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DIFFERENTIAL RATE for RETIREMENT VILLAGES in the Whitehorse City Council municipality.

(supporting submissions presented by Bedford Heights Estate and Fountain Court Retirement Villages' Committee members)

Presentation to a Special Committee of Council, Tuesday 10th June 2014

Differential rating – an alternative view as per Bedford Heights Estate, Box Hill.

Recognizing that

(i) the MAV member Bill Mc Arthur has said that the decision by Government to pass Section 161 of the Local Government Act 1989 was an *"assault on the autonomy of Councils to make decisions about equitable rates for their communities"*;

(ii) that it seems that the decision to use the Capital Improved Value rating system, means that 'properties with a higher improvement to land ratio' are now paying more than under the previous Council Site Valuing rating system;

(iii) that the recently released Ministerial Guidelines on Differential Rates by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Jeanette Powell MP, considers retirement villages worthy recipients of their own differential rate,

I present my submission on behalf of the BHE Residents' Committee and support the submission from the residents of the Fountain Court Retirement Village.

I support the recommendation of the Retirement Villages Act 1986 and Section 161 of the Local Government Act 1989.

*I quote from your own Budget document that *"Differential Rating can be an advantage giving Council, through the rating system, the scope to assist groups of rate payers"*.

*In another Council document it reads that *"the characteristics of the Land [that is to be developed] can be used as a criteria for declaring a differential rate"*.

I believe that the request for differential rating for Bedford Heights Estate residents come under these categories.

*Further: Residents at BHE have purchased a LIFETIME or OCCUPANCY lease; to quote my contract, *"title is to the whole of the land which will remain in the name of the Owner"*. It is the Owners' responsibility for ownership regulations and administration of BHE including all external maintenance of common property and services within BHE. For example, this financial year Residents' external maintenance expenses including paths, lighting & roads, were \$20,300.00 (rounded); (as residents we pay a fortnightly fee, adjusted to the CPI, to cover these services). An important fact is that the Land now known as BHE, containing 147 Units, was built on church property where previously

NO RATES were collected. It can be assumed that with any other private developer, the Council would have been responsible for the maintenance and costs of roads, paths drains and lighting.

Not only is there a LIFETIME Lease, I have bought a LIFESTYLE not a property for investment.

Despite the recommendation from the draft rating strategy that Council not introduce a differential. there are other aspects that I believe Council members need to consider - the demographic of the residents,

- (i) In at least ½ of the 147 units at BHE are women living on their own; women who, if in employment, invariably had to resign when they married; had a lower salary than men and possibly little or no superannuation until relatively recently.
- (ii) It is commonly expressed, retirees or aged pensioners are seen as a burden on society despite the fact that they are the unpaid workers for local organizations and community events, not to mention the role they play as carers of grandchildren.

I support the Minister's consideration that retirement villages are worthy recipients of their own differential rate and respectfully request that you reconsider this matter.

Margaret Tonkin

On behalf of BHE Residents' Committee

10 June 2014