

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

	<b>Surname</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Submission Detail</b>	<b>Do you wish to be heard in support of your submission?</b>
170	Albert	Jeremy	162 Alberts Rd, Willaura 3379	<p>Dear Ararat Rural City Council,</p> <p>As landowners at Willaura, we write to you in regards to the unacceptable and unfair proposal of the rate increase for our shire. This increase will directly affect our livelihood in ways we see unimaginable. We are currently in a financial situation where we have been forced to lease out our farm, but have been working diligently toward returning to working our farm at a point in the near future. These rate increases will not allow us to follow our dream of raising our children on the land we have called home for five generations. Although our land valuation may be significantly higher than persons owning land in town, our income does not change; we are forever relying on the seasons to be generous in order to make a mediocre living.</p> <p>Not only will these increases effect ourselves, we will also be negatively impacted in our local community businesses, which we rely so heavily on. People like ourselves will simply be unable to afford to spend as freely on farming products in our local area, as well as support small businesses like our supermarket. Unlike those businesses in town, we are unable to pass on the cost to the consumer.</p> <p>We understand that rates should be shared equally, and see it immensely unjust that struggling farming families will be subsidizing the majority living in the town's centre. We are already some of the highest rate-paying collective in Victoria. We are interested in hearing what future plans are in place for keeping our farming communities sustainable and what alternative steps may be taken instead of going ahead with this proposed action.</p> <p>Warm regards,</p> <p>Jessica, Jeremy and Kenneth Albert</p>	Yes

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171	Armytage	Chas, Jo, Nick & Andi		<p>Dear Councillors, We are a business operating in the municipal district of Ararat Rural City Council (ARCC) and we are extremely concerned about Council's proposal to abolish differential rates in 2017.</p> <p>One of the most important objectives that any rating system should achieve is EQUITY and FAIRNESS. The ARCC proposed rating strategy to introduce uniform ratings falls far short of achieving such important principals. Furthermore, it is deeply concerning that the decision by ARCC to adopt this proposed rating strategy was made without adequate public consultation, communication and analysis particularly when in the course of public consultation regarding two previously proposed rating strategies, 82 percent of the responses were in favour of retaining the differential rating strategy. This is great cause for concern and reflects lack of good governance.</p> <p>The existing ARCC differential rating methodology was devised through considerable public consultation to address well known inequalities associated with the land valuation process. We feel that the ARCC proposed rating strategy has the potential to be detrimental to the long term sustainability of our business which would in turn have a negative impact on a great number of service provider businesses operating within the ARCC and to the municipal district as a whole.</p> <p>We therefore support the retention of the existing ARCC differential rating methodology and urge Council to reconsider its position on the proposed rating strategy.</p>	Yes
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172	Barr	Noel	2986 Mt William Rd YALLA-Y-POORA 3378	<p>To Ararat Rural City Council</p> <p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>The proposal to abolish the current differential rates has the farming community in shock and wondering what next will happen in council. The initial options for the draft review were flawed in that they gave the impression that farming families were paying around \$2000 in rates. To be more realistic I'll give an example. A modest farm of 578 hectares, South of Ararat, has a CIV of \$3,643,000 and paid rates of \$14,398 plus the Fire Service Levy, Garbage Bin Collection and Municipal fees to a total of \$16,243. The rates for last year increased by around 4% because, of increased valuation. Rural properties continue to increase in value for a variety of reasons not related to increasing incomes. If it is right the median residential property paid \$1363 in rates which equates to a 10th of the Single Entity farm example I have given. It is not fair that a farming family is paying so much more for council services than other families.</p> <p>The proposed change to a URS will increase farm rates by 50% for our farm, which supports three families, a total increase of \$21,000. The reality is most farming families will, if this change goes through, be paying around \$20,000 in rates. If you had a house and your rates were \$20,000 I am sure that moving to an alternative area would be considered, however moving from a farm is not as easy.</p> <p>Differential rating system is used to even out the contribution of rates to be more equal to the receivers of council services; that is the people that reside in the community. Commercial and Industrial organisations are more people related and hence have a greater reliance on council services. Farms have a high asset value and hence the need for lower rating level to bring about a fairer contribution in rates.</p> <p>I urge council to reconsider and go back to Option 1.</p> <p>I also wish to have the opportunity to speak to support my submission.</p> <p>Noel Barr</p>	Yes
173	Brady	James & Maureen	"Bradach" 126 Salvation Gully Road, Norval. 3377	<p>We have just come through years of drought and have struggled to pay the rates that we are currently required to pay. Given that we now have had rain and are able to manage to pay rates, any increase is only going to turn the tables and we once again will struggle to pay the amount required.</p>	Yes

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174	Geddes	Lyndal	73 Elder Road Streatham Vic 3351	<p>I would like to oppose the council draft rating strategy for 2017. I propose to go back to the status quo and then properly workshop another option that is both fair and equitable to ALL rate payers of the Ararat rural city. I believe the proposed rating structure creates division between sectors of the community, leading to a feeling of disharmony. Ararat municipality should prosper! The industrial sector should prosper! The farming community should prosper! We should all be working towards a prosperous Shire. We run a farming operation and with exceeding prices in all aspects of our business I worry for our future. I worry for my children's future here and the long term viability of farming. I love my life here - please let us work together to achieve a long term plan that is beneficial, fair and equitable to ALL in the ARC.</p>	Yes
175	Gellert	Ruth	51 Bluegum Rd Willaura, 3379	<p>As I'm sure Council have heard many times by now what this actual change in rating will mean in dollar terms for farmers, I would also ask the seven members of the Ararat Rural City Council to consider the ethics of their position with regards to the rating question. To clarify, ethics are the rules or standards governing the conduct by which I make my decisions. I personally assumed that people who put up their hands to put in the effort and time required into going on Council, would be doing so on behalf of everyone in the shire, even if they probably have closer connections and better understanding of some particular groups than others.</p> <p>So indeed I went back to the statements made by the councillors and found such comments as "providing the framework for job opportunities for our kids, growth for our local businesses (plural) and better services" by Councillor Darren Ford, being "passionate about helping communities (plural) &amp; creating more opportunities for everybody" by Councillor David Pettman and liking "to listen to people and arrive at a decision that I believe is fair to everyone" by Councillor Gwenda Allgood.</p> <p>I have no reason to disbelieve these statements, and ask the councillors to really think about what they meant when making them.</p> <p>I was quite disappointed when at the last Council meeting, a Councillor in fact looked at the group of farmers who had made the effort to attend the meeting, some taking an hours worth of travelling to do so, and said that he was looking past the 10% represented there, and at the 90% beyond them. I hope this wasn't touching on the idea that might is right, that the highest number counts, or that people who have power can do whatever they want.</p> <p>I have also made the point that farmers who have land and access to making profits from their land, should be expected to contribute more to shire rates, but how can it be deemed to be fair, when one particular group within the Ararat Shire and indeed a small group by number, is singled out to be asked to make in some cases, huge increases in rate payments when every other group is told they will have rate reductions?</p> <p>I'm also confused about what the differential rating system was all about, as I had thought it was a recognition of the fact that some people were unable to access the services provided in</p>	Yes

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				<p>the main living areas. If this was not the case, why was it in place?</p> <p>To conclude, I really do thank anyone who has made the effort to try and make our shire a more productive and successful one by standing for Council. I acknowledge that it's not an easy position to be in, but I ask that the solution to this whole question doesn't become driven by antagonism between the different groups, but is indeed the result of a carefully thought out and researched process.</p> <p>Ruth Gellert</p>	
176	Greene	Anna	Karingal Darbyshire Rd Elmhurst VIC 3469	<p>The latest Draft Rating Strategy would have to be one of the most unfair and short sighted documents I have ever witnessed by a Local Government body in any community. How can increasing rural rates and at the same time as decreasing rates for every other type of business and resident be seen as fair and just? Council boasts on its homepage that "residents enjoy a strong sense of community which regularly sees the region score above the Victorian average on a range of happiness and wellbeing indicators." Are we planning to add a footnote to this "as long as you live within town limits and do not choose a career in Agriculture"? This will not and can not create a stronger community, it will divide a community and fracture the very pillars Council believes it is aligning to; Our Community; Our Lifestyle; Our Economy and</p>	Yes

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				<p>Our Environment. I am saddened to think some Councillors believe we can afford such an increase to our costs and are so out of touch with life on the land. Over the past 17 years that I have lived and worked here on the land, my husband and I have been trying to desperately to raise our four children and just simply make a living, however in that time we have had 10 years of drought, 2 major floods, a freak weather event in the middle of summer that resulted in the death of 2000 sheep overnight from hypothermia (something insurance does not ever cover), and a super storm that turned my in-laws house into rubble - with each of those events we have had to go further and further into debt just to survive, and it has forced us to work off farm just to keep our head above water. Those representing us (the whole community) on Council need to know and understand this, and increasing our rates will only add to our levels of stress and debt levels - how can you possibly think it is fair and just, and why do you think we can afford it over any other type of resident or business? I am in favour of keeping the status quo. If you want to reduce rates for your residents, then reduce the Council's budget (perhaps focus on their inflated payroll), don't just dip into the rural resident's pockets for a quick fix solution. I want my family to be proud of their community and where they live, how do we reinforce that when our own local level of Government has such little respect for those that live on the land. Be the Councillor that makes a positive difference to strengthen our Community, not the one to drive the wedge in and tear it apart.</p>	
177	Greene	Simon	Karingal Darbyshire Rd Elmhurst VIC 3469	<p>As a local livestock transport business with this shire, I would like to see the rate strategy remain status quo. The rural rate increase does not effect our transport business directly, however indirectly and into the future like many other businesses that depend on farmers, it will undoubtedly have a negative impact on it. Councillors need to consider the long term effects to all business and understand how much the rural sector contributes to the local economy and employment within our shire.</p>	Yes
178	Hope	Michael	1372 Geelong Road	<p>Rates should not be increased for rural rate payers because it will mean less disposable income to be spent elsewhere in the community. Rates are supposed to contribute to the cost of servicing property but as a lot of council expenditure is now about servicing people the fair and equitable collection of rates should reflect the changes in councils priorities. Targeting rural rate payers will mean less time available for those people to contribute to the community both financially and in voluntary capacities. I find it surprising that some councilors think such a divisive approach to the rating strategy will help the Ararat and surrounding community work together for the benefit of all.</p>	Yes

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179	Kilpatrick	Jo, Blair, Lachie & Biance	136 Allanvale Rd	<p>Being a family farming business that has land in the northern Grampian shire and the Ararat rural city shire, the difference in rates from either side of a fence was already a concern this proposed change will express that even further.</p> <p>In general the proposed removal of the differential rating system is inequitable given that farm valuations do not reflect high returning assets (2.25% return to asset 2014-16 south west Victoria livestock and industry benchmarks). The average civ value of a farm in Ararat in 2016 being \$756,603 returning the state average of 2.25% makes a return to asset of \$17,023.56 per annum. With the proposed rate increase of 47% for the average and increase of \$1,441 per annum will consume 9.1% of farm profit for the average farm. Given the average wage in Ararat is \$37,596. (\$30,368 per household) it is obvious that the proposed change financially is unfair and inequitable for the rural sector and those reliant on it, therefore falls outside the Local government act-sect 3c and the fair go rates system.</p> <p>It is concerning the lack of (none) any feasibility study or research on what the flow on effect may be to the rural sector that is our biggest employer (740 people) and small businesses in town.</p> <p>In summarising agriculture is the most volatile industry in the world, this proposed change for some in a tight season may mean the difference of food on the table or not. As councillors of the Ararat shire be aware of what the proposed change will be to some people and be prepared to accept responsibility of your actions.</p> <p>Kilpatrick family</p>	Yes
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180	Knight	Susan	898 Porters Bridge Road Tatooon 3378	<p>Submission opposing ARCC draft rating strategy decision to abolish differential rates</p> <p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>I am writing to express my strong opposition to the Council’s proposal to abolish the differential rating system.</p> <p>My opposition is based on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This option was not workshopped by Council in any way (as verbally reported by Council staff including the Mayor and CEO at community consultations at Lake Bolac, Moyston and Ararat on Tuesday 23rd May). Council staff could not provide us with any research to justify the proposal. There has obviously been no forward planning to evaluate the potential impacts of the proposal on the social, economic, and health and wellbeing outcomes of our broader community. Without any further arguments, this point alone provides overwhelming evidence that the proposal cannot be adopted.</li> <li>2. There has been no opportunity for true consultation with the community regarding the proposal. The Councillor who moved the proposal was not present at any community meetings and has not been available to answer questions or provide any evidence or data to support this proposal. The three Councillors who also voted for the proposal have similarly not been available to their community. This is in direct contradiction to the Councils Mission Statement, which says: “We will demonstrate leadership through social responsibility, openness and transparency by actively working with our community to achieve shared goals”. There is no evidence of openness or transparency, or of Council actively working with the community. The proposed rating change is certainly not a ‘shared goal’.</li> <li>3. The rating proposal and the process leading up to and following its tabling are also in direct contradiction to the Council’s values of:              Respect: Respect for each other and the wider community;              Excellence: Striving for ongoing professionalism and organisational excellence; and              Passion: Passion for our people, community and services.              Rather, the process shows a disregard for farming families, and a lack of professionalism in that no modelling of potential impacts was completed. There was certainly a lack of respect for the three Councillors who clearly had no knowledge of the proposal prior to it being tabled.</li> <li>4. The proposal is divisive and shows a complete lack of understanding of farm businesses. Land values have increased significantly however this bears no relation to farming income. There is simply no way farming families can pass this cost increase onto consumers of their products.</li> </ol>	Yes
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				<p>5. While Council is careful to use the term ‘land tax’ rather than ‘service charge’ in reference to rates (comments from Council staff at Lake Bolac Community Consultation meeting, Tuesday May 23rd), the Council CEO Andrew Evans did state that “services are a consideration”. When considering the services we receive as rural ratepayers, it is clear that we are volunteering hundreds of hours per year at football ovals, recreation reserves and fire brigades, to provide facilities to our local communities that residential ratepayers receive free of charge. There has been no communication with us that justifies an increase in rates without a subsequent improvement in services. Under this proposal, the rates on our farm would increase by 50% with no change in services. I am interested as to what ‘consideration’ Council gives to that?</p> <p>6. This proposal is also one that financially benefits the majority of Councillors. There has been no communication with the community about how this conflict of interest is managed within our Council.</p> <p>7. General discussions with residential ratepayers (who play sport in local rural clubs, and work with us on a daily basis, as many farming families must generate off-farm income) indicate they are similarly horrified by the reality that their rate cut will be funded by 461 farming families. I have not heard one residential ratepayer express the opinion that this is fair or acceptable. All ratepayers favour a rates cut, but one that comes via improvements in Council’s financial management. This must be Council’s focus as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>8. The level of distress that this proposal has caused in the rural and wider community is significant. I assume that the four Councillors who initially voted in favour of the proposal had no idea of the depth of feeling about this issue. Clearly the fact that this proposal was tabled without the prior knowledge of three Councillors and the CEO (as reported at Community Meetings on May 23rd) our Council is not operating with the level of governance and professionalism that is required.</p> <p>It is essential for the long term viability, health and success of the entire Rural City of Ararat that the proposal to abolish the differential rating system is NOT adopted. We need a proper period of consultation with the entire community about how a rates cut can be managed for ALL rate payers.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration. Yours Faithfully, Susan Knight 898 Porters Bridge Road, Tatyoon</p> <p>Please note: I wish to speak to this submission at the public meeting.</p>	
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181	Laidlaw	Rod	2324 Yalla-Y-Poora Rd, Tatyoon 3378	<p>We are a family farming business in the Tatyoon/Yalla-Y-Poora districts. Our soul income is derived from primary production. We have been notified by the Rural city of Ararat that our council rates will increase by 50-51% for the coming year to a total that is roughly the same as our total fuel bill for the same period. This is extreme as we run a predominantly broad acre cropping operation and fuel is one of our highest costs. It will be higher than our total wages cost and will indeed make it all the more difficult to allocate funds toward employment of permanent and casual staff who are usually sourced locally. This increase from what was already a high base compared to neighbouring municipalities, is unfair, unjustified and totally inequitable compared to city residential, commercial and industrial ratepayers. Agriculture is a huge contributor both directly and indirectly to the sustainability and growth of this municipality along with the many businesses that serve the rural community. A healthy agricultural sector leads to employment for locals, both in town and out on the farms, and the continued growth and health of the many rural service industries that are based within the Council boundaries. Based on the services that are available realistically to ratepayers from outside the city, this increase and indeed the level that we were already paying, is unjust. Unlike many of our other costs, we are unable to shop around various suppliers for the best price. We have a son who has come home on the farm and is working for minimal wages and learning the ropes so to speak. Like many other young farmers in the district, he has seen drought, frost, flood, record crop yields along with total failures, high commodity prices along with the 1980's grain prices we are experiencing at present. All this is a part of farming and is out of our control. A 50% rise in rates shows the total disrespect and disregard that Council has for one of its most important sectors. One that receives little but contributes much. Surely Council could look inwardly and prune costs instead of continually using the farming sector as the magic pudding of funding.</p> <p>I implore Council to reconsider this unnecessary and divisive action and to revert to a status quo.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. Regards, Rod Laidlaw</p>	Yes
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182	MacRae	Christopher	595 McKenzies Lane Wickliffe Vic. 3379	<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>We are a farming business operating at the southern fringes of the municipal district of the Ararat Rural City Council and are deeply concerned about the Council’s proposal to abolish differential rates in 2017.</p> <p>We feel that the ARCC rating strategy decision will be detrimental to the long term sustainability of our business and feel the Council decision was made without adequate public consultation, communication and analysis.</p> <p>The current and excessively high ARCC differential rating methodology was devised through considerable public consultation to address well-known inequalities associated with the land valuation process. We therefore support the retention of the existing ARCC differential rating methodology, preferably at a far lower percentage than the current level of 55%.</p> <p>Christopher MacRae.</p>	Yes
183	Millar	Pat	6001 Mortlake- Ararat Road WILLAURA VIC 3379	<p>We write to express our disappointment with the Ararat Rural City Council (Council) at its decision to abolish Differential Rates in favour of the application of a Uniform Rate as outlined in the Draft Rating Strategy 2017. This decision was made without prior public consultation as a Uniform Rate was not one of the two proposed rating strategies originally on the table for ratepayer feedback. It is our understanding that around 82% of responses received were in favour of retaining the existing Differential Rating Strategy. Why has this response been totally disregarded? Council has supported a Differential Rating Strategy for a number of years. Why the sudden change? Only a few years ago a change to rates was discussed at length prior to implementing the current rate differential. Why then is there a need to revisit this so soon?</p> <p>What other steps can Council take instead? Is there an alternative rating method that also takes into account the percentage by population to more accurately apportion the rate burden? Please bear in mind that, on the whole, the farms in this Municipality are family run businesses therefore any rate rise impacts directly on the District’s families and their livelihoods.</p> <p>The removal of the current Differential Rate in favour of a Uniform Rate will see an unexpected and substantial increase in annual farm rates. This has the potential to be further exacerbated by the two-yearly revaluation (January 2018) which could see a further rate increase due to recent inflated corporate land purchases in the Municipality. We stress to you that high land prices (CIV) does not mean higher income potential. It is only money ‘on paper’ not ‘in the bank’. Cost pressures already facing rural industry include volatile markets,</p>	Yes

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			<p>weather extremes and the rising cost of labour. It will be extremely hard for these farm businesses to absorb this immediate rate increase.</p> <p>We would argue that farm land values have increased incrementally more than residential land values and possibly commercial business. This is largely in part due to recent Corporate and Foreign investment. As such the proposed Uniform Rate based on this land value (CIV) is in our view neither fair nor reasonable. Surely the expectation that 24% of the Municipality pays 55% of the rate burden is not fair or reasonable? We fail to see how this is equitable. If General (residential) ratepayers make up the majority of the Municipality's rate base (70%) then surely they should collectively contribute greater than 40% of the rate burden. After all it is the people (ratepayers) that utilise the Council funded services and facilities not the land (CIV) the rates are assessed on.</p> <p>The figure of 1,718 for the farm sector is not an accurate reflection of the actual number of farmers and the financial contribution of each farm household. It may be the number of assessable rates notices issued to the farm sector but it is not the number of farm based ratepayers responsible for the payment of same. Multiple assessments often form part of a single farm enterprise. In our case we pay a combined total of 11 assessable notices. If the 2017 Draft Rating Strategy with Uniform Rate is adopted our combined personal rates obligation will increase by 51% and will result in us paying a staggering 1% of the total Municipal rates revenue, yet we only represent one family within the Municipality. This is not equitable.</p> <p>In our view a Uniform Rate is being applied to a non-uniform land use. A differential rate will at least take this variation into account. Often the farm sector is disadvantaged due to restricted access to Council services given their location outside of the town boundary. In the Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rates (as attached to the Draft Rating Strategy) reference is made to 'circumstances whereby common types and classes of land use consistently demonstrate significant relative rate disparities, including access to services arising from the use of a uniform rate' and these 'may be addressed by use of the differential rate powers'. It further goes on to say that 'common types and classes of land use where such circumstance can arise and where a Council must give consideration to reducing the rate burden through use of a reduced differential rate include (but are not limited to): Farm land. Why then is Council moving away from a Differential Rating Strategy when a significant portion of the Municipality is farm land? Why is Council no longer giving consideration to reducing the farm rate burden through use of a reduced differential rate?</p> <p>For the 55% of rates generated by the farming sector, what percentage is directly returned to the rural communities by way of Council funded services and infrastructure/maintenance? What direct return does the farming sector see for the rates they pay? What obvious improvements to services will the farm ratepayers see following their increase?</p>	
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				<p>Ararat Rural City is heavily reliant on its volunteer base, particularly in the small rural towns, to maintain Council assets and provide community services. Some examples being schools/pre-schools, sports facilities and clubs such as Rotary and Lions. Not to mention the vitally important CFA. Farming families make up a large part of this volunteer base. We are not merely ‘rural ratepayers’. ‘Farmers’ and their families are significant contributors to the Ararat Municipality, not only as volunteers, but also as business operators, employers and spenders! We might be perceived as a small minority but collectively the farms within the Municipality inject a significant amount financially into the local economy.</p> <p>In our own farming enterprise (run as a husband and wife partnership) the rate increase will have a significant impact. One for which we have not budgeted. Our land includes several rateable parcels. The figures in the table posted to us by your Mayor show that on average we will be ‘hit’ with a rate increase of 51% on land we own and lease. How do we justify this increase? We don’t receive anything tangible in return. In the Draft Policy, Legislative Provisions (Sect 136), it makes mention that ‘Council must pursue spending and rating policies that are consistent with a reasonable degree of stability in the level of the rates burden’. How can a sudden rate increase to the farming sector of 46% (in our case 51%) be seen as a reasonable degree of stability?</p> <p>As a result of this 51% increase in our budgeted rate expense, which we cannot ‘pass on’ as we are price takers not makers, we will be forced to make budget cuts from other areas of our business. This will have a negative flow-on effect to our local and wider community by way of reduced expenditure, possible reduced labour force and a reduced volunteer base. The current Differential Rate is one that we, and other farm businesses, have based our budgets on and used for forward planning. We will already have to absorb Council’s capped rate increase in 2017/18 of 2%. Farmers cannot be expected to simply absorb a 46-51% rate increase.</p> <p>We note in the 2017 Draft Rating Strategy that ‘the purpose of Local Government as expressed in the Local Government Act 1989 is to provide a system under which Councils perform functions and exercise powers for the peace, order and good government of their Municipal District’. Why then does Council continue, whether intentionally or not, to use land values and rates to create a rural/urban divide? If Council does not stand to gain financially from altering the current rating strategy then why is it wasting time, effort and ratepayers money trying to implement a change that is proving to be divisive within its Municipality and in fact amongst its own Council Members? This is not creating ‘peace and order’ within the Municipality. Is it a breach of this Local Government Act?</p> <p>We respectfully urge Council to re-consider the impact to the farming sector of such a major rate change and ‘have regard to the long term and cumulative effects’ of such a decision. Do not adopt the 2017 Draft Rating Strategy as tabled. There needs to be proper consultation</p>	
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				<p>within the community as to how rates can best be managed for all sectors.          Please support the District farmers. They are significant contributors to the Municipality and its 4 Pillars of: Community; Economy; Lifestyle and Environment as referred to in the Draft Council Plan 2017-2021.          Thank you for considering this submission.          AP &amp; S Milliar          6001 Mortlake-Ararat Road, WILLAURA VIC 3379</p>	
184	Mohr	Dr Janette	56 Robinson St Camperdown 3560	<p>I object to the raising of farmers council rates. As a Consultant Psychiatrist, apart from Warrnambool I am the only regular Psychiatrist betn Geelong &amp; Sth Australian border. I deal with farmers who have had one bumper year after drought. The proposed rate increase particularly in assocn with others proposed rate reductions will affect the mental health of the farmers &amp; well documented increased rate of potential suicide. Farmers having the highest rate of success with suicide attempts in our society. Where wld all businesses be in Ararat if farmers die or sell up to Chinese/ American super funds with no local loyalty.</p>	Yes

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185	Mulcahy	Anthony	3517 Eurambeen-Streatham Rd, Streatham 3351	<p>Rural City of Ararat PO Box 246, Ararat 3377</p> <p>28 May 2017</p> <p>RE: Draft Rating Strategy feedback</p> <p>To whom it may concern:</p> <p>I am writing to oppose the proposal to introduce a universal rating system in the Ararat Rural City Council and to retain the farm rate differential at 55 percent.</p> <p>The circumstances, the lack of professionalism and poor governance displayed by the council and councilors that have led to the proposed removal of the differential has been a disgrace. Neither of the two options consulted on were adopted. For the current proposal there was no proper public consultation, no explanation of strategy nor costing of the impact on the wider community.</p> <p>My understanding of council rates is that they are a land tax and, if administered well, they are very stable and predictable. If any change were proposed, adequate time is required for consideration of issues and to implement the process of change.</p> <p>As a rate payer, I expect information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rationale and objectives for the need to change including council pricing policy and core components of its rating structure.</li> <li>• Related research and background information on council (demographic, rate payer classes etc.) and past practice.</li> <li>• Comprehensive impact modelling on how the change in rates (or charges and fees) will affect the municipality.</li> </ul> <p>Once all this information is provided over time then an opportunity is given for public consultation.</p> <p>To this point it seems the removal of the rating differential in the Ararat Rural City Council has been an idea from some councilors acting on a “vibe”. I am concerned for the council and question if it can operate effectively. In my opinion the mayor and CEO have failed in their leadership roles in allowing this motion to be passed. It seems some councilors are</p>	Yes
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				<p>inadequately educated on the rating issue and unaware of the significance or consequences of their actions.</p> <p>This rating proposal will place greater pressure on the viability of traditional family farming businesses such as ours. Our rates are already increasing due to an increase in capital value driven by competition from corporate land buyers. Farm land is estimated to have increased by at least 20% in the last 12 months and anticipate this will be taken into account in the next council valuations.</p> <p>This combined with the proposed removal of the differential rating system are burdening farm businesses like ours. We cannot pass on the added fixed cost to our customers as other business sectors in the shire can. If I was a tradie, vet, solicitor, accountant, small business (shop keeper, earth moving contractor for example) I could pass the increase in rate cost on. In most cases, wage earner home owners have awards and unions to assist them to lobby and negotiate for increased wages. They are a large percentage of the population of the municipality and would use a greater percentage of the council funded services and facilities due to their geographically location.</p> <p>In our business this proposed increase in cost is occurring in a farm operating environment of increased scale and cost, diminishing returns, a reliance on capital appreciation (this does not improve profitability), vagaries of international commodity prices and exchange rates, extreme weather events and seasonal conditions.</p> <p>In farming any increase in rates (any fixed cost) increases the break-even yield and/or price our crops are required to achieve before we make a profit. We can manage our business well at farm level, however any of the external forces as highlighted in the paragraph above can have a major influence on our ability to break even or make a profit.</p> <p>The past two cropping seasons are an excellent example of this. The 2015/16 season resulted in low yields (as low as 600kg/ha) due to a poor finish and frosts and high prices (\$280/t for cereal grains) due to scarcity and supply pressures in the world. In contrast the 2016/17 season was one of high yields (6t/ha) and low prices (\$160/t) due to world oversupply and lack of demand.</p> <p>It should be noted that in a cropping system input costs are outlaid at planting or early in the growing season and the resulting yield is mostly determined by spring rain and frosts. Farming is a high risk operation and this description I have provided somewhat explains why</p>	
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			<p>farmers are susceptible and have a high rate of mental health issues.</p> <p>Locally, the concern with cropping this year is that conditions are quite wet early in the season and a wet winter would see a lot of crop washed out or severely reduce yields. This culminating with low prices would have major impact on the profitability of farm businesses.</p> <p>The Council also needs to consider who owns farmland in the municipality and what they want for their rural communities. From the perspective of rates as a wealth tax, some family farms may be well established with strong balance sheets and be able to afford to pay higher rates. Others like ours (and many others throughout the shire), where generational succession has occurred in recent years, have high debt and low equity and a rate proposal such as this has a major financial impact and reduces viability.</p> <p>The questions for councillors are: Do the council want to support family farms such as ours that live in and contribute to the local community or do they want a vastly reduced rural population with the farm land owned by corporates that employ regional managers and use itinerant contractors to undertake their operational requirements?</p> <p>These are the reasons why I understand the Rural City of Ararat has used differential rating system in the past – to ease the burden on family farm rate payers with consideration to their capacity to pay and the nature of their business.</p> <p>I am concerned for the overall strategy and direction of the shire. As a rural ratepayer, it is my opinion that the shire and the current council is out of touch with the community. The council needs a reality check of what the town of Ararat is, the demographic of the shire, their expectations and priorities.</p> <p>I urge the council to retain the 55 percent rate differential for farm business for the 2017/18 budget period and undertake a feasibility study into the wider community impact of any change to the rating strategy before making a proposal in the future. The council budget spending for 2017/18 should also be reviewed.</p> <p>I believe a coherent and well-presented revenue and rating strategy is essential for an effective council. This can help all stakeholders – councillors, council staff and ratepayers. I understand that the removal of the differential rating system is a draft proposal. I hope the council can become better informed and will drop the current proposal and retain the 55 percent rate differential for farm land.</p>	
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				<p>I would like to reserve my right to speak on my submission at the special council meeting regarding the changes in council rates.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>Anthony Mulcahy 3517 Eurambeen-Streatham Rd Streatham 3351 Director - Tenira Nominees Director - Mt Emu Creek Farming</p>	
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186	Phillips	Geoff	124 Phillips Brothers Road, Tatyoon 3378	<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>It is of great concern to me the current situation re: rate redistribution. Obviously the debate is complex as legitimate arguments can be pulled from either side, but I believe the current proposal is flawed on two counts.</p> <p>Firstly the process of the decision seems unethical, unprofessional and devoid of any legitimate governance or credibility. This is based around no consultation, deliberation or any projected ramifications of this decision. Purely an adhoc, knee jerk response to a serious issue reflecting very poorly on the responsibility you all have in your Councillor role.</p> <p>Secondly the rate redistribution itself is unfair and inequitable to the rural sector. It seems the genesis for this proposal revolves around the perception of the disposable wealth that exists in the rural sector. It is a poor reflection when perception rather than an accurate understanding of the situation dictates responsible governance. I have no doubt you will be flooded with figures and facts relating to the effect of the added cost on many farming families to their severe financial and emotional detriment. It is the nature of a farming enterprise that the asset base needs to be at a higher level to generate income and this is not a guaranteed reflection of disposable income.</p> <p>We had a Trivia Night at Tatyoon last weekend, with one of the questions relating its population. On the slide that came up from the Australian Bureau of Statistics census data, there was a comparison of family weekly incomes. Those without children \$1607, those with children \$1650. Upon comparison with Ararat, those without children \$1558, those with children \$1874. Interesting data.</p> <p>I believe the rates formula for the Ararat Rural City needs to be reflective of peoples capacity to pay and a more user pays system.</p> <p>With our farm business, any year is dictated by income and expense. As the weather is a big dictator in our income, we have to constantly adjust our expenses accordingly. Perhaps this could be a strategy employed by the Rural City of Ararat, with greater emphasis on reducing expenses. This is highlighted with the current wages bill in the vicinity of \$11 million representing approximately 79% of the \$14.1 million revenue received from rates (the core revenue apart from grants). This is not sustainable.</p> <p>Thank you for your attention and I trust a decision will be made for the entire community of the Ararat Rural City that promotes unity and fairness and avoids alienation and inequity.</p> <p>Yours sincerely, Geoff Phillips.</p>	Yes
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187	Russell	Hugh	4608 Pyrenees Hwy, Dunneworthy 3377	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to you regarding the proposed Uniform Rating Strategy.</p> <p>As a farm manager of a large grazing operation, I am opposed to this rating increase as it increases financial pressure on the business, makes my job of running a profitable enterprise more difficult, reducing money spent in the community and our ability to employ local people.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>Hugh Russell</p>	Yes
188	Spittle	Geoffrey	Willaura-Wickliffe RD Wickliffe 3379	<p>I reject the proposal to up the council rates on farmers in the ARCC to 55%. Sighting concerns to our rural community and object to unfair hike on our rates discriminating against rural property owners.</p> <p>If the council is to increase rates it should be done across the board which would results in Fairness for everyone .</p>	Yes

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189	Tucker	Jack	945 Moyston-Willaura Rd Willaura North VIC 3379	<p>31/5/17 Willaura North 3379 jack@tuckerfarms.com.au</p> <p>To Ararat Rural City Councillors, I am sure you have been flooded with submissions so I will keep this brief. I farm with my wife Celia and our 2 young boys, my brother Andy, his wife Jess and their 3 young boys. We have 1 full time employee (we really need another but can't justify it financially). We spend a considerable part of our working year doing off farm contracting to supplement the inconsistent income from the farm. Our farming history began with my grandfather who arrived in Australia from England with no money. He enlisted with the army and fought in the Second World War, including protecting Australia from the Japanese on the notorious Kokoda Track. For his efforts, he received an interest free loan from the government to purchase his allocated 250ha at Yalla Y Poora. From that time on he, and then my father, and then Andy and I have used every bit of equity to borrow money and expand to try and have a 'liveable' area of land and to give the next generation an opportunity to farm. With current farming returns we have no way to pay ANY more in rates. In 2 of the last 3 seasons we have had to extend our borrowings by the full amount of our rates bill (around \$48k/pa including municipal charge). This financial year will be better but will hardly put a dent in the bad debt created by the previous 2 rates bills. If option 3 was adopted we would get a \$24,000 increase in rates, taking us up over \$70k/pa. With annual land valuations, it's easy to foresee that we would be up over \$100k in no time. Our business can't absorb an increase in rates of any size let alone one of this magnitude. Effects of option 3 on our business would be: -Serious consideration about retrenchment of our worker. -Our spending at local businesses would be significantly reduced and our already restricted use of tradesman would have to stop. -We would be forced into more off farm contracting on top of running our own farm. This would lead to a large reduction in family time, and leave little, if any time for community activities like sport, school, CFA etc. -I am currently president of the Upper Hopkins Land Management Group. I would most likely resign due to lack of time. -The hardest thing for me would be the explanation to our boys that there is no future in farming in this area, and that we either sell everything that their Great Grandfather had sacrificed so much for, and move to a more farmer friendly region, or exit farming altogether.</p>	Yes
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			<p>My main aim in life is to give our children the opportunities that I have had. It seems desperately unfair that 3 generations of borrowing money, putting nearly everything we make back into the land, and being part of a happy healthy rural community could all be strangled by an unresearched, unprecedented and totally unfair Council ruling.</p> <p>After attending Council information sessions, it was made clear by the Councillors present that option 3 had not been researched or discussed at all prior to the special Council meeting on May 2. I believe it is morally wrong that a ruling such as this, that has the potential to cripple the local farming sector can be made without large scale analysis, unbiased external professional advice, transparency and regular correspondence with the people it would affect most-the farmers.</p> <p>Can the Councillors who support option 3 answer the following questions?          How many retrenchments will this cause?          Can, and is, Council responsible for compensating workers retrenched as a direct result of this?          What is the average debt of a viable farm business in the ARRC?          What is the average net income of a viable farm in the ARRC?          What effects would this have on farmer mental health?          What effect would this have on Volunteer organisations, sports clubs, CFA etc that are already battling due to a time poor rural community?          What environmental effects might this have? One of the first things financially strained farmers cut back on is Landcare.          How would businesses within town be affected? Farmers discretionary spend would, more often than not, go out of town to the cheaper option rather than the current staple of 'looking after the local bloke'          How much would corporate farming increase in the area under this ruling?          How much do local businesses make out of family farms versus corporate farms?          Will the proposed \$80million partially farmer funded GWM Water pipeline go ahead?          What is the value of the missed opportunity if this doesn't go ahead?          I believe these and many more questions need to be researched and answered and results made public before any consideration of lifting farm rates is made.          I acknowledge that residential and commercial rates are also too high, but taking from farmers is not the answer. Council needs to be looking within its own budget to find ways to reduce rates in the short term.          Please don't hesitate to contact me in regard to this submission.</p> <p>Regards,          Jack Tucker          Tucker Farms</p>	
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190	Tucker	Andy	238 Rockies Hill Rd	<p>1st June 2017            Andy Tucker            238 Rockies Hill Rd            Maroona 3377</p> <p>Ararat Rural City Council            PO Box 246            Ararat, Vic 3377</p> <p>Dear Cr Paul Hooper, Cr Glenda McLean, Cr Gwenda Allgood, Cr Jo Armstrong, Cr Peter Beales, Cr Darren Ford and Cr David Pettman.</p> <p>Submission opposing Ararat Rural City Council Draft Rating Strategy and supporting option 1 retaining existing system.</p> <p>It is of enormous importance for the future of family farming that Council abolish its draft rating strategy and retain its existing rating system, until a fairer and more equitable solution for funding local government can be reached.</p> <p>The community consultation meeting I attended on the 23rd of May left me feeling this draft strategy has been formed with absolutely no consultation, is not representative of voters and is a gross display of poor governance. The intimation by Mayor Paul Hooper at these meetings that the first he heard of the proposal was when the motion was put forward at Councils special meeting 2nd May leaves me flabbergasted. I support the view councilor Beales expressed that in his experience, for a proposal of such magnitude to be considered he would have an expectation of at least 9 months consultation. I was also extremely disappointed that only two of seven councillors were in attendance of ‘round table discussions’.</p> <p>No consultation taking place regarding Option 3 has brought to my attention the flaws in the Councillors consideration of Option 1 and Option 2. My primary concern is Councillors have been provided with extremely limited and misleading information to base their decision on. Lack of information I am shocked wasn’t available during initial consultation.</p> <p>1. Exactly how many Rate paying farm businesses are there in ARCC? For example our business has 9 Rate notices being paid by 1 business – effectively my brother and I. Statistics surrounding individual rate notices can be misleading and are irrelevant.</p> <p>2. What is the current average rating amount, and proposed average rating amount per farm business?</p> <p>3. How will any proposed increase affect a farm business? I was appalled that in the meeting</p>	Yes
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			<p>in Ararat on the 23rd of May, in urging farmers to make submissions Mayor Paul Hooper expressed that during his discussions with farmers on that day he had been shocked at hearing the level of rates farm businesses are actually paying, and how this translates into percentage of expenses, percentage of gross income etc. I would have thought this would have been thoroughly investigated during the consultation period.</p> <p>In scrambling to defend our rights as family farmers the VFF came up with some conservative numbers to quantify the above. It seems ridiculous this information is not readily available when ARCC has an overwhelming amount of highly paid staff capable of working on this.</p> <p>As a simple suggestion, has council ever considered sending a survey attached to rate notices to gain accurate statistics on farm businesses?</p> <p>These missing statistics would be useful to council in many ways, and would illustrate that family farms are getting heavily taxed with little to no support from all levels of government. Farm businesses in ARCC have declined sharply over the last 20 years due to increasing costs and decreasing incomes. Unfortunately corporate and internationally owned farms are becoming the norm, which is not only killing off family farming but taking away substantial business from country townships like Ararat.</p> <p>In closing I implore all Councilors to vote for retaining the Status Quo Rating System being Option 1 - 55% differential. It is clear Council has lost control of this situation and would be ill advised to change the current system based on such sketchy information and lack of consultation.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Andy Tucker 0429976395 andy@tuckerfarms.com.au</p>	
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## Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

191	Twomey	Peta	1915 Yalla-Y-Poora Rd, Tatyoon, VIC, 3378	<p>I do not support the rate rise proposed in the draft rating strategy. The 49% increase in municipal rates is unacceptable, and a uniform rate is not a fair way to calculate charges.</p> <p>Our rates for our two properties will increase by \$6865.10 in the next year.</p> <p>Rates should only apply to house and curtilage.</p>	Yes
192	Anderson	Emily & Nicholas	2451 Maroona-Glenthompson Road, Willaura, Vic 3379	<p>To the Councillors of the Ararat Rural City Council,</p> <p>I am extremely concerned about the proposal to discontinue the differential rate system. I am also extremely concerned about the lack of proper process and adequate community consultation in doing so.</p> <p>Our family farm where we live and which has been in our family for over 4 generations is our livelihood. The farm is primarily a grain growing farm and our income is supplemented by myself undertaking full time work in Ararat and a farm freight business which my husband has built from scratch. We work hard to make a living, to raise our children well and to continue to live on farm and invest in business growth and continued viability.</p> <p>I am concerned about the impact the proposed rating strategy will have on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the viability of family farms</li> <li>- the impact on local businesses of which farmers support</li> <li>- local employment</li> <li>- mental health and community resilience</li> <li>- a lack of recognition of just what many farming families contribute, through volunteering and keeping the fabric of small rural communities alive and thriving</li> <li>- The significant increase in costs farms in the municipality will have as land values have risen considerably. This rise in valuations together with an increase in rates will present a double blow which will impact farming families deeply.</li> </ul> <p>I urge you to reconsider your proposal to discontinue the differential rating strategy. In the very least, please allow adequate time for a comprehensive review and an adequate consultation process.</p> <p>Yours sincerely, Emily Anderson</p>	No

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193	Beckitt	Vanessa	443 Long Gully Rd, Pomonal 3381	Concerned about effect on farmers and my husband is overseas and unable to submit.	No
194	Blandford	Jarrold	327 Tatyoon North Road Dobie, VIC. 3377	Myself and my wife are a young family trying to make a life for our kids as farmers, this rate rise will mean we will be put under extra financial pressure that we have not budgeted for or can afford moving forward. Our rates are to be increased by a whopping 48%, are we going to receive an extra 48% service I highly doubt it. I feel that more consultation should have taken place before this rash decision was made. We would also like to know with this rate increase are we as a farming community going to see more infrastructure put back into the rural area.	No
195	Brad & Sarah	McLean	122 Cemetery Rd Wickliffe, 3379	Dear Councillors  I am writing in regards to your proposed plans to increasing farm rates. We have recently received a copy of our proposed draft council rates and as our small acreage property is classed as rural we are up for a significant rate increase of 41%. My Wife and I purchased our small rural property at Wickliffe in November 2015. I currently work as an Agronomist for a local business in the area and my Wife until taking maternity leave recently worked at East Grampians Health Service in Ararat. We have recently had a newborn and if these changes were to go-ahead it would affect us as we currently only have one income in the household. As the rates are proportional and ours may seem insignificant to others we only have the ability to earn little income from our hobby farm acreage to support our family. As seasonal conditions vary (ie. drought, frost, flooding etc) so does our potential small farm income. As an Agronomist in the local community I currently have a client base of 30 plus farmers, I see this proposal having a large affect on their farming businesses and it having an impact on local expenditure. I believe this proposal should be reconsidered.  Regards Brad, Sarah & Ella McLean	No
196	Brady	Damien & wendy	1714 Geelong Rd Ballyrogan	Dear members of the Ararat Rural City Council, We are writing to express our concern about the proposed rural rate rise. We feel the proposal has been hastily submitted without any research or public consultation and to us seems to apportion a huge rate rise on a minority proportion of the community ie 461 farming families. Our daughter and son in-law have just began their farming career and for young people like them it is a large extra burden on their finances which has not been budgeted for. We think young farmers need encouragement to stay in the industry not more costs. We would encourage you all to reconsider this proposal. Thank you.	No

## Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

197	Chace	Dianne & Shayne	17 Saladin Ave Glen Waverley, 3150	<p>We submit that Council must REJECT the Draft Rating Strategy 2017; specifically REJECT the removal of the differential rating system on the grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Dropping the differential rating system creates increases for farmers that are too large to absorb in one year; i.e average farmer must find an extra \$1400.</li><li>2. Council must take into consideration people's ability to pay. The amount of land a farmer has is not related to the income he receives. If he receives income below the taxable threshold then his rates are not tax deducted.</li><li>3. Farms have until recently always taken the rate burden and this is fair if it is not excessive.</li></ol> <p>We submit a fairer strategy be adopted similar to that in place from 1997-2002 which used the differential rating system.</p>	No
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198	Coutts	Adele	1430 Delacombe Way Mininera, Vic, 3351	<p>Objections to Ararat Rural City Draft Rating Strategy 2017</p> <p>Dear Mr. Evans</p> <p>In the Ararat Rural Shire’s “Councillor Code of Conduct”, reviewed in January 2017, the councillors, commit to represent the local community in a fair and equitable way.</p> <p>The rate proposal for 2018/19 is neither fair nor equitable.</p> <p>It is of concern that the councillors are trying to redistribute the rate burden to the farming sector. Figures released by the Ararat Council (Draft Rating Strategy 2017) show that the farming sector, 24 % of the ratepayers, paid 38% of the rate income of the Ararat shire. Now 24% of the shire population is proposed to pay 55% of the total rates. Farmers are price takers; not price makers. Therefore we will be forced to absorb this charge. This cost will come straight of our profit – if me make any. I note that the farming community is still recovering from a significant drought.</p> <p>Differential rates are used to achieve greater equality. The non-differential rate strategy increases inequality in taxing land, the farmer’s tools of trade.</p> <p>According to data released by the Municipal Association of Victoria, Ararat council rates are some of the highest in the State. Farmers are only disproportional users of these facilities financed by our rates. We are now expected to shoulder an even greater burden of services we mostly didn’t ask for and hardly use.</p> <p>I would therefore urge the councillors to reconsider this draft rating strategy and vote to retain the existing differential rating system. The proposed rating framework would disadvantage and alienate the farming community, and risk a deep divide between the rural and urban populations.</p> <p>Sincerely</p> <p>Adele Coutts Mininera</p>	No
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199	Dagleish	Barry	64 Sheepwash Rd Wickliffe Vic 3379	I strongly object to the ARC Draft Rating Strategy. It is inconceivable that a corporation, organisation or government body could seek to increase its charges by 50% in one hit. The farming community are sick of being used as a cash cow by the ARC. I hope that certain councillors haven't been sucked in by media reports about how good things are on the land at present. It will take continuous years to recover from a decade of drought & poor commodity prices. Cr Mclean was happy to boast of her farming background to gain rural votes then betrays these very people. I urge council to reconsider this horror rating strategy.	No
200	Darbyshire	Helen	1 Kims Close, Ararat	I am concerned with Ararat City Council's Draft Rating Strategy. Being a retired farmer and understanding only too well receiving the rates notice and paying the rates. A huge expense, sometimes a big worry too. I do not want my residential rates subsidised by farmers in our community. Please think carefully about your Draft Rating Strategy. Farmers will really suffer with the added burden of extra rates. Yours faithfully Helen M Darbyshire	No
201	Duver	Russell	218 Yarram Gap Rd Willaura 3379	Dear Councillors,  We are a business operating in the municipal district of the Ararat Rural City Council and are concerned about the Council's proposal to abolish differential rates in 2017.  We feel that the ARCC rating strategy decision has the potential to be detrimental to the long term sustainability of our business and feel the Council decision was made without adequate public consultation, communication and analysis.  The existing ARCC differential rating methodology was devised through considerable public consultation to address well-known inequalities associated with the land valuation process. We therefore support the retention of the existing ARCC differential rating methodology which is a balanced approach to sustaining farming, business and commercial viability of our community.  Russell Duver 02/06/2017	No

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202	Duver	Elsie	North Creek Road Willaura 3379	<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>We are a business operating in the municipal district of the Ararat Rural City Council and are concerned about the Council's proposal to abolish differential rates in 2017.</p> <p>We feel that the ARCC rating strategy decision has the potential to be detrimental to the long term sustainability of our business and feel the Council decision was made without adequate public consultation, communication and analysis.</p> <p>The existing ARCC differential rating methodology was devised through considerable public consultation to address well-known inequalities associated with the land valuation process. We therefore support the retention of the existing ARCC differential rating methodology which is a balanced approach to sustaining farming, business and commercial viability of our community.</p> <p>Elsie Duver 02/06/2017</p>	No
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203	Ebsworth	Elinor	1430 Delacombe Way, Mininera 3351	<p>In the Ararat Rural City Draft Rating Strategy (ARCDRS) 2017 it is stated that the Council’s most applicable rate determination obligations are that they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of the municipal district (triple bottom line);</li> <li>• Ensure the equitable imposition of rates and charges (equity); and</li> <li>• Ensure the transparency and accountability in Council’s decision making (transparency).</li> </ul> <p>I would argue that in proposing a uniform rating system and abolition of the municipal charge, Council has not presented empirical evidence that the ARCDRS meets the above objectives. The details of my objections are as follows.</p> <p>The Community Information Brochure – Budget and Rates 2017/18 (Ararat Rural City Council (ARCC)) explicitly states that the proposed uniform rating system will result in properties classed as farms paying significantly higher proportion of the rates. In addition, the abolition of the municipal charge further disadvantages farm properties. Yet, the ARCDRS nowhere justifies why farm properties should be paying a higher proportion of the rates, nor does the ARCDRS provide any economic modelling to justify how the current imposition of rates and charges was deemed to be inequitable.</p> <p>The Ararat Rural City Rating Strategy 2016 identifies that “farming operations involve large properties which have significant value and which are often operated as family concerns. Agricultural producers are unable to pass on increases in costs like other businesses. Farm profitability is affected by the vagaries of weather and international markets. In this sense farms are seen to be more susceptible or fragile than other commercial and industrial operations. Farming is the only “occupation” dependant on a land asset base for earning an income. A lower rate is also to encourage land use consistent with farming activities and conservation of areas which are suited for agricultural pursuits”. Nowhere in the ARCDRS is there evidence that these arguments no longer hold for farming operations within the ARC municipality.</p> <p>Where uniform rates are applied on capital improved value (CIV), the fact that agricultural land value provides an exceptionally low rate of return in comparison to most other property classes or investments is not taken into consideration. The disproportionate total CIV of all farms in the municipality does not highlight a greater capacity to pay council rates.</p> <p>There are currently only ~471 agricultural businesses in the municipality (Source: ABS, 2014/2015 Council Budgets), which when divided by the total 6,410 municipal charges (ARCDRS pp 16), constitute only 7% of ratepayers. Despite this, under the proposed ARCDRS these businesses will be expected to pay almost 55% of Council rate revenue. As recognised in the Ararat Rural City Rating Strategy 2016, agricultural producers are unable to pass on increases in costs like other businesses. This increase will therefore come at a cost to family welfare (through a reduction in income) and/or the environment (through the need to</p>	No
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				<p>apply more intensive farming practices to fund the rate increase).</p> <p>On a personal level, the rating framework proposed in the ARCDRS will result in an increase of approximately \$12,000 in the rates payable on our family owned and run farm (an additional 50% on the 2016 rate). This increase in costs alone will account for between 8-10% of our annual farm income in an average year. This does not account for the risks that farm businesses face from variability in weather and market prices, as recognised in Ararat Rural City Rating Strategy 2016.</p> <p>As such, the ARCDRS fails the triple bottom line, equity and transparency objectives. I recommend that the current differential rating framework is maintained.</p>	
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204	Geddes	Andrew	73 Elders Road, Westmere, Vic, 3351	<p>After 72 years of living within the Ararat Rural Council and owning a farm that has been in our family for over 100 years I am compelled to right this submission against the injustice I see being played out with the proposed rate increases.</p> <p>During my families 100 plus years of living within the Ararat Rural Shire we have supported businesses such as Medical ie Dentists, Doctors, machinery manufacturers, farm merchandise suppliers, supermarkets, restaurants, sporting clubs, insurance agents, the list is endless. These businesses have the ability to pass on their costs (including rates) to the consumer at the point of sale. Many of these businesses have a low cost capital value and per dollar invested generate reasonable, stable and consistent incomes.</p> <p>In the reverse farmers seem to have a high capital value and inconsistent incomes i.e., the price of grain, wool, animals etc is subject to the vagaries of world markets. A current example being one of our major commodities wheat being at its lowest price in ten years.</p> <p>Whilst I understand that all rate payers in Victoria are subject to increases I cannot comprehend the total injustice of the suggestion that the farming community of the Ararat Shire are going to be subject to an increase in their rates, whilst the businesses and residents within the urban area are to be afforded the honor of receiving a rate reduction!! What a divide this could potentially cause within our communities.</p> <p>As stated under the Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Ratings the objectives of differential rating is to ensure an equitable imposition of rates and charges. I do hope that a common sense and fair approach can be considered by the councillors.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely</p> <p>Andrew Geddes</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

205	Gellie	Kelly	457 Helendoite Road, Maroona VIC 3377	<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>I write as a concerned Ararat Rural City Council ratepayer, farmer, Chartered Accountant, wife and mother of two young children. In every facet of my life the proposed draft rating strategy will have a significant impact on the day to day decisions that I'm required to make.</p> <p>If I put my 'farming' hat on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In March each year I sit down with my husband (who is also a farmer, my business partner and the father of our two children) and construct a Cash Flow Budget (CFB) for the next twelve months (April – March).</li> <li>- In preparing this year's CFB we did factor in a small increase in our rates based upon the 55% differential rate.</li> <li>- This is what we model our business decisions off for the upcoming twelve months.</li> <li>- This is also what we have submitted to our bank manager so he can base his business decisions around our current financial position.</li> </ul> <p>If I put my 'Chartered Accountant' hat on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In March each year we (myself and my work colleagues) sit down with some of our clients and construct a Cash Flow Budget (CFB) for the next twelve months (April – March).</li> <li>- In preparing this year's CFB we (my colleagues and I, along with our clients) did factor in a small increase in their rates based upon the 55% differential rate.</li> <li>- This is what our clients model their business decisions off and how we continue to advise our clients for the upcoming twelve months.</li> <li>- This is also what some of our clients have submitted to their bank managers so they can base there business decisions around our clients current financial position.</li> </ul> <p>If I put my 'wife and mother of two young children' hat on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In March each year I sit down and construct a CFB for the next twelve months for our personal spending.</li> <li>- In preparing this year's CFB I did factor in a small increase in the rates based upon my prior year rates notice as I own an investment property in Ararat.</li> <li>- This CFB is what I base our personal spending decisions off for the upcoming twelve months.</li> <li>- In this I have to factor in the cost of child care while I'm at work, my son has started Kinder</li> </ul>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

			<p>this year and the added cost of that, the increased costs in maintaining my vehicle with the additional trips to town, the increased costs of putting food on the table and the numerous other costs in raising children.</p> <p>As a farmer, Chartered Accountant, wife and mother I understand that the farming sector is very much reliant on the weather, the economy and a number of other factors that are most often out of our control. However, rates are a fixed cost to a business and there is simply no scope for a farmer to pass on such a significant increase in a fixed cost. This decision will have a huge impact not only to our farming businesses, but a huge impact on local business in general not to mention the number of businesses that are heavily reliant on the spending of the local farmer.</p> <p>Option 1 must be passed and even then farm business rates are high at a 55% differential. Please also consider that any increases in land values does not equal an increase in farm income. Farmers still have the same parcel of land in which they have to produce commodities from to generate income.</p> <p>It is also very concerning that a decision that is going to make such a significant impact on the Ararat Rural City Council as a whole was not in any way given proper public consultation. In fact neither of the two options that were consulted on were adopted.</p> <p>I would appreciate if you could take my submission and all submissions from our local farmers into consideration.</p> <p>Regards, Kelly Gellie</p>	
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## Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

206	Gibson	Jim	612 McCarthy Road Rossbridge	<p>As a small rural business owner the cost pressure is always an issue, the thought of any cost to your business going up by 45-50% at a time is completely unacceptable. Nobody likes to pay rates or taxes but the previous rating system for the shire seemed reasonably satisfactory. Why things have to be changed for changes sake is unjust.</p> <p>I appreciate the difficult task that councillors have and their endeavours to make it fair for all BUT the proposed rating strategy seems generous to some and grossly unfair to others and I would hope that council in their wisdom can re-visit this strategy and make it fairer to more rate payers. Mental health within rural communities is a growing issue and usually associated with financial burden, already there are those who are financially stretched to their limit and thrusting this extra anxiety their way is surely going to add to the existing stress levels. I implore the councillors to reconsider this rating strategy and not burden the rural sector to such an extent and allow everyone to work together within the community, town and rural to share the burden.</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

207	Greene	Benjamin	2123 Landsborough- Elmhurst Rd Elmhurst 3469 Vic	<p>To the Ararat Rural Council.</p> <p>I do not support the 2017 draft rating strategy and strongly oppose a shift away from the current strategy. As councilors, we elect you to represent the best interest of the community both rural and urban. I feel that this has not been reflected in this case. Although you have mentioned that there were workshops presented to the councilors to learn about the implications of new potential rate differential the one that is being suggested was not worked on at all. This is very poor governance preparation work when you have been elected by the community to act in the best interests of this community.</p> <p>As farmers and townfolk across the municipality of Ararat we all, I'm sure are proud of our land, water, environmental, city and small-town assets that we share. Along with this comes responsibility to look after and enhance our assets in an equitable manner. Farmers have an obligation to contribute to Ararat the city as do the city residence have the same obligation to contribute to the environment and all the catchments from which their town benefits from. With the fair rating system that is currently in we are sharing this responsibility together.</p> <p>It would be in the in the councilors best interest one would assume to have industry and business across the municipality sustainable, both within the city limits and out on farms. This being the case the question needs to be addressed to why are the commercial and industrial businesses within the council getting rate relief under the draft plan?</p> <p>The flow on effects from forcing up to a 51% increase on an average farm business with 3.7 assessments are quite worth considering from a stronger community effect. This should have been explored in the workshops presented to the councilors. The farm employee that resides in or around the municipality may get rate relief but also could be looking at less work as our first cost cutter is to reduce labour inputs.</p> <p>Disappointment has flown through the community meetings that have been had in respect to this draft plan. These meeting were poorly attended from councilors and strongly attended from the community with most questions left unanswered. We endorse you as councilors to represent us and we have been left dumb founded that you have not come out to help us understand what you are trying to achieve.</p> <p>What the future will hold for the Rural City of Ararat is dependent on good governance from the councilors that we elect. As a farm ratepayer, I would expect the big decisions like the draft rate plan to have impact studies on our community (all sectors) carried out. These</p>	No
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**Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2**

				<p>should not only cover financial aspects but health outcomes as well. (it was pointed out that none of the workshops that did take place, considered depression amongst the farming community, an issue we can't afford to overlook.)</p> <p>I urge the council and the councilors to look forwards in a positive manner after returning the strategy to the existing framework and then reuniting to come up with a well-researched and fair outcome with the differential rating strategy. This will require some disciplined workshops covering all aspects of our community including health. Community consultation on the potential strategies is a must and the councilors we elect need to present themselves for discussion. Very little to ask for such an impacting decision.</p>	
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## Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

208	Greene	David	42 Darbyshires Road Elmhurst. 3469	<p>My concern is around the fact that farmers owned less than a quarter of the rateable properties in the shire and take financial responsibility for more than half the city's rates, you refer to this as been fair and equitable, not the case. Also there has been a distinct lack of community consultation over the process, and when questioned at the Elmhurst meeting, no answers were forth coming, and lack of understanding of the consequences of the draft proposal by one of the Shire representatives present at that meeting. It was not till a community member organised a meeting in Elmhurst, that the Council thought it necessary to consult with Elmhurst residents.</p> <p>A very poorly conducted, and ill informed council, trying to bulldoze a draft strategy through, and refer to it as uniform rate.</p>	No
209	Hamilton	Darren	384 Western Highway, Ararat	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I wish to submit that I strongly disagree with the Draft Rating Strategy proposed by the council.</p> <p>As a land owner and Director of S.T. Hamilton &amp; Son Constructions and S.T. Hamilton Farms, I believe the proposed rate changes would result in the loss of jobs and are not at all in line with community expectations.</p> <p>The huge rate rise for farms will certainly result in job losses within our construction and farm businesses, who often work hand in hand. We currently have 30-35 local employees. This is not something we would want to do and feel it is completely avoidable.</p> <p>On another note, I also own several commercial interests in town but still disagree with the rate changes. I believe the proposed commercial rate cuts would be offset by the loss of business from the farming district who would no doubt be re-evaluating their spending.</p> <p>In short, this is not fair on farmers who are a core part of the Ararat community. There has to be a better way forward.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Darren Hamilton</p>	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

210	Hamilton	Stan	1 Bellinghams Hill Road, Ararat	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I wish to submit that I strongly disagree with the Draft Rating Strategy proposed by the council. As a land owner, and Director of S.T. Hamilton &amp; Son Constructions and S.T. Hamilton Farms, I believe the proposed rate changes would result in the loss of jobs and are not in line with community expectations.</p> <p>The huge rate rise for farms will result in job losses within our construction and farm businesses, who often work hand in hand. We currently have 30-35 local employees. This is not something we would want to do and feel it is completely avoidable.</p> <p>On another note, I also own several commercial interests in town but still disagree with the rate changes. I believe the proposed rate cuts would be offset by the loss of business from the farming district who would no doubt be re-evaluating their spending.</p> <p>In short, this is not fair on farmers who are a core part of the Ararat community. There has to be a better way forward.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Stan Hamilton</p>	No
211	Hinkley	Rodney	9 Corella Court Pomonal Victoria 3381	<p>Hi to all at the Ararat Council meeting tonight! its time for a change ! Around 22 years ago we had council amalgamations, It was said back by the Kennett Government the differential rates will only be around for 3-4 years here we are 17 years after that with differential rate still going,This is unfair on all that pay full rates eg someone living on the 1/4 acre bloke with no way of making money directly off there small property to pay rates up to people who live on slightly larger blocks around the Ararat rural city as well some are paying \$3000-\$4000 plus, just for the right to live out of town ! Businesses in the street with whether commercial or industrial will all benefit, a reduction of rates may help employ more staff to helping our economy !</p> <p>Differential rates must go no matter how much the farming community carries on its only fair as these part of the community clearly make lots of money from what they grow and they have the asset as well ! At the current time sheep prices are through the roof along with cattle and cropping , also rates can be claimed as an expense, no one in there private home can do this ! Also not happy that the Ace Radio network has been played by the farming community continuously saying that some farming people will be paying between \$60,000 to \$150,000 more which is a lie just to get a frightening reaction across ? I hope Rolly&amp;Judy Patterson are not in on this as the owners of Ace! Just vote to get rid of the differential rates and i think you see all other councils follow suit, this must be happen ! thanking for your time regards Rodney Hinkley</p>	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

212	Ibs Von Seht	Jan	111 Moyston West Rd., Moyston 3377	<p>I feel we should stand back and assess where we are currently (2016/2017) with the Differential Rate at 55% and a Municipal Charge of \$90.</p> <p>Under this formula most of the community seemed relatively happy, as was demonstrated by the Submissions received by ARCC for two originally proposed options.</p> <p>Option 1: Keep the status quo of 55% Differential and raise the Municipal Charge by to \$92          General: 8          Commercial: 1          Industrial: 0          Farming: 99          Total 108</p> <p>Option 2: Increase the Differential to 75% Commercial to 200% and Industrial to 150% and raise Municipal Charge to \$150          General: 19          Commercial: 0          Industrial: 0          Farming: 4          Total 23</p> <p>To me this would indicate only a small percentage of General, Commercial and Industrial rate payers were concerned enough to but in a submission - either for or against either option, so they were not overly interested or concerned which option was endorsed.</p> <p>Changing the Rating Strategy so radically has the danger of completely isolating the farming community, where previously there was a harmonious relationship. The community has become more aware and interested about where their food comes from, and with that there comes a growing respect for farmers - and a realisation how uncertain their economic viability is, being at the mercy of the weather and markets. To a large extend they have no way of passing on any additional costs, as many other businesses do.</p> <p>Conversely, farming families interact and utilise many of the sporting facilities and attend school in Ararat. These interactions form a harmonious bond, and many friendships. After explaining what the proposed Draft Rating Strategy would mean for their farming friends, this quickly evaporates any feelings of joy at potentially receiving a small reduction in town rates.</p> <p>The general feeling among the whole community is that this formula is unfair and inequitable.</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

213	Jackson	David	2466 Stockyard Hill Rd Skipton Victoria 3361	<p>Re: Draft Rating Strategy.</p> <p>I farm and reside in the Pyrenees Shire. I also own and farm land in the Ararat Shire. My rates in the Ararat Shire are going to increase from \$5881.66 to \$ 8,756.36.</p> <p>This is a 49% increase in my rates. Rates are one of my biggest expenses and this increase is the biggest increase of any of my expenses The increase represents the total profit that I will make off 30 acres of land. The increase will reduce my taxable income by nearly \$3,000. I have no way of passing this increase on to my customers because as farmers we are by and large price takers.</p> <p>I acknowledge that the Ararat Rural City Shire requires income from its residents to perform the duties expected of them.</p> <p>However, all residents should contribute in an equal and equitable way.</p> <p>Farmers make up the minority proportion of thee ratepayers, however they are contributing the majority of the income to run the Shire.</p> <p>I urge council to consider the impact that this increase will have on the profit of all farmers in the district. The majority of profit which farmers make is channelled back into local business.</p> <p>Please reject this change to rating policy.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely</p> <p>David Jackson 2466 Stockyard Hill Rd Skipton Vic 3361</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

214	Jess	Dan	799 Ballyrogan Rd Ballyrogan 3375	<p>Dear councillors</p> <p>I would just like to express my disappointment and dismay at the proposed rating strategy change.</p> <p>The proposal would likely cost our business an extra \$10000 a year in rates to the Ararat Rural City Council.</p> <p>I already think that as Rural rate payers we struggle to get value from our rates, and I see this increase as grossly unfair. A grader along our road on average once a year is about the extent of the benefits we realise from the Ararat Rural City Council and tens of thousands of dollars worth of rates.</p> <p>The margin squeeze in the farming industry is well documented with ever increasing costs and relatively stagnant commodity prices. Productivity gains (something foreign to the ARCC) are a tool that farmers have used to combat this however efficiency gains (again...) are a valuable tool. This potential rate rise will have to be recovered by farming businesses and I fear that taking business to larger regional centres such as Ballarat for goods and services maybe what ends up happening to the detriment of Ararat.</p> <p>I would be interested to know especially from councillors Maclean and Ford why this proposal was put up let alone voted for by our citycentric councillors. What have farmers done to offend them? Why do they want to penalise them? Has there been some sort of cost benefit analysis done on this proposed draft rating strategy and it effects on the Ararat economy? We have not had any reasons explained to us.</p> <p>I sincerely hope some common sense prevails and the ARCC does not engage in this social injustice.</p> <p>Yours sincerely Dan Jess</p>	No
215	Jess	Brooke	799 Ballyrogan Rd Ballyrogan 3375	<p>I am writing to object to the current rating draft for increase in the rural shore rates. As it stands if the rate increase goes ahead we will be paying an extra \$10,000 in rates on top of what we already pay now. I am not objecting to paying rates but the rate rise the has been proposed will cripple our farming g family. I understand that rates pay for essential services within the shire but the reality is for us we are lucky to get our road graded once a year. We do not receive a rubbish collection and have to now have our own skip to remove our rubbish at our own cost. I do not agree with the rate rise!</p>	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

216	Joyce	Anthony	342 Burnett Road, TATYOON	<p>Dear Councillors, I am writing to ask Councillors of Ararat Rural City Council to vote to return to a differential rating strategy, preferably ‘Option 1,’ as discussed at the Special Meeting on 4 April 2017.</p> <p>The community as a whole and farmers in particular, have been blindsided by the proposed abolishment of differential rates. The motion was seemingly passed in haste, without any community consultation, and completely lacked transparency. Moreover, Council’s public consultation on the two rating strategies, as proposed, indicated that 82% of respondents supported the existing differential strategy and this has been ignored. It is unacceptable for elected officials to perform their duties in this manner.</p> <p>The proposed strategy will have a significant financial impact on our family farm business and on our young family. The short-term consequences will mean less money to pay down debt, run our farm and pay our household bills: we will have to cut spending from other areas. Almost all of our farm operating expenses are paid to other local businesses that benefit from the local agricultural sector. We also employ local contractors several times each year. The flow on effect of this policy change will also negatively impact these local businesses and households. During drought, these effects will be exacerbated.</p> <p>It is impossible to predict exactly what the long-term effect of the proposed strategy will be, but I have no doubt it will detrimental to the sustainability of our family farm, which has (thus far) proudly operated over four generations. Unlike other businesses, farmers are unable to pass along increased costs which means rates come directly out of our income base. As the saying goes, farmers are ‘price takers, not price makers.’</p> <p>Land value is irrelevant when one requires the land to make their living and hopes to never have to sell it. Increased land value creates a larger tax burden and increased rates. Furthermore, it is simply not fair to encumber a small population with least access to council services, with the majority of the rate burden.</p> <p>I implore the four Councillors who voted to abolish differential rates to re-think their decision. As a community, we need to find a solution that is equitable to farming families and the local businesses that benefit from them.</p> <p>Sincerely, Anthony Joyce</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

217	Kennedy	Rod & Victoria	3689 Glenelg Highway Pittong 3360	<p>Victoria and Rod Kennedy RP and VC Kennedy ATF Kennedy Farming 3689 Glenelg Highway PITTONG 3360</p> <p>31st May 2017</p> <p>Ararat Rural City Council 59 Vincent St ARARAT 3377</p> <p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>Submission opposing ARCC draft rating strategy decision to abolish differential rates</p> <p>We are a local farming business operating in the municipal district of the Ararat Rural City Council and are concerned about the Council's proposal to abolish differential rates in 2017.</p> <p>We are extremely disappointed with the proposed rate rise for the 2017/2018 period. Our current rates for our farming property are \$8924.70, with the proposed rise to make our rates \$13,357.11 , a rise of 50%. We now need to produce an extra \$4432.41 to run our business for the year.</p> <p>We feel that the ARCC rating strategy decision has the potential to be detrimental to the long term sustainability of our business and feel the Council decision was made without adequate public consultation, communication and analysis.</p> <p>The existing ARCC differential rating methodology was devised through considerable public consultation to address well-known inequalities associated with the land valuation process. We therefore support the retention of the existing ARCC differential rating methodology which is a balanced approach to sustaining farming, business and commercial viability of our community.</p> <p>Victoria Kennedy on behalf of Victoria and Rod Kennedy RP and VC Kennedy ATF Kennedy Farming</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

218	Kimpton	Charles & Cassabdra	3752 Moyston-Dunkeld Road, Bornes Hill	<p>The proposed changes to rural rating are neither fair nor equitable. To impose a rates increase of over 80% on about 1/4 of ratepayers goes against the spirit &amp; the letter of the Local Government act. We ask the Council to reconsider the recommendations as they are inconsistent with similar councils across Victoria, will seriously disadvantage rural constituents and are illogical given the Council's own stated Rating Framework.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Charles &amp; Cassandra Kimpton.</p>	No
219	Kirkpatrick	Kate	Willaura	<p>We support the rate structure to remain as us and do not support an increase to rural rate payers. As a rural resident and as a business that works in the rural sector we do not support the increase. This would have a negative flow on effect to our rural townships and businesses leaving families like us questioning the worth of living in the municipality.</p>	No
220	Kumnick	Anthony	17 Moyston-Great Western Rd Moyston	<p>Ive just recently moved off the farm and to a residence in Moyston. I fully support the farming community and have lived first hand how hard it is on the farm and how hard it is to make money off the farm.</p> <p>Some farmers might be doing a bit better this year than in previous years however when farms have a good year some low life organisation finds a way to try and suck any of that profit whether it be by putting up input cost because a so called "limited supply" or by putting up rates.</p> <p>The problem is that I dont believe the Ararat council has an ounce of innovation when it comes to devising rate structure. It holds true that the farming industry is the only industry that sells wholesale, has to purchase at a retail price and pays for transport costs both ways!!! The statement that one councillor made along the lines of why should they have to pay more when they are not a business. May be but...Why should farmers have to pay for services they are not getting any benefit from? Id argue that based on that statement you should base the rates on net income.... As a non-business entity you are still using a service.</p> <p>Also why havent the council taken into consideration making the businesses within Ararat pay more? Why should a multi-national have their rates dropped substantially.</p> <p>I encourage the council to reconsider this strategy and put a bit more thought into it.. So its Fair For All.</p>	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

221				Commercial in Confidence 01.06.2017	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

222	Lewis	Laura	126 Ballanee Rd Ballan	<p>As a landholder of farmland within the Ararat Rural council, I object to the unfair rate changes. I have a property that is surrounded by road or road reserve on 4 sides of the property, only one of those four sides is maintained by the council. I receive no other infrastructure or services from the council. However, I believe that those who are more fortunate within society should prop up the lesser. Farmers by no means are more fortunate every year as their livelihoods and yearly income is determined by the weather, there is no other industry that has it's profits directly linked to mother nature.</p> <p>Whereas a retail, Commercial or factory business profit is ultimately determined by the efficiency and customer demand.</p> <p>Why would anyone support Woolworths or Aldi supermarket that have un-ending customer demand to receive a rate cut.</p> <p>If it is stated that for every house in the shire has 1 service using occupant Town residential properties each hold a house. Not all farm properties hold a house in fact approximately 1/3 don't, therefore only 2/3's of the council's farm property 24% share is using council services. To put these numbers into perspective 1145 people are paying for 55% of the rates share, yet only make up 15% of the council's population that use the services that the rate revenue provides.</p> <p>So the rate change is putting undue pressure on the highest income risk families by expecting them to foot the bill for services that they can only expect to as a population to access 15%. (This assumes that each rural resident uses the same amount of council services that their town dwelling cousins)</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

223	Liston	Joseph	4198 Tatyoon Rd Westmere	<p>To the Mayor, Councillors and CEO, Ararat Rural City Council.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to address council on the topic of the 2017 rating strategy review.</p> <p>While this is a very emotive topic and the proposed changes would have a drastically negative effect on our family, we will attempt to keep our emotions in check.</p> <p>Straight out the rates for our modestly sized family farm, split across three rateable properties will increase from \$12,157.43 to \$18,244.66.</p> <p>\$6,000 is too much to expect a small business to find in an industry where we cannot increase our prices and our income does not increase at such a rate.</p> <p>Also, given the upcoming revaluation and land prices being driven up by large corporation purchases the actual increase will be even higher.</p> <p>The effect of taking an extra \$6,000 + out of our business and families pockets will not only place a financial and emotional strain on farmers as individual people but it will also effect where and how we spend money both personally and for the business.</p> <p>At present we try to shop locally where possible which often means spending slightly more and coming into Ararat rather than purchasing through larger suppliers in larger towns and online. A larger farm ute to accommodate our growing family, swimming lessons for our children, eating out and attendance at local events are areas we would have spent money locally but will now have to reconsider and further cut back.</p> <p>We may only be one family and one small business who will be taking their spending out of Ararat but the case will be very similar for all farmers in the district and this will have a negative impact on many businesses in Ararat.</p> <p>In contrast, the proposal reduces the rates of large corporations in town such as Safeway Ararat who will not necessarily spend their savings locally.</p> <p>We urge you to reconsider this draft rating strategy and continue with the 55% differential for farming properties.</p> <p>Reassessing the criteria for farm property classification should also be considered as there may be many small acreages that are not actually agricultural businesses and could technically be classified as general.</p> <p>An audit of how council is spending its funds is needed to demonstrate the relevance of all council programs. We have major concerns that significant quantities of money are being spent on luxuries such as the performing arts centre, gardens, tourism promotion and the outdoor swimming pool. While there is a place for these expenses in a budget with healthy</p>	No
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**Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2**

				<p>funds, we do not believe they should come at the expense of basic services such as safe roads and definitely not where the viability of our family business is threatened by unsustainable rates increases.</p> <p>Again we thank you for the opportunity to voice our concerns and trust you will give our submission proper consideration.</p> <p>Jock and Justine Liston</p> <p>Please acknowledge receipt of this submission.</p>	
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## Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

224	Maconachie	Ian & Susan	Geelong Rd Ballyrogan	<p>Strongly disagree with councils draft rating strategy, for farm rate increase!            Feel as though we're being held to ransom, it's like going back in time to Robin Hood era if this proposal is passed.            Buying more land recently in this council, the next generation may not get to continue farming in this council, if this proposal is allowed. It would make it extremely difficult.            Our land is our work place, without it we can not farm! For most of us it is also where our place of residents is also. Having our house &amp; farming sheds on this land increases our property values, of which without we would not exist. Where is our decrease for our place of residents?            Farming has one of the highest levels of health issues in our state. We feel this would add severely to stress, heart conditions, mental health &amp; numerous other health issues brought on by added pressure to pay added bills.            Can't understand why we the farmers are expected to pay excessively higher rates for no extra services for our money paid.            Farmers spending in town will decline if draft is passed.            We are hoping all of our coucillors look at their whole region, that we have voted them into, not just the city boundary.</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

225	Marshall	Bruce	<p>Unit 15, 37-39          Brook St, Sunbury,          Vic, 3429          (Owner of rate-able          property at: 56          Moyston Cemetery          Rd, Moyston, 3377)</p>	<p>Dear Ararat Rural City Councillors,</p> <p>I'm writing to object to your proposal to remove differential rates from the municipality. My objections are based on the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- “Equal” Vs “Fair”: Whilst the rate strategy states that the new system will be an 'equal' way of distributing the burden of local government administration costs, I would strongly argue that it is not a 'fair' solution. To suggest that you would now expect the farming community to contribute an additional \$2.4 million dollars annually to be split across 1718 rateable properties, meaning an average annual increase per property of \$1,397 while all other rateable properties in the municipality get a decrease could hardly be called 'fair' in the eyes of the reasonable person. Excluding the Commercial and Industrial Properties I calculate that the remaining general rateable properties will all receive an average discount of \$345 per property on their rates. Again, I question whether this can be deemed to be a ‘fair’ outcome. Looking at the way the current rating system is structured, it shows that 52% of rates currently come from General Rates, with the remaining balance of 48% coming from the combination of commercial, industrial and farming. When you consider that most farms are operating as businesses, then I would have thought this was a pretty ‘equal’ split up of the rate burden.</li> <li>- The struggle for farmers: Whilst, as per their CIV values, agricultural properties can be seen to have a large asset base, and are presumably in a better position to absorb the increase, the reality is that most farmers do it fairly tough from season to season. I personally grew up on a farm in Moyston and have family and friends that currently operate farms. The amount of work that goes in to making ends meet from season to season is hard to fathom by those who have never experienced farming life. For the Council to, without fair warning, suddenly impose a new rating system that for many farmers will mean many thousands of dollars in additional rates, is in my opinion a poor way for local government to conduct its business.</li> <li>- The contribution to the local economy: As per the ARCC website, the agricultural (and related sectors) industry provides employment for over 1000 people in the municipality. I would suggest that this is probably the highest employing sector in the municipality, which in turn would support many of the other local industries such as retail and services. Anecdotally, I'd say that that vast majority of discretionary spend (ie, groceries, lifestyle goods etc..) from local farmers would be spent within the municipality most of the time which, for many local businesses may be the difference between them staying viable or not. Therefore, an additional tax which is going to take away a chunk of this discretionary spend is only going to hurt other local businesses in the municipality. Conversely, I wonder whether the extra savings to be had for the General Rates population will be captured in the local economy, or</li> </ul>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

				<p>is it likely to be spent on a major purchase or experiences outside the municipality.</p> <p>- The Perception of Council's Work: As a current local government professional, and indeed a former staff member of Ararat Rural City Council, I know only full too well how much work goes in to keeping an LGA operating to the standard that people expect and hope. The situation is only even more dire in the current environment with the imposed rate capping. I am impressed with much of the work that ARCC is pursuing across the municipality and in particular in Ararat itself, so credit where credit is due. Whilst I don't currently live in Moyston, I regularly visit family and have a small property for which I pay my rates and is used for farming purposes by my family. I have got to be honest and question how much effort and resources ARCC is really putting into maintaining the assets and roads in the rural communities. As an example, in the 3 or 4 years I lived at my property I don't remember a grader once coming along the full length of the Moyston Cemetery Rd where I lived. It might actually be the case that a tremendous amount of effort is going in to it, however the rural community's perception for many, many years has been that Council is not adequately keeping up with the needs of the rural communities. Therefore, this proposed rate increase feels like a massive slap in the face. Perhaps a better way to go about it would have been to stagger the rate increase, and progressively deliver a higher standard of work to the rural communities that would help them better appreciate the value of Council's work. I notice in the Council plan there is an action to 'Implement the Small Towns Strategy'. I couldn't find a copy of the plan on the Council website, so I'm not sure of the nature of the strategy, however if there was a truly concerted effort to improve Council's services in the rural communities then perhaps there wouldn't be such an uproar over this proposal.</p> <p>I trust that you will take this opportunity to thoroughly rethink this proposal and come back to the community with a proposal that is fair.</p> <p>Kind regards, Bruce Marshall 0435 354 970</p>	
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226	McPherson	Greg & Scarlett	365 Coburn's Road Streatham, 3351.	<p>As a farmer in the Rural City of Ararat we are extremely concerned at the proposed Draft Rating Strategy 2017. It has been an absolute surprise that the Ararat Rural City Council(ARCC) has decided to adopt this proposal. Especially since council put out 2 options for a public response and to abolish the differential rate was not one of them. The process of arriving at this proposal is total unacceptable.</p> <p>We have been notified of a 49% increase in our rates which will make it one of our top four expenses. This expense contributes nothing to our income. The gravel road is graded twice a year, so its good for a short period, thereafter it has plenty of pot holes to aid wear and tear on vehicles. Margins are tight anyway, so this increase means we will have even less to spend in the local area. With a property revaluation next year it will no doubt mean another increase in rates. One really wonders if it wouldn't be a better idea to leave the shire and move elsewhere. It concerns us the direct financial impact this will have on the young farmers in the ARCC with heavy debt burdens, they also might consider their options, which could lead to another negative impact on the town of Ararat.</p> <p>Decisions that ARCC make like this, will have an impact on the businesses in Ararat as well as putting others under more stress.</p> <p>Perhaps ARCC should stick with the status quo or option 1, which was the favourite from their survey, for this year. Then seriously consider all options including a major budget review, to bring before the rate payers in early next year.</p> <p>The Victorian Government has applied a rate cap of 2% increase on the total rates council can collect. I believe the state government did this to provide some certainty to the people of Victoria, that their rates would not go up excessively. I believe councils have a moral responsibility to apply that cap evenly across all sectors. I'm sure its not the Victorian Governments intention that some ratepayers should have a decrease by up to 91% and others an increase by up to 51%(ARCC 2017 Strategic Document Fact Sheet).</p> <p>We support the existing differential rating strategy the ARCC has, which is fair and just to all rate payers.</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

227	McRae	Heather	1556 Moyston Willaura Road Willaura	<p>Initially I thought I would support rates increase if it meant a more prompt or actual response from Council for any maintenance requests to occur. However I'm now aware that the rating strategy is only a shifting of the percentage of rates across Council's four differential rates with an increase to farms that will result in decrease to the other three.</p> <p>Please consider my following concerns. Due to pre-arranged family event I will not be able to attend 6 June meeting however my son Drew McRae will represent the family.</p> <p>1. The process and lack of transparency. Two proposed rating strategies were table at Council meeting where 82% of responses were in favour of maintaining the exiting status quo. However on the night a third option was tabled where four of seven Councillors voted in favour of what is now the current draft rating strategy. It appears this strategy had not been discussed, workshopped or an opportunity for community consultation prior to the Council meeting.</p> <p>However Council did provided the opportunity for rate payers to meet with Councillors "involved in preparing the draft budget and draft rating strategy" through three community council meetings. Those Councillors who voted for the draft rating did not attend any of these meetings. This is concerning as the meetings could have provided an opportunity for all available Councillors to explain the rational for their decision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Will those four councillors publicly justify and demonstrate logic for their decision and the third proposal?</li> <li>- Had they considered the possible implications (risk &amp; impact) not only on the farming community but the broader rural community?</li> </ul> <p>2. The proposed draft rating strategy will bring at this point extra financial pressures on our 540ha Willaura North farming enterprise as we try to rebuild the farm infrastructure to a standard to again to be a viable business.</p> <p>Following Errol's illness and untimely death we hope to maintain the 110 year old McRae farming enterprise. Drew, our son, resigned from high paying trade related position to manage the farm at 50% salary increase. The family support him in this commitment and his aim to eventually build a local trade business to complement his income to a comparison to his previous one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do all Councillors have a clear understanding of the impact in maintaining and or increasing family farms especially in current environment where land values have been driven by multinationals? This has also meant an increase in our rateable farm value with rates also increasing. Both impacts that may result in more family families selling out and young people moving away.</li> <li>- Does Councils have any views on assisting young farmers to stay in the district?</li> </ul>	No
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## Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback – part 2

				<p>3. Ararat Rural City Council Draft Council Plan 2017-2021 Mission Statement, Values and the new Health &amp; Wellbeing includes "... openness ... transparency ... working with our communities ... respect ... passion ... importance (on) health and wellbeing"</p> <p>- Adopting this Plan how will our elected Councillors implement this Plan if the draft rating strategies remain? How will Council support the Ararat Rural City greater financial contributors - farms, in supporting these farming families and communities?</p> <p>In light of the farming communities concerns and the proposed extra financial rate requirements I ask Council to adopt, as proposed at original Council meeting, maintaining the current status quo whilst Council undertake further investigation and consultations regarding differential rates.</p>	
228	Nicholson	Luke	414 Moyston-Dunkeld Rd, Moyston	I vote for option 1 differential rates and do not want the proposed uniform rate	No
229	Nicholson	Graeme	414 Moyston Dunkeld Road. Moyston	Option 1. Status quo Why is it necessary to reduce commercial properties as these businesses also earn an "income" from their facilities.	No
230	Nicholson	Catherine	414 Moyston-Dunkeld Rd Moyston 3377	I vote for option 1 to continue the rate differential as it currently stands rather than unfairly rating farmers out of existence.	No

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231	Panter	Nancy	368 Colliers Gap Rd	<p>Re: ARCC Draft Rating Strategy 2017</p> <p>We (Adam Louder and Nancy Panter) of 368 Colliers Gap Road, Eversley, 3377 are opposed to the proposed strategy by Council that will raise the municipal rates by the application of a uniform rate.</p> <p>The council to-date has not provided any sound rational and/or reason for such a significant change to ARCC rates.</p> <p>As a ARCC ratepayer we would like to better understand the strategy behind the ARCC Draft Rating Strategy 2017 and how it will provide our city with increased social and economic sustainability and growth.</p> <p>By applying a uniform rate, large multi-national commercial enterprises will see a reduction in rates paid – this reduction will help their profitability which will not be seen again in Ararat.</p> <p>If the rate decision as mooted is passed, farmers will have considerably less disposable income to spend in Ararat and in some cases it could cause severe economic hardship for farmers and their families.</p> <p>So it is not only the farming community that will see be penalized by this proposed strategy, but also businesses within Ararat.</p> <p>The social impact of such a strategy will be devastating to the Ararat community. It will create severe economic consequences for farmers and local businesses and also has the potential to create angst and division between town and farming citizens. It puts town against country when we should be trying to work together to support each other.</p> <p>We are extremely disappointed that our elected representatives behind this proposed strategy have not been available for comment or to attend local meetings to discuss this proposed strategy.</p> <p>In our opinion it is highly irresponsible of our elected representatives to put such a strategy forward without a detailed rationale as to how this will help our community and it is negligent of those councilors responsible not to be available to answer questions or to provide details that would back up their proposal.</p>	No
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				<p>We are so disappointed in the way this strategy has been proposed we will be filing a complaint with the state government's local government authority.</p> <p>Nancy Panter and Adam Louder 368 Colliers Gap Road, Eversley, 3377</p>	
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232	Peter	Michael	34 Wild Street, Ararat, VIC 3377	<p>I just need to understand how council can justify the rate increase proposed for farmers. Besides the fact that they have larger portions of land, what extra services do our primary producers receive from council compared to people in town? Compare to residents in town the tax increase proposed for farmers seem disproportionate to the services they receive from council. In my mind this is not fair and it is a shame that our primary producers who are major contributors to our local economy should be treated this way. I do not live on the land myself but as a business owner I feel strong about supporting our farmers. I always say doing business in a farming community like ours, if the farmers are happy everyones happy. Another thing I would like clarity on as well is why our rates in Ararat are so much higher compared to other councils in Victoria. Has anyone done an assessment on this? What make our council different from others ?</p>	No
233	Price	Peter & Merrilyn	2261MoystonWillauraRd Willaura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No strategy,understanding behind decision of rate changes</li> <li>-Our operation will be unsustainable with another extra cost</li> <li>-Our son&amp;wife looking at taking over the farm will not be a reality</li> <li>-No capacity to spend money,therefore local business's will suffer</li> <li>-Council needs to take more time &amp; consultation into reviewing the rate strategy-be fair!!</li> </ul>	No
234	Price	Scott & Carmel	Willaura	<p>We strongly believe that the differential rating system must stay in its current state. The loss of the differential rating and its resulting spike in cost to us would have a major effect on our family farming operation.</p> <p>We do not have the luxury of passing this price increase on in any way. We currently work on average 6.5 days weeks while raising our four young children to keep outside expenses down. We do not have employees but rely solely on the support and assistance our little family unit can offer. We are not aiming to make millions of dollars; but simply to have a sustainable and viable farm going into the future so should any of our children wish to continue on in farming endeavours the option is available to them.</p> <p>Only a year ago the government granted Drought funding for our entire district, not just funding for farming families. This clearly demonstrates the understanding of the close financial implications farming hardships have on all local businesses and communities. Crippling farms with additional rates will have a strong detrimental effect on all local businesses and communities within the Council.</p> <p>It is these farming families that will be penalised that are often responsible for essential services within their communities that the Council perhaps undertake in Ararat. Mowing of local football grounds, management of local pools, kindergartens and the like. With less money to be spent local farmers will have to work harder and longer hours limiting time they have in the past been able to spend on Community projects.</p> <p>The National Centre for Farmers Health was created as the health of farmers is at a critical</p>	No

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				<p>point both physically and mentally. Abolishing differential rates would demonstrate the Ararat Rural City Council's indifference to the struggles of its farming rate payers and further isolate these families.</p> <p>Increasing rates while reducing services to farming families is simply beyond comprehension.</p>	
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235	Price	Joshua & Katy	62 Wills Rd, Lake Bolac	<p>My wife and I have been landowners within the Ararat Rural City Council for 5 years and as a young couple starting out on the land we are deeply concerned about the impact that the proposed rate rise will have on us.</p> <p>We are planning to start a family in the next 12 months which will mean that our sole income will come from profits on the farm. The Agricultural industry is an incredibly vulnerable industry and dependant on external factors including climate and grain prices. This has placed enormous stress and unpredictability on farmers particularly in the past few years.</p> <p>The proposed rate increase of 47% is not only one of the highest rates in the region but also a cost that we could not have predicted given the lack on consultation in the process.</p> <p>While we understand that rates are necessary to assist in implementing future initiatives we feel that it is unreasonable and unfair to expect local farmers to provide the 55% of this, particularly given the vulnerability of the industry as previously mentioned and fact that this is not only our home but our business as well.</p> <p>We have felt firsthand the impact that purchasing of land by Corporations has had in the area and how difficult it has made it for young farmers to purchase land in this region. We are disappointed that the local council isn't supporting and providing incentives for young farmers to stay in the area and we are concerned that the proposed rate increases may mean that we are unable to purchase more land and grow our business in the future. Living on the land also means that my wife has to travel 70km each way for her work due to the limited opportunities for employment in her industry which is also a challenge many young farming families face.</p> <p>We just feel that we should be given the same opportunities as other young couples regardless of where we reside which we feel that proposed rates don't reflect.</p> <p>We would urge the council to take the time to reconsider the proposed rate and provide farming families with the opportunity to be part of the consultation process and consider other options that support all families as the proposed rate rise will not only impact us in the short term but our future business and family decisions.</p> <p>Regards Josh and Katy Price</p>	No
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236	Rogers	Simon	PO BOX 139 Donald 3480	<p>Corinella Farms Pty Ltd own farming land across multiple shires in Western Victoria. Corinella Farms are still in the acquisition phase with further capital to deploy.</p> <p>If the draft rating strategy is implemented it will substantially increase overhead costs in the Ararat Rural City Council (ARCC), reducing the profitability of current holdings. Even with the current 55% rate differential for farming land, the council rates in the ARCC are some of the highest paid. The proposed significant increase in rates will be taken into account for any further investment in the ARCC.</p> <p>Corinella Farms aim to source farm inputs, machinery and labour locally and support local communities. The proposed rate increase will directly impact the capacity of Corinella Farms to contribute to the local communities with the ARCC.</p> <p>Corinella Farms would strongly urge the ARCC to reconsider the draft rating strategy and favour the current 55% rate differential being retained.</p>	No
237	Rowe	Don	963 Andrews Lane Maroona	<p>I wish to add my protest to the ridiculous rise in rates for farmers in the Ararat area. No doubt you have had all the reasons from many people so I won't repeat them. I can't see how you can justify a sudden increase of 50% without any consultation. Any other Govt. body would have no hope of getting away with such a proposal.</p>	No

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238	Russell	Susan	4608 Pyrenees Hwy, Dunneworthy, 3377	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing in regards to the proposed Uniform Rating System. I am apposed to this proposal on many fronts. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. By increasing the rate burden to rural rate payers, it will add financial pressure to my families farming operation Dunneworthy Pastoral Pty Ltd which has seen tighter margins over the last 20 years. As farmers are "price takers" this additional cost can NOT be passed on, thereby, causing the business to have to tighten costs, which will include spending with business in the Ararat township and reducing employee number. This will inturn will hinder the electorate reducing wealth and population.</li><li>2. Mental anguish, at the best of times farming is a difficult business with great reliance on the season (drought and floods) and commodity prices. By increasing the rate burden it will add further pressure to farmers and farm managers.</li><li>3. It is the rural population that support local business in the Ararat City, and by increasing rates to these people you will be hurting all local businesses not just the farming ones.</li></ol> <p>The Ararat Council has not had it's rural rate payers interests at heart for some time, it is a disgrace that this proposal even be considered! It is short term thinking.</p> <p>Yours sincerely, Susan Russell</p>	No
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239	Shaw	David	4608 Pyrenees Hwy, Dunneworthy, 3377	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I would like to register my objection to any changing of the rating structure for the municipality. I believe there are a number of implications to all rural businesses with any changing of the differential.</p> <p>I believe that the council may not have properly considered the impact that this will also have on Ararat City businesses. As an example, we alone in the last 12 months have used 32 local businesses, 7 local contractors, 4 full time employees with families plus casual staff. These businesses and contractors are small operations that rely on the rural sector. The impact of taking money out of the rural sector is well known as it has such a profound effect. This example when multiplied by the number of agricultural businesses in the municipality will have profound effects on Ararat.</p> <p>Unlike other businesses agriculture cannot pass on any increased costs, and as is well known the return on farming assets is far less than other businesses of similar value. As such spending must be reduced.</p> <p>I also believe that rates should reflect some form of fair benefit as was the original concept. This proposal is nothing but a wealth tax. A large percentage of the rural roads maintenance expenditure is via government grants and as rural residents receive no more benefits than the city dweller this proposal is most unfair.</p> <p>The original concept of the shire amalgamation was to be for the betterment of all residents. There is already a large resentment by rural residents to the way the council has treated them. This proposal will only increase the rural versus city divide, which is in no one's interest.</p> <p>I also note that there will be a revaluation in the municipality next year. As farming land has increased in value quite considerably in recent times this will already mean a considerable rate increase.</p> <p>Yours sincerely, David Shaw</p>	No
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240	Stacy	Brian & Davina	868 Chatsworth Wickliffe Road WICKLIFFE VIC 3379	<p>To the Councillors of the Ararat Rural City:  Paul Hooper,  Glenda McLean,  Gwenda Allgood,  Peter Beales,  Darren Ford,  David Pettman,  Jo Armstrong.</p> <p>My husband and I are relatively new to the Ararat Rural City municipality. We moved our farming business from Western Australia to Wickliffe in 2013. We chose this area because of the climate and farming conditions as well as the commodity markets, lifestyle, education, and off farm income opportunities. We were fortunate enough to be able to buy property in the district but have taken a substantial financial risk to do so. The farming business is a tough game and achieving good gross margins can be very challenging. We support our farm business with off farm income and some contracting and we are working extremely hard to build a family business that is able to be sustainable for the long term. My husband and I are both well-educated with business qualifications and I am a CPA, we understand financial risk and the challenges of managing cash flow in good years and bad. Under this draft rating proposal we are personally looking at an increase of 50% in our rates for the property and this amount is likely to further increase with the revaluation of land early next year.</p> <p>I have been made aware that the differential rating system was implemented to address inequalities arising from the land valuations method of determining rates. The ARCC has supported this differential rating system as a matter of policy for a number of years. With the current 55% differential rate farming families in the ARCC are already paying some of the highest rates in this region.</p> <p>As a farmer we are not opposed to the principal of increasing rates, however the extent of this proposal is going to have major implications for not only farmers, but all small business in the municipality. If farmers have a significant jump in their overheads; discretionary spending will reduce impacting many small local businesses, like machinery manufacturers &amp; dealers, car dealers, contractors, mechanics, tradesmen, engineers, vets, etc.- in fact anyone who is in a service and supply industry will be hit hard.</p> <p>If the increase in rates revenue was to be put back into infrastructure and projects in the local towns within the municipality outside of Ararat, we would be more inclined to support a</p>	No
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			<p>proposal for an increase in the differential rate. I would like to mention that the shire where we were in WA had a good system in that it had a budget submission process where the satellite towns in the shires were encouraged to write a submission each year requesting funding for specific projects in their town. The submissions generally came from the Development Committees which were made up of a residents of the town, this process streamlined and prioritised what each town's major goals and projects were and allowed the shire to work with the towns to achieve their goals. So far in the few years we have been in Wickliffe and been involved with a number of organisations in Lake Bolac and Wickliffe we have seen very little support in comparison from the ARCC. I can see huge potential in our local town with the strength of our communities, but it always seems to be up to the volunteers to raise funds and the local businesses in town to donate services and products to achieve the town's goals.</p> <p>It does appear that the ARCC's decision to abolish the differential rates system was made without proper consultation or consideration with its families and business located in the municipality. I realise that the ARCC has in the past worked hard in times of droughts / floods / fires to assist farm businesses and is also looking at the future of water sustainability in the municipality. We urge you as councillors to consider the impact this draft rating strategy decision will have on all constituents in the municipality. I ask that you reconsider your position and reinstate the current differential rating system leaving the current rates in place for the foreseeable future. The increases in farm land values in the southern part of the municipality will already cause significant rates increases in the next couple of years. Please review your budget and council plans to ensure that the families and businesses located in the Ararat Rural City municipality have a fair and equitable future.</p> <p>Yours sincerely Davina Stacy Stacy Partners Avonlea 868 Chatsworth Wickliffe Road WICKLIFFE VIC 3379</p>	
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241	Stapleton	Cheryle	35 Pollard Lane Ararat Vic 3377	<p>Council should consider the impact on all rate payers. I am an urban rate payer and would like to see my rates decrease. I pay almost \$4000 in rates per year and as it is my family home I gain no tax benefits to help offset this expense. I have lived in the Ararat community all my life and have supported the infrastructure and commercial community by buying locally, sending my children to the local primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>Whilst I have empathy for the farmers, many of which are friends (with my husband coming from a farming background), I also have grave concerns for the local Ararat residents who struggle to meet ever the most basic of needs. The pensioner who is reliant on the aged or disability pension to make ends meet, live by modest means and at times struggle to pay for their heating and food bills. I realise a lot of farmers may do it tough, but so do a lot of other hard working people who can not claim any benefits through the ATO. Many farmers in our district send their children to private schools outside our region, drive new model vehicles and enjoy a modest lifestyle because in years gone by they have not had to bear the same financial burden that urban and commercial ratepayers have had to.</p> <p>It is a shame that the whole rate strategy debate has become somewhat personal, has been directed by some like a political campaign with myself receiving emails and texts from farming friends to submit a pre-populated letter. I'm sorry but please put struggling families and pensioners first because they too support of community, live, shop and are usually educated within the boundaries of Ararat Rural City Council.</p>	No
242	Sullivan	John	Units 1-5/26 Vincent St, Ararat	<p>I'm the owner of 5 units at 1-5/26 Vincent St, Ararat.</p> <p>I strongly support the new Draft Rating Strategy 2017/18.</p> <p>The current rating scheme is unfair and is a major disincentive to property owners to upgrade or develop their properties. General, Commercial and Industrial property owners have been disproportional paying an excessive portion of the rates.</p> <p>If the new rating strategy is introduced, I will be upgrading and renovating my 5 units. I'm sure many other property owners will be considering the same.</p> <p>Regards John Sullivan</p>	No

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243	Thomas	Jane		<p>As a farmer for 40+ years with multiple blocks around Ararat I am disappointed with the Draft Rating Strategy. I have struggled to see any significant benefit to farmers resulting from the merger between the City of Ararat and the rural focused Shire of Ararat in 1994 when the financially stable Shire of Ararat began paying off the debt of the City of Ararat. Prior to the merger rural roads were a focus of the Shire of Ararat and farmers were treated as important contributors to the community who could see real benefit from their rates. Currently Ararat Rural City expects approximately 460 farm businesses to pay 38% of total rates and municipal charges. This is already an inflated contribution from farm businesses but increasing that to 55% is unconscionable.</p> <p>The 'Fair Go Rates System' (FGRS) implemented by the Victorian Government as a cap for rate increases for all councils sits at 2.5% for 2016/2017. For Ararat Rural City Council to pass on a 49-51% rate increase to farmers is against the principle set out by the FGRS. While the FGRS does not dictate the proportion of contribution from each rating category, it does point towards a system of incremental rate rises which are unlikely to have serious impacts to businesses or households.</p> <p>Farmers do not have the ability to pass on an increase in cost of production. Farm businesses only have two ways of influencing profit, increasing production per hectare or reducing cost of production. An increase in rates of 50% increases our cost of production and limits our ability to invest in production increases. We have just endured 7 out of 15 years of lowest 20 percentile rainfall and have years of rebuilding to get our businesses back to full production. 2016 was the first step towards rebuilding but this rate increase undermines that rebuild severely. Many grazing properties have declined pastures due to the drought which need a full renovation at an expense of approximately \$400/ha (regularly sited figure by Agriculture Victoria and others for pasture renovation).</p> <p>I urge councillors to reconsider their 2017/2018 Draft Rating Strategy and remember the contribution that farming businesses make to ARCC already, especially in the context of recovering from the worst multiple year drought on record.</p> <p>Kind regards, Jane Thomas</p>	No
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244	Thomas	Duncan	<p>Personal background  I would like to start by highlighting that I am a 26 year old who has recently become a financially invested partner in our family farming business in ARCC and Northern Grampians Shire. I went through primary school in Ararat before moving away for further education in Melbourne and then into full time work in Ballarat conducting agricultural research. I chose to return to Ararat and become active in community groups, starting with Perennial Pasture Systems (management committee member) due to a love of agriculture and the opportunity to enter a farming business as a young adult. I did not make that decision lightly and the connections I formed through farmer groups was a key determinant to me coming home. Quite simply without farming and without key community groups I would not be a resident or contributor to the ARCC in any way. I happily have a partner in Melbourne and full time employment in Ballarat but it is agriculture that ties me to the Ararat region.</p> <p>Inequity in Draft Rating Strategy  In reading the Draft Rating Strategy I have not found any tangible advantage to me, my business or the wider community from this proposal. My objection is not to a rate increase but to the redistribution of the burden onto farm businesses. Point 2 in the rating framework highlights ‘where feasible, services should be funded on a user pays system’ and the purpose of the strategy as outlined by ARCC is to strike a balance that ‘meets the tests of equity, efficiency and simplicity’. There is no information in the literature provided by ARCC that indicates that farmers currently pay inequitably low rates, or that farm businesses will receive any benefit from contributing a higher proportion of rates. In the Benefit Principle the draft dismisses the argument ‘the rates I pay have no correlation with the services I consume or the benefits I receive’ citing complexity of measuring relative levels of access and consumption. This justification is not sufficient when ARCC is expecting the farming community to increase their share of total rates and municipal charges by 17% without explaining why the current system is flawed or how the new proposal will be beneficial to the community. A purpose outlined in the Draft Rating Strategy is to improve the equity of rates paid within the Ararat community, the differential rating system is the key tool used to provide that equity and this proposal seeks to remove it. I believe this draft fails in its core purpose.</p> <p>Nonfinancial effect of Draft Rating Strategy  The recent Draft Rating Strategy therefore has been a huge knock to my confidence, not only financially but to my belief that ARCC is committed to helping my generation enter agriculture and return to Ararat with the experience and financial backing I have built while away. Regardless of whether the draft strategy is accepted, the process has damaged community morale and risks driving a wedge between rural and urban residents. By sending</p>	No
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				<p>letters to urban residents calculating how much they will save under the new proposal, ARCC has put the responsibility on the farming community to articulate why those residents should have to pay approximately \$346 more (in reality only their current rate). I believe this draft strategy was poorly researched, as evident by it not being one of the options broadcast to the public and its potentially disastrous singling out of a single rating category.</p> <p>I estimate that I have spent 20-25 hours dedicated to understanding this proposal. That time should have been spent growing my business as May is the month where the bulk of sowing occurs in the Ararat region and sets both cropping and grazing enterprises up for the coming season. More importantly as most rating strategy research is done after dark, that time should be spent with loved ones. The unnecessary stress that ARCC has placed on farmers during our sowing window is unlikely to be formally documented or calculated but as a young business owner and full time employee, time with family is rare and I believe through poor preparation and poorer community consultation ARCC has contributed significantly to farmer stress levels.</p> <p>Drought reminder</p> <p>I would like to use this opportunity to remind ARCC that up until 2016 Ararat farmers were eligible for drought response funding due to the worst ongoing drought in recorded history. Included below is rainfall data from our closest BoM station, Eversley 079014. Clearly visible are the 12 out of 15 years post 2000 that have been below average rainfall and 7 out of 15 have been in the lowest 20th percentile. These climatic conditions have eroded farm finances and permanent pasture for over a decade and forced the local farming community to adopt much higher debt loadings than normal. I am glad to acknowledge that 2016 was a great year for most of our farming community but it does not come close to putting farm businesses back into full productivity or profitability. I encourage ARCC to note any submissions by commercial businesses that have struggled throughout the drought period as farm businesses reduced spending on all nonessential goods.</p> <p>Table 1: Annual rainfall collected at Bureau of Meteorology’s Eversley station 079014 from 2000-2015 and decile ratings calculated for rainfall from 1888 to 2015.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Annual Rainfall</th> <th>Decile</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2000</td> <td>619.6</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2001</td> <td>532</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2002</td> <td>471</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2003</td> <td>520.4</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2004</td> <td>514.2</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2005</td> <td>471.4</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Annual Rainfall	Decile	2000	619.6	6	2001	532	4	2002	471	3	2003	520.4	4	2004	514.2	3	2005	471.4	3	
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				<p>2006 300.2 1                  2007 442.9 2                  2008 386 1                  2009 564.6 5                  2010 851.2 10                  2011 660.9 8                  2012 450.3 2                  2013 448.7 2                  2014 366 1                  2015 453.4 2</p> <p>Concluding remarks                  There has been no communication from ARCC that indicates any added value to me or my business for a rate increase averaging 49.2% across my 5 assessment titles (calculated from ARCC notices distributed to my address). Farm businesses are not a pool of money to be drained in order to gain short term favour or votes from residential, commercial or industrial rating categories. Farm businesses underpin the local economy of ARCC not only through rate payments but more importantly through supporting local businesses. Agriculture is a capital intensive industry with proportionately low profit but high cash flow which flows directly through Ararat businesses. As farm businesses are unable to pass on any extra expense to buyers, ARCC is effectively targeting the small profit window of farmers and therefore undermining its longest running and most sustainably productive industry.</p> <p>I hope councillors reconsider their support for removing the differential rating system as the repercussions would be dire for the wider community not just farm businesses.</p> <p>Kind regards,                  Duncan Thomas                  4761 Pyrenees Hwy                  Dunneworthy</p>	
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245	Tucker	Celia	945 Moyston Willaura Rd Willaura North VIC 3379	<p>1st June, 2017 Dear Ararat Rural City Council,</p> <p>SUBMISSION OPPOSING ARCC DRAFT RATING STRATEGY DECISION TO ABOLISH DIFFERENTIAL RATES.</p> <p>I am writing to voice my concern about your proposal to abolish the existing Differential Rating Strategy and replace it with a Uniform Rating System (URS). If this proposal goes ahead farming households located in this municipality will be required to contribute 55% of the total rates or an increase of \$2,432,665. That amounts to 461 farming households paying an average extra \$5,276 each which offsets: urban households an average of \$345, industrial ratepayers \$950 and commercial interests \$1,924 in rates per year.</p> <p>Do each of the Councillors honestly believe this is a fair and equitable solution to enable ARCC to raise the revenue it requires to deliver the services it currently offers the community?</p> <p>I strongly urge you to reconsider this motion and maintain the existing Differential Rate of 55% for the farming sector. Instead of the proposed URS I believe you need to review the Council budget spending proposed for 2017/18.</p> <p>Going forward if the ARCC Councillors feel there is no fair and equitable way to raise the revenue that it requires to deliver the services that it currently offers then we as a community need to work closely with ARCC to lobby State Government to resolve unsustainable Council resourcing across the state. I appreciate how difficult it is for Council to deliver the services that are currently enjoyed by our community but collectively we need to find a fair and equitable solution to this rating issue once and for all. I believe you would be well supported by your ratepayers if you were to go down this path. In turn we would have a much happier, healthier and financially viable community.</p> <p>Rating farmers at such a high rate is not a sustainable way for us to support those more vulnerable in our community. We love where we live, what we do and the community that we live in and continuously help in so many ways to give back to our community via our sporting clubs, Meals on Wheels, EGHS Hospital Auxiliary, CFA and Landcare.</p> <p>I am genuinely concerned about the serious stress that people in the farming sector are displaying in relation to this issue and how powerless they are feeling.</p> <p>Yours sincerely, Celia Tucker 0409 138 581</p>	No
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246	Vallance	Jane	5615 Mortlake Ararat Rd Lake Bolac 3351	I don't believe the proposal is a fair proposal. Like many farmers we have done our budget for next financial year and to find an extra \$10k+ is so unfair at this short notice. Plus we don't get any extra benefits from the services that you provide. No rubbish collection, I have to drive 15kms to take our recycling into town. we wont be spending any extra money now on trades and services around Ararat and district businesses. our budget of going out for dinner or lunch will have to stop. No new cars,utes. The local businesses are going to feel this and it all sits with you councillors that vote for this proposal. We know who you are and don't expect to be on council for long because the wider farming community wont be voting for you again.	No
247	Vallance	Neil & Helen	2778 Glenelg Highway Wickliffe 3379	We strongly object to a Uniform Ratings Strategy being implemented by Ararat Rural City Council. This new motion will increase our overall operating costs significantly and has the potential to impact employment opportunities on farms. Farmers are being asked to fund an unfair and disproportionate tax rate that will create financial hardship. A number of our properties have limited road access with major road disrepair that receive no council maintenance, but we get no increase in services for our increased rate payments. Discretionary spending will be reduced. The biggest impact will likely be felt in Ararat with reduced spending on car purchases, home wares, eating out and recreation. We believe the process that the Council has followed here displays limited understanding of the agricultural sector and rushed decision making. The overall impression is one of poor and ill informed governance, lacking in foresight and fairness. We urge the Council to reconsider and retain the existing Differential Rating Strategy for the benefit and sustainability of all rate payers.	No
248	Van Opstal	Eric	PO Box 587 Ararat 3377	I recall that in the mid to late 1990's the determination of rates was changed to the current form in order to minimise disadvantage to those living outside the city on rural properties. I pay rates on 3 properties, two of which are on the city border, albeit not producing income, yet I will receive a discount totalling several hundred dollars. Co-workers at the East Grampians Health Service who live on rural properties will be facing rises of 50%, or several thousand dollars. Ararat City contains many retirees and other pensioners. Much of the local economy depends on farm activity, and this obviously feeds into the businesses of Ararat's service sector. This decision will impact severely, and the least consideration would be for a staged implementation. Council should, however, reconsider the proposal, and if a re-balance of rates is deemed necessary, consider terms which are more realistic and less punishing. In any event, most residents are aware that rates in a community of this size will always be expensive when compared to large urban centres, and given that rate increments in recent years have been well above inflation, the discounts that city dwellers may receive under the	No

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				proposed plan will shortly disappear as the rates continue an inexorable climb; achieving this end at the expense of farmers seems discriminatory.	
249	Veale	Judith		<p>Dear Councillors, As a rate payer of the Ararat Rural City I wish to express my concern at the removal of the differential rating scheme and would like to see option one reinstated. Option 3 was not advertised for us to consider, I am sure this is not good governance and quite irresponsible considering the huge increase proposed (51% in my case).</p> <p>I also wish to express my disappointment that the councillors who voted for option 3 will not talk to us in person or by phone to explain their reasons for supporting option 3.</p> <p>Coming from one of the small communities in the shire I am also concerned on the effect of taking tens of thousands of dollars out of the area will have on the businesses, schools, sporting clubs, health services etc in the town.</p> <p>I urge councillors to please reconsider these rate rises.</p> <p>Judith Veale.</p>	No

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250	Webster	Lyn	Edgarley Estate Road, Willaura	<p>The proposal to increase farm rates by up to 55% is a huge error.</p> <p>This will adversely affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-the profit of our farming business and all local farming businesses</li> <li>-the profit of community agri, retail and service businesses</li> <li>-the value of the local businesses and the ease at which they could be sold</li> <li>-morale within our community</li> <li>-morale of farmers, whose job is already hard</li> <li>-the next generation who may be considering farming</li> <li>-the relationship between Ararat City and Ararat Rural City</li> <li>-the ability to attract new businesses and residents to rural areas</li> </ul> <p>Willaura businesses are already suffering. Businesses for sale are not being purchased.</p> <p>By putting additional financial pressure on our farm, the businesses we do locally will suffer as :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-local spending will be reduced or ceased and/or</li> <li>-there will be more shopping on price (out of town, internet)</li> </ul> <p>The request for feedback ie: 'give us feedback and the majority will rule', was setting the farming community up. It wasn't a fair and reasonable way to proceed as rural communities do not have the populations. It also does not ensure that the best decision will be made.</p> <p>Anyhow, feedback was given, mostly by the farming community - in writing and by attending the council meeting. However, this feedback was ignored and a third, out of left field, worse option for farmers, was moved and carried at this meeting. With people being told to 'suck it up'.</p> <p>These are councillors who are 'elected representatives' and who are supposed to be representing the whole shire! Who are supposed to understand farming and rural communities!</p> <p>This proposal is unfair, unequitable and will be divisive.</p> <p>I ask that option 1 be reinstated.</p>	No
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