

From: Paul [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 7 March 2018 2:03 PM
To: Legislation
Subject: Submission local Government review

My name is Paul Mulcahy and address is [REDACTED]

I would like to add a submission to the Local Government review.

We were impacted by the ineptitude of the City of Swan rate review that took place last year. We received a document requiring us to fill in a form that required detailed information on the use of our property and our income source and in effect prove that we were making a living from our property. The form was to be returned within 14 days or we would be subjected to review of our rates to make us residential. we live on 125 acres in Gidgegannup and have a horse stud and I am retired due to ill health.

A large number of residents such as ourselves protested against this action and were treated with disdain by the City of Swan. They were invited to a meeting by the Gidgegannup Progress Association and 3 members of staff were present. To say they were totally dismissal of our concerns is an understatement. Numerous issues were presented by the local ratepayers at this meeting and we were treated basically as idiots and lectured about how we just dont understand how the provision of services has nothing to do with the application of rates. We moved here in 1998 and there is a lack of amenities and and services that the majority of people within the City of Swan would not tolerate. We accept that in a Rural area that we will not have the same level of services due to geography , remoteness etc. Whilst we accept that, it is totally unacceptable to then try and rate us as residential. We have no footpaths , lighting, parks, transport and many other services that the general public assume as basics. To point out the misinformation the City has been providing I quote a letter received by a ratepayer recently. " Our differential rates take into account the provision of services provided to differential types of properties , to reflect the cost of provision of services to those categories of properties ". This is a complete contradiction to what we were lectured about at the above meeting.

We are zoned rural and this is a rural area to say we will be zoned residential for ratings purposes is ludicrous. half of our property is rugged terrain that cannot be used for anything and rightly so. We still have to provide fire breaks and services to all our property and we have been told the land here will never be able to be subdivided. This is a total money grab by the City of Swan (COS). If we are zoned rural we should be rated rural it is not a difficult concept. If the minister allows this carve up of rural areas to occur there will be few people who will be able to afford the type of lifestyle that rural areas provide and that would be a ridiculous situation.

I am extremely unhappy with the behavior of members of the COS and the CEO. The CEO was out rightly rude at 2 meetings we attended in December and they seem to be very dismissive of ratepayers concerns and have refused to have any further communication with at least 1 aggrieved local ratepayer who has a legitimate concern. It seems that they are not here to serve the interests of their ratepayers and surely that is a basic function of any local government.

There may need to be a new ratings category that reflects the changing nature of rural properties. It is extremely difficult for anyone to make a living off properties in the outer metro area nowadays and government needs to acknowledge this.

The council meeting in mid December accepted a motion put forward by an elected Councillor to have the rates review suspended whilst the local GOVERNMENT REVIEW TOOK PLACE. This is something we continually requested but the COS continued on there agenda which would seem an extraordinary waste of ratepayers money. They refused to return any of the documents people had returned before they finally agreed to shelve the review process and advised they would contact everyone affected within weeks.

They only wrote to us on 5 February 2018 to advise that the rate review had been deferred and many people would not have known that it had been deferred at the December council meeting and if they sent their forms in they would not have been returned as the COS claim that all correspondence id their property. They also refused to release their legal opinion on the definition of Rural as it was privileged information. Well we the ratepayers provided the funds for that legal opinion and to claim it as privileged is absolute nonsense and the State Government should be concerned about that type of behavior. That was overturned finally at council meeting when a motion was put forward by a Councillor and unanimously agreed upon.

I would call for the following.

1. Leave Rural zoning as rural for ratings purposes.
2. More equity in the provision of ratings and services on properties.
3. The minister needs to have more powers to reign in councils that are not treating ratepayers as their main concern.
4. A method of scrutiny of the outcomes of administration staff as it seems in many cases they are running their own agenda.
5. Definitely more professionalism shown by administration staff including CEO to ratepayers concerns.

Yours faithfully
Paul Mulcahy