Dear Keir Delaney,

I am responding to your letter dated 29th February 2016 on local government rate capping and perceived effects upon local Councils' ability to deliver services to communities by council CEO's and sitting Councillors.

Rate capping is overwhelmingly welcomed and well-der due by the ratepayers of Mount Alexander Shire and may I say by a vast majority of Victorians.

We have endured unprecedented outrageous rate rises over the past decade which has caused financial pressure and anguish to our (including my wife and I) most vulnerable within our communities who can least afford or able to pay these obscure charges imposed upon them by CEO's and staff whose wages grow continually while as pensions rise in line with the CPI.

Then you have inept Councillors whose backgrounds and work experience is limited to a lifetime of being a public service (no disrespect intended) who bring their political and personal agendas to the Council chambers and cloud judgements when it comes to making decisions.
that will either benefit or affect the harmony and growth of the communities they represent, as in the case of Mount Alexander Shire the current CEO Phil Rowland he alone has divided a once cohesive, harmonious Shire with his arrogance, dismissive attitude and undue pressure he has exerted upon the weak councillors to achieve his desired results.

In a time of State and Federal governments reducing funds to Councils in a belt-tightening exercise CEO’s and senior staff have shown no such fiscal restraint at all, it business as usual supported by green and leftwing labor elements within Council and rubber stamped by councillors who support them.

"CEOs have been given far too much power and latitude by the department of local government which they abuse and use to their own advantage, these ladder climbers powers must be reined in and made accountable for financial debacles, overruns on projects given its their recommendations and reports that councillors accept and rubber stamp that blowout which adds eventually to a burden upon residents and ratepayers."
Take Mount Alexander Shire’s CEO has pushed for a Mege pool complex to be built ever since he took charge. This is an unacceptable financial burden upon the ratepayer. This pool will be replaced this year but the financial damage will be done. $500,000 - $600,000 annual running cost will add more financial pain to residents and ratepayer. The projected costs are 13.5 million and we all know any public works projects blowout by Millions.

The push for this pool goes on while two bridges in the shire need immediate replacing, given being a high fire risk area the closers of these bridges present an unacceptable risk to those who rely on these bridges to escape fires. I don’t know about you but vital infrastructure such as bridges come before 13.5 million pools. If due to lack of providing such bridges in time of fire or a medical emergency lives are lost who do these affected sue? Council, state government, or CEO for not attending to bridge replacement before the pleasure palace pool you tell me?

Yet another example of an ego trip by a CEO and staff and not to bright Councillors.
When it comes to electing Councillors, it should be legislated that they may only be able to sit two consecutive terms only, same applies to CEO’s as well thus reducing the aspect of cronism and corruption. The ability to sack CEO’s and senior staff for misconduct, bullying, etc. should be handed back to the Councillors thus hopefully will help to keep CEO’s and senior staff from stepping outside their guidelines or over stepping their positions and power these people lack respect for constituents councillors and other council workers who live in fear of losing their jobs.

Mount Alexander is a perfect example of a dictatorship, along with ratecapping CEOs powers must be curbed, accountability transparency imposed, the right of residents, ratepayers to question council employees at a council meeting must be also made law.

All issues before council must not be argued behind closed doors, but thrashed out in front of those who attend council meetings. This enables the ratepayers, residents and petitioners to hear the forces and against and reasons for or against from Councillors and Council staff which isn't afforded to residents of our Shire and the rights to speak at such meeting on the matter by the effected pettioner must be
allowed without fear of reprisal or retaliation by Councillors or Council staff for doing so.

This obnoxious code of conduct used to silence ratepayers, residents and Councillors who speak out on issues to which they feel strongly about by Council must be removed. It's undemocratic, immoral, creates disharmony and ill feeling within the community. Council's steady feet and readiness to impose this code of conduct when challenged or put under pressure smacks of a corrupt, flawed system one sided to protect CBO's and senior staff and incompetent councillors.

On closing I would like to point out I don't have or use a computer here for any relevant information pertaining to meeting or reports. I would hope your department would forward this to me via the mailing address.

Yours Respectfully

William H. Dwyer