they're doing. Until they've done a proper review of all the options, we should not be subjected to this massive increase. Byron Shire is a major holiday/tourist destination (over 1.5 million tourists per year), yet there are less than 15,000 rate payers in the shire. 30% of our rates go to support tourist infrastructure, so we rate payers are supporting the tourists, not the other way around, as it should be. Also, the businesses in the shire pay a great deal less than businesses in other shires, such as Lismore, although they benefit enormously from tourists. Our shire has many retirees and young working families who are on low incomes and will be badly affected by this rise. This massive increase should not be allowed. Keep it at the minimum decided by IPART.