Good morning,

As a rate payer in the Mitchellshire Council, I have been advised by the council that they would like to increase our rates to 4.5%. I am not happy about this decision and have opposed this by completing the online survey and nominating for a maximum 2.5% rate increase, which will carry a reduction in current council services. I am emailing this evening to voice my opinion that I strongly oppose a rate rise above the Victorian Government Rate Cap.

I would also like to express my disappointment with the Victorian Government in their lack of support to local councils through the removal of the country roads and bridges program.

I agree with the following Finding and Recommendation in the First Report into Rate Capping Policy: RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Victorian Government re-establish the country roads and bridges program which provided $1 million per year to each of the 40 rural councils that qualified.

The local council for Mitchell shire struggles to maintain basic facilities such as roads and footpaths, which is surprising, considering residents pay over $2,500 in rates per annum. Continuous rate rises to date have not provided improvements in roads, footpaths or services provided to the Southern Ward of Mitchellshire.

Please see emails below for an example of the lack of response to ongoing queries regarding the poor state of local roads.

I see that Municipality charges are ‘used to cover a Council’s administrative costs (‘administrative costs’ are not defined in the Act)’. I would be interested to know if there is a cap on annual increases in council ‘administrative costs’ (CPI or WPI)? Can you please advise what council administrative costs include?

As a rate payer, I would like to know if I have access to the record on levels of dept held by local government? RECOMMENDATION 3: That as part of its monitoring role under the proposed rate capping regime, the Essential Services Commission also monitor and report annually on levels of debt held by local government.

I believe it may be appropriate to review Mitchell shire council spending on essential services, such as roads and footpaths. Being in a rural area, I am concerned that the council accepts tender offers for road maintenance that do not meet acceptable standards.

Please accept this submission of OPPOSITION of the proposed Mitchell shire council rate rise ABOVE the Victorian Government rate cap, and SUPPORT of the First Report into Rate Capping Policy Recommendation 1 that the Victorian Government re-establish the country roads and bridges program to assist our council in providing essential services that are currently NOT provided adequately in Wallan.

Kind regards ..

Angela James
Rate Payer,
Previous emails to council regarding state of roads:

Good morning David,

I have noticed signage stating road works and delays along Valley Drive to William Street will occur from 15th March until 20th May. As a ratepayer, I would be interested to know which road works will require a timeframe of over two months for completion, and would like to know when these will commence. The only change to this area has been the installation of a port-a-loo and the presence of concrete drainpipes and equipment. There have been no works commenced on the roads or side of the road to date.

Could you please advise which upgrades are taking place in this location that have been given preference over the maintenance required at the Windham-Queen St intersection?

I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention that the road reconstruction and resealing did not occur last year as stated in the email below. I would like to know when the improvements to the Windham-Queen St intersection will occur under the 2015/2016 capital works program?

Kind regards

Angela James
Rate payer

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From: [redacted]
To: [redacted]
CC: [redacted]
Subject: RE: Council Services and Query re. residence occupation in the absence of occupation certificate. - INW15/10390
Date: Tue, 15 Sep 2015 01:01:13 +0000

Hi Angela,

I refer to your email dated 2 June 2015. The intersection of Windham and Queen Street, Wallan will be reconstructed and resealed later this year under the 2015/16 capital works program.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me.

Sorry about the delay in response to your query.

Regards,
Good evening,

I was wondering if you could advise if there are any planned roadworks for the intersection of Windham and Queen St? Will this section of road will be resealed? This area has recurrent potholes and has been patched up numerous times, creating an uneven surface.

It is good to see local taxpayer money has been used to widen and even out William Street. This is a fantastic improvement, which is greatly appreciated by those who drive and cycle on this road.

If you can advise who this issue can be directed to it would be greatly appreciated.

Kind regards

Angela James
Resident