

The Commissioner  
Essential Services Commission  
Level 2  
35 Spring Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Commissioner,

As a resident of Patterson Lakes I am astounded at the proposed seismic shift in our precept rates. When I invested in my home a few years ago, there was no indication that such a fundamental shift in policy was in train.

It seems to me that the principles of the Commonwealth, user pays and equity have been totally lost in this process. The benefits of costs expended on flood control extend to a much wider community than those who are proposed to participate in the new precept rate. How is this an example of user pays or equity or even Commonwealth?

Similarly a much broader community benefits from the fact that Patterson Lakes' infrastructure can handle drainage from a wide area. Is it our fault that we live at a lower level above sea level than others and does this mean we need to pay more for this indiscretion?

The other issue is that the entire precinct for which residents are expected to pay are in fact fully accessible to the public. Not only are there about 50,000 launches of trailer boats per annum from the nearby Launching Way facility (reputed to be the highest traffic facility in Australia) but there are also many boats that access the system through the Marinas and from elsewhere in Port Phillip Bay as well. These users of the infrastructure are not being asked to contribute the cost under the proposed rate arrangements.

There are thousands of users of the Patterson Lakes system who are not residents there and are not being asked to participate in this new higher precept rate. How is this compatible with the concept of the Commonwealth where commons are owned and paid for by the broader community?

The sheer number of cruising boats that access the Patterson Lakes waterways each good weather evening in December to see the Christmas lights has to be seen to be believed. Add to this the fishermen, canoeists and those just cruising the waterways and you have probably tens of thousands of users each year who access a system where maintenance costs are to be paid for only by the landowners.

This proposed change to the precept rate fails the test of being equitable. It also does not reflect the concept of user pays. The proposed change also violates the basic principle of the Commonwealth so I fail to see how or why it is on the table at all.

regards

Franz Grasser