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ATTN: Rate increase submission

Dear Council members,

I would like to voice my concerns, in regard to the increases in domestic dwelling "Rates charges" in Canterbury,
It is a fine thing that the councilors endeavour to look after our fine city, this is to be commended. However the cost to the rate payers needs to be addressed, especially where people are on fixed incomes. The elderly, beneficiaries, and the like who have had to face increases in other areas, such as electricity, petrol, etc, yet have had little or no increase in pensions. It is observed that government MP's, Councilors and many professionals get substantial increases in salaries on a yearly basis but that is not the case for most. Some can afford to pay more, others can't.

There is a desire on the council's part to increase rates by 8-10%, meaning in my case, around \$100.00 a year.

The council does not consider a persons ability to pay, only its own need of more finance. To me this is social discrimination against a segment of society who can least afford it and are vulnerable, who are dictated to by those who have, and who receive increases themselves. To a person working, \$100.00 may seem insignificant but too many fixed income people such as me it's a lot, it means going without in other areas.

When I see where some of these increases of rates are spent, I can't help but think that it is wasted. Street cosmetics, where roads and footpath are tiled, making streets narrower and I think more dangerous, this is but one example where rates are wasted in my opinion. The council needs to look at where Cantabrians consider the council is wasting rate resources and listen. There are core things all of us require and I'm not speaking about these, rather I'm speaking of areas where given the choice most of us can do without.

The council holds a power that most other business does not hold and that is the power of "monopoly" on rates. Average people don't have a choice whether they will shop with you or not. Because of this, you have a responsibility to really listen to what all rate payers are saying and not just to pass them over and dismiss them, and cater for a certain well off segment. You are all appointees of the community ultimately, and many of your community are not well to do and struggle financially. I don't think you have really considered them at all. I say that because you know that average people have not had a 5-10% increase in their incomes in the last year, it has only been a certain segment in society.

Another concern is that the council appears to be backing an inflationary policy. It has become very difficult for young people to buy their own homes and live in them. I believe the council should have a policy of financial weight reduction so as to help families rather than hindering them and making life more difficult.

If you want to cosmetically improve things why not first put it to the people of Canterbury in an email poll and take it across various section of the society, see if they want it as a community rather than a few councilors and those who can afford it. Many older people have email access through their children, or directly. This is a cost effective way of polling in our day. Just give the people a council number. If the majority wants it then you have the peoples backing and not their protest.

Sometimes I think that councilors justify their positions on the council by "being seen to be ^{doing} something" rather than examining how their actions will affect the whole community. If your policy is one of making the disaffected suffer more, especially if they are people who have disciplined their lives to pay off mortgages on properties and then find themselves in their old age oppressed by increasing rates then you are inviting real trouble. The community needs to be consulted on rates increases.

Thank you

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