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Submission: Average rates in Tanilba Bay and Lemon Tree are close to \$1000 according to the Port Stephens Council website. So if you think it's worth at least trying to stop getting slugged an ***extra \$600 or so dollars every year*** then put in a submission to iPart against the rate rise. Here is the link to do it. <https://www.ipart.nsw.gov.au/Home/Industries/Local-Government/Council-Portal/Submission-Form>

Here is what I put forward. Feel free to use any or all of it.

I object to the rate rise on the following grounds:

*** Affordability. We live in a low income area. Many residents will not be able to afford the rise. They came here because of the lower rates and lower cost of housing. To suggest that rate relief will help such residents is not a solution. Rate rises feed into rent rises and increase costs across the board for those that can least afford it.

*** Lack of Consultation. Almost all meetings were started and held during normal working hours. One cannot claim to have consulted the community when people who work would have little chance to attend. (see SRV Meeting download)

*** Lack of experience and expertise before asking for 66% rate rise. 50% of the Councillors are newly elected. Councillors job is to prioritise and manage community needs within the budget allocated. Spend time operating within budget before asking for \$50 million dollars extra.

*** No-one on council campaigned for a rate rise in the last election. The councilors specifically rallied against the proposed merger with Newcastle council on the grounds of a feared rate rise post merger.

*** Undemocratic. Three councillors are against the rise, voting that they are abiding by their constituents wishes. The others are ignoring the almost 70% vote against the rate rise in the submissions.

*** Unsubstantiated claims for the rate rise. Councillors for the rise stated in public that they had consulted widely with community groups in the area.