

# RESIDENTS AGAINST TOXIC WASTE IN THE SOUTH EAST

Inc. No. A0038288B

P.O. Box 180, Dingley 3172 Chairperson Thelma Wakelam 0414 998 337



## Concern re Rate capping

Residents Against Toxic Waste in the South East Inc (RATWISE) have concerns re the introduction of rate capping in line with CPI.

RATWISE is currently advocating for the development of an environment/sustainability centre in response to climate change. A facility within the municipality designed to help address the financial burden of utility costs, and assist emerging and vulnerable communities to live more sustainably. In the past RATWISE has primarily advocated regarding the Lyndhurst hazardous waste tip. City of Greater Dandenong is currently also seeking answers on the tips future.

City of Greater Dandenong and City of Casey relies on the increase in rates to be higher than CPI to fund new or noncore expenditure. RATWISE is not privy to know how councils may reduce spending in other areas to more strongly support or promote environmental change and needs within the community.

What is evident to RATWISE however is that rate capping (whether this should be the case or otherwise) will pressure councils to tighten their belt.

**RATWISE suggests government consider an alternate strategy of strengthening local government performance measurements, in particular financial accountability and value for money.**

Unfortunately councils generally have not made adequate provision for the impacts of climate change and other environmental issues on their residents.

City of Greater Dandenong is currently embarking on a new Environment sustainability Plan. Rate capping may reduce its implementation.

Rate capping will place councils in the position where they may cut funding or support to advocacy groups like RATWISE. Councils in the past have generally not prioritised environmental issues and now if rate capping goes ahead some new initiatives such as the sustainability festival (only in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year) will likely be cut. This year was the first year of the sustainability awards. The last in will be the first out. New initiatives such as an environment centre to benefit residents and an improved environment may not be addressed.

Under Section 3C of the Local Government Act, local Councils have a key role to promote the environmental sustainability of the community and RATWISE is concerned that the two Councils we deal with – the City of Greater Dandenong and City of Casey – will not be able to do this effectively and instead will focus on short term decision making and in the case of the

City of Greater Dandenong it could lead to underdevelopment of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1989 - SECT 3C**

### **C Objectives of a Council**

(1) The primary objective of a [Council](#) is to endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the [local community](#) having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions.

(2) In seeking to achieve its primary objective, a [Council](#) must have regard to the following facilitating objectives—

(a) to promote the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the [municipal district](#);

(b) to ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively and services are provided in accordance with the Best Value Principles to best meet the needs of the [local community](#);

(c) to improve the overall quality of life of people in the [local community](#);

(d) to promote appropriate business and employment opportunities;

(e) to ensure that services and facilities provided by the [Council](#) are accessible and equitable;

(f) to ensure the equitable imposition of rates and charges;

(g) to ensure transparency and accountability in [Council](#) decision making.

With the introduction of rate capping RATWISE believes city of Greater Dandenong will not be in a position to adequately address environmental issues and councils ability to assist a not for profit group like RATWISE are likely to be greatly reduced or removed altogether.

Thelma Wakelam  
on behalf of  
Residents Against Toxic Waste in the South East Inc

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