

3. SUBMISSION TO CITY COUNCIL'S DRAFT COMMUNITY PLAN – ADDENDUM (RURAL RATE CHANGES)

The Board Chairman reports:

“On Friday 14 May, in the company of the Community Advocate, I attended a residents’ meeting convened at the Yaldhurst Hall for the purpose of discussion on an issue related to rate changes affecting a number of ratepayers in the rural community. The residents were from a number of rural sectors in the community, but mainly from the Ouruhia/Marshland and Yaldhurst areas. Having now heard the concerns of those at the meeting, I consider that the Board should support these concerns through an addendum to the Board’s submission which was adopted on 4 May.”

The Community Advocate reports:

“The concern of the residents related to a decision to implement a rule covering rating on rural properties which are **not** “used solely or principally for agricultural, horticultural, pastoral or forestry purposes, or for the keeping of bees, or poultry”.

The issue arose when approximately 290 rural ratepayers received a letter from the Council advising that their properties would be rated “residential” instead of “rural” with effect from 1 July 2004.

There are a number of factors which relate to the concerns, and which were referred to at the residents meeting, as follows:

- concern that the interpretation of land use had been determined from an aerial photograph (not necessarily current) – issues of privacy were also referred to.
- concern at the tone of the letter (see copy **attached**)
- confusion as to whether the ratepayers affected would prepare an “objection” (under section 39 of the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002), or a “submission” against the draft Community Plan. It would appear that a number of “objections” had been made although it was not clear that these would be considered as part of the draft Community Plan process.
- concern that properties which may be used for industrial or commercial purposes were not to be similarly adjusted.
- concern that a possible amalgamation with Banks Peninsula was the incentive for the change proposed.

Above all the residents believed that rural land, which did not attract the same level of Council servicing, should simply remain as “rural” without further adjustment.

Officers present advised that the determination for the change was promulgated from inspection of aerial photographs, and that there was clear evidence that most properties actually indicated, from the evidence of lawns, gardens etc., that the properties were being used for “residential” purposes.

Staff

Recommendation: That the Committee consider the opportunity for preparing an addendum to the previously adopted submission, in support of the rural ratepayers concerns.