

SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS
- RATING STRATEGY 2015

Date Received	TRIM Number	Town	Précis of Correspondence
04/03/15	D15/2513	Alexandra	Proposed rate increase impacts the sustainability of the business. Council should look at its own performance and efficiency and provide services not out of town consultants who come to town regularly which is very costly. Council needs to restrain staff wages to enable it to work within budget.
01/03/15	D15/2650	Taggerty	Council should consider charging all properties a combined waste levy, i.e. No separate charge for recycling.
01/03/15	D15/2652	Eildon	I understand equity is the desired outcome of this strategy which recommends a new rating class "vacant land" The current system is not equitably distributed amongst present ratepayers and residents. We strongly recommend that the strategy as is, is not accepted by Council.
18/02/15	15/7292		The past six years particularly have been balancing extreme phases of survival to then being inundated with gifts, but without the property long term big picture view. An extension of the closing date for submissions is required to seek feedback from our association members. Delivery of services, communicating Council's targets and the need for change, evaluating an comparable evaluation; property valuations across the shire need to be undertaken.
24/02/15	D15/2340	Marysville	I understand that commercial properties will have an increase of 25%, this is well above the normal CPI increase of a usual 2-3%. This increase along with increased insurance premiums and other costs in operating a small business will make life very uncomfortable. We also own vacant land at Murchison street which we've had on the market for sale for the last 2 1/2 years. With very little interest of businesses wanting to invest in Marysville or Murrindindi. Increases such as this only make it less attractive. We rebuilt in Marysville after the Black Saturday Fires and have now been back in business in Marysville for 3 1/2 years. Business is not what it was pre February 2009 and is very slowly picking up but I anticipate this taking a lot longer than we forecast. I understand that the Shire has a lot of new infrastructure to maintain since 2009 but as business owners so do we. It is unfair to expect small businesses to pay the extra when we already struggle with premium costs within the Hospitality/ tourism industry. I would appreciate a more detailed response on the Rates Strategy and maybe a better, more productive way of small business and the Shire working together.
03/03/15	D15/2696	Alexandra	Against proposed differential rating increase for commercial and industrial property. - businesses in shire are hurting - proposed increase counter-productive by discouraging new investment. - encourage prospective business investors to take up and develop the large amounts of vacant property.
02/03/15	D15/2558	Alexandra	Council should encourage business in towns and shire by incentives rather than penalties. - increase services to generate competition and attractive businesses, including shops and facilities to encourage visitors to the shire, many of whom may wish to become permanent residents if they are suitably impressed. - We further submit that the increase in rates be spread over the whole community of rate payers rather than just the 4% of commercial rate payers as proposed.
18/02/15	D15/2081	Glenburn	It is pleasing to see that Council proposes to broaden the Differentials based on use of Council Services and the ability to pay, however - Industrial land - Traders are likely to say they are struggling however Council should be strenuously trying to encourage clean industries to establish within the Shire. Municipalities with abundant industrial development have the most prosperous communities with superior facilities. Rural 2 land - the objectives of the rural differential apply equally to Rural 1 and Rural 2. They have the same uses, limitations and potential except that Rural 2 cannot offset expenses against any income. Vacant Land - vacant residential zoned land "banked" for future development should be rated at a premium to encourage timely development of land taken out of production. User pays -Currently tenants receive many services for "free". In major cities this is reflected in their rental, but this does not apply in rural areas where the rental market is smaller. Environmental rebate - now is not the time to introduce it but should be mentioned in a rating strategy.
04/02/15	15/5042	Yea	1. The concept that Council charges in Municipal administration level of \$290 currently and that applies to all rateable properties, and that no additional revenue is derived through re-distribution and of market trends, and that is a well established function for all municipal Councils and fixed in time. 2. Differential rating is open to all Councils on the basis that some rate-payers will pay a higher proportion of the General Rate. 3. What is not revealed is the total of Rate Revenue within any year.
04/02/15	D15/1476	Yea	Unable to make an informed submission due to lack of access to shire held information. Please refer to mine of 4 February 2014 re injunction - FOI application and alternative. I find that the 31 page document 29/1/15 is vague and misleading.
25/02/15	D15/2372	Yea	Refer D15/2372 for full details Differential Rate Scheme 1. What as proposed, if ever implemented, would cause a 'riot' after the first year as with 'compounding at a rate of 50% then a base of \$1000 would become \$2250 in just 2 years and after that would reach the heavens, ie $1000 \times 50\% = 1500$ and $50\% = 2250$! 2. In respect to Ratepayers' concerns and for possible apprehension due to Council's failure to communicate the difference between 'Rate Base' and (and explain the difference of Rate uplift (%), the 'Rate Notice' received includes extraneous other costs - fixed or otherwise! 3. I shall wish to speak to my (2) questions to council and together with C54 MSC 'planning scheme' now proposed for final review.
02/03/15	D15/2630	Buxton	Property is approx 22 hectares on two titles in RLZ - one title has house - grazing and infrastructure on other title. Currently pays CFA primary production charge and CFA primary production fire levy. Presume second title should not be classified as vacant and hence not subject to the proposed 150% charge.

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24/02/15	D15/2374	Taylor Bay	<p>As a property owner of both rural and commercial within Murrindindi Shire and an active Valuer throughout the district, and within the Melbourne Metropolitan Area, I have a fairly good overview of the current two speed economy (City versus Country).</p> <p>This year's Rate notice that one of Council's reasons for increased rates was that new assets built as a result donations/government funding after the 2009 bushfires now need maintaining and it appears from Page 6 of their Strategy that depreciation allowances on these assets is a factor in the current review.</p> <p>Council needs to have regard to the rate at which they are depreciating and whether they are using straight line or reducing balance methodology. If you can't afford to hold an asset, you should sell it. If they are strategic assets, perhaps sale and long term leaseback could be contemplated. If they are not strategic the Shire might simply not be able to afford the luxury.</p> <p>Increasing rate payments is not an incentive to build, it is an incentive to sell or only to buy developed property if they can afford it.</p> <p>This leads to an over-supply of vacant land which is unsaleable and a shortage of new housing stock. The bushfires, through Narbethong/Buxton/Taggerty and Marysville destroyed a number of homes and placed considerable financial pressure on many people. There are many vacant blocks which have been available for purchase throughout those areas and some have been withdrawn simply because there are no purchasers. These people having suffered through Black Saturday (may have chosen not to take the Government buy back or were not eligible) will have their rates increased by 50% under this Strategy. (Of note, is the fact that the vacant sites bought back by the State Government do not contribute to the rate base at all).</p> <p>With regard to commercial and industrial property, it is well known that both are in a weakened state.. The Council's use of increases in CIV's is spurious, in that these estimates are generally untested. There are very few factual sales to give guidance to the Valuer.</p> <p>Council's mention of Vertical equity is a valid point to look at. A case study would be the comparison of say a standard shop in Eildon and a typical house. In accordance with recent sales, the typical single shop may have a value in the vicinity of \$80,000. Their rate payment for 2014 will be in the vicinity of \$1,300. The typical well maintained older house in Eildon may have a value in the vicinity of \$190,000- \$250,000. It's rate payment will be similar. If we look at taxation on the basis of wealth and therefore the ability to pay, The shop owner already pays about 3 times the rate per \$value of the property as compared to the resident. Those shops providing the scant facilities to the community are currently under significant pressure and a further rate increase on retail property is inequitable.</p> <p>Similarly industrial property values have declined markedly in Alexandra since the closing of the Mill. Council may do well to look at the CIV records for the main Mill site 3-4 years ago as compared to it's sale price in more recent times. This demise is reflected throughout the industrial zoned land. Mortgages are difficult to achieve due to the heightened risk of further reductions in value. Again industrial users provide essential services to this community and if the cost of the service becomes prohibitive, you be negotiating to bring trades across the Black Spur or from Mansfield or Seymour, as our own trades pack up shop.</p> <p>I take issue with Section 7 Council Revaluations and the statement : "A revaluation does NOT provide the Council with any additional rate revenue " The amount of revenue is entirely in the hands of Council and the rate in the dollar struck by it.</p> <p>eg: The CIV's may go up 10% and if the Council maintain the rate in the dollar, the rate base will increase by about the same. If they decreased the rate in the dollar by 10%, the rate income would remain the same. I have often heard Councillor's from a broad spectrum of Municipalities, saying that the rates went up because your values went up. They forget to say that they intentionally left the rate in the dollar the same, knowing this would cause a rate rise.</p> <p>Finally. I note that from 15 July 2016 Municipalities will have a cap on rate increases to no more than the rise in cost of living. A change in the differential rate at this time would be more difficult to reverse after that date and give future Councillors little room to manoeuvre.</p>
18/02/15	15/7292		<p>We appreciate Murrindindi Shire Council is interested in having the local Industry Associations together with Murrindindi Inc to provide feedback from it's members. We also believe that with the time frames provided and the importance of the nature of this 'Rating Strategy' will require proper engagement process which will take extra time.</p> <p>If I was to provide input with regard to organisational improvements:</p> <p>One of the challenges I see is assessing the delivery of services: Sometimes when indicators alert us that there is a need to strategically address an organisations present status quo of performance, and/or we decide to implement change for a different and/or improved outcome, we usually begin by objectively reviewing and evaluating our past and current situation. That reviewing process being 'Market Research' is a major factor in a commercial world and if this is not addressed thoroughly without a balanced holistic view towards key performance areas and looking at our organisation through fresh eyes the efforts and investment to implement change could be disastrous if we get it wrong and the outcome could be costly.</p> <p>In a commercial environment resources should be regarded as valuable commodities and have a direct benefit for the desired outcome that will satisfy the deliverer and receiver. If areas aren't properly scrutinised there could be factors that are causing huge problems that go unnoticed and are letting down the organisation.</p> <p>Another challenge is communicating your targets and the need for change: Without clear and beneficial goals, being able to articulate what the desired outcomes are and to gather broader investment could have a negative affect. To be able to demonstrate the core of what it is you are trying to achieve and take others on the journey will make the need for others to buy-in much easier. It will also assist with those who hold investment in an organisation and are looking to benefit whether it be financially or socially to be able to bring others along the journey also. My thinking would also be to engage with investors much earlier in a consultation process to save time and be able to develop a considerable approach much earlier.</p> <p>My final challenge comment is evaluating and comparable evaluation: Like 'Market Research' when 'Measuring Comparisons' especially when you are comparing the function of an organisation or a geographical location and the differing considerations aren't properly addressed, there can be huge issues with agreeing to the measurable case findings. The challenges at times we have faced as individual communities and as a shire is that there has hardly been a similar case for us to</p>

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			<p>compare our circumstance and so we are at times having to create a fresh path and delve into an approach that fits us perfectly. Taking into consideration only one aspect such as population stats without the other factors for example like services required and income generated could be incomplete measurement of evaluation.</p> <p>On another evaluation area that was presented was taking into consideration property values across the Shire. My personal experience in regard to the property evaluation process over the past six years has been a terrible experience that has required a number of investigations to even come to some type of agreed evaluation outcome.</p> <p>I thank you again for taking the time to engage with our Industry Associations and you will consider our request for an extension to provide proper feedback to the 'Draft Rating Strategy' and the responses from each of the industry Associations and the Murrindindi Inc</p>
20/02/14	D15/2333	Marysville	<p>Vacant land at a rate of 150% of the general rate.</p> <p>In consideration of the proposed rating differential for vacant and developable land we believe that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to encourage property owners to develop vacant land identified by Council as suitable for development could well accelerate some landowners into inappropriate and ill-considered projects and/or designs. 2. to claim that landowners simply acquire or hold land for the purpose of future investment without developing it fails to understand all the possible circumstances facing landowners. Deceased estates, inadequate funds, familial issues are just some non-investment issues. <p>So in summary, we are not in favour of the proposed rating differential for vacant and developable land.</p>
04/03/15	D15/2729	Alexandra	<p>Objects to the proposed rebasing of commercial rated properties at 125% of the general residential rate, based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rate increase is beyond inflation rates and beyond capacity to recoup. - Anti business and may lead to a decrease in commercial rate takings as businesses look for more business friendly environments in which to operate. - Council should be encouraging business by reducing costs. - Council should explore cost saving measures by pruning non core services. - inconsistency in rateable class designation - we will be seeking a review of our rateable property which is currently rated commercial rather than rural as we are a farming business with few Council provided services.
04/03/15	D15/2733	Marysville	<p>We have accommodation properties in Marysville and rebuilt after the fires. Our rates are very high already and the increase would be devastating to our business.</p>
04/03/15	D15/2733	Marysville	Duplicate
04/03/15	D15/2760	Seymour	<p>Council should use % of rating Units to give better clarity of the rates and where they are being raised. It is the residential component which is way below paying a fair share at only 47% compared to 63% of the rating units (defacto population).</p> <p><u>Bushfire Infrastructure costs should be identified on Rate notes to identify the cost of this imposition .</u></p> <p><u>To be fair any rate increase should be across the board and all ratepayers should contribute equally</u></p>
04/03/15	D15/2777	Fawcett	
04/03/15	D15/2808	Taggerty	<p>Small businesses are struggling to remain viable. There are a substantial number of business being run from private residential properties, such as B&B accommodation, farming contractors and small commercial vineyards run from Rural 2 properties.</p>
05/03/15	D15/2821	Eildon	<p>Such large increases in Commercial & Industrial rates are an impediment to business recovery and a disincentive to further invest in the area and to create jobs.</p> <p>LEHIA opposes the proposed rate increase, however it is prepared to work with MSC to create a positive future that includes more jobs, more people living locally and then more people paying rates.</p>
05/03/15	D15/2822		<p>Businesses are struggling with a reduction in their customer base by 15% due to people not rebuilding after the Black Saturday disaster. Murrindindi Inc strongly opposes the proposed rate increase in the Commercial & Industrial rated properties as it sees the increase as a threat to the viability of existing businesses and employment.</p>
05/03/15	D15/2823	Alexandra	<p>The Commercial and Industrial sector of the shire should not be unfairly penalised with an increase of this magnitude. We believe the burden should be shared by the entire community equally, not just businesses that employ and support the shire. Just because other shires have a different structure for commercial and industrial does not mean it will suit our shire at this present time. We cannot absorb this rate increase. We must all be prepared to work together to support our community and share the burden equally.</p>
05/03/15	D15/2827	Marysville	<p>We worked hard to open a business after the 2009 bushfires at great cost to us, but we thought our town needed us to be rebuilt. No one will consider opening a business or building one if council treat us unfairly.</p>
05/03/15	D15/2832	Alexandra	<p>It is of great concern, when we learn about Council wanting to raise the Commercial, Industrial and Vacant Land rates. Every week we have rising costs, eg cartage, water and other costs that cannot be passed on. Please do not cut back on outdoor staff and services as they provide us with what the visitors to our community see clean parks, streets, public amenities. If cuts need to be made, perhaps take a couple out of the office. Councillors need to get tough and take a few out of the office and leave the outdoor staff alone.</p>
05/03/15	D15/2833	Buxton	<p>We recently purchased a vacant block of land and hope to build our first house there in the next year. We cannot fathom the reasoning behind increased land rates (50%) to encourage development of vacant land. It would be more prudent to increase rates across the shire rather than imposing the increase on a select few.</p>
05/03/15	D15/2834	Alexandra	<p>The increase will be detrimental to the successfulness of our business, so we will have to increase our prices, which in turn may turn our customers away and seek assistance outside the shire. The loss of business services in the shire will affect everyone.</p>
05/03/15	D15/2835	Eildon	<p>Businesses such as accommodation and food premises pay registration of Prescribed Accommodation and Registration of Food premises and I only receive one Health Inspection per year which takes about 15 minutes. These business are already subsidising the Rate Revenue by paying these extra fees. A lot of businesses are barely making wages for proprietors and some are probably going backwards. <u>More consultation needs to be undertaken before Council deliberates on the rating Strategy.</u></p>
05/03/15	D15/2836	Eildon	<p>council needs to look at the projects and positions they are wasting money on before taking the areas that are already highly contributing to the development of the shire.</p>
05/03/15	D15/2837	Alexandra	<p>the increase proposed in the rating strategy will have a direct effect on the viability of many businesses leading to the loss of employment and unfortunately for some businesses to close. It will be a strong disincentive to business investment and attraction that is required to provide the jobs to grow the Shire and its rate base. ATTA believes that the proposed Rating Strategy is very short sighted and will not fix the Council's financial issues but will only further exacerbate them.</p>

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05/03/15	D15/2838	Alexandra	Council has a problem with the reduction in its rate base as a result of the fires, coupled with need to maintain and operate new facilities. Councils calculation is possibly an "ambit claim" for dealing with the stage Government and may be a very different figure to the "real" costs. Council Plan - it is difficult to understand how increasing rates and thus costs to business and others affected will promote opportunities for growth. Vacant residential land will only be developed when there is a market for the newly subdivided land. Council should revisit the definition of "vacant land" to include only existing vacant residential blocks and not residential zoned land that is currently undeveloped.
05/03/15	D15/2819	Alexandra	The basic question is "what increase in council services are business owners going to receive as a result of paying a higher rate? Until this question is answered, I do not feel that I can fully support this rating strategy.
05/03/15	D15/2828	Yea	I am concerned about the proposed differential rating level for vacant land for the following reasons: The higher rate level is not connected to the costs to Council of servicing this land - and so appears to be inequitable. I am not convinced by Council's conclusion that charging holders of vacant land higher rates will necessarily encourage property owners to develop vacant land. In my view, the Draft Strategy assumes a level of demand for development in Yea that may not necessarily yet exist.
05/03/15	D15/2831	Marysville	Increasing commercial rates discourages new businesses to the area which affects your rate base = negative result. Increasing rates on undeveloped land will encourage owners to either build/sell or sit and the higher rates = positive for you.
05/03/15	D15/2841	Marysville	Through no fault of their own, property owners now find themselves with vacant land due to the 2009 fires. Many of these property owners were not eligible for grants or gifts as the property was a second home. Many people are waiting on the outcome of the Morris Blackburn Class action to be able to rebuild. I request that there be an exemption for properties that have been affected by the 2009 bushfires. There are many properties that have been on the market in excess of 6 months.
05/03/15	D15/2846	Alexandra	I object to the proposed differential rating strategy in regard to commercial and vacant land. I urge you to consider all points put forward by all submissions before making your final decision.
05/03/15	D15/2842		After reading the Draft Rating Strategy, I have grave concerns how and if this is implemented will be fair and equitable across the whole of ratepayers. Council should consider restructure of staffing options.
05/03/15	D15/2844		I do not consent.
05/03/15	D15/2843	Marysville	If our rates are increased much more I would have to consider closing my business. Many businesses in Marysville are still struggling financially as the cost of rebuilding a commercial premises, because of the new fire ratings was so high) that I had to take out a large mortgage.
05/03/15	15/10431	Alexandra	Regarding vacant land, it would find a use immediately if the demand were there. Landholders may be forced to sell or develop if the rates rise, but it will likely create oversupply or result in cheaper than desired development if the land is released at a discount. There is a long way to go to fully comprehend the ramifications of the proposed policy change and these thoughts provide an initial resonation to the proposed implementation.
05/03/15	15/10419	Yea	Overwhelmingly, Yea business is totally opposed to a rate increase as proposed and respectfully request Council to reconsider and try to find a more equitable solution.
05/03/15	15/10418	Marysville	As much as I understand the issues that council is having regarding making ends meet - so are we. If you do proceed with this new differential rating strategy and increases to such an extent, then more of us will be forced to close and will leave the area. Please look at other ways than making the business suffer.
05/03/15	15/10412	Alexandra	In relation to the implementation of this rating Structure we take exception to the proposition to apply a differential rate surcharge to commercial and industrial property owners on the basis that they are in a better financial position to contribute to the municipal rate revenue. In Alexandra and Yea the balance of business operators are battling to stay financially operational through working longer hours. Yea businesses do benefit from having a major highway through the township, however Alexandra is more dependent upon the spending patterns of the local community and tourism through the summer holiday period. A strategy needs to be developed to encourage development of residential land, and the big stick approach has never worked in the past and does more to discourage. the proposed Draft Rating Strategy has logic in elation to implementing a means to increase rate revenue in view of the Victorian State Governments proposal through legislation to prevent Councils from raising rates above inflation levels from 1 July 2016. Council has a challenge to promote the municipal areas as an alternative lifestyle proposition within two hours drive from Melbourne, that can provide those resources and service comparable to outer suburban Melbourne. This will include high speed communication services and economic zones for business to relocate
05/03/15	15/10433	Alexandra	I am totally against the large increase to the rates as with a drop in visitors to the area, on line shopping and the rising cost of utilities it is very hard to make ends meet. The whole shire needs to contribute to the solution not just the business and vacant land owners as the whole shire benefits when things are going well.
05/03/15	D15/2848		People struggle now to pay the excessive rate charges and lots do not use the new facilities that were put up so why should we have to pay for them. Unhappy Rate Payer.
05/03/15	D15/2849		do not use the new facilities that were put up and I have bush at the back of my property that belongs to the Council that is not looked after or cleared and I have complained many times. Disgruntled.
05/03/15	15/10469	Yea	I strongly support the use of special rates and charges as outlined in the strategy recommendations. I strongly support the use of the Municipal charge although I believe that if it is possible the maximum charge should be levied. Strongly support the principle of differential rates for commercial properties and vacant land, although I would have preferred a figure higher than 12% and 15%. Strongly believe there should be a differential on residential rates of between 5 and 10%. Rating such a large group of ratepayers with a small differential will be a very powerful too to correct inequities. Strongly support a third level of rural rating on properties above either a certain value or area. Because of the relatively small number of properties, it would have a small impact not he revenue raising potential for the shire. This would be my most preferred option in any rating review and it certainly needs further investigation.
05/03/15	15/10300		To put it in simple terms a 'Commercial & Industrial Rate Increase' would have major negative outcomes for the businesses in the Kinglake Ranges. They are already stretched financially and to be hit again with this rate increase would not have a positive outcome. Many of our local businesses are already supporting our Kinglake Ranges community recovery initiatives, sporting teams and community events. This increase would be taking funds away and have negative outcomes across many other important parts of our Kinglake Ranges community. The Business Network does not support the rate increase and would be more than satisfied with rates not being altered and possibly another approach to assist the Murrindindi Shire's reviewing of it's resources and activities.