

Letter to the Editor

RATING REVIEW URGED

A matter that continues to trouble me and seemingly more and more ratepayers is how the Hobart Council raises its revenues. It is my intention to advocate for a thorough and early review of rating if elected to the Council in October.

The current Hobart Council's rating policy is totally based upon the value of property. Just because things have always been done that way cannot and should not be a justification to continue past practices without challenge.

Rates comprise a straight calculation of 8.6 cents in the dollar of assessed annual value regardless of the services provided. However, simply raising rates on property values has no relevance or regard for the actual services the Council provides.

This method of raising rates is almost unique in Tasmania. Most councils have adopted flat charges for various purposes and for amounts that equate to the actual cost of services provided, especially in waste managing and recycling functions. This seems fair

In Hobart every property is charged 0.7 cents in the dollar of assessed annual value for waste management. This raises rates probably as low as \$70 for some residences and as much or more than \$200 for others yet all properties receive exactly the same service.

It costs no more to collect the waste and dispose of it on the tip for a property that pays \$70 to another that pays \$160. This is not fair. Just because a home has been lovingly improved over time and is re valued cannot be the justification for applying or increasing the charge for a service, sometimes different charges apply in the same street yet it's the same truck and the same personnel! Imagine if any other service provider e.g. a supermarket asked to see what assets someone had before deciding what to charge them for a standard service!

In recent years the Brighton and George Town Councils have gone even further and introduced a flat charge for all council services. This system obviously works well for those communities.

I will be advocating for the Hobart Council to undertake modelling on what the effect of a single flat charge would be as well as a system of partial flat charges and a portion of rates raised on property values to get the right mix. It may be appropriate to bring in the changes over a set number of years but change it must if we are to be able to look our rate payers in the eye and say fare is fair We need to act now to remove this anomaly

Damon Thomas
Candidate for Alderman, Hobart City Council