

**PHILIP AND LINDA DUCKER
85 SUTHERLANDS ROAD
HALSWELL, CHRISTCHURCH 8003**

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RE: 2004 COMMUNITY DRAFT PLAN VOLUME 3 PAGE 40

**OBJECTION TO PROPOSED CHANGE IN RATING DIFFERENTIAL
PROPERTY ADDRESS: 85 SUTHERLANDS ROAD, HALSWELL
VAL REF 23562 41200 RTZ 2301125**

We received a letter from the Christchurch City Council in March 2004 regarding the proposed change in rating differential from rural to residential which affects our property located at 85 Sutherlands Road, Halswell. Several aspects of the proposed change in rating differential process concern us and we would like to make an official objection to the proposed change in rating differential that applies to our property.

(1) Information provided to residents

We are particularly concerned that the letter does not advise residents of the financial impact on their own property of the proposal to change the rating classification from rural to residential. While the letter does state that the proposed change in rating differential only affects the general rate it does not clearly advise residents of the different components which collectively form the rates we pay such as the general rate, uniform annual general charges and special rates and the financial implications on the general rate component of our rates. This lack of information may have prevented other property owners in a similar situation to us from making a submission to the proposed change in rating differential process and is a denial of natural justice.

We request that a further letter be sent to all residents affected by this proposal advising them of the financial implications to them of the proposed change to the rating system. The letter should provide the opportunity for further submissions on this matter.

(2) Rating differential process

We note that the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002 outlines matters that may be used to define categories of rateable land. Schedule 2 of the Act includes the following matters:

- The use to which the land is put.
- The activities permitted under an operative district plan or proposed district plan.
- The provision or availability to the land of a service provided by, or on behalf of the local authority.

We have read the letter the Council sent to us and the relevant sections from the 2004 Draft Community Plan and can find no reference to Council's reason for electing to choose the use to which the land is put as the sole criteria to determine the category for rating purposes. Council should clearly state its reasons for using and not using the matters to define categories of rateable land set out in the Local Government (Rating) Act 2002.

We understand from discussions with the Rates Policy Manager that the size of the land is another criteria that is proposed to be used to define rateable land. To our knowledge this is not recorded in any of Council's published material. If Council proceeds with relying on the use to which the land is put as the key category for defining rateable land we consider that this should be equitably applied to all land used for residential purposes in rural zones regardless of the size of the property.

Page 40 (Vol 3) of the 2004 Draft Community Plan outlines the Rural Sector Rate Differentials. This section includes the following wording:

“This lower general rate (as compared to Residential) is based on the following assumptions:

- *A lower standard of services generally is provided to outlying rural properties.*
- *The greater distance from Council provided services and therefore reduced use of those amenities by ratepayers (no footpaths, lack of adjacent parks etc)*
- *The value and impact of services provided by the Council to the property values (farm land may not be enhanced by community services).”*

It is our view that we do have a lower standard of services than other properties in Christchurch residential areas as we do not have access to reticulated water, drainage or sewerage systems. In addition, we are also living at a greater distance from Council provided services such as footpaths, street lighting and parks than other properties in Christchurch residential areas. We are not aware of any Council initiatives to upgrade the services within our area to ensure that they are consistent with other residential areas within the city.

We are also aware of the work being undertaken by Council to develop the South-West Area Plan and recently attended a community consultation meeting on the development of this plan. It is our understanding that the role of area plans is to:

- Identify future land use options.
- Facilitate integrated planning of Council managed services.
- Provide a framework for cost sharing.
- Anticipate and budget for future requirements for physical and social infrastructure.
- Identify areas where land needs to be acquired.
- Help produce sustainable development.

We are supportive of general strategic planning for the south-west area so that future development in the area is well planned and managed. However, we are concerned that the proposed change in differential rating will pre-empt the outcomes of the South-West Area Plan in regard to future land use options. We consider that is an important issue for the south-west area and consider that land use issues should be carefully considered as part of an integrated planning framework for the future growth and development of the area.

We are also concerned that there are no proposed transitional arrangements to phase in the proposed change to the general rate over time. As stated earlier, we have not been informed of the financial impact of the proposed rating differential. Therefore, we are unsure of the exact financial implication of the proposed changes to our general rates. We believe from our discussions with the Rates Policy Manager that it may be within the range of a 25% increase. This is particularly concerning to us as we have had no time to plan ahead for the increased rates payment.

While we oppose the change in our property from the rural to residential category for rating purposes and the consequent increase in our rates we submit that if the change is adopted the increase in the general rate that applies to our property and others in a similar situation should be progressively phased in over a 3-5 year period.

We wish to be notified of any public hearing where we can present our submission to the Council. Our day-time contact number is 3227 225 or 021 1021775

Yours sincerely

Philip and Linda Ducker
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Halswell
Christchurch