

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

	Surname	First Name	Address	Submission detail	Do you wish to be heard in support of your submission?
1	Allender	Tim	34 High Street Ararat	I am a local city rate payer in Ararat but I don't think Council has really thought through the implications on the farming community of a sudden 46% rate increase that will be higher when land revaluations are completed. Asking farming families to contribute 55% to the overall rates budget when they are a little over 10% of the population is unconscionable in my opinion. There is a community meeting but such gatherings are, in my experience, usually window dressing to justify decisions that will not be changed. I urge Councillors to re-think what they are proposing here. Rates are already the major cost to small and medium size farms and with tiny margins mostly of profit (and sometimes loss in bad seasons, esp with the currently climate) this kind of rate increase will force many small farmers to think about leaving the land, taken up by large and absentee landowners or companies, which will rob the overall community of its vibrancy and heritage-this is quite apart from the intrinsic unfairness of this measure. I appreciate and value the service of local councilors, but I think they have got this provisional decision terribly wrong and the scale of the change, and its sudden implementation, indicates to me it has not yet been properly thought through.	Yes

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2	Allender	Una	<p>Residential/farm: 576 Karmala Lane, Wickliffe, 3379</p> <p>Postal: PO Box 109, Lake Bolac, 3351</p>	<p>To: CEO Andrew Evans, Mayor Paul Hooper and Councillors, Ararat Rural City Council</p> <p>Submission to Ararat City Council re proposal to abolish the Farm Differential Rate</p> <p>As a landholder with interest in three rate-able properties affected by the proposed new rating strategy I wish to express my dismay at what seems to be a poorly thought through proposal.</p> <p>For a vacant block in Lake Bolac township I see we will get a 33% reduction (\$474 down to \$320). For a small block (1.8 ha) attached to my farm property there is also a reduction due mainly to the removal of the municipal charge (\$323 down to \$194). However for my farm property of just under 1000 acres (429 ha) my rate bill goes up 49% from \$7219.41 to \$10,778.90. My land is leased with the current rates making up over 11% of the lease income. The new rate will see this rise to almost 17% of lease income. This is an increase that I simply cannot afford. I cannot pass on this unexpected cost.</p> <p>Council has supported a farm differential rating strategy for a number of years. This differential serves to address inequalities arising from determining rates based on the value of land, but even with a 55% differential 461 farm households are paying 38% of the rates. Why has council suddenly decided to abolish this strategy with the resulting huge impact on farm families, and resulting in farm households paying 55% of the total rate bill?</p> <p>Ararat Rural City’s wealth is derived largely from farming enterprises, most of these being family farms. Removing the 55% farm rate differential, leading to increases in rates of around 50%, with the prospect of even higher rates with the expected revaluation, is likely to cause many farm families to seriously consider selling up and leaving the land. The likely buyer would be a superannuation company or other corporate body looking to make money from large scale “industrial” farming with no thought for the long term sustainability of the land or the community. The owners of most family run farms have a genuine passion and interest in the sustainability of their land for the long term.</p> <p>Family members make up the community. They attend the local school and serve on school councils and parents clubs, serve on various local committees, attend working</p>	Yes
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				<p>bees, administer and compete in various sports (football, cricket, tennis, golf), belong to and work with Landcare groups to improve sustainability and biodiversity, and are the backbone of the CFA. These are just a few of the activities which make up a thriving rural community. Losing family farms means losing the people who are the fabric of our small rural communities. Corporate farms employ managers, often living remotely, and contractors who work on a seasonal basis and do not necessarily live locally.</p> <p>Family farms do business locally, supporting local tradesmen and retailers. Any reduction in net income means less to spend on goods and services which will have a flow on effect through the whole community. Losing family farms altogether would exacerbate this effect.</p> <p>I request that Council rescind the motion leading to the current draft strategy and instead retain a farm differential of 55% - ie. Option 1. Option 1 was clearly favoured by those who submitted feedback to Council but this was completely disregarded, with neither of the two options put forward during the consultation process adopted.</p> <p>Una Allender May 28th 2017</p>	
3	Baldock	Robyn & Daryle	102 Picnic Road Ararat	We pay \$4000 pa for rates. No water no sewage no mail delivery no paths no kerb and chanel. Asked 2 years ago for a dead tree on nature strip that is covering crebbins lane street sign to be removed and no response. Someone was going to call back. So \$4000 for not much in my opinion. No servies or service. Not a satisfied customer at all.	Yes
4	Bourizk	Cozette	8 Rundell street Ararat	I'm in favour of the submission.	Yes
5	Buckingham	Marrilyne	118 Mt Cole Road Warrak 3377	I disagree with the rise in the rates .It is unfair.	Yes
6	cavendish	Jack	Lake Bolac	Your proposal to abolish differential rates will quite simply sink many farmers. We are the life blood of the municipality, and a key cog in the shire's and state's economy. Our backs are up against the wall as it is, further financial challenges will make our businesses unviable which will cause great detriment to the wider Ararat district rural community. Farmer suicide statistics are already troubling, the impacts on these rates may well be excacerbated further by the proposed rate changes. Please reconsider your position, more is at stake here than a few extra bucks in the council coffers	Yes

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7	Chick	Kellie	31b Elizabeth Street Ararat Victoria 3377	Reduce the cost of Rates	Yes
8	Conboy	Cameron	Ararat Road Lake Bolac VIC 3351 2730 Tatyoon Road Tatyoon VIC 3378 30 Main St Willaura 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>RE: Submission to the Ararat Rural City Council Draft Rating Strategy</p> <p>Gorst Rural is a family owned and operated rural merchandise business who has operated in Lake Bolac, Willaura & Tatyoon since the 1980s. We would like to acknowledge that we support Charles de Fégely's Submission to the Ararat Rural City Council Draft Rating Strategy and would like to put forward our reasons to oppose the draft strategy that the council has put forward to abolish the differential rating system. This draft strategy combined with likely increases in property valuations in 2017/2018 will have a major economic impact across the whole municipality.</p> <p>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>Gorst Rural services farmers across their cropping, pasture, animal health and merchandise needs. We employ 14 permanent staff and some extra casuals during seasonal peaks. We do our best to be good community citizens, supporting local clubs, sporting organisations, fire brigades, schools, day care centres and others; contributing in kind funds and services where government often falls short. Our staff are integral members of their local towns and committees. This will all be in jeopardy if this draft rating strategy goes ahead.</p> <p>We would like to highlight to council that their actions directly impact all local businesses and families. Under this proposal our farmers are looking at rates increases between 46% and 100%. If the \$2.4m is to be pulled out of farmers pockets that will be \$2.4m that will not be put back through our local small businesses. Our business will not be the only one to have the bottom line hit hard - local machinery manufacturers & dealers, car dealers, mechanics, tradesmen, engineers, vets, earth</p>	Yes

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			<p>moving contractors; in fact anyone who is in a service and supply industry will be hit hard. Farmers are notoriously innovative and resourceful; they will soldier on & tie things up with wire for now; however as seen when seasonal pressures are high discretionary spending reduces significantly. Business in regional Victoria is hard enough with the challenges of on-line shopping, employing skilled people, and freight & distance disadvantages to name a few.</p> <p>It would appear 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. In recent times the Ararat Rural City has worked hard on drought workshops, investigating increased water resources and planning for a future for agriculture in the region. I urge you as councillors to consider the "Rural" in the organisation and think of the impact this decision will have on all constituents in the municipality. I ask that you reconsider your position on the rural rating strategy, review the 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>We would also like to ask permission to speak on behalf of our submission.</p>	
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9	Coutts	George	"Menenia", 1430 Delacombe Way, Mininera 3351	<p>To Whom it May Concern,</p> <p>I would like to voice my objections to the recommendations proposed in the Ararat Rural City Draft Rating Strategy 2017 (DRS).</p> <p>A summary of my objections to the DRS is listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The DRS does not provide any economic modelling to justify how the current imposition of rates and charges was deemed to be inequitable. Financial analysis should also be used to determine that any amendments result in a more equitable imposition of rates and charges. · The recommendation to abolish the application of differential rates infers that there is no disparity in access to council services and a uniform rate will result in a fair rating outcome. The Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating (April 2013, pp 8) acknowledges the potential for inequality when applying uniform rates, and recommends that a differential rating strategy is employed to alleviate these issues. · The abolition of differential rates will place an unfair burden the agricultural community: 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 (DRS pp 16), constitute only 7% of ratepayers. Despite this, under the proposed DRS these businesses will be expected to pay almost 55% of Council rate revenue. I believe that this is an inequitable outcome. · Calculating council rates purely on capital improved value (CIV) is unfair, as agricultural land value provides an exceptionally low rate of return in comparison to most other property classes or investments. Therefore, the disproportionate total CIV of all farms in the municipality does not highlight a greater capacity to pay council rates. · On a personal level, the rating framework proposed in the DRS will result in a ~\$12,000 increase (or 50%) in the rates payable on our family-owned and run farm. This increase in costs alone will account for between 8-10% of our annual farm income in an average year. We are not able to pass on these additional costs and will be forced to absorb the financial impact. <p>I believe that the rating framework proposed in the DRS is ill-considered and will result in an inequitable imposition of rates on farmers within the municipality. I recommend that the current differential rating framework is maintained.</p>	Yes
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10	Fitzpatrick	Leo		<p>I believe its a disgrace and totally biased, in the plan to increase farm rates which are already very high and a huge financial strain. The approximate 50% increase on farm rates is a shameful way of imposing way too much of the hard work of rates on a minority group (farming sector). The way the council (some councillors) have gone about this ridiculous rate change has been disgusting in itself. The inaccurate farm figures on which the council have used to try and press its case are absurd. Land and farm values are rising quickly, largely as a result of investor groups and this already has our rates increasing dramatically. This doesn't help farmers like myself with kids who are already working hard to simply provide and make enough to keep food on the table.</p>	Yes
11	Forbes	Murray, Caroline & John	333 Geddes Road Westmere, 3351	<p>To the Rural City of Ararat Council,</p> <p>We attended the special council meeting on May 2, 2017 to witness the adoption of the Draft Rating Strategy 2017. It was not one of two options made available on the ARCC website. Therefore it appears that this Draft Rating Strategy 2017 has neglected to examine its effect on its rural ratepayers, local businesses and the locals employed. As the rating system stands farmers pay over 50%of the rates received and administered by council. This rate burden will increase dramatically under the current Draft Rating Strategy 2017 and put further pressure on farm businesses. Our rates will rise by 51%; a huge increase by anyone's standards and it will affect our bottom line. The flow on from this will mean our spending ability locally will be reduced and this will affect local business and their employees.</p> <p>It is difficult in this shire to receive a fair go since farmers are such a small minority. To witness the administration and distribution of our rates primarily in Ararat is frustrating to say the least. This will be further exacerbated by this Draft Rating Strategy 2017 should it be passed. After over a century of our family being involved in this shire and after what transpired in the special meeting on May 2, 2017 we feel alienated.</p> <p>Under the current permissive system it makes it too easy to disadvantage one group; in this case farmers. We would like our financial future as farmers protected; not threatened or disadvantaged under such a permissive system. We make a crucial contribution to the financial wellbeing of this country.</p> <p>We would like to address council.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Murray, Caroline, and John Forbes</p>	Yes

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12	Franc	Theodore and Bernadette	42 Willow Tree Road, Middle Creek, 3375	<p>We cannot believe that we have a 43% increase in our rates for 2017/2018. We are only on small acreage, however over the many years we have always paid our rates and get little or no services in return. It is 2 years since we have had our road graded. We have had to contact Ararat Rural City twice lately to request that this be attended to. This road (Willow Tree Road) is a main road for access to the Western Highway for Ballyrogan, Middle Creek traffic travelling east. We put no other demands on Ararat Rural City - no rubbish collection, we supply our own water, etc.</p> <p>You have presented a lovely table detailing the percentages of rates spent on the various service categories. Perhaps Ararat Rural City would be better off making savings in this area of producing lovely tables! Also forget the 3 Drop-in BBQs prior to submissions - another saving!!</p> <p>Another suggested saving would be to perhaps allocate similar percentages that are allocated to the Library (1.2%) and Emergency Services (2.0%) to Governance & Risk (12.5%) and Corporate Services & Information Technology (12.2%). Can this be explained? And as for the 20.3% allocated for Engineering Services, Road Maintenance & Asset Management, well we see nothing of that!!</p> <p>We find ourselves wondering who has been paid for devising the 2017 Strategic Documents Fact Sheet? Such a wordy/inclusive type document:- OUR COMMUNITY, OUR ECONOMY, OUR LIFESTYLE, OUR ENVIRONMENTall 'underpinned by the pillar of OUR ORGANISATION!' Does Ararat Rural City think that their rural farming families are stupid? I think not! Bernadette and Theodore Franc.</p>	Yes
13	Gardiner	Hayley	15 Best Street Ararat	Being a single income family with 2 young children we find that the cost of living is always on the way up which makes it hard at times for a lot of families! It would be a major relief to have a decrease on our rates!!! :)	Yes
14	Gardiner	Nathan	15 Best St Ararat	With a family of 4 with two kids under the age of 8 I feel that the rates of ararat are way to high and as a single sole worker of the family it can be very hard to pay some of higher the 2,300 a year!...thank you for your time	Yes
15	Gibson	Jan	50 Blake St Ararat	I thoroughly agree with the new rating strategy. It's not before time. The farmers are able to claim their rates on tax whereas the towns people dont have that luxury. Ararat Rural Council finally heading in the right direction. Well fine	Yes

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16	Harris	Bill	6 Rundell Street, Ararat.	<p>The cost of our rates in Ararat are getting out of control. We pay nearly double in Ararat than in Geelong, and for what.</p> <p>We don't seem to be getting anything done to improve our town, where are the Rate Monies being spent. The money wasted on the so called Christmas decoration of the Municipal Offices was a disgrace, the community should be asked how they would like these things done.</p> <p>The Eastside entrance into town is an absolute disgrace, an accident waiting to happen, you cannot see cars entering the roundabout because of the so called landscaping, and the mess in the middle.</p>	Yes
17	Harris	Russell	Harris Automotive 46 Albert St Ararat	<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>As a small business owner in the Ararat Municipality we are deeply worried about the proposed draft strategy by increasing Farm Rates by 46%. Farmers make up approximately 40% of our business income. Our concern by increasing their rates will deeply impact our business as well as all local businesses in the Ararat area. If farmers are slugged with this increase they will have to cut cost by not spending money within local businesses. As a Commercial and Home Rate payer within the Ararat Municipality ourselves the savings we make on our reduced rates will not even compare to the income we will lose to the annual income that farmers spend within our business. We employ local people and reduced work will result unable to pay our employees therefore I can see a wide spread increase of unemployment will occur. Farmers already have an unsteady income due to many factors and I believe this will deeply impact their mental wellbeing and see many will walk off the land or further still suicide rates will rise. Council needs to deeply reconsider the Draft Strategy as this will be a wide spread downturn of Ararat, its farmers and local businesses.</p>	Yes

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18	Hinchliffe	Craig	1197 Tatyoon Road, Langi Logan, ARARAT, Victoria 3377	<p>To: Ararat Rural City Council Submission opposing ARCC draft rating strategy decision to abolish differential rates</p> <p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concern about the Council’s proposal to abolish differential rates in 2017. The rating advice notice I recently received from Council (11 May 2017) indicates that our municipal rates and charges will increase from a 2016/17 charge of \$9,236.90 to \$13,829.14. This change of \$4,592.24 represents an increase of approximately 50 percent.</p> <p>I acknowledge that the budget challenges confronting Council are complex and as such, any rating strategy option needs to undertake ‘due diligence’ to evaluate the potential social, economic, environmental, and health and wellbeing implications for our community. As guidance to assist Council’s and other statutory entities with the implementation of such ‘due diligence’ processes, the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office (VAGO) issued a ‘better practice guide’ for ‘Public Participation in Government Decision Making’ in January 2015.</p> <p>The VAGO notes that effective ‘public participation is a critical input to government activity, and Failing to adequately engage the public risks alienating the community and creating negative impacts through poorly informed and implemented decisions.’ VAGO defines ‘public participation’ as the involvement of those affected by a decision in the decision-making process. Unfortunately, the Community consultation undertaken by ARCC thus far have failed to adequately explain the ‘due diligence’ undertaken in developing the proposed rating strategy option under consideration and no evidence has been presented to support the notion that the social and economic wellbeing of our community will be advanced by adopting the proposed changes to the rating strategy methodology.</p> <p>From a personal perspective, the impact of the ARCC proposed rating strategy undermines the ability of my family to sustain our farm as a viable economic concern beyond 2017. As a ‘food producing family’ on 750 hectares (3 land titles) we have accrued considerable debt as a result of the prolonged drought we have just endured and sadly, we are no longer able to generate a ‘living wage’ through food production activities alone. Our family coping strategy for the declining terms of trade and increasing council rate overheads involves splitting our family unit to generate an ‘off-farm’ income. Hence, the impost of a 50 percent increase in municipal charges</p>	Yes
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			<p>(\$4,592.24) means that additional ‘off-farm’ employment is needed just to pay Council charges.</p> <p>As a ‘food producing family’ our municipal rate liabilities are 5 to 6 times those of our extended family members that live in Ararat on similar household incomes and in comparable dwellings. The notion of ‘equity and fairness’ is often premised on measures of access to public services while such commentary or analysis conveniently ignores the historical quirk of CIV Land Tax that results in a disproportionate percentage of municipal rates and charges being levied on ‘food producing families’ or ‘farming families’.</p> <p>From a personal perspective I feel that the ARCC rating strategy proposal has been formulated in an ad hoc manner and the lack of analysis and commentary on the potential second and third order effects to the health, welling and social fabric of our community is indicative of both disappointing leadership and unacceptably poor governance practice. While I commend the ARCC for publically adopting the values of ‘Excellence’ and ‘Respect’, but I am dismayed that Council would even consider tabling a significant rate change proposal without undertaking the type due diligence that is fundamental to professional and transparent public policy decision-making.</p> <p>Implicit to the Ararat Council Mission Statement is the need for the professional and efficient implementation of consultative practices such as those proposed in the VAGO guidelines forementioned. Given the community discussion and concerns expressed on this topic thus far, I feel confident to suggest that the rating strategy proposal before Council is neither consistent with the ARCC Mission Statement and Values, nor is it consistent with the aspirations of our community in general.</p> <p>Please note that while I am broadly supportive of the objectives contained in the Draft Council Plan, I believe the proposed rating strategy has not been adequately researched and the scant commentary by Council representatives on the justification for such significant change is indicative of poorly lead and ill-considered public policy decision-making. Given the concerns raised by community members of late, I feel the only reasonable course of action open to Council at this juncture is to retain the existing ARCC differential rating methodology (used in 2016/17).</p> <p>Kind regards, Craig Hinchliffe</p> <p>PS. Please note that I would like to address the Council meeting on 6 June 2017 in relation to the matters raised in this submission.</p>	
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19	Joyce	Denis & Marianne	19 Barkly Street Ararat	<p>28 May 2017</p> <p>Dear Sir/Madam, As Ararat Rural City Council ratepayer, we strongly oppose the current draft budget relating to the differential system. A 51% increase in rates is an exorbitant expenditure and very difficult to budget for. The lack of consultation with ratepayers was shocking and information regarding this proposal was also restricted. We would strongly urge you to reject this proposal.</p> <p>Yours sincerely Marianne and Denis Joyce 19 Barkly Street Ararat</p> <p>My daughter has submitted this for us as we are technically incompetent.</p>	Yes
20	Kaczynski	Brendan	6 Mountain View Court Ararat 3377	Rates to high	Yes
21	Knowles	Jacinta	62 Rundell St Ararat	Rates have gone way to high in the last couple of years people are struggling to pay bills and is a stress on family's please we need to cut rates	Yes
22	Leggett	Emma		I agree with the council in its new rates submission	Yes
23	Lineen	Kara	2402 Rossbridge-Streatham Road. Westmere 3351	<p>I vote for option 1 differential rates and do not want the purposed uniform rate.</p> <p>This will cripple us farmers and drive us off the land.</p>	Yes
24	Lloyd	Tracy	4 Thomson Street Ararat	rates	Yes
25	McDougall	John	1184 Webbs Road Tatyoon 3378	<p>Your Mission Statement states that :</p> <p>"We will demonstrate leadership through social responsibility, openness and transparency by actively working with our community to achieve shared goals "</p> <p>The removal of the differential rate makes a mockery of your mission statement by the imposition of a fifty per cent rate increase with no consultation, due diligence, impact study or any other communication other than the serving of a notice of proposed rate charges. The fact that farmers cannot pass on these costs reflects an arrogance which would not be tolerated in common business practice.</p> <p>Substantially reducing commercial rates on businesses whose headquarters are not even situated here (Supermarkets, MacDonaldis Country Target etc) adds an additional</p>	Yes

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				<p>insult.</p> <p>There is nothing socially responsible, open or transparent in this decision and only demonstrates that Council is actively working against the 450 families who make up the farming sector.</p> <p>The ill considered consequences of your proposed actions will be divisive and far reaching.</p>	
26	McInnes	Robyn & Kevib	4 Queens Avenue Ararat 3377	Lower rate fees	Yes
27	McKay	Bruce & Jenny		<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>The only fair option is Option 1. If Option 1 is not accepted and passed, our farm will be in a position where we will have to cut back our spending, which is done in Ararat , so businesses will also suffer.</p> <p>We will also have to look at our wages policy. We employ two full-time workers, and these men spend their wages in Ararat. They have young families, so if Option 1 is not reinstated, there will be real pressure on these young men and their families as well as our farming operation.</p> <p>As we were among the many who already put in a submission to support Option 1, and to discover another option, with no communication to ratepayers, was decided on, was very disappointing and unacceptable.</p> <p>We like to put faith in our councillors to act fairly for their community they represent.</p> <p>Please reconsider the effects this could have, if Option 1 is not accepted.</p>	Yes
28	McMahon	Travis	5 Wilmot Street Ararat	<p>I wish to be express concerns about the ongoing rate increases Of residential and farming land. The levels we currently pay in relations to the rest of the state are disturbing and I know I'm not alone in my level of frustration the council has created over a long period. Money grabbing is a term that would seem fitting. Ararat is know statewide as the expensive place to buy due to the ridiculous rates you demand from its residents, yet wonder why more and more people choose to live elsewhere while commuting to work at large employers like the Hopkins prison. Enough is enough.</p>	Yes

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29	McRae	Drew	34 Stephen St Hamilton Vic 3300	<p>Dear Councillor</p> <p>I am writing this letter to inform you that I am opposed to your Universal Rating scheme.</p> <p>I am a 31 year old male, born in the Ararat Hospital and raised on a farm in Willaura North that has been in my families hands for 3 generations of which I am now a 6th generation Australian farmer.</p> <p>I attended Willaura Primary School and later Ararat Community College. I left School and moved out of home at 16 years of age to learn a trade to one day return to the family farm and use my trade skills and knowledge and most of all I hope to raise my own family the same way I was raised.</p> <p>Over the past 3 years I had been able to work on the farm alongside my farther as I worked shift work 7 days on 6 days off as a maintenance technician, this also allowed me to run a small fabrication and engineering business and still spend every second weekend with my Wife, friends and family.</p> <p>Just before my fathers passing in September last year I had taken up full time work on the family farm with the hope to bring my Fabrication and Engineering business with me to the local community, since taking up the farm full time I have cut my wage in half and more than doubled my work load just staying on top of farm jobs, I have not had time for my own business also less time to spend with my Wife, friends and family than I ever have.</p> <p>If the Universal Rating scheme is implemented it will make it harder for existing farmers and their families. It will make it harder for young farmers to make a start and a living to support their families or in my case start a family. It will push the younger generation away from the local area. It will put more stress on farmers leading to depression and we all know what potentially comes from depression. It will reduce the money we have to put back into local businesses in the way of trades, car dealerships, and machinery sales. It will push families away diminishing the numbers in local schools reducing the jobs for teachers. The effects will roll on and on.</p> <p>In my own case our little over 1000ac farm is very tired, the machinery and infrastructure is old, worn out and falling apart, the farm needs to invest back into its self but the more you take from it in rates the less we have to spend on newer vehicles and machinery, contracting builders, electricians, plasters, plumbers and concreters, less to spend on safety and equipment and upgrades.</p> <p>So please drop the Universal Rating scheme and bring back the 55% differential for whom reside in the Ararat districts future, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>As you list Health and Wellbeing on the Ararat Rural City Councils Draft Council Plan</p>	Yes
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				<p>2017-2021 and abide by your Council Values as listed on the same document. Or are you going to change the draft plan to suit.</p> <p>Your sincerely Drew McRae Farm Manager</p>	
30	Nicholson	Ian & Kerri	102 Major Mitchell Rd Wickliffe	<p>I vote for the differential rate proposal. It would be a crippling bill to have a 47% increase in rates. What is the council thinking !!!! This is a rural setting with a large reliance on the agriculture industry!! Please think of the big picture and long term impacts.</p>	Yes
31	Parry	Marcia	294 Railway Road, Ararat	<p>The draft rating strategy 2017/2018 will cause a great deal of economic pain to people in farm zoned areas. There will be the ripple affect of less money being spent in the community, and less business growth. Families will have to find cheaper options to make purchase being online and bigger cities to be able to afford day to day items (clothes, sporting goods, giftware, food etc..)</p> <p>We live on 114 acres, we are not primary producers, we make NO money off the land due to the size of it and we will not be able to pay our rates if they increase as proposed. We don't even get our road fixed by council, we don't have mains water, and we don't get garbage collected. We live on our acreage for quality of living away from town, not to be broken by council rates. You cannot penalise people for choosing to live on farm land versus residential. You are hitting the minority with a massive hit to their pockets. It completely unfair. Beyond Blue will be busier than ever when people cannot afford to live.</p>	Yes
32	Peachey	Rodney	7245 Mortlake-Ararat Rd Maroona 3377	<p>I vote for option 1 differential rates and do not want the proposed uniform rate.</p>	Yes

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33	Sanders	Robert and Rosi	776 Ararat - Halls Gap Road Ararat Vic. 3377	<p>To the Mayor and Councillors,</p> <p>It was with great trepidation that my wife and I received letters indicating the changes to the rating system. I have been a ratepayer for 35 plus years and I have never before seen an attack made on on the hardworking farmers of this community to this extent. Firstly to the councillors that made this decision, do you represent the rural city as a whole or just short term thinking for the benifet of residential and commercial owners. I represent all three categories as investments, rural, residential and commercial. The preposterous idea that rural community can sustain the high rates that you consider they should is beyond belief and for your information I have put together some figures that should challenge your thoughts. I repeat, we own rural, residential and commercial investments that are all currentlly leased. Farm return for rent is 3.84% of rural city valuation, residential is 8.2% of valuation and commercial is 18% of valuation, these are the returns possible from these investments when leased. I can also use figures based on the actual returns ie gross profit as a percentage compared to capital investment, that can be gained from these three capital investments. Farm in a good year comes in at 9.07% in a bad year (been many in last 25 years), a very poor minus 2.67 %. Residential doesn't change at 8.2 % but the commercial is a massive range of 36% to 48% return on capital investment. How can you put the farming community under a massive increase when you see these figures that prove that they are unable to wear the increase as compared to residential and commercial. I am putting in this submission not for my own benefit as we are \$3202.21 better off with the proposed non-differential rating system but the damage you will do to the farming community will far outway the extra cost that we will have to burden. The local farming community support our businesses, clubs and community in general and they are by far the least able to pay. This has been no revenue raiser but a tax to take from rural business's that are under constant threat and have invested in a high capital asset with very poor returns to the pockets of residential and commercial property owners. These people are the backbone of our community and we see the short sighted thoughts of some councillors that obviously have not seen figures that are real and believe in some fairy tale. I can vouch for the fact that after 12 years in the retail sector when the rural community struggles it reflects in sales. I am happy to prove my figures to any councilor as I personally vouch for them but they must understand that I have used percentages as an indication and that our personal finances are private.</p> <p>Yours Bob and Rosi Sanders</p>	Yes
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

34	Shalders	David	Willaura	<p>Farming is hard enough as it is without an increase in rates. This increase in farm rates is unfair and unreasonable. You asked for feedback but are ignoring it.</p> <p>You set up a feedback system that is inequitable. The rural area was never going to be heard or successful overturn any decision due to our low population.</p> <p>The income we earn from our farms is extremely low and many farmers are highly geared.</p> <p>We work long hours and against many factors that we can't control , month in month out, year in, year out. A job that the majority of people wouldn't do preferring to work 9-5 with guaranteed wage.</p> <p>This increase in rates will lead to some leaving their farms. Others , it will put such a strain on them that It will detrimental to their and their families health.</p> <p>Add to this the Ararat and district businesses will also suffer from a downturn in business.</p> <p>It is just so wrong that our own local council is showing complete disrespect for our profession and for the future of our communities</p> <p>Seeing us as a cash cow so that the town rate payers can save \$200 or \$300 on their rates and increasing ours by \$10,000, \$20,000 and more per annum.</p> <p>Increasing farm rates is wrong wrong wrong.</p>	Yes
35	Shea	Cheryl	19 McGibbony Street, Ararat, 3377	I have posted my submission by priority mail on 26.5.2017 at the Ararat Post Office.	Yes
36	Stigger	Clinton	751 Sugarloaf Road Rhymney	I think it is unfair on us rural people because we are having to pay more when we don't get a waste service or anything all we have are unsafe ruff potholed roads that never get fixed. We are forgotten out here and are expected to pay heaps more. What do you also classify as a farm because not all of us live of the land.	Yes
37	Walter	Georgia	11 Anzac cres Loxton SA	Reverse the proposal. Now. Abhorrent disregard of farmers and their hard work with no regard for families and businesses.	Yes

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

38	Waterston	Bill & Rhonda	1 Ford Street Ararat	I agree with the council decision to reduce our rates and increase the farmers rates ! Great to see the council moving on this !	Yes
39	Wynne	Charles	2402 Rossbridge-Streatham Road. Westmere 3351	I vote for option 1 differential rates and do not want the purposed uniform rate. The ripple will go further than the farming families and will also greatly affect our already struggling towns within the shire.	Yes
40	Albert	Lee and Robert	205 Warrayatkin Rd Dobie	We support Option 1.	No
41	Allen	Mellissa	6 Highview Court, Ararat, 3377	Totally support the proposed draft, not quite sure why city residents would be painful a higher percentage than our country counterparts when we don't derive an income from our land. In fact I find it quite arrogant!	No
42	Astbury	Scott & Heidi	753 Gordons Bridge Road Tatyoon Vic 3378	We are writing in relation to the recent decision of the Ararat Rural City Council to abolish farm differential rates. Being relatively small farmers we have recently been given an opportunity to purchase more land, which has put us under extreme financial pressure but with careful management we hope to service our loan. Since making this commitment the council has decided to raise farm rates significantly through a process we believe is unacceptable. This will vastly impact our farming business and family of seven.	No
43	Baird	Mandy	5 Scherger Crescent, Ararat	I support the proposed uniform rating system.	No
44	Baird	N & A	50 Hucker Street, Ararat	We support the proposed Uniform rating system.	No
45	Barr	Amy	2986 Mt William Rd, Yalla-Y-Poora,3378	Option 1 differential rates.	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

46	Barr	Simon	2797 Mt William Road Yalla-Y-Poorra 3378	<p>To: Ararat Rural City Council</p> <p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>I am a proud and passionate rural resident living in the municipality of Ararat Rural City Council and I am extremely concerned by the proposal to abolish the Differential Rates in 2017. Council put up for draft, 2 options to the broader community in which feedback was given; however neither of these two were adopted. 82% of the response given was to retain the Differential Rating strategy. I ask the question, Does community feedback mean anything to you?</p> <p>The erratic proposal of scrapping the differential for rates will have a huge community impact throughout the municipality. Increasing farming family's rates by 45% is completely inequitable. Rural communities are struggling for population and I believe your strategy is only going to accelerate the rural decline.</p> <p>I strongly hope you can rethink your strategy and implement the proposed Option 1 of 55% differential.</p> <p>Regards Simon and Amy Barr</p>	No
47	Bennett	Stacey		DROP OUR RATES .	No
48	Birch	Sharie	24 Mc Neill Street Ararat vic 3377	Agree	No
49	Blackie	Ian	34hard hill road Armstrong 3377	I vote for option one differential rates and do not want the proposed uniform rate.	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

50	Brady	Paul & Eileen	388 STAVELY ROAD STAVELY VIC 3379	<p>1. We are writing to strongly oppose the ARCC's decision to abolish the Differential Rating System. The process undertaken by the council was unacceptable as neither of the two options consulted on were adopted. In the course of public consultation on the two proposed rating strategies, 82 percent of responses were in favour of retaining the existing Differential Rating Strategy. The decision was made without proper public consultation and is an example of very poor governance by the ARCC.</p> <p>2. The proposed introduction of the Uniform Rating System will have a direct and severe impact on our farming business. Under the proposed system our rates will increase from \$15,232.27 to \$22,621.37. This is a cost imposed on us which we cannot pass on and one which we are unable to make an informed and economic decision on. This will be a huge cost to our farm enterprise for which we receive very little services or benefits. The value of our land bears no correlation to the increase in the land's capacity to produce an increase in commodities and therefore an increase in income.</p> <p>3. The current Differential Rating System relies on farmers for 38% of its rate revenue, which amounts to a significant proportion of the overall operating revenue for ARCC. If implemented the URS proposes that farming enterprises like ours will contribute to 55% of the total rates or an increase of \$2,432,665. This is an unfair and unacceptable burden for the farming community to bear, while other rate payers have their rates decreased significantly.</p> <p>4. The ARCC needs to be aware that the proposed decision to introduce the URS system will have an adverse impact on local business and families. It is a well known fact that if the farming community are experiencing reasonable incomes then that creates income for local businesses.</p> <p>5. We would like to know what are ARCC's plans for future rating systems and urge council to keep us informed and to follow the proper consultative processes.</p> <p>6. We understand that rates are an essential source of income for the ARCC to provide services for the community. However, we urge ARCC councils to consider what other steps can be taken to pursue other forms of revenue. A thorough overhaul of staffing and wages may be one area that can be examined.</p> <p>7. In conclusion we urge ARCC to reconsider abolishing the existing Differential Rating Strategy.</p> <p>We ask that ARCC maintain proposed "Option 1" 55% Differential Rating Strategy.</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

51	Brady	Shaun	9 Waterwheel Way Highton Vic 3216	<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>I am a ratepayer within the Ararat Rural City Council and am writing in objection to the proposed rate change. The way it has been presented and the council process is appalling.</p> <p>Such an increase in our rates will result in financial constraints placed upon us limiting our ability to spend locally. Currently most of my farming dollars are spent in Ararat. I get very little from the rates I pay as it is so why would I want to pay more? Rural services are appalling; my roads are less than adequate. Is council going to give me 50% better rural services? I don't think so.</p> <p>The proposed change to our rating system penalises farming families for owning land. Penalising farmers for having sustainable businesses is short term thinking for both farming families and for the towns future growth and wealth.</p> <p>To adopt such a proposal without public consultation and thorough research is poor governance. Council ignored the public submissions on May 2nd and decided on a random option without any public discussion, consideration or research. I do not believe our council considered the detrimental effects to our farm businesses, commercial businesses, general businesses and the general broader community when adopting this option.</p> <p>I strongly object to the proposal to abolish differential rates and wish to remain with the current option 1 system.</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

52	Brady	Simon & Yvette	979 Pentlands Creek Rd, Rhymney Vic 3377	<p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>We are a farm business operating within the Ararat Rural City Council and are writing in objection to the proposed rate change. The way it has been presented and the council process is appalling.</p> <p>Such an increase in our rates (\$6340) will result in financial constraints placed upon us. This will result in us terminating our casual employee and reducing our ability to do business locally in Ararat. Many farming enterprises will be in the same boat leading to increased unemployment and struggling businesses within Ararat.</p> <p>The previous 4 years have been hard for farmers. We ourselves have seen the direct impact of years of hardship coming to a head in the form of mental health issues. This rate increase may well be the straw that broke the camel's back for many farmers. Yes we had a good year last year; crops were good and stock prices high. However, the previous 3 years were mentally and financially devastating due to drought. We hope to be able to recover financially within the next 2 -3 years.</p> <p>If farming families were as financial as our council obviously believes we are, then why do so many rely as heavily on off farm income as we do? Most farming wives work hard enough as it is, how much harder do they have to work?</p> <p>The proposed change to our rating system penalises farming families for owning land. In today's economic climate a farm cannot be viable unless it has scale. To get scale, most farms have had to expand hence adding considerable debt and pressure to families. Penalising farm business for trying to make their businesses sustainable now and into the future for our children is short term thinking for both farming families and for the towns future growth and wealth.</p> <p>To adopt such a proposal without public consultation and thorough research is poor governance. Council ignored the public submissions on May 2nd and decided on a random option without any public discussion, consideration or research. We do not believe our council considered the detrimental effects to our farm businesses, commercial businesses, general businesses and the general broader community when adopting this option.</p> <p>Penalising family businesses that employ local people, spend and shop at local businesses, raise families in the Ararat area and are very active in community events is a disgrace and shows how out of touch our council really is.</p> <p>We strongly object to the proposal to abolish differential rates and wish to remain with the current option 1 system.</p>	No
53	Braebrook Pastoral Company		P.O Box 38 Lake Bolac 3351	<p>We will be charged a 51% increase in our rates and this is so unfair as there was no warning this was to happen and we believe that the money will be wasted on city things instead of fixing rural roads and towns facilities.</p>	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

54	Brain	Philip	1440 Malim Rd Willaura Vic 3379	<p>To Counselors of Ararat Rural City</p> <p>I am writing in response to your draft rating strategy for 2017. We are a farming family business and this proposal will increase our rates bill by 50%. Other businesses can increase the cost of their products or services to help cover such a cost, but we farmers have very little influence on the world commodities trade which dictates the prices we receive for our produce. This rate rise equates to a 5% increase in our cost of production. It is not a cost that I can “pass on”, the business has to absorb it.</p> <p>Over the last year my rates have risen 5.7% (\$1069). No improvements have been made to my land. I assume this is because local land values have increased. I think foreign investment has inflated the land values and large scale superannuation fund managers have invested in portfolio risk spread. Thus local farmers cannot compete with the prices these investors are willing to pay.</p> <p>Also, I lease farm land from a neighbor. His rate rise will be passed onto me. So my profit margin decreases with every rate rise. Yet on page 14 & 15 it says others will get a reduction.</p> <p>It means working longer hours myself to save on out sourced labour costs. My son who wishes to take over the farm has to work for a minimal wage, where he should be saving so as to be able to pay out siblings when the time comes. Leasing will be an expensive option for him.</p> <p>These ongoing and ever increasing costs are a constant concern. It puts a considerable amount of stress on myself and my family. I would like to keep the farm viable enough for my son to take over and fund my retirement.</p> <p>Making farms pay more rates for the land they work is not equitable. Rates on the family home, the same as everyone else, yes that’s fair, but I am a primary producer. There is no one to pass this cost on to, and the land can only produce so much at a sustainable level.</p> <p>I am writing to urge council to please consider too maintain the currant differential rate system, until another means of revenue raising can be explored. We pay road fuel taxes for our produce wherever it is transported. We would like council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To get more of that back from the government and/or increase the GST to 15%. 	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our Victorian farmers federation • A municipal charge for every household seems a fairer option. <p>Yours Sincerely Philip R Brain & family</p>	
55	Brown	Annie	85 Campbell street ararat 3377	Cheaper rates!!	No
56	Buckingham	Sally	37 mount Cole road	As a rate payer of both farming rates and also residential rates, I am extremely disappointed in the letter I have just received the letter is extremely misleading and fails to mention that that the new rates quoted DO NOT include rubbish collection or fire levy I am in favor of the 16/17 differential rates, and do not agree with the proposed uniform rate.	No
57	Buckingham	Daniel	37 Mount Cole Road Warrak	<p>I would like to voice my disapproval of the proposed uniform rate,</p> <p>This is unfair to farmers, myself I am a hobby farmer on 260acres will have a rate rise from \$2145 to \$3286.an increase of \$1141 that's 44% rise. I am also a residential ratepayer who will receive a reduction of \$316.90</p> <p>This is robbery as far as I am concerned, and should not happen. Please keep the differential rates!</p> <p>If farmers are forced to pay the new uniform rate this is money that I will no longer have therefore, I will not be spending locally, \$1141 may only seem to be a relatively small amount in the scheme of things, but there are a lot of small hobby farms out there and this all adds up, the amount the big farmers will be forced to pay \$1000s more, they also will not be supporting local business, because they can't afford too and the only one to blame for this will be the Ararat Council.</p> <p>Kind regards.</p>	No
58	Cain	Kate		I vote for option 1 differential rates and do not want the proposed uniform rate	No
59	Cameron	Margaret	1 Glastonbury Place Ararat	Rates	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

60	Carr	Barbara	3839 Ararat - Halls Gap Road Pomonal 3381	<p>My 46 ha property in Pomonal is a land for wildlife and a Trust for Nature covenanted property which acts as a buffer zone for the Grampians National Park. I do not conduct any commercial or agricultural activities on this land, so there is no income generated from this property.</p> <p>I do not use the service of a rubbish collection along the Ararat Halls Gap road and I have to pay at the recycling station in Pomonal even if I want to dispose of invasive weeds or car tyres which were left on the property by previous owners.</p> <p>I am completely mystified as to how you as councillors could justify a 39% increase in rates when there is no extra service or no extra expense within the Ararat Rural City which would benefit the population living in the " fringe" areas of this shire on larger blocks of land. I also want to declare my solidarity with the farming community which is such an important part of the rural economy and so badly disadvantaged through this new strategy whereas the commercial/ industrial section and the urban population within the Shire will have their rates reduced.</p> <p>I therefore ask you to reconsider the options for a rating strategy and to adopt a more balanced spread of rate income across the three sections of the population.</p>	No
61	Catherine			I am in favour of removing differential rating and accept the councillors proposal of 0% differential	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

62	Clark	Jennifer	156 Mint Rd, Moyston 3377	<p>Dear Members of the Rural City of Ararat,</p> <p>With attention to: Deputy Mayor Cr Glenda McLean, Cr Gwenda Allgood, Cr Darren Ford, Cr David Pettman,</p> <p>After attempts to contact each of you via telephone, and your collective absence from the community meeting held on 23 May, we petition you on behalf of farmers in the Rural City of Ararat to reconsider your stance on the rate changes proposed in the Draft Rating Strategy.</p> <p>We draw your attention to pages 7 & 8 of this document, where it is specified that services should be funded on a user pays system, where the rating system is designed to create horizontal and vertical equity.</p> <p>As you will be aware farmers in RCA are paying more for their rates each and every year. Many of these rate payers are not serviced with water, waste management, or even waste water management. Many of us must drive to our homes on public dirt roads that rarely even see a council vehicle.</p> <p>The fire levy alone for our property has more than tripled, rising from \$274 to \$833 in four years. We find this excessive as we have not used this service in this entire time. Further, we were burned out in the 2006 fires without a single fire truck coming to our aid.</p> <p>We ask: How does this reflect services being funded on a user pays system?</p> <p>Regarding equity, how can it be justified that farmers in RCA are paying higher rates than other parts of Victoria? As has been highlighted in Steven Shannon's letter in the Ararat Advertiser (26.05.17), the state average for rates is 0.47% of property value, yet for some reason we are paying 0.69%.</p> <p>In RCA, farmers on average only make \$27 for every dollar of rates paid. Other commercial rate payers make \$839 for every dollar of rates paid. That is to say that farmers pay 31 times as much in rates compared to other businesses. This hardly seems equitable! We are forced into paying more because of the inflated value that the council considers our land to be worth. Usually a price we could never realistically sell for.</p>	No
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

			<p>How can you vote in favour of a rate structure that sees farmers paying more than half of all rates, when they comprise less than a quarter of all rate payers? This hardly seems equitable at any level, be it vertical or horizontal.</p> <p>This would hardly seem equitable to us. Especially in view of the fact that our land is mostly bush land which we are prohibited from clearing, not hundreds of acres of broad acre crops that produce commercial yields. Like so many farmers, we are not in a position to increase crop or cattle prices to make up for the inflated rates that you would be demanding from us. It is heartbreaking to know that the council reserves the right to consider the sale of our land should we fail to meet the increased demands of RCA.</p> <p>It is insulting to the great farming heritage of this area to demand that all farmers across the board put their hands deeper still into their pockets. All the while rates in town are much lower than so many farmers. More land does not equate with more money in the bank. The challenges of managing over 100 acres of land are taxing enough without being hit with excessive rates.</p> <p>Kind Regards,</p> <p>J & J Clark</p>	
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Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

63	Coad	David	440 Moyston Rocky Point Rd Moyston 3377	<p>It is hard to know how council can make an informed decision given that there seems to be numerous and conflicting figures being put forward. The council ad in the Ararat Advertiser suggested a median farm value of a little under \$500,000, the weekly advertiser article reported Cr McLean suggesting approx \$750,000, Darren Ford (who I presume is Cr Ford) in his letter suggested a typical farm enterprise was \$3,000,000. With the rates under the current system being approx \$2,000, \$3,000 & \$12,500 respectfully. It also suggested that moving to a non differential system would increase farm rates by 47%, my understanding is that the current differential is 55% meaning that if the general rate is \$1,000 for the same CIV farm rate would be \$550. My maths suggests that to increase 550 to 1,000 is an increase of over 80%. If Cr Fords figures are to be believed this would increase the rates paid by the typical farm to over \$22,000, a figure more than 12 times what Cr McLean says she pays and feels is too high. Cr McLean suggests that her rates should be lower and one wonders whether the use of her position as a councillor to lower them would be deemed a pecuniary interest.</p> <p>The current system of funding municipalities does not take into account an ability to pay. Many farms in the last financial year (being a fairly severe drought) would have had a small (or even negative) income as exemplified by the person who paid more in rates than they made off their farm. As councils now fund much more than property services a tax on property seems to be a highly inappropriate method of funding local government. A change to a proportion of income tax or even the GST would seem to be much more equitable. Given that the council may not be able to bring about such change and are currently left with no alternative except a property tax I would suggest a differential system may be the only equitable way for the immediate future. Farming returns vary dramatically from year to year depending on climate vand the vagaries of an international market, I would suggest that the typical farming enterprise on a ten year average would not be vastly different to an average wage earner and that any rating strategy should reflect this. My apologies if you have received this twice as I have found the process confusing and filled out this submission incorrectly on my first attempt.</p>	No
64	Coburn	Emma	191 Burke road Ararat 3377	I agree with the councils amended strategy. Any savings that can be passed onto residents is a positive thing and considering considering that the farmers own the majority of land I believe that they should pay more.	No
65	Coffey	Kim	15 Tuson Street Ararat	I agree with the council and the change to the rates	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

66	Cooper	Neil	14 Temple Street Ararat	<p>I'm livestock manager for Elders I have lived in Ararat for 20 years. I believe this proposed rate increase should not be approved. I deal with the local farming communities, we have just come to a point in time farmers are starting to make ground drought and low earnings. All this is doing is penalising them for having committed their lives to this industry.</p> <p>This will not be of any help to the local community or businesses as I can see more people doing shopping out of the area.</p> <p>Myself personally would not mind an increase in my rates in the township</p>	No
67	Coutts	Linda	849 Geddes Rd Lake Bolac 3351	<p>I am at a loss at why councillors have voted for the farming community to take on the burden of such a significant rate rise.</p> <p>Such a burden will cripple already struggling farmers but will also, in turn have a detrimental effect on the local towns and businesses of Ararat Rural City.</p> <p>As a region of seasonal growers, farmers in the Ararat Rural City take into account the expences of the unpredictable, such as markets and Mother Nature but to add in such a substantial expense of this rate rise proposal is nothing short of ludacrice.</p> <p>This unwarranted and unexpected rise in rates is certainly not an incentive to invest in business within the Ararat Rural City.</p>	No
68	Coutts	Robert	849 Geddes Rd	<p>This unwarranted and unexplainable hike in local taxes is hardly an incentive to invest in the Ararat Rural City council area. What is next? Another hike next year? I have no faith that the council is acting in the best interests of its constituents.</p>	No
69	Curtis	Jocelyn	55 Grange Road Ross Bridge 3377	<p>As a owner of 50 acre property on Grange Rd Ross Bridge. I am very disgruntled about the rate rise. I don't know how a 50 acre property can be classed money making venture. I am a single women and I make not one cent out of this property. I also don't get a thing for my rate money Grange Rd is a gravel road I would be lucky it get graded once a year. And I have to fix my driveway became every time it rains it washes the drive away. And that is all I get for my huge rate payment do you think this value for Money</p>	No
70	Dempsey	Graham & Jenny		<p>Rates are too expensive.</p>	No
71	Dollimore	Mark		<p>I support the councils rate strategy.I would like to have the cheaper rates option.</p>	No
72	Drysdale	Sarah	1384 Willaura- Wickliffe Rd, Wickliffe 3379	<p>I am not a primary producer & do not run a business from home. We only have 6.25 ac & cannot afford a 38% land rate rise. I find this proposal to be very unfair on all concerned. It's disgusting that you are doing this to us. At the moment I am a single stay at home mum & cannot make it to council to have my concerns heard, but please reconsider this outrageous rate rise, as I am already financially struggling. All we receive from ARCC is one bin pick up p/w, no recycling p/u, shocking roads to drive on & we don't even have drinkable town water. Not happy.</p>	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

73	Dunford	Daryl	77 Tobin Street Ararat 3377	<p>I support the council with there Draft Rating Strategy as I feel it is fair and everyone should be prepared to contribute to the greater benefit of the whole of the Ararat Rural City. It may seem the farmers are being hit hard but they have the capacity to generate income to cover the increase.</p> <p>Daryl Dunford</p>	No
74	Evans	Anthony & Kelly	203 Lalkaldarno Road	<p>We are writing to express our anger and disappointment in the Ararat Rural City Council in regards to the proposed rate rise as outlined in the points below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Rates for farming families will increase by 48-51%. How can anyone think this is fair? This will make many families consider leaving the land. * Our farm rates will increase by \$3081.03 for a total of 800 Acres and when our land gets revalued next year, this amount is sure to rise again, something we just cannot afford. * Ararat Rural City is a rural town and therefore all businesses rely on farming families to spend money locally; a rate increase for farming families will have a direct impact on local businesses. Local shop owners are very concerned about the direct impact this will have on their business looking to the future. Hence, this will not encourage or promote new business to the town. * Will more of our rates be put back into our rural communities where the money comes from? Currently we are lucky if the gravel roads in our area are graded once every three years, or sometimes only half the length of the road is graded. We don't see anything for our money. * This is dividing the Ararat Rural City population between rural and city. How is this going to benefit Ararat in the future? This has caused such a negative headline for Ararat which in turn will have a negative impact on tourism and employment opportunities in the future. * The way in which the Council advertised two Options to vote on, but then Option three was suddenly included - how is this fair? How can we have trust in our local Council? Ararat Rural City Council has such a bad reputation - this has just tarnished the reputation even more within the Rural City population and further afield. 	No
75	Evans	John & Sandra	71 Lalkaldarno Rd. Willaura 3379	<p>As a fourth generation farmers this decision may effect the fifth generation decision to continue in this venture,we are extremely disappointed at level of rate increase, what value does this bring to us.</p> <p>.Will services increase to higher quality e.g. slashing of roadsides prior fire seasons, grading gravel roads regularly to safe useable standard.</p> <p>.Higher rates cause stress as we are unable to pass on costs, this affects local businesses we interact with, particularly in poor seasons.</p>	No

Attachment 4.2 Website Feedback

				<p>.Less trips to China, decrease staff numbers to provide higher worth ethic as extremely difficult when phoning to speak to appropriate staff then receive follow up to request! .Is there a fourth option not yet disclosed? .This submission to be supplied to Mayor Paul Hooper, and all Councillors.</p>	
76	FitzGerald	Paul	Greenhills 90 Gluepot Road Pomonal 3381	<p>My name is Paul FitzGerald and I am sole Director/Secretary of Johlin Hotels Pty Ltd - the owner of a family farming property situated on the north western boundary of the shire at 90 Gluepot Road Pomonal. Property No: 628075.402000. Johlin Hotels PL is the Trustee for the FitzGerald Family Trust who operate the farm.</p> <p>I recently received notification that the ARCC have abolished the differential rating system and replaced it with a uniform rate of 0.5975% of the Capital Improved Value of the property. As a result our rates will increase by a staggering 49% (\$3540.28). This, combined with a Council land revaluation due next year, will incur an unsustainable impost on our family farming business.</p> <p>The process by which this decision to abolish the differential rating system in favour of a uniform rate is totally unacceptable.</p> <p>The extra cost will force the FitzGerald family to implement economies of scale causing us to shop in bulk further afield and not locally in Ararat.</p> <p>Why has Council voted to abolish the current differential rating system when the figures indicate that farmers in the ARCC are already paying some of the highest rates in the region?</p> <p>Also, the decision has been made without proper public consultation. Neither of the 2 options consulted on were adopted. In fact, 82% of responses were in favour of retaining the existing differential rating strategy. Why has Council disregarded this?</p> <p>I strongly oppose the proposed changes to the rating system and urge Council to reconsider this unfair decision as soon as possible.</p> <p>Regards, Paul FitzGerald Sole Director: Johlin Hotels Pty Ltd</p>	No

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77	Forster	Peter and Christine	10 Betleigh Street Anglesea Vic 3230	<p>Intended Abolition of Differential Farm Rates</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to the intended change of rating basis which will adversely affect farming families. The proposed change will mean a whopping 50% increase in rates on our two blocks and I gather on most other farms.</p> <p>I received notice of these changes in the mail too late to attend any of the community meetings outlined in your letter dated 11 May. We live in Anglesea and mail delivery times are slow at the best of times. I find your level of communication on this very important issue totally inadequate especially in terms of timing if you were really interested in feedback.</p> <p>The proposed rate increase is a totally unrealistic demand on farmers who constantly battle to survive in an environment with no control over seasons and little control on prices of the commodities that they produce. In fact we are already paying high rates in comparison with other farming areas. I believe the proposed rate increases will have a backlash economic effect and may damage ARC's economic base.</p> <p>We currently lease most of the farm under a long term lease and cannot just insist that the lease rate be dramatically increased to cover this totally unexpected added cost impost. Nor could we suddenly increase production to cover the increased costs if we were actively running the farm.</p> <p>If you suggested a similar increase on urban rates you would have a similar reaction from the residents to what farmers are now feeling. In fact I am sure you would never contemplate such a huge general rate rise for residential properties. So why do you think it is acceptable to hit the economic generators of the Shire?</p> <p>Yours sincerely Peter and Christine Forster 10 Betleigh Street Anglesea Vic 3230</p>	No
78	Foster	Luke	3 Tuson Street Ararat	I hope rates r lowered	No

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79	Fraser	Alister	94 Pretty Tower Rd Stoneleigh 3373 (this is where we live not where we own land in Ararat Rural City Council)	<p>Hi our family own two parcels of land in the Ararat Rural City Council one at Carranaballac the other at Yalla-Y-Poora, property numbers 828300.57 and 617007.01 respectively. This 849.59 hectares accounts for 21% of our land the remainder being next door in the Pyrenees Shire. With your proposed rate increase we will be paying \$24960.56, this amounts to \$29.38 per hectare. Compare this with the 3293.49 hectares owned in Pyrenees Shire we currently pay \$57715.36 or \$17.53 per hectare. You may argue that our land is not of similar value in the Pyrenees Shire as compared to the land in the Ararat Shire. But if I compare our best parcel in Pyrenees Shire being property number 624017200 of 524.271 hectares at 2242 Beaufort-Carranballac Rd with 95% arability plus improvements like a shearing shed laneways and brick veneer house in excellent condition we pay \$10,457.16 or \$19.95 per hectare. Compared with Our best property in the Ararat Rural City Council on the Mt William Rd Yalla-Y-Poora property number 617007.01 with 518.145 hectares with 95% arability but no improvements other than three internal fences (in poor condition) dividing it into three large paddocks. We will be paying \$16583.61 or \$32.01 per hectare. Is this fair? To add further insult to astronomical increases in our overheads as soon as you cross the lines into the Ararat Shire boundaries the roads immediately deteriorate in both the Yalla-Y-Poora and Carranballac areas. The argument that they are at the far edges of the Municipality doesn't apply as it is also the very bottom boundary of the Pyrenees Municipality.</p> <p>I believe the entire draft rate differential change has been poorly managed and 'rushed' without significant research into the effects of removing 2.4 million from the farming sector. This will have crippling effects to business in Ararat. I believe only 1 of the 7 councillors really understand the financial pressure farmers are facing being a farmers wife in Cr Jo Armstrong. I don't believe Cr Darren Ford has the Municipalities best interests at heart as he doesn't even reside in the council area and plans to sell his house in the near future removing him as a rate payer and therefore his ability to sit on council. Therefore does his decision or vote really count? I believe the lack of justification given for the change in differential rating fails to satisfy 'Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating'. I believe the council should be instead researching how to reduce the rates pie of \$13.5 million instead of changing how it is raised therefore making a win win in reducing residential rates and not further burdening already stretched family farming businesses. Thankyou for the ability to voice my concerns. Regards Alister Fraser (Pretty Tower Pty Ltd & Tower One Pty Ltd)</p>	No
80	Fraser	Tim	937 Webbs Rd Tatyoon	I am opposed to the Ararat Rural City Council proposed changes to the rating strategy which are designed to "redistribute the rate BURDEN from General/Residential, Commercial and Industrial properties to Farm properties" (AKA Farm families). This	No

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				<p>proposed rise directly equates to a monetary increase of \$9,380.67. Our family business will go from paying \$18,591.29 to \$27,971.96.</p> <p>I'm sure that you will agree that this is a significant share of the rate burden. I urge you to please reconsider your proposed rate changes for a more reasonable option.</p>	
81	Freeman	Christie	5 Tahara Road Toorak Victoria 3142	<p>Submission to the Ararat Rural City Council (ARCC)</p> <p>Re:- Proposed changes to rating strategy from differential to flat CIV rate</p> <p>I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal outlined in the ARCC Draft Rating Strategy.</p> <p>The proposed rating strategy is neither equitable nor logical, is inconsistent with other comparable councils' approaches to rating, and will seriously and disproportionately disadvantage farming families.</p> <p>Firstly, the strategy is inconsistent with the council's obligations as set out under Section 3C of the Local Government Act, in that it does not ensure "the equitable imposition of rates and charges". Whilst all community members have an obligation to bear their fair share of community costs, 24% of the community paying 55% of the costs can in no way be considered 'fair'.</p> <p>Secondly, it is not even aligned to the Council's stated Rating Framework. The Framework states that both the entire community should contribute to unavoidable costs, but also that "where feasible, services should be funded on a user pays system." I note that under the Draft rating strategy, the removal of the \$90 municipal charge, and that this cost would be then recovered through general rating, thereby adding a further cost of approximately \$400,000 to the general revenue required, which would then be passed disproportionately to farmers, who do not receive any of the services which it was there to cover, such as roadside rubbish collection.</p> <p>The Council's proposed strategy is also inconsistent with other local councils across Victoria. Having reviewed many of the councils in the Western half of Victoria, virtually all have adopted a differential rating strategy. As one Shire of similar size and composition to the ARCC noted, "this provides for differential rates to be levied on the capital improved values of all rateable land to reflect the different standard, rate and access to municipal services available to residents and ratepayers in different areas of the Shire." On this point it is noted that the one council that does not have a</p>	No

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				<p>differential rate has a low rate of only 0.003445 \$/CIV, considerably lower than the ARCC general rate either currently is or would be under the proposal.</p> <p>There are also numerical inconsistencies in the Draft Strategy document which further bring into question the reasoning and logic underpinning it. (For example a reduction in CIV rate from 160% to 100% is not a 60% reduction, nor is an increase from 55% to 100% a 45% increase).</p> <p>Finally, while the underpinning philosophy of the tax rate is that the imposition should be both horizontally and vertically fair, the use of property values to determine this is a blunt instrument indeed. Think for a moment of a young farming family with a farm value of the median value of \$464,000 (therefore logically half the farms are of lower value - refer Draft Rating Strategy). Correspondingly, think of a town resident in the median value house \$173,500, and a share portfolio of \$290,500. One will pay \$2772 and the other \$1037. Surely this hypothetical example illustrates the ludicrous imbalance in the proposed strategy?</p> <p>I ask the Council to reconsider its recommendation in the interest of fairness, equity, logic and importantly, the interest of all ARCC ratepayers and community members.</p> <p>Yours sincerely,</p> <p>Christie Freeman</p>	
82	Ganley	Paul	22 Barkly Street West	The new suggested rating increasing the farming rate is the best idea Council have had in a while - I think they should move forward with it, saving people in the town ship who struggle to pay their rates some breathing space.	No
83	Gilbert	Rebekah	26 Queen Street, Ararat 3377	Rates to be reduced please	No

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84	Goninon	Jane	197 Mount Cole Road	<p>I write to formally oppose the draft rating strategy 2017 introduced at the Council meeting held on May 2, 2017.</p> <p>The Local Government Act 1989 states that Council must ensure the equitable imposition of rates and charges.</p> <p>I do not believe the rating strategy offers equity for the residents and ratepayers of the Ararat Rural City and should not be adopted for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic modelling and data have not been obtained and provided to demonstrate that the imposition of rates as outlined in the draft strategy will provide equity to residents and ratepayers in Ararat Rural City. • No rating system based on property valuations can be equitable because service users such as renters and tourists do not pay to fund the services they utilise, nor does • Property value reflect the level of services consumed or received <p>I respectfully request that Council oppose the draft rating strategy and retain the status quo.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration</p>	No
85	Goninon	Shane	197 Mount Cole Road, Warrak	<p>I write to formally oppose the draft rating strategy 2017 introduced at the Council meeting held on May 2, 2017.</p> <p>The Local Government Act 1989 states that Council must ensure the equitable imposition of rates and charges.</p> <p>I do not believe the rating strategy offers equity for the residents and ratepayers of the Ararat Rural City and should not be adopted for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic modelling and data have not been obtained and provided to demonstrate that the imposition of rates as outlined in the draft strategy will provide equity to residents and ratepayers in Ararat Rural City. • No rating system based on property valuations can be equitable because service users such as renters and tourists do not pay to fund the services they utilise, nor does • Property value reflect the level of services consumed or received <p>I respectfully request that Council oppose the draft rating strategy and retain the status quo.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration</p>	No

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86	Grellet	Danny	Corner of Roxborough Rd and Great Western - Moyston Rd Great Western	<p>To: Ararat Rural City Council</p> <p>Submission opposing ARCC draft rating strategy decision to abolish differential rates</p> <p>Submission from: Danny Grellet</p> <p>Honorable Councillors,</p> <p>I am a small scale sheep farmer who relies on revenue from my farm in the municipal district of the Ararat Rural City to make a living. As a rate payer I am concerned about the Council's proposal to abolish differential rates in 2017.</p> <p>The ARCC rating strategy decision has the potential to be detrimental to the long term sustainability of our community and threatens the viability of my farming operation. Among the many rate payers of the Ararat Rural City It is the widely held opinion the Councils 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. I 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>Signed: DG Dated: 29/05/2017</p> <p>Address: Corner of Roxborough rd and Great Western - Moyston rd Great Western</p> <p>I do not wish to be heard on my submission.</p>	No
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87	Griffiths	Olivia	1769 Woorndoo-Streatham Rd, Nerrin Nerrin Vic 3351	<p>My fiance and I have our farm in your council.</p> <p>I am not sure if you are unaware but the pressures facing farmers are incredible. Grain prices have plummeted in recent months, making it difficult to break even, and the land is so wet that most are unable to get crops in the ground. Their income and family livelihood is literally weather dependent, it's an incredible burden for people to take on. Something you and I are unlikely to be able to manage.</p> <p>It's well and good to say that they can earn their living from where their home, as your member Glenda McLean argued, as tax is charged by land area, they pay this opportunity. Our farm is too small to support a family, yet we are paying a 5 figure tax to you, one which we can barely afford at this stage, let alone without your offensive and frankly unscrupulous tax gouging. How many years of tax must Mrs McLean have to pay to have contributed a 5 figure amount? Yet every year we have to do just that. The stress that your obscene tax increase will put on the financial and especially mental health of these hard working people will be not be displayed by shouting and screaming. As farmers always do, they will put their heads down and work hard until they simply cannot pay the tax man, at which stage I believe your shire will see an increase in farmer suicide.</p> <p>Because of this tax, you will place some of the most incredible people in the most difficult life-threatening position. I have seen how agricultural financial burden can destroy men and women, destroy families and destroy communities and I fear I am going to see it again if your tax comes to fruition.</p> <p>I'm appalled that this has made it this far, you have to engage your common sense and throw this proposal out.</p> <p>By implementing this tax Ararat City Council are quite literally putting peoples lives at risk.</p>	No
88	Guthrie	Tom	366 Mafeking Rd Willaura. 3379	<p>I am proposing that under capital works some funding being allocated to a study to look at the completion of the sealing of the Moyston-Dunkeld Road from where it stops at the Moyston end to the intersection of Muirhead Rd. This would make a safe, sealed section for traffic travelling north/south close to the Grampians.</p> <p>I raise this issue because of the frequency of accidents over the last two years in particular. Not only did we lose our son on this road, but three others were lucky to escape with their lives after running off the road.</p> <p>The current gravel section is constantly unsafe from the higher than average rainfall in winter and the amount of loose gravel which accumulates in summer. Unlike many other gravel roads in this shire, this road has thick vegetation all the way along its length making it more dangerous than most.</p> <p>The worst spot is the intersection of Moyston Rd with Andrews Lane. As a result of</p>	No

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				<p>the change in direction of the Moyston Rd, thick gravel builds up and gets corrugated. It was there we lost our son when our daughter lost control travelling north. Earlier this year, a twenty year old girl travelling south in a Toyota 4 wheel drive lost control in the same spot and hit a tree, writing off the vehicle.</p> <p>Now we have the Pitch Festival with 6000 attendees hoping to use this road for the next 5 years.</p> <p>This road has been one of the poorest maintained roads in the shire for my 35 years living here, in fact its been a disgrace. Its one thing to leave it as such, but when it is so poor that it is unsafe, something needs to be done about it.</p>	
89	Guthrie	Pollyanna	366 Mafeking Rd, Willaura. 3379.	<p>Our family has been farming on Thermopylae since 1927. It seems strange our local Council is making more difficult to survive and employ locals by increasing rates by such an extent. We need viable rural businesses to support our local community. Leave the rating system as it was.</p>	No
90	Guthrie	Sarah	366 Mafeking Rd, Willaura. 3379	<p>The increase in rates is unfair, unjust and inequitable. No-one imposes increases such as this. The smallest sector of the community is being slugged to subsidise the largest. Where was the community consultation? Where was the warning? Crazy stuff.</p>	No
91	Hall	Lorraine	58 Lovells Lane Moyston 3377	<p>I hereby lodge my objection to the Differential Rating Strategy. I find it extraordinary that Council can seek to increase my farm rates by 51% !! This is higher than the top percentage increase discussed in Council!! Why is this so?? A preposterous rate hike of this magnitude is beyond the pale. Could you please enlighten me as to how anyone could reasonably be expected to foresee, let alone budget for such a huge rate increase. I have a very small land holding and receive very little income. The proposed rates represent 19% of my average (gross) income. My present rates represent 13% of my gross income and even this causes me financial stress. I don't know how I will be able to continue if the rates absorb 19% of my income.</p> <p>I strongly disagree that the farm rate be increased and the increase allocated to the Commercial and General Sectors. It is wrong that Council should notify the Commercial and General sectors of the "good news" for them, before hearing and processing objections from the farming sector.</p> <p>Farmers have endured 10 years of drought, stock losses, locusts, poor yields, bush fires and floods in the past 15 years. Last season was a good season but many of us have not been able to sell our grain due to a glut. The irony of waiting for a good season to finally come, only to find out that we have no market for our grain is devastating. Farmers feed this nation under very stressful financial and emotional restraints at times and God help them if they should succumb to illness.</p> <p>My purchasing power will be eroded therefore I will have less disposable income to spend. This will have an impact on local businesses and I am sure this will be the norm</p>	No

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				<p>for most farming enterprises in the district. Therefore I suspect that commercial businesses will suffer to a degree yet to be determined.</p> <p>I think that many farms will actually decrease in value as the market will reflect the exorbitant cost of rates, which would scare off any prospective buyers of farm land. As we (all) are subjected to a high rate in the dollar anyway, it is time that Council introduce cost saving measures to reduce the rate in the dollar, rather than just expecting everyone to keep coming up with the money?</p> <p>I have decided not to be heard in support of my submission, as I expect Council will be inundated with submitters wanting to be heard who share my grievances.</p>	
92	Hamilton	Kirby		It is unfair for people of a low income, such as myself, to have to subsidise farming rates in our shire and pay rates that are too expensive.	No
93	Hardy	Callum	c/- 258 Glue Pot Road Stawell Property Bellellen Road	I wish to express my disappointment at the rate increase. The land I own has no structures on it. It is farm land only, no power connected. I only have about 400 meters of road frontage, which is rarely graded. I do not believe I will benefit anything from a rate increase. A 51% increase seems excessive.	No
94	Hardy	Ann & Geoff	258 Glue Pot Road Stawell	We wish to voice our objection to the rate charges. We do not believe this change is fair. We live 36 kms from Ararat and do not use the facilities at Ararat. We have no garbage collection and we are lucky if we get our road graded once a year. We still have pot holes on the Glue Pot Road which have been there since last year, this road is also in shocking condition heading towards the Black Range and has had road closed signs on it since last year. The Bellellen Road also floods most years and washes the road away. We have been here 32 years and instead of putting a culvert in to fix the problem, it is continually patched up. Increasing farm rates does not add any extra money to the Council, it is only shifting the money around, we do not see that we will see any benefits from a rate increase. There has been a number of droughts over the past 10 years in which farmers struggled. Last year conditions improved but this does not mean farmers should be penalised. We believe this decision needs to be reviewed.	No
95	Harrison	Don & Lois	105 Brooks Rd Vite Vite RSD Derrinallum Vic 3325	<p>We operate a family farming business in the Ararat Rural City Council and are deeply concerned about the Councils proposal to abolish differential rates. The decision to put this proposal forward appears to have been made without proper consultation & with scant regard to the effect & ramifications to the farming sector of the shire.</p> <p>Our rates will increase 48% if this proposal goes through & we will have to reduce our spending which will effect the amount of volunteer work we do with a number of community groups & we won't be able to afford health Insurance. We have grave fears for the mental wellbeing of some farmers who are already suffering financial stress. Increases in land value bears no correlation to increases in the land's capacity to</p>	No

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				<p>produce commodities for income. If rates keep increasing, many family farms will have to be sold to corporate identities & the contract workers they employ will contribute very little to small communities.</p> <p>The existing differential rating system was devised through considerable public consultation to address many inequalities associated with the land value process, & this proposal defies logic.</p> <p>We strongly support the retention of the existing differential rating system & request that council looks at their expenditure to see where saving can be made to take the burden off an already heavily burdened farming sector</p>	
96	Heard	Geoffrey	82 Helens Road WILLAURA	<p>The proposed changes to the rating system for the Rural City of Ararat would seem to be an extraordinary increase when applied to farm land after removal of the Differential Rating currently in use.</p> <p>This will be further compounded with the next valuation, as many farm land values have risen in recent years.</p> <p>State Government Guidelines appear to support the use of Differential Rating, and I would draw attention to the second paragraph on pg48 of the Draft Rating Strategy 2017 pdf where it is stated that consideration must be given to reducing the rate burden (using a reduced differential rate) for farm land.</p>	No

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97	Higgins	Patricia & Kevin	3574 Mortlake- Ararat Road Lake Bolac Victoria 3351	<p>To the Ararat Rural City Councillors,</p> <p>We wish to oppose the Ararat Rural City Council's decision to abolish differential rates because it will cause increased and unsustainable financial burden on our farming business. Our farming business is a small mixed enterprise which we operate ourselves. Because of our age and declining physical health, we outsource most of our seasonal manual work such as lamb marking, crutching, shearing, fertilizer spreading, fencing, cropping and harvesting to local contractors. This business model reduces our profit margin significantly. However, it does provide much needed work for several small local businesses. We wish to stay living and working on our farm for many years to come and believe the way we operate our farm and manage our financial resources, as a way to achieve this. An increase of 50% in our rates will mean that a review of our business model will be urgently required. This rate increase will definitely result in us having decreased financial resources to employ local contractors for some of our operations and will mean reverting to doing more work ourselves. This in turn will result in us working longer hours, in isolation, causing increased fatigue and stress, all of which are known causes for increased mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. The mental health of farmers has been widely researched by Deakin University and The National Centre for Farming Health. Their findings show that the Australian male farmer suicide rates are significantly higher than the non-farming rural male and general male population.</p> <p>Our decision to cut back on employing local contractors will also have a flow-on financial and mental health effect to the local contractors and their families. The health of ALL rate payers, including farmers, their families and employees, the local businesses and workplaces that exist solely to service farming businesses, such as shearers, farm fencers, rural merchandise businesses, agronomists, vehicle suppliers and services, stock and station agencies to name just a few, cannot be ignored. The secondary and tertiary industries in our shire will also be dramatically effected by the flow-on effect of the decrease in disposable farm incomes.</p> <p>Our business will commence on line purchasing of rural merchandise, spare parts etc. Whilst this will be a cost saving strategy for us, designed to save funds to pay our increased rates, it will have a negative financial impact on the businesses we support in Ararat and Lake Bolac. The detrimental consequences on the social capital of the residents of Ararat Rural City Council, cannot be underestimated.</p> <p>Because of the fluctuations in weather, world grain, meat and fibre market prices and ever increasing expenses, our profit margin has declined to the point where we do not always make a profit. Whilst we understand it is our civic duty to pay our rates, and are willing to do so, our business cannot cover such a big increase in rates. It imposes a</p>	No
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				<p>direct cost that cannot be passed on. This added pressure may mean that our only option could be to sell our farming business to a large corporate body, resulting in the further attrition of our local community.</p> <p>We feel that even with the current 55% differential rating, farming households in the Ararat Rural City Council are paying some of the highest rates in the region. This is unfair and discriminatory. The process which arrived at the current decision, was without proper public consultation which is unacceptable. The councilors are elected by the rate payers to represent ALL rate payers fairly and equally. The fact that, 82% of responses on two proposed rating strategies were in favour of retaining the existing Differential Rating Strategy, was disregarded by council, is also unacceptable.</p> <p>Finally, we implore the Council to reconsider abolishing its existing Differential Rating Strategy; to urgently conduct a feasibility study into the impact of URS to rate paying categories, to maintain the proposed Option 1: 55 % Differential rating system, to lobby the Victorian State Government to resolve unsustainable council resourcing and finally to review the proposed 2017/18 council budget spending.</p> <p>Thank- you.</p>	
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98	Hill	Gary	27 McLellan St Stawell 3380	<p>This policy only inflicts another burden on those producing food for the country. After years of crippling drought, with many farmers still trying to recover, we are hit with this extreme rate rise.</p> <p>Some people have short memories.</p> <p>Where is the documentation and case studies to show a need for a rate change. Is the current system broken or is this change just driven by a few with an axe to grind?</p> <p>The proposed policy is short sighted.</p> <p>Hopefully council will see this and vote accordingly.I'm totally against changing the rating schedule.</p> <p>One needs to look at why it was introduced in the first place - what has changed, other than the composition of council?</p> <p>Equity in rating should always be sought to ensure everyone contributes fairly. Unfortunately, equity is not achieved by making everyone contribute at the same level - it's not about the financial contribution.</p> <p>Those in townships obviously utilise more facilities than those on farming properties - this needs to be reflected.</p> <p>A vote for change is a vote for an unfair system with far reaching consequences.So Cr Ford wants to increase what farmers pay in rates to make them equitable with those paid in urban areas.</p> <p>Cr Ford seems to think equitable implies an equal financial contribution based on property values.</p> <p>His assertion is absolutely flawed.</p> <p>Where's the real research to define a fair definition of "equitable" - perhaps it was done when a differential rating system was introduced years ago!</p>	No
99	Hucker	Ivan	2779 Glenelg Highway Wickliffe. 3379i	<p>I am appalled by the council decision to abolish differential rates.</p> <p>This is a huge increase in costs that can not be passed on,local business and families will be impacted.</p> <p>What are the future plans for the rates in the next 5-10 years?</p>	No
100	Hull	Desmond	26 Gordon Street Ararat Vic 3377	<p>As a business owner in Ararat for over 60 years I strongly support the Ararat Rural City new Rating Plan</p> <p>Congratulations to all involved in trying to make this a better place to live & work. I have had 2 generations of family involved in my business and I keep telling them Ararat is not a bad place to live and work.</p> <p>Keep up the good work.</p> <p>Congratulation to the councillors for trying to look after the rate payers of Ararat</p>	No

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101	Hull	Fay	17 Banfield Street Ararat, 3377	<p>On the 2 May Council discussed a draft differential rating strategy for the 2017/2018 financial year. The agenda provided two options for consideration, with Option 1 retaining the existing differential rating strategy and Option 2 proposing a variation in the differential rates. Neither strategy was adopted, and a majority vote saw adoption of a Draft Rating Strategy based on Uniform Rates and removing a Municipal Charge. The result is that all four classes of rates – Commercial, industrial, farm and general, pay the same rate in the dollar on the CIV of their property.</p> <p>One can only assume that Councillors did not anticipate the implications of the adopted draft strategy. This strategy would raise farm rates in a single year on the average farm by 47%. This decision is unconscionable, since by comparison average rates for General, Commercial, and Industrial properties would each go down by 22%, 49% and 38%! Safeway, one of Ararat’s largest local commercial enterprises is not a locally owned business - surely Councillors did not intend to provide Safeway, and similar sized commercial and industrial firms with massive reductions in rates - subsidised by the farming community!</p> <p>I completely understand that a measure of rate relief is needed for the general ratepayer. Rates for farmers, Industry and commercial enterprises are an input expense of their operations, while general ratepayers pay their rates out of their disposable income. Ararat has an ageing population with many households in a low-income bracket. The increases in daily living costs like power, water and council rates is arguably causing hardship for these residents.</p> <p>Farming enterprises have unique challenges that have led to many councils including Ararat, adopting a farm differential lower than the general rate. What that level should be differs according to the characteristics of each municipality. Completely removing the farm differential in a single year without a compensating change in the commercial and industrial differential, is unacceptable and should never have been contemplated. As a general ratepayer, the 22% reduction in my rates would be very welcome, but not at the expense of low income farmers whose financial position may not be dissimilar to low income general and business ratepayers.</p> <p>A Municipal Charge is a regressive tax, it impacts most severely on those least able to afford it and I have never believed that it should be included in the Rating Strategy. In municipalities which are predominantly urban, or predominantly rural the imposition of a municipal charge makes sense – with the ratepayers paying an equal contribution to overheads and having equal access to all services.</p> <p>Ararat has a mixed urban/rural community and in these circumstances the imposition of a Municipal is harder to justify. Farmers are only required to pay one municipal charge no matter how many assessments they receive. General and business ratepayers</p>	No
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				<p>pay the municipal charge on every single assessment. Access to services differs for city, township, and farm residents. Whilst I believe that a Municipal Charge is not appropriate in this municipality I am not sure that dropping the charge, and at the same time increasing farm rates by imposition of a Uniform Rate or a higher differential is appropriate for the 2017/2018 Strategy.</p> <p>I submit that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Councillors of Ararat Rural City Council give serious consideration to the adoption of a Rating Strategy for the 2017/2018 financial year based on the Differentials proposed in Option 2 as listed in the agenda of the May 2 Council Meeting, and that the differentials in the Draft Strategy are equitably adjusted to accommodate either – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Retaining a Municipal Charge of \$90. o Or No Municipal Charge. 2. That Councillors review the Rating Strategy in 2018 to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Review the changes in value movements within each of the four Differentials based on the results of the scheduled revaluation o Determine if a decision to move to Uniform Rating can be supported for the 2018/2019 Financial Year o Determine whether to impose a Municipal Charge, and if so the level at which to set the Charge. <p>Fay Hull 12 May 2017</p>	
102	Hull	Gary	9 Noaks Ark Rd Ararat Vic 3377	<p>Being a business owner and a land owner in the city of Ararat I will support the new Municipal Rates system</p> <p>It will be most welcome for the many Business in the town and will give relief to the pensioners who are having a stressful time with the ammenties bill`s going up all the time.</p>	No
103	Hull	Thelma	30 Barkly Street Ararat	<p>Being a rate payer in Ararat I wholly support the council new rating strategy</p> <p>Good luck</p>	No
104	Hull	Tracy	9 Noaks Ark Rd Ararat vic3377	<p>Being a rate payer in the city of Ararat I commend the City of Ararat Council on their new rating system which will fairer for the rate payers in the city of Ararat</p>	No

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105	Jackson	David	168 Morocco Hills Road	<p>This submission opposes the Ararat Rural City Council draft rating strategy proposed decision to abolish differential rates.</p> <p>The increase that farming households will pay is \$2,432,665, if this motion is adopted. Which will mean that this amount is not available to be spent in Ararat or elsewhere on farming inputs. This disregard shown for farm businesses will mean many people will elect to purchase farming inputs out of town. I believe Councillor McLean's reference by farming people to Ararat residents as townies is unfair and merely her perception. Her action in supporting this motion is driving this perceived wedge much deeper. This motion also plays into the hands of the corporate land purchasers, which will reduce the population in farming areas as farms are amalgamated. A domino effect will occur reducing rural schools, sporting clubs and cooperative community events. Farmers are price takers not price makers. Produce has to be sold at whatever the current price available is, but inputs are charged at rates that resellers and service providers decide upon. I believe that council has not given enough consideration to the long term effects that the adoption of of this proposal would have on farm business and local businesses as well.</p>	No
106	Jamieson	Gary	1 Short Street Ararat	I agree with Council and the rate changes	No
107	Jamieson	Melinda	133 Barkly Street Ararat	I agree with Council and the rate changes	No
108	Jenkins, S G & Murphy,C B		11 Baird St Ararat	Rates reduced	No
109	Jess	John	377 Middle Creek Rd. Middle Creek 3375	<p>I would urge Council to reconsider their rash proposal to abolish the existing Differential Rating System.The fact that this was not one of the two options put to the public is of great concern.</p> <p>I would be interested to learn what circumstances have changed to provoke this attack on the farming industry.</p> <p>Council should know that the farming industry is one of the major economic drivers of the Ararat area.One would assume that Council would be keen to show encouragement and support, rather than impede development.</p> <p>Most business people in the Ararat region are aware that "Ararat does well when the farmers are doing well".</p> <p>If this proposal goes ahead, it will cost our business in the order of \$10,000 extra in rates.This will have to be found somewhere.</p> <p>Although farmers generally prefer to support local businesses,all suppliers of goods and services will be subject to increased pressure to provide the best price.This may</p>	No

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				<p>not go well for businesses in Ararat. There may well be business closures and even more empty shops .</p> <p>I understand the need for Council to contain costs, and I think we are assisting by accepting the lack of services we receive.</p> <p>Perhaps Council could also look at some employment conditions. For instance, a degree of flexibility might lead to more efficiency. It is frustrating to see an expensive piece of equipment such as a grader, parked up when weather conditions are ideal and there are any number of roads in need of attention, just because it is an RDO!</p> <p>I believe that common sense should prevail ,and the current differential rate of 55% continues.</p>	
110	John		68 Bethany Rd hoppers crossing 3029	<p>This is outrageous how do you justify this price rise ? Hard working farmers are working multiple jobs because you are driving farmers off their land this is another nail in the coffin are you going to offer discounts on tariffs for overseas meat when all the farmers have sold their land ? This is a disgrace im ashamed to call my self australian.</p>	No
111	Johns	Jennifer	720 Estate Road Lake Bolac 3351	<p>I am writing on behalf of my mother, Margaret Moreton, to object to the new draft rating strategy.</p> <p>The proposed increase in rates is far beyond what we could have budgetted for. My mother lives in aged care and leases the farm. I manage her affairs on her behalf. There has been no significant increase in the return from leasing farmland that could possibly match the increase in rates.</p> <p>There has also been no increase in the services provided by the council. Also services available to residents and ratepayers differ greatly between the City of Ararat and those living in the rural areas.</p> <p>I therefore request the rates remain the same as last year.</p> <p>Yours sincerely, Jennifer Johns on behalf of Margaret Moreton</p>	No
112	Joyce	Ambrose	5 Gossip Avenue, Ararat, 3377	<p>I strongly vote for Option 1 differential rates. I am completely opposed to the proposed uniform rate. This is blatant discrimination against the Ararat region's farming communities and will cripple local farming families.</p>	No

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113	Joyce	Verna	5 Gossip Avenue, Ararat, 3377	I vote for option 1 differential rates. I do not want nor support the proposed uniform rate. I do not think it is fair that local farming families have their rates increase at such a huge percentage. Local farming families are the salt of the earth - they are the volunteer back-bones of rural Australia - without them, the CFA would cease to exist, not to mention countless other local groups. Local farming families give tirelessly to their local communities and I find it abhorrent that the Ararat council can treat them with such discrimination. The proposed changes are not sustainable for any local farmers and will result in the local Ararat council ceasing to have a farming sector at all. This will have a negative flow-on affect to local Ararat businesses and the entire region will suffer.	No
114	Laidlaw	Sandy	54 Dobie Rd Ararat	The proposed increase to rural rates will have a huge impact on my farm and my capacity to make a living from farming! As we are price takers we have know way of passing the cost on !!!	No
115	Lauren			I would like to see the rates be lower	No
116	Liston	Brendan & Elizabeth		Brendan & Elizabeth Liston of Westmere wish to submit our disapproval of the Ararat City Council's exorbitant rate rise for the farming community. The councillors have to understand that property value does not equate to high income ; we like everyone else have to work for our money and after paying bills and living expenses there is not a lot left over. Farmers are not cash cows and should not be treated as such. This decision means that we will not be going to Ararat to buy the groceries etc. because why would we support a community that has no regard to fairness so therefore businesses will be impacted in some way. Also we get very little support in regards to road maintenance and other services in our area and now you want us to pay 50'/, more while the city area goes ahead without paying an equitable amount.	No
117	Lofts	Julie	30 Burke Street Beaufort Vic 3373	Part owner property located at Warrak. I vote for option 1 differential rates to remain and do not want the proposed uniform rate. Farming communities are under constant stress, if this proposal goes through a large number will have to sell, prices for land will fall business in town will suffer, what do farmers get for there rates?.	No

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118	MacInnes	Donald	227 Slattery's Road, Bald Hills	<p>I wish to add my voice to the chorus of dismay and concern at the recent Council decision to significantly increase rates for farmers in the Rural City of Ararat. In particular:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The percentage of farmers is now far lower than the percentage of total rates paid by them and this is simply unfair. 2. Many ageing farmers will now face further costs in an ever increasing cost environment. 3. Younger farmers establishing themselves in the industry also battle costs. 4. Lack of information and warning about the decision have been surprising. <p>Yours sincerely, Donald B. MacInnes,</p> <p>Rural City of Ararat Ratepayer .</p>	No
119	McDougall	Sally	2063 Tatyoon Road, Tatyoon, Vic, 3378	<p>I am strongly opposed to your proposed changes to the farm rates differential. Differential rating exists for a sound reason, and changes have a direct impact on the business operations of farms and the community.</p> <p>As part of good government, the Council is under an obligation to explain their conclusion that a single, uniform rate is fair and equitable.</p> <p>It is impossible for farmers to pass on rate increases commercially. This means that a dryland rate is less a land tax and more an imposition of fixed cost on business. Farming is the only occupation dependant on a land asset base for earning an income. In reality, rating redistribution is a tax on businesses in the region and impacts on families.</p> <p>I strongly encourage the Council to reconsider its position on differential farm rates. Reinstate Option 1</p>	No
120	McInnes	Graeme	345 Stavely Rd Stavely Vic 3379	<p>Dear Council</p> <p>As a elected representatives of the rate payers of the Ararat Rural City Council you were elected to represent all rate payers. I believe that this decision to scrap the differential rate system unfairly targets rural rate payers. We will be expected to pay over half of the total Rates collected despite being a fraction of the population. Also receiving fewer services for said rates because of the distances to be able to access them. As a consequence I urge you to reconsider this decision and hope that a fair and equitable decision can be reached</p> <p>Sincerely Graeme McInnes.</p>	No

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121	McInnes	Greg	9 Hakea St Arararat Vic 3377	<p>I strongly oppose the Ararat Rural City Councils decision to abolish the differential rating system. It seems distinctly unfair to charge a minority of rate payers such a large portion,(over 50%) of total rate revenue. As a Farmer/ Land holder, the variation in income as opposed to property value means in the last ten years I have had a Nil taxable income in some of those years, and still have had to pay rates. To increase this rate burden will make the viability of many farms in the Council questionable, and as it is an ongoing cost, any further increases in rates will be compounded by the large jump you propose. As a farmer on the edge of the Council area we look and compare your rate strategy to your neighbors and find it hard to see any extra value you provide. Sadly if this plan is carried out in its current form, as we are on the fringe of the Council, our only form of protest will be to buy our supplies outside of Ararat. As was stated by the Vff president in "The Weekly Advertiser" "Ararat in danger of 'artificial drought'" .Either by farmers not having the capital to spend in Ararat, or as I would propose shopping elsewhere in protest this decision that you make will impact all businesses.</p> <p>Sincerely Greg McInnes</p>	No
122	McInnes	Julie	1001 Astons Road Narrapumelap South 3293	<p>changing the differential rating system to a uniform rate overall is unfair on us. Why should our rates go up 50% and we see no benefit to us.</p> <p>Our roads only get graded once a year if we are lucky and then we have to ring and complain for the roads to be done. How can you increase our rates when we get no amenities now (eg water, sewerage street lighting etc) Rubbish is there if you want to travel 10 kms , no door to door like in town.The trees are overgrown on our roads & bridges that visibility is poor & dangerous.From various rain there are wash outs across our road . Its just a cash grab for the shire.</p>	No
123	McKay	Donna		<p>Dear CEO and ARCC Councillors,</p> <p>The current proposed increase of rates for the farming community is unfair and unjust. We are a young family just starting out on our farming venture and with the increased rates it will put huge pressure on us financially. Any money we make goes back into paying our large farm loan and excess bills. These external bills are spent locally in the ARCC area. This will have to be reconsidered if the differential disappears.</p> <p>Surely consideration should be made in keeping young farming families in the area for future economic growth. There should be some other way you can source this extra money.</p> <p>Please be fair when making your final decision.</p> <p>Sincerely, Donna McKay</p>	No

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124	McKay	Rob	139 Burnett Road TATYOON VIC 3378	<p>I oppose the scrapping of the differential rating strategy, and implore council to adopt 'Option 1'. As a lifelong resident of the Ararat Rural City, I am appalled at the lack of public consultation made before hastily adopting a proposal that has a huge impact on rural ratepayers.</p> <p>My wife, three young children and I derive our sole income from our farm business and this increase of 49-51% is unfair, and unjust. Rural ratepayers are already paying more rates per household than other regional councils.</p> <p>It will have an impact on our family business, and as primary producers we have no way of passing on this massive increase in rate cost.</p> <p>The knock-on effect of this rash decision will be:</p> <p>Large impact on farm businesses, their employees, and suppliers of rural services and equipment.</p> <p>Reduced discretionary spending by rural residents in Ararat.</p> <p>Possible reduction in demand for farmland due to unfavourable rating strategy compared to neighbouring areas.</p> <p>Division within our great community by driving a wedge between rural residents and their town counterparts.</p> <p>A number of councilors list 'growth for local business' and 'job opportunities' as visions for this great region. Agriculture has much potential as a growth industry and has always been a key driver in the local economy. I believe some members of council need to be aware of this potential and look to nurture, not hinder local agriculture for the benefit of all ratepayers.</p> <p>Please Consider Yours sincerely, Rob McKay</p>	No
125	Meehan	Tammie	7 High St west, Ararat	I vote for option 1 differential rates and do not want the proposed uniform rate.	No
126	Metcalfe	Annette	29 Selwood Road, Ararat	<p>I wish to put my support behind the change to the differential rating system and I whole heartedly support the return to a uniform rating system.</p> <p>I believe this to be the fairest system for all involved.</p>	No

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127	Mulcahy	Peter & Kylie	1006 Yalla-Y-Poora Road, Streatham	<p>We take exception to what Ararat Rural City has published in their Community Information Brochure – Budget & Rates 2017/18 “it is generally accepted that ratepayers who own highly valued properties have a greater capacity to pay”. Agricultural land at present is significantly high in value but it is absurd to think that equates to the farming community having a greater capacity to pay a higher level of rates. If Council takes the view farmers are wealthy people it is truly out of touch and unfit for governance.</p> <p>It is estimated with the implementation of your proposed rating system our business will be required to pay a further 50% on what we already pay and with the increase in land valuations to occur we can expect this to be even higher. This is extremely harsh and unfair. It is difficult to understand why the smallest proportion of ratepayers are being asked to pay the highest percentage of rates and we fail to see any local factors that would deem a change to the differential rate percentage approved last time.</p> <p>Farmers have always paid their way. We don’t see or receive the benefits of our rates unless living in town, although we support Ararat and its surrounding area by spending locally. We are quite often responsible for the upkeep of buildings and recreational areas within our district and spend much time fundraising for our communities. We pay a ridiculous amount for waste removal and do half the job ourselves driving to and from drop off points. Simple requests such as grading the appalling gravel roads we have to travel on in order to get to town and send our children to school has always been a disappointing battle. The audacity of Council’s proposal to knowingly further burden the agricultural sector with a higher share of total rates revenue is nothing short of disgraceful.</p> <p>We strongly recommend Council do not replace the current differential rates with a uniform rate to apply to all property type as the proposal is not equitable, highly emotive and discriminatory.</p>	No
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128	Nater	Ms Rosie	111 Moyston West Rd., Moyston 3377	<p>ARCC Rating Strategy Submission - Rosie Nater, 111 Moyston West Rd., Moyston.</p> <p>I was quite stunned when I heard the outcome of the 2 May 2017 Special Council Meeting.</p> <p>Yes, I was shocked that a motion proposing that the Differential and the Municipal Charge be abolished, but even more so in the way this came about.</p> <p>At the Special Council Meeting, there were two options up for consideration. These two options were the result of extensive consultation and significant investment from Council staff to workshop the full implications of each. These workshops were designed to ensure Councillors had the best possible information on each option, so they could truly understand the real-world implications of each on community members, to enable them to make an informed decision.</p> <p>Neither of these options had the full support of Councillors. To then put forward and pass a radically different motion, which had not been – as I understand from council staff – ever been proposed or even discussed, I think is very disappointing from experienced councillors, and really showed the inexperience of some of our new councillors.</p> <p>It may be legal, but it certainly was not ethical.</p> <p>I attended the Community meetings at Moyston and Ararat hoping to talk personally to each of the three councillors who proposed, and supported this motion, to try and understand why they thought this significant cost increase to farming businesses of between 47%-51% in one year, is fair and equitable?</p> <p>None of these Councillors attended any of the meetings. Apart from appearing cowardly, it also showed to those present that these three councillors could not justify their actions, and that their rationale was weak.</p> <p>Contrary to Cr McLean’s impression that all farmers don’t want to pay any rates at all, (audio May 2 Special Council Meeting), I feel this is offensive to the majority of us who fully expect to pay rates and taxes, but want to see value for this money.</p> <p>A lot has been said about Differential Rating and its perception of inequity. I feel it’s</p>	No
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			<p>more about what is a fair amount to pay. Do you honestly think its fair that the average farmer (ARCC figures of 461 farmers with an average of 3.7 assessments) will now pay over \$16,000 in rates? Why then is it expected that farming businesses contribute \$7,766,500 into the budget, but the total of all other Commercial and Industrial (town businesses) rate revenue is budgeted in 17/18 to be \$756,000, or roughly one tenth? (ARCC Strategic Documents Fact Sheet May, 2017).</p> <p>Fair?</p> <p>Farming businesses constitute 10% of the rate paying pool (VFF figures) but are now expected to contribute 55% of the rate revenue.</p> <p>Farmers do have a social conscious, and we are more than willing to assist those less fortunate by subsidising their rates, but why are we now being asked to subsidise all those who's income is higher and more secure than ours as well?</p> <p>Thank you for taking time to consider this submission.</p>	
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129	Norman	Scott	441 Moyston Great Western Road, Moyston Vic 3377	<p>29 May 2017 Ararat Rural City Council P.O. Box 246, Ararat, Victoria 3377</p> <p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>Re: Opposed to ARCC’s decision to abolish differential rates.</p> <p>I am writing this letter to raise my concerns and objection to the recent announcement that Ararat Rural City will no longer be using the differential rating system with reference to your letter dated 11 May 2017 to all rate payers.</p> <p>I have major concerns over the process for this decision and ask you to demonstrate were due diligence has occurred with reference to the below:</p> <p>a) Ararat Rural City’s obligation under its own guidelines to “endeavour to achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term and cumulative effects of decisions.”</p> <p>b) Ministerial guidelines state;</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. section 3C(2)(f)of the Act to “ensure the equitable imposition of rates and charges”</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. 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 , may be addressed by use of the differential rate powers</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">c. 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):</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i. Farm land (as defined by the Valuation of Land Act 1960);</p> <p>c) Local Government Act clearly states;</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">a. applying different levels of charging on a capacity to pay basis is more easily and systematically achieved</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">b. The rating basis chosen impacts the distributive burden of who pays rather than the total quantum of revenue raised</p> <p>In Victoria, according to the Municipal Association of Victoria’s website the vast majority of councils (73) currently use the capital improved value system to set rates</p>	No
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			<p>along with the differential rating system, to achieve equitable rates burden across the community.</p> <p>Accurate valuations of properties are a critical means of ensuring that property owners pay a fair share of rates and I understand revaluations are due to occur shortly but Councils shouldn't collect extra rate revenue as a result of property revaluations.</p> <p>As we are all aware council is restricted to a rate cap of 2.5% p.a. Correct process is to assess budgetary requirements and then the total rates required is the short fall between non rates revenue and budget requirement, has comprehensive scrutiny of the budget been completed and published showing maximised efficiency of revenue use and thus lowering the rates burden on the community?</p> <p>Each council chooses one of three valuation bases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capital improved value (CIV) reflects the value of the land and all fixed improvements, including property • site value (SV) reflects the value of land only • net annual value (NAV) reflects the annual rental value of the property net of fixed costs <p>If Councils are using a differential rating system they must use the CIV, if they are using a Uniform rating system Council is not restricted to CIV, has any consideration to the rating method been undertaken for uniform rating system?</p> <p>Has consideration to the disparity of the capital value of farming land verses its capacity to generate income been considered?</p> <p>Has NAV for example been considered? For farming land (and commercial properties) it may best reflect the income potential of the land and thus ability of the farmer to pay their fair burden of rates.</p> <p>Victorian Auditor General's report into ratings practices of local government, 2013 stated there were large "inconsistencies in the rating practices of councils and the quality and soundness of council rating decisions", also "Council engagement and communication with ratepayers on rating decisions and rate matters varied significantly in depth and quality", and Councils do not provide sufficient or consistent information to ratepayers about their rating decisions".</p>	
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			<p>I feel the reality of the decision to move to uniform rates and therefore increasing farming families rates by 40 – 55% and taking the rates generated by the farming community to well over 50% of councils total rates revenue is going to be extremely detrimental to not only the individual farming families but also to the greater community.</p> <p>Personally I will simply have less money to spend back in to the commercial sector of Ararat and as many studies have shown for every \$1 a farmer spends in their local community it is re-spent 6 – 9 times within that same community.</p> <p>I would like to see council take a mature view of the rating policy going forward, with consideration to councils own goal of making a healthy and viable community. Differential rating needs to be maintained to share equitably to burden of rates across the whole community and not to unfairly over burden one sector. Everyone is prepared to pay their fair share of rates but it must be fair.</p> <p>I believe the differential rating system is a fair and adequate system and I would like to see your Option 1 (differential rating) be adopted as it is the status quo and has been operating effectively for a long period of time.</p> <p>Could you please acknowledge my submission in opposition to the proposed Uniform rating system and could you please address my questions raised in this letter.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely</p> <p>Scott Norman</p> <p>Scott & Jill Norman 441 Moyston Great Western Road Moyston, Victoria 3377</p>	
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130	Phillips	Michael & Sherry	Bungarra 790 Yarrack Road Narrapumelap South 3293	<p>The draft rating policy for 2017 is unacceptable</p> <p>1 The Rural worker minimum wage is well above our average Taxable Primary Income for the last 5 years</p> <p>2 The 48% & 51% proposed rate rise is extreme and depressing</p> <p>3 We are both Ararat born and have supported business within the Shire including</p> <p>WISS Wool Ararat Meat Exports Carriers Anthony Schwab & Damien Stevens Several Lake Bolac Firms With the better road access we have to Dunkeld & Hamilton maybe all our shopping should be done there</p> <p>4 This a Soldier Settlement area and a single assessment has proved to be unviable</p> <p>5 We have been here 50 years and would like to stay</p> <p>6 The Ararat RC website boasts that it has versatile primary production famous for its wine, merino wool and cropping</p>	No
131	Phillips	Kylie		rates are too expensive	No
132	Pinniger	D A & AJ	6 Blackwood Court Ararat Vic 3377	We support the change to the Uniform Rate for the 2017/2018 period and we would hope that this would continue as an ongoing system.	No
133	Pithie	Mia	22 A Alexander Ave Wendouree 3355	<p>The increase in rates is not just unfair, it would bring some farmers close to breaking point. What is the point of increasing rates if your ratepaying base is closer to becoming uneconomical, and having to sell? You will not find that there are plenty of replacement smallholders ready to buy.</p> <p>Further, how on earth can the council justify the amount of rates in view of the service provided. I understand that 1000 acres would incur roughly \$11,000.00 in rates. How on earth can the council provide \$11,000.00 worth of services to that ratepayer?</p>	No

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134	Plunkett	Kylie	52 Barkly St West, Ararat	<p>24th May 2017 Ararat City Council P.O Box 246, Ararat, VIC 3377</p> <p>Dear Cr Paul Hooper and Ararat City Councillors,</p> <p>RE: Draft Rating Strategy</p> <p>I am no less than shocked at the proposed changes to the municipal rates, in particular the steep increase in rates to farmers. It seems to me, (a 'townie') that council has decided to go with the popular vote rather than consider the long term future of our farms and therefore our city.</p> <p>Whilst my rates go down around \$400, our farmers rates increase by thousands. I don't understand how many farms could swallow this increase and remain viable. Our farmers work hard, often have large debts and run a gamble each year to make their living, so dependent on our unpredictable climate.</p> <p>I have been proud to be an Ararat Citizen and farming is such a big part of our community. Our health services business as well as many other businesses in Ararat are supported by the farmers, who know the value of community and supporting local enterprise.</p> <p>It would be a sad day when we see our farming communities shrink and lose the generations of farmers that are a big part of our future. A knock on effect is that Ararat may see a sharp downturn in local economy and serious population decline.</p> <p>I for one, will keep my previous rate charges in support of the farmers and propose a review of your proposal.</p> <p>I do have one question to pose to council – why are our rates amongst the highest in the state? I propose a review of where our rates are spent per capita in comparison to the spending of other similar sized cities with similar facilities.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely, Kylie Plunkett</p>	No
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135	Preston	Leigh	137 Barkly Street Ararat	I agree with the proposed change in the rating strategy. I feel that in particular that residents of our townships unfairly subsidise the farming businesses in our district. The cost of rates is too high for our lower socio-economic class of residents in our townships. We need to help our poor pensioners and less well off rate paying residents to be able to live sustainably in our community.	No
136	Price	Glenn	325 Drysdale Rd Willaura	I absolutely oppose the intended rate increase to effect the farming community. Unfair thoughtless & detrimental to the shire as a whole.	No
137	Pritchard	Geoffrey & Glenda	1704 Geelong Road, Mount Helen. 3350	<p>To the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Andrew Evans, Ararat Rural City Council.</p> <p>As a property owner at 808 Chatsworth - Wickliffe Road, Wickliffe, we are shocked to read the Draft Rating Strategy for Rural City of Ararat proposal to remove the differential rate.</p> <p>The impact on the farm community is enormous with a proposed rate increase of 47% on our property. There is no suggestion of any increased benefit to us or the farm community. Only rate relief for the General and Commercial sectors in the Rural City. This would appear to be a grab for money from the farm community.</p> <p>The current rating system has been in place for many years and has given some consideration to the limited value for rates paid by the rural community compared to benefits for the Ararat City residents.</p> <p>We understand the draft proposal was voted on in Council and narrowly passed on a vote of 4 to 3 councillors. We do not see this as a very convincing justification to proceed with the proposed Draft Rating Strategy, particularly the removal of the differential rate.</p> <p>In the interest of keeping a fair balance of rates paid across the Rural City of Ararat and retaining some harmony with all sectors we demand that the differential rate be retained for farms, the current rating policy remain, and the Draft Policy be torn up..</p> <p>On behalf of Geoffrey Pritchard and Glenda Pritchard</p>	No

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138	Ratepayers Victoria Inc		8/1248 North Road Oakleigh South 3167	<p>This does not seem to be acceptable my the farmer ratepayers it is also of concern that several councillors 2 years ago voted for a reduction and ARE now voting for 100% increase to the farming land owners</p> <p>I have study the Farmers Federation concern in the local newspaper and agree in total council should reconsider their option and adopt proposal 1.</p> <p>Councillors can be replace, we believe that Ararat councillors should stood down and administrators be appointed.</p> <p>Ratepayers Victoria will be taking a strong interest in the results at the next council meeting</p> <p>Jack Davis Vice President Ratepayers Victoria Inc.</p>	No
139	Ritchie	Leeanne		<p>As rate payer's we all understand that we have to pay rates. Farming is a business that relies on its income from the land. Income that is affected by many outside influences that farmers have no control over such as drought, flood, fire, and prices for their commodities, farmers are price takers not setter's This is why we currently have a differential rating system to compensate for these ever changing conditions which effect a farm business profitability</p> <p>I suggest that there has been no evidence presented that there has been any regard or consideration given by some shire councillors to the impact that an introduction of a uniform rate system would have on the farming community.</p> <p>As stated above, a differential rate accommodates the influences that a farming business has no control over whereas a uniform rate is unchanging therefore doesn't accommodate these uncontrollable influences.</p> <p>It is very disappointing to be going through this current rating strategy which has created much anger among farmers and disbelief from many town people in the community. If the majority of councillors had followed the ministerial guidelines this current situation could have been avoided and a more consultative & informed outcome may have been achieved.</p> <p>I feel it would be of great benefit to all rate payers of the Ararat Rural City that the Ararat Rating Strategy be deferred so that the required regard and consideration be</p>	No

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				applied to meet the objective and achieve the best outcomes for the local community having regard to the long term cumulative effects of decisions made	
140	Roberts	Luke	19 Kindred Road Pomonal	I am a farmer leasing land out at Pomonal. This is directly going to put up my payments that will put pressure on me and my family. I am part time employed by a local farmer in Simon Brady who has confirmed that if this is to go ahead I'm out of a job. Which in turn will put pressure on my situation. I find this hard to understand how four un educated people can make a rash decision that will divide town and farming communities. And not have the guts to appear at any meetings in the shire because they know how unfair this is. Regards Luke	No
141	Rodger	Clinton	7 Highview Court, Ararat	The new rating strategy suggested by Council sounds like it will give people living in residential areas a fair go - farmers own the majority of the land in the shire, yet think residential area should pay a higher portion of the rates. We still pay for garbage and recycling on top of our rates - it is not part of the rates, farmers get an option if they do or don't get this service. Well done Council for thinking of the people who struggle to pay their rates each year.	No
142	Russell	Mike	37 Henderson Street	I concur with OPTION 2	No
143	Sandy		Ararat	To get lower rates	No
144	Savoia	Dean	59 Pierbox Lane Moyston	I finalised purchase of my property in December 2016. The first I've heard from the Shire is to let me know of a 39% increase in my annual municipal rates. I'm sure it's a wonderful plan to raise revenue and the 53 page strategy is fascinating reading, but tell me, in what other sphere can you suddenly whack on a 39% increase and expect widespread approval. As a new resident in the Shire, I'm more interested in hearing what your plans are to live within your current rate-payer funded means.	No
145	Schott	Naomi	9 Grano St Ararat	I agree with the council drop in rates!	No
146	Schwab	Anthony	12 Queens Avenue, Ararat	Accept new rating strategy as proposed by Councillors	No
147	Shaw	Irene		I vote for option 1 differential rates and do not want the proposed uniform rate	No
148	Sladdin	Amanda	23 Queen St Ararat	Rates to be reduced	No

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149	Stephens	Cheree	35 High Street West Ararat	As a single parent the rates I currently pay for my house are a huge financial struggle for me. I pay my rates fortnightly & they are over \$100 per payment. Please lower our household rates!	No
150	Stevens	John	3054 Pyrenees Hwy Elmhurst 3469	<p>Mayor and Councillors,</p> <p>This submission is to request Council reject the Draft Rating Strategy which proposes a uniform rate across all categories and to retain the current rate which includes a farm differential of 55%.</p> <p>As mentioned at the community gathering at Elmhurst, the Moyne Shire operates with a uniform rating system. Perhaps if Ararat adopts this model then Ararat's uniform rate should be in the same range as the 0.23146 cents/\$CIV in Moyne.</p> <p>The mix of rate sectors in Moyne, amongst other factors, is different to Ararat's which makes comparison an inappropriate argument.</p> <p>Businesses in Ararat are bigger beneficiaries of direct spending by Council than the farming community. Council employs people to promote tourism and events which benefit local business. The figures presented by Council indicate that the uniform rate for the commercial sector further disadvantages the rural sector when taking the promotional funding into account. Council employs nobody to promote the rural sector.</p> <p>Local farmers will find it harder to compete with large corporate bodies when looking to expand to enable future generations to work on the farm because cash flow needed to fund capital purchases will be used to rates. Any rate increases reduce cash flow available</p>	No
151	Strafehl	Bridie	20 Acacia Ave Ararat vic 3377	I agree with the council as the rates need to be adjusted/ reduced	No
152	Taylor	Peter & Jody	67 Campbell St Ararat	Draft budget 2017/2018 as we need a discount in rates compared with other municipalities. Cheaper rates would be great	No

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153	Taylor	WR & AV	788 Moyston Dunkeld Rd, Moyston 3377	<p>To all councillors, we Bill and Annette Taylor object to the councils draft strategy decision to alter the differential rating system and municipal charge.</p> <p>Why should multi-national franchises whose profits go offshore and who pay no taxes receive a rate subsidy from the farming community.</p> <p>The decision by council only makes the minority, that is farmers, pay for the services that are enjoyed by the majority of residents and commercial/industries of this municipality.</p> <p>This will drive a wedge between the urban and rural communities. Moyston has a fairly strong community with farming families contributing to the wellbeing of our little town. This will be put into jeopardy if this financial burden is implemented.</p> <p>Farmers are price takers not price makers and lack the ability to adjust to such increases as proposed. The whole economics of the municipality are at risk by this decision to burden farmers with such an increase in rates.</p> <p>In our personal circumstances, our life style block which we have developed over 20 years, to provide us with a sustainable lifestyle, generates no income, is facing a rate increase of 45%, which is outrageous and very hard to justify.</p> <p>In conclusion we would like to see the council adopt the status quo model.</p>	No
154	Thewlis	Heather	651 Mt Elliott Road Willaura	<p>I and my family are appalled at the decision by the council to draft a change to the differential rating system and aim to impact farming land with a potential 51% increase to the cost of the rates across the entire farm. The majority of farming land should be classified quite differently to capital improved blocks with houses etc in a town or even on the farm itself. It is interesting that there has been no suggestion that there will be a 51% or even any increase in the very few services we currently receive from council despite the suggested increase in rates. It is obvious that the counsellors who voted for this new rating system have little concern for farmers in their council area. It is also obvious these same counsellors have no idea what has been happening for farmers over the past ten to twenty years. We realise we are a minority group and that there are some counsellors who are more interested in keeping the votes of the majority than aiming to understand the concerns and needs of minority's groups like ours. We have faced many challenges over the past thirty years and have stayed with farming encouraging our son and his family to take on the family farm. We did this believing those in powerful positions within our council would make fair decisions that are also reasonable. There is nothing fair or reasonable about this potential decision made with only a difference of one vote. This decision could mean the difference between many family farmers staying or leaving the land as the long term cost consequences are beyond what most farmers will be able to absorb. We feel thoroughly let down by the counsellors who voted for this potential change to the rating system.</p>	No

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155	Thomas	Amanda	28 McNeill St Ararat	Lower rates	No
156	Toye	John	2 Waratah Ave	uniform rating is long overdue, carry on with your proposed plan and more than enough support will be forthcoming , any objection to this plan will only come from the farms and primary producers ,but they object to everything ,so dont let it worry you sincerely john toye	No
157	Tucker	Jessica	238 Rockies Hill Rd	<p>29th May 2017</p> <p>Dear Councillors,</p> <p>I am writing to you as an Ararat business owner, a farmer's wife, a member of the Ararat Regional Business Association, and as a mother of 3 young children.</p> <p>I am a physiotherapist and part owner of Ararat Physiotherapy & Health Services. We are a young business but are rapidly growing and currently employ 8 people.</p> <p>I have grave concerns that should the proposed rate restructure be accepted all Ararat businesses including ours will be adversely affected. Quite obviously rural people stand to lose a significant portion of their disposable income to rates – this has to come from somewhere so many belts will be squeezed.</p> <p>A significant amount of our health service business is the farming community. I have concerns that since the proposed rate rise there are rumblings by farmers that they will boycott Ararat as Ararat Rural City is turning its back on them.</p> <p>In the case of our farm business we face a rate increase exceeding \$40,000, equating to a \$13,000 per family involved in the farm. In total our farm would be paying approx. \$32,000 per family. Should our physio business be faced with this we would have no option but to consider closing the health service. I cannot understand how a farming business is supposed to handle this?</p> <p>As a farmer's wife and health professional I see the health issues financial pressure puts on farmers. 100 hour weeks are not uncommon in farming, combined with declining commodity prices, and climate change increasing drought risk, stress levels run very high. Increasing rates is going to have a direct impact on depression and farmer health which should not be taken lightly.</p> <p>In closing I plead with you to reconsider your position. I enjoy being involved in Ararat and feel proud that my business is contributing to the local economy. I am hopeful that if you fully understand the pain this proposal is causing Rural Rate payers, and the wedge that Council is driving between City and Country you will see fit to retain the 55% Rate differential.</p> <p>Yours sincerely Jess Tucker, Ararat Physiotherapy & Health Services Cc: Victorian Farmers Federation</p>	No

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158	Vallance	Graeme	811 Norbank Road Lake Bolac 3351	The rate rise will be a huge increase in my rate payments and I believe this is ridiculous amount of money as I cannot afford such payments. Also why should farmers pay to top up the shires cash reserves.	No
159	Veale	Kylie	2 McGrath Court, Cardigan, Victoria, 3352	I am a ratepayer in the Ararat Shire. The recent decision made to remove the rates differential, and the means by which the council passed this decision is an absolute disgrace. It demonstrates appalling governance, and the complete lack of consultation was not only deceitful, it also causes me to question the ability of the council to adequately represent its constituents. I am in support of Option 1 - the option that was proposed and endorsed by the vast majority of ratepayers.	No
160	Veale	Wendy	2 McGrath Court Cardigan, Victoria, 3352	I am a ratepayer in the Ararat shire, and I am disgusted at the poor governance and complete lack of consultation undertaken prior to the passing of the decision to remove the rates differential. I am 100% in support of option 1, being the original option that was proposed and endorsed by the vast majority of ratepayers.	No
161	Vernon	Helen	1 Boberski Close Ararat	I would like to submit that our rates do not go up at all and remain the same as last year or less	No
162	Waites	Matthew	129 High Street Ararat	I wish to call for a lowering in price of our property and commercial property rates! I find it frustrating that our council continue to raise them without justification. That is what it seems like to us home and business owners. Where is the money going besides the basics?	No
163	Waites	Tracey	395 Watgania Road, Maroona, 3377	To whom it may concern, I am writing to voice my concern as a rural land owner on the proposed municipal rates. I am opposed to the proposed rates as they will be financially detrimental to my family. As a low income earner and single parent the proposed rates will mean my family will be put under greater financial pressure. I vote for option 1 of differential rates and do not want the proposed uniform rate. Regards Tracey Waites	No
164	Walker	Casey & Terry	Willaura	Thursday 25th May 2017. Dear Councillors, I writing to you regarding the Ararat Rural City Council Farm Land Rate proposed changes. My husband Terry and I live in Willaura with our two children ages 11 and 8. We have worked in the agricultural sector all our working lives. We pride ourselves on working	No

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				<p>hard and contributing back to our community. I think it would be easy for me to get angry about the proposed rate changes, start name calling etc, however that's not how we approach life.</p> <p>I will encourage you to stop a moment and ponder what Ararat and District will look like in the next 1, 2 or even 5 years if these proposed rate changes take place. Will Rural Steel still be open? Will the car dealers be open? Elders? Landmark? Grampians Insurance? A young boy or girl leaving school and wanting to work as a mechanic, will there be any jobs? The proposed rate changes are very short sighted and effect everyone in the shire, not just famers.</p> <p>Farmers spend more money in Ararat than Ararat Residents. As a collective we shop at Landmark, Elders, Grampians Insurance the list continues. If the rates increase we won't have enough financial means to spend money and local businesses in Ararat will crumble.</p> <p>The proposed changes are devastating for our family and business. It will cripple us financially. Business corporations are already in the area purchasing land from family farmers. If this pattern continues, Corporations will still pay there rates, however they won't shop in Willaura, Lake Bolac or Ararat. Employees don't live in the area, they arrive sow the crop and leave. Harvest rolls around, again they arrive, harvest and leave. No children for the kindergarten, schools and little to know money spent locally. This is a devastating potential reality for everyone, including Ararat.</p> <p>I would love to see you as a councillor frequent Willaura and talk to the locals, listen to our thoughts and concerns. Not only about the rates, but about our lives. What do we want? What do we need? How can we work together to achieve success.</p> <p>In conclusion, I would like you to please re consider your vote about the proposed rate changes and think about everyone's future.</p> <p>Yours Sincerely, Casey & Terry Walker</p>	
165	Walker	Adam	14 Leatherwood Drive, Ararat	I support the uniform rating system.	No

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166	Walker	Casey	Willaura	<p>Thursday 25th May 2017.</p> <p>Dear Councillors, I writing to you regarding the Ararat Rural City Council Farm Land Rate proposed changes.</p> <p>My husband Terry and I live in Willaura with our two children ages 11 and 8. We have worked in the agricultural sector all our working lives. We pride ourselves on working hard and contributing back to our community.</p> <p>I think it would be easy for me to get angry about the proposed rate changes, start name calling etc, however that's not how we approach life.</p> <p>I will encourage you to stop a moment and ponder what Ararat and District will look like in the next 1, 2 or even 5 years if these proposed rate changes take place. Will Rural Steel still be open? Will the car dealers be open? Elders? Landmark? Grampians Insurance? A young boy or girl leaving school and wanting to work as a mechanic, will there be any jobs? The proposed rate changes are very short sighted and effect everyone in the shire, not just famers.</p> <p>Farmers spend more money in Ararat than Ararat Residents. As a collective we shop at Landmark, Elders, Grampians Insurance the list continues. If the rates increase we won't have enough financial means to spend money and local businesses in Ararat will crumble.</p> <p>The proposed changes are devastating for our family and business. It will cripple us financially. Business corporations are already in the area purchasing land from family farmers. If this pattern continues, Corporations will still pay there rates, however they won't shop in Willaura, Lake Bolac or Ararat. Employees don't live in the area, they arrive sow the crop and leave. Harvest rolls around, again they arrive, harvest and leave. No children for the kindergarten, schools and little to know money spent locally. This is a devastating potential reality for everyone, including Ararat.</p> <p>I would love to see you as a councillor frequent Willaura and talk to the locals, listen to our thoughts and concerns. Not only about the rates, but about our lives. What do we want? What do we need? How can we work together to achieve success.</p>	No
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167	Waterman	Peter	728 Moyston-Rocky Point Rd, Rocky Point, VIC, 3377	<p>My wife and I are retired school teachers who live on a rural property at Rocky Point. We have 30 hectares, on which we have planted over 10,000 trees in the last 15 years. We do not make any money from our property, but certainly enjoy the tranquility and the lifestyle.</p> <p>Under the council's draft rating strategy we are informed that our rates will rise by 43%.</p> <p>I would like to make the following points-</p> <p>~ The plan seems to target just one group in the rural city; those living on what is classified as farming lands. This group will see an average rise in their rates of around 50 %, while all other groups- general, commercial and industrial all will have lower rates. Your figures show that this group represents 24% of rateable properties and yet will pay 55% of rates, up from 38% in 2016/17. Most fair minded observers would, I believe, see this as unfair, hasty and counter-productive to building community.</p> <p>~ While asking the farming community to pay much more and the rest of the community much less, it might be seen that councillors are looking after their chances of election. Farmers are not numerous enough to get sufficient representatives on council to alter this policy. Town dwellers, businesses in the towns and industries other than farming will obviously enjoy the reduced rates and will vote to keep this advantage.</p> <p>~ Council has stated that overall rate increases will remain within the 2% cap and no exemption will be requested. This would indicate that council does not need more revenue but just wants to shift the burden away from the majority of its rate payers to the smaller and less represented group, the farmers. This would seem unjust. Surely there must be a more equitable way than what is outlined in the draft rating strategy.</p>	No
168	Watson	Julie & Michael	Residential- 34 Maude Street, Ararat & rental- 12 Plant Street, Ararat	I would like to see the Differential rate replaced by a uniform rate, therefore reducing the amount payable. Our rates have always been more expensive than other areas.	No
169	Woods	Casanda	194 Burke Road ARARAT VIC 3377	I support the rally for lower rates...council needs to look after rate payers...	No