

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 8 March 2014 7:09 PM
To: Local Government Mailbox
Subject: OBJECTION: TENTERFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL RATE INCREASES

Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW
PO Box Q290
QVB Post Office NSW 1230
localgovernment@ipart.nsw.gov.au

Letter of Protest

RE: Tenterfield Shire Special Rates Variation

To the *State of New South Wales Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal*—
NOTICE IS GIVEN THAT ..

1. We, the undersigned, do hereby register our formal protest against the *Special Rates Variation applied for by the so-called Tenterfield Shire Council*; and
2. As member of the Tenterfield Shire body politic, I hereby withdraw any consent I may have previously given to be governed under the so-called *Tenterfield Shire Council* until such time as this body is able and willing to represent my interests; and
3. I demand that a formal investigation be conducted into the grievous misuse of Rate Payer's funds by the so-called *Tenterfield Shire Council*—115 employees being paid \$5.8 million in salaries and benefits out of a rates collection of \$5.3 million/year; and
4. I give my considered opinion that the so-called *Tenterfield Shire Council's* current Rates Income is more than sufficient to meet its obligations under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW); and
5. I give my considered opinion that the people of Tenterfield Shire *do not want* and *cannot afford* this *Special Rates Variation* nor indeed any increase in council rates above the basic rate of inflation.

Sincerely,
NAME: Mr. Murray N. Larsen & Mrs. D.J. Larsen

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SIGN/DATE: SATURDAY, 8th MARCH 2014

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

1. Our land values, over the whole Shire, have fallen \$193mil over 3 years, the most in the entire State of NSW. This equates to an average value loss of almost \$50,000 for every ratepayer in the Shire. Our rates should not be increased.

2. ANY increase in rates will add Financial duress not only to ourselves as Pensioners, but to anybody on low incomes, as these incomes are NOT keeping up with the rate of inflation nor the 'normal' cost of living.

Personally, as Pensioners with ONLY the basic Pension rate as a 'Married Couple', we have experienced a rate increase last year, which added an extra \$30 per month to our monthly rate p'ments to Council.

FOR EXAMPLE: This equated to the same amount that we would have allocated in our own budget for our MONTHLY milk & bread costs. We now have to cut down on something else essential to cover that cost.

With ongoing increases in just about everything, we just do not have any resources left on which to 'cut down' .. we have had to reduce FORTNIGHTLY grocery costs (for 2 adults only, which also covered our costs for essential Medications, averaging \$35-40 each fortnight) from \$400.00 to \$300.00, to cover increases in Electricity, Water, Petrol, Medications, Phone charges, essential car costs for maintenance, Specialists costs & travel, etc .. BEFORE WE EVEN CONSIDER BUYING GROCERIES!

As you can see as a 'ball park' scenario, we 'live' on an average (after Rates, Essential Services, Mortgage etc have all been paid for first) of \$75.00 EACH PER WEEK! We are neither Smokers, Drinkers or Gamblers, nor do we 'go out'. We do have a car, as there are NO buses nor Public Transport in our whole area & taxis are not affordable. We do have a small Mortgage, but luckily it is lower than paying modest local rent charges monthly.

This scenario, we know, is shared with little difference, amongst other Pensioners & friends we have on low incomes, whether they are 'home owners' or 'renters'. Nobody we know, knows how they are going to cope either with their rates increased or their Rents increased, should Council raise the Rate Charges.

3. We have already seen the effects of this 'projected' rate increase in some local housing/rent situations:

a) Either Tenants are already being charged higher rents (before any Rate increase is clear) which leaves them with choices to pay higher rents or move, which is extremely difficult as housing is already in short supply.

b) Housing that was available for rent is being sold, as rental property owners are considering the ongoing effects to them & costs on their properties. eg. Higher rates = higher rents = difficulty in renting = expenses without income = houses for sale with no tenants = continued decrease in property & value to the Community over-all.

Tenterfield is already one of the States lowest 'Socio Economic' Shire Council areas .. a Rate Increase will only exacerbate this further.

Council has also avoided giving answers to questions from the Council politic pertaining to increases in OTHER charges that we see on our Rates Notices, even though some are already seeing increases in Service Charge areas. eg. garbage collection, tip charge increases, water, sewerage etc.

Although these Service Charges are not directly associated with Basic Rate Increases, they are areas of EXTREME financial worry to all Rate Payers, as just another area to which more money will have to be directed at the cost of hardship in another.

**Yours Sincerely,
Murray N. & Dianne J. Larsen**

