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From: Inquiry into the Retirement Housing Sector POV eSubmission Form
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To: LSIC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into the Retirement Housing Sector

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into the Retirement Housing Sector

Mrs Maureen Walsh
[REDACTED]

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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RATES STRATEGY WITHIN LOCAL COUNCIL - CITY OF GREATER GEELONG.

The rating strategy is of an unfair and money making exercise for most councils in Victoria. Many are based on one Residential rate rather than following Ministerial Guidelines which allow for a differential rate for Retirement Villages. Submissions to the COGG for the past three years have been rejected all with varying degrees of reasons, none of which have been valid or reasonable, but rather refer to the rates as property tax and not a charge for council services. Ministerial Guidelines refers "Councils may consider using differential rates to reflect that some property classes may have consistently received or already have access to, a significantly higher or lower level of Local Government Services". Retirement Village Land is also considered to be appropriate for Differential Rates and the Minister for Local Government considers that Retirement Villages are worthy recipients of their own Differential Rate. Of course this has all been worthless as there is no legislation to enforce these guidelines and councils choose to use this as their main argument for rejecting submissions. No cost to Council services include Street lighting, Road & Footpath Construction and Maintenance, Drainage, Parking Areas & Fire Fighting Services to name a few. These are provided by retirement village management and residents pay a maintenance levy for the upkeep of these services in accordance with the appropriate Residential and Government Legislation. Council also alludes that as there are Pension Discounts applied to Rates we should not be requiring a lower rate. This discount is a Government initiative, not all residents are eligible and this is a misinformed excuse to not consider a Retirement Village Differential Rate. Council further believes that the Valuations are the problem not the rate in the dollar and therefore dismiss the submissions each year on these grounds and many other lame excuses.

Several Councils have acknowledged the outsourcing service Retirement Villages have in the community and have chosen to introduce a differential rate or give a percentage discount to Retirement Village Rates. This whole structure of Rating needs to be addressed, a one size fits all approach is neither acceptable or fair, and Local Councils are reaping the rewards of the many retirees who have downsized, freed up the housing market and are making no demands on Council services at all. Please consider this as a submission on behalf of all Retirement Sector establishments, and know that Councils are budgeting on the Retirement Villages in their constituencies providing a very lucrative income with little or no cost to council. We have

no independent representative who may advise or assist in this matter and would encourage an appointment of an Ombudsman for the Retirement Sector.

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File1:

File2:

File3: