Dear Committee,

Thank you for considering submissions.

Please don’t cap local council rates because it will limit local councils ability to respond to local needs.

Glen Eira Council, where I live prides itself on being a low rate Council claiming in its recent budget reports to collect revenue $15.2 million less each year than similar councils. I am concerned that this means Glen Eira locals get poorer services and infrastructure than similar communities. $15.2 per year is a lot of bike paths, pedestrian lights, new parks, library books and childcare places!

I am keen for Glen Eira Council to implement their Bicycle Strategy in its 5 year time frame and extend it to cater for children cycling to school with new paths and traffic lights. However the Council has allocated minimal budgets for the last few years that will fail miserably to achieve the bicycle strategy or extend it to cater for children’s needs.

If the State Government caps rates then a future more progressive Glen Eira council seeking to respond to resident needs will be unable to increase revenue to meet such needs, or even deliver an average level of services and infrastructure compared to similar local government areas. Locals would benefit if Glen Eira aspired to offer even an average level of revenue and services.

Any capping of Council rates should consider a situation like Glen Eira’s when they charge less than similar councils and deliver poorer facilities.

Can you please introduce a new process in local council budget setting where Councils more fully consider the needs of local communities and can’t claim it’s a good thinking to have less rate revenue and poorer services and facilities than similar councils? Glen Eira Council received less than 10 submissions to its budget this year and last year and more than half the submissions were calling for Glen Eira Council to provide sufficient funds to complete the bicycle strategy on time. However, these submissions were ignored with the Council emphasising its priority to have lower rates than similar councils. This seems a very odd competition when local communities miss out. It would be worsened if the State Government capped rates and praised councils with low rates and limited the ability of Councils to recover these revenue gaps in future.

Please consider my submission. I do not wish to appear at a public hearing.

Thanking you,

Catherine Mc Naughton