



TRIM (C/15/5535) Council Rates Capping - Submission No 1 from Adrian Jackson

Adrian Jackson to: localgovernment@esc.vic.gov.au

25/04/2015 09:03 PM

History: This message has been replied to.

State Government Council Rate Capping Review Committee,

It is about time the government introduced capping of council rate.

I am 62 and have live in Port Phillip since 1980, been a ratepayer since 1983 and a local small businessman since 1996.

Port Phillip City Council rates have gone through the roof since amalgamation in 1994 and appear far higher than to just cover a CPI increase.

Here is my council rate for a 1/8 acre block with a circa 1900 single storey double front (10m wide) house on it.

1996 - \$728

1997 - \$800

1998 - \$794

1999 - \$1395 (a huge rate increase after single issue St Kilda based councillor was elected to my ward. She was the President of the neurotic Save Albert Park group).

2000 - \$1419

2001 - \$1381

2002 - \$1414

2003 - \$1569

2004 - \$1907

2005 - \$2022

2006 - \$2133

2007 - \$2176

2008 - \$2860

2009 - \$2940

2010 - \$3092

2011 - \$3288

2012 - \$3368

2013 - \$4788 (I was overcharged the FSPL as my 2 room B&B was re-classed a business instead of a residence which it had been for the 18 years running my B&B. A refunded was returned to me after a complaint that the houses major function was a residence).

2014 - \$4068

2015 - TBA

After leaving a 23 year career in the Regular Army I started a small 2 room B&B from my house in 1996. The other 7 rooms are for my private use. 5 years after starting the B&B the government introduced a food permit fee and 15 years later a well being inspection with another fee. While accepting the food fee I challenged the well being fee saying the house already has a RACV 3 stars rating and why duplicate what the private sector does very well and besides the well being inspection is designed for boarding or rooming houses. The council agreed and refunded the last fee paid but not the earlier fees.

Before amalgamation 90% of resident in South Melbourne who voted in a plebiscite did not want to join up with St Kilda but were happy to unite with Port Melbourne. After amalgamation it was found St Kilda Council brought with them a \$10 million debt while South Melbourne and Port Melbourne Councils were debt free.

St Kilda Council also bought with them the Sea Baths bomb site left by the first developer Hannah Friedman from Caulfield who's \$7 million was not enough to complete the project. The Seabaths remained a bomb site for 10 years until a new developer finished the project.

Council has been involved in a number of worthless or cancelled projects which have cost ratepayers millions. The now defunct St Kilda Triangle site development cost ratepayers \$5 millions to pay out the developers and the Palais theatre is currently costing ratepayers \$1million a year to maintain scaffolding on a building that the state government actually owns and which was built on crown land.

Other wacky projects including fencing the sand dunes at Albert Park beach, closing Pier Rd, St Kilda to cars for a freeway wide footpath with 250 safe car parking spaces being lost and rebuilding St Kilda foreshore paths every 10 years.

20 years ago the forecourt in front of South Melbourne Town Hall was grassed over to make it a nice amenity. Now the council wants to waste millions to make another plaza and close roads to cars around the town hall in the delusional idea that people will want to go there and sit on benches. This will not happen as the space has little to offer.

Other rates waste is painting bike lanes close to parallel parked cars so that bike riders are more likely to be "doored" and bike symbols being painted on residential street (my street included) but why as they are both ugly and serve no useful purpose.

Blind people footpath guide markers are often made of plastic which does not last when square pavers with the same raised aids will last for 50 years.

Last year council proposed a tram bridge over the Yarra River at a cost of \$300 million. but not only will this not happen it would be in the Melbourne City Council area and is not a Port Phillip Council responsibility.

Money is wasted annually so artists can live their lifestyle at our expense. Gas Works Art Park gets \$500,000 PA and Linden Gallery gets \$300,000 PA as well as building maintenance costs. There private organization need to be self funding by charging for access or increase to ticket prices.

Port Phillip Housing Association gets \$500,000 PA to duplicate state public housing and this must stop.

Public event like the St Kilda Festival while well organized now cost \$2 million PA if you include the months of council staff costs. This Melbourne wide festival should sell tickets to be self funding.

After amalgamation Port Phillip was left with 5 libraries, 4 of which are in the north of the city. Instead of closing Middle Park (30 people attend daily in the 4 hours it is open) and perhaps Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) they are all still open which is overkill in the smallest municipality in Victoria (about 9 km long X 2 to 3 km wide).

Council must get back to and concentrate on providing core functions that affect all residents like rubbish collection, street cleaning, road, footpath and drain repairs and keeping the grass in the parks green.

All this additional cost as outlined above require staff to manage them and staff salaries and wages are the council main cost to we ratepayers. I would like to see a 30% reduction in staff numbers and given that 10% of staff leave annually this could be achieved in 3 or 4 years without mass sackings. Council staff are there to do a job not get a job.

We all know that politicians like to leave a legacy or monument to their time in council but not out my expense thank you.

Currently rates are based on property valuation (site value and capital improvement). Most residents use similar services but pay more if your house block is larger which is ridiculous. There should be a standard rate for all residential properties be they a house or a one bedroom flat. Any additional service would be user pay including book borrowing from libraries or computer use.

Pork barreling vested interest groups, like the bike lobby or Save Albert Park group, which are usually from the political left, must stop.

This is my No 1 submission and more will follow.

I am happy for this and subsequent submissions to be a public document and you don't need to black out my personal details either as we don't live in Stalinist USSR, Nazi Germany, Militarist USA or Fascist Israel.

Regards, Adrian Jackson. 404 Richardson St, Middle Park, Vic 3206. Tele: 9534 7615