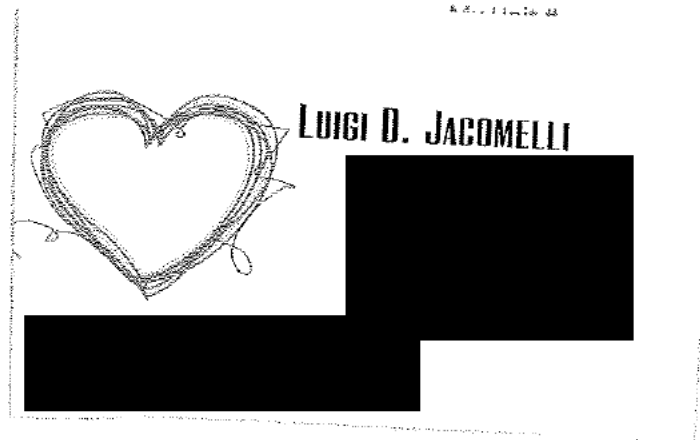


**PLEASE CHANGE THIS TO EXPRESS YOUR PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE AND REFLECT THE FACTS  
OF YOUR SITUATION**

Today's date *30.5.2016*

The Secretary.  
Legal and Social Issues Committee.  
Parliament House.  
Spring Street.  
East Melbourne Vic 3002



By email: [lsic@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:lsic@parliament.vic.gov.au)

Dear Ms Topic,

**Re: Differential rates for retirement villages**

On 9 April 2013, the State Government released new Ministerial Guidelines for the use of differential rates by Victorian Councils.

One of the key reforms contained in the new Guidelines is a revised definition of the types and classes of land open to consideration for differential rate purposes. In total, nine categories were given State Government imprimatur with the creation of a new Retirement Village Land category being a key element of the reforms.

I and my fellow residents that retirement village occupants bear an unfair rate burden.

Thousands of Victoria's retirement village residents pay rates to local government to help fund the delivery of services and infrastructure maintenance in their local communities. I am one of those residents

In the vast majority of cases, local municipalities collect these rates from retirement village residents at an amount similar to the General Residential Rate.

I would like the State Government to reform the system.

My reasons are twofold.

First, retirement villages provide independent living accommodation for residents. Through the collection of 'maintenance fees', retirement villages fund the provision of private services (e.g. waste disposal, bus services and 24-hour emergency care) and infrastructure maintenance (e.g. drainage, street lights, road and footpath construction, landscaping and parking areas). Most provide a

community centre, and many provide recreational facilities such as a bowling green, swimming pool and tennis court.

Unfortunately, due to the imposition of full rates by local municipalities, retirement village residents are being charged for the same services in the public sphere. These arrangements are a form of double taxation.

Second, retirement village residents are typically light users local municipal facilities and services due their limited mobility and the provision of self-funded services at their place of residence. As a result, residents are being taxed for the provision of services they are not utilising.

Alternatively expressed, if the residents from within the retirement village sector started relying more heavily on the services provided by local government, those service could be overwhelmed. Given the conditions imposed in planning permits on the operation of villages, the current rating system 'double dips' by charging the residents through council rates and charges and the services fees from the villages to cover the costs of the services provided. An example of this is the private contractor rubbish collection for residents who are still required to pay a garbage charge.

Our Council is one that does not apply a differential rate despite the fact that residents of our village have been pressing them to do so for years

With the new category now in place, we ask the Legal and Social Issues Committee to recommend making a differential rate for retirement villages compulsory.

I that a 25 percent discount differential rate for retirement village residents strikes a fair balance between taxation equity and community obligation.

I am currently aware of some municipalities which provide a differential rate of a similar nature. Knox City gives a 25% discount

I ask you to give this rating policy reform sympathetic consideration.

Should you have any queries regarding the matters raised above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.