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To: [ENRRDC](#)
Subject: W: Submission
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Parliament of Victoria
Environment, Natural Resources and Regional Development Committee.
Email. enrrdc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Sir / Madam,

Challenges Facing Rural Councils in Victoria

Thank you for allowing myself, and other members of Victoria to send in a submission on Challenges Facing Rural Councils in Victoria.

My concern revolves around fair distribution of the Council's rates burden.

Some five years ago I became very aware that I, and other rural residents, in our Gannawarra Shire, were being unfairly categorised. That two of my farming properties (dryland) were being charged at Water Irrigation rates in the dollar. When in fact only small portion of both property's are in the ORIGINAL documentation carried out when land was made commandable by the Water Authority at that time as irrigable land. In other words that not all the land was or could be irrigated.

The balance of my land is what is known as DRYLAND which was determined by State Rivers and Water Supply which has since become known as Goulbourn Murray Water. None the less their documentation is a valid document today.

I do have a COPY of the Original contour maps which clearly show my statements.

So 5 years ago I approached the Gannawarra Shire regarding this injustice overlay of rating And after a lengthy discussion the Gannawarra Shire saw fit to issue me with 4 rate Notices. Being 2 to cover the irrigation area and 2 to cover the deemed dryland balance. This was not very difficult to arrive at as I could demonstrate with the maps how the land was not all having access to Irrigation.

With the change by the Gannawarra Shire 2 years ago I find am now back to where I started with just 2 rate notices and being charged at the Irrigation rate in the dollar over the total area of land again. Fellow farmers also in this same predicament attended a Special Gannawarra Council meeting it soon became obvious to me that another issue had is deemed which has been caused by the Sales of Irrigation permanently and called the NEW dryland.

Therefore the boundaries determining dry and Irrigation land have changed. This was carried out by the Gannawarra Shire.

However my research shows that the mistakes occurred as they Shire was using the incorrect maps supplied by GM-Water to work on was seen as traditional dryland which shows up now portions of land have been incorrectly assessed by GM-W and the Gannawarra Shire.

After completing lengthy discussions with 2 employees of the Gannawarra Shire which involved highlighting the differences with the two maps and showing them the Contours of the land they agreed that I was right.

These employees stated that it would be necessary for the Gannawarra Shire to change their Policy and that this would be hard to achieve. I see these changes are a necessary part of responsibility of the staffing and councillors of the Gannawarra Shire..

There are two options in my estimation that could provide a solution to ratepayers being in appropriately over-charged.

1. All dryland outside commandable irrigation land area be charged at the the dryland rate in the dollar. This would include the New dryland properties. And all Irrigation commandable be charged at the Irrigation rate.
2. If the first suggestion is not workable then over time all rural property's properties be charged at a lower rate and the SAME rate in the dollar.

I would like you to consider this serious issue of incorrect charging as I have talked with several fellow farmers and discovered that they are tired of being treated with contempt when putting their concerns forward.

I would also like your direction please as to whom I should take up this very real issue up with. Be it the State Ombudsman or the Minister for local Government.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future

Colin J Fenton

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