

Lindsay Leake

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Andrew Chow
Director
Essential services Commission
Andrew.chow@esc.vic.gov.au

Dear Sir,

Reference; Local Government Rates Capping and Variation.

I have recently sold my house in Corio and bought another house in Mildura.

I have been extremely surprised at the differences in the rates for the two houses, my rates for Corio ex fire levies and pensioner rebates was (2014-\$875.40) and Mildura (2015-\$1524.50) a difference of \$649.10 which is an increase of 74%.

The house at Corio I sold for \$213,000 and I bought the house in Mildura for \$140,000, site value Corio \$143,000 Mildura \$66,000.

The house in Corio was a brick veneer 3 bedroom 1970's house, the house in Mildura is a 1950' conite (cement rendered over weather boards) two bedroom house, there are similar facilities available such as schools, shopping etc. But I would consider Corio's better. Corio has a green waste service Mildura does not.

I find the difference in rates difficult to understand, while you do not expect each council to have identical circumstances and therefore identical rates; the difference I believe indicates that there may be substantial inefficiencies in the operation of Mildura Rural City Council.

While I support the Governments call for a cap on rate increases I believe that there also needs to be a mechanism for each council to be easily bench marked by ratepayers against other councils.

I therefore believe that all council income and expenditure and balance sheets should be available on the internet on a commonly used spread sheet such as "Excel".

It would be a simple matter of the government setting up a site where ALL Victorian Council's financial reports are available to ratepayers so that they can compare their council with any other council in the state at their leisure.

It would be necessary that all reports be on a common format which should not be difficult in fact it would be very simple.

In normal commercial transactions you usually have the option of obtaining competitive quotes and are able to choose the quote that suits your circumstances, with councils you do not have this luxury, therefore having the ability to compare in detail your councils performance with other councils introduces a discipline to the administration of all councils.

Anyone can look good if they operate on a cost plus basis, while the proposal to cap council rates introduces some discipline I believe my suggestion would introduce a stronger discipline at a much lower cost to all concerned.

Yours sincerely
Lindsay Leake