



Organisation Sunshine Coast Association of Residents
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MEDIA STATEMENT: 8/8/10

THE REAL INCREASE IN RATES AND CHARGES: CAN WE AFFORD TO LIVE ON THE SUNSHINE COAST?

OSCAR has been inundated with emails and phone calls since residents and community associations have received their rates bills. Unfortunately, Council have received few if any complaints from ratepayers and staff have expressed the view that people are satisfied with the level of rises that have been implemented. OSCAR challenges this premise and wonders how in touch the Council are with their community.

Even a cursory examination of the data we have from our members indicates the following:

- the general rate has increased by 26% in three years (a compound rate of 8.46%)
- the waste charge has increased by 37% (a compound rate of 11.06%).

This is a significant increase and belies the figures touted by the Mayor when selling the budget. The “smokes and mirrors” approach of reducing the discount for early payment by 5% lulled ratepayers into believing they were only paying a modest rate increase, when the reality is very different.

If the Council continues to increase rates and charges into the future at the same level then the general rate will double in 8.5 years and the waste charge in 6.6 years. These increases are many times the CPI or even the LGAQ CPI.

This is unsustainable not only for householders but for small businesses and for small not for profit groups who own facilities and land in the region. OSCAR fears that many will not be able to continue to live or work here.

The debacle in the application of new water charges as illustrated in today’s headlines in the Sunshine Coast Daily add to the angst that people are experiencing. Even if there had been no errors in the bills sent out, Unity Water’s rates show that our water is far more expensive than previously, and we can expect to see astronomical rises over the coming years as our water becomes more and more expensive.

We urge all residents to let Council know how they feel about the rates increase and check their water bill carefully before paying this to Unity Water.

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