

Mr Frederick Rubly,

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[REDACTED]
Manuka ACT 2603.

20/03/2018

Dear Sir or Madam,

We had been reading where the Government was encouraging Seniors to downsize in order to free up housing for younger families. The logic being that this would reduce waste removal and utility expenses, maximise infrastructure usage around town centres and reduce land usage and availability pressure.

As "senior" pensioners, we rationalised our future lifestyle and health services requirements, took the above advice 'on-board', and made the decision to be closer to our children and grandchildren.

We subsequently moved from the South Coast last year, and downsized to a Unit in Canberra. Had we known the ACT Government was intending to rape unit owners with its revised Strata rate calculations, we would either have not moved to Canberra or purchased a home rather than a unit! Life is hard enough on a fixed pension, with eroding benefits, body corporate fees, electricity prices and private health cover going through the roof, and now an imminent and immoral rate increase that will exceed 50%!

By revising the rating structure in such a dishonest manner, the ACT Government has unfairly restructured the previous methodology used to determine Rates and Land Tax for strata residences. I suggest the revised rate increase is a "cash-grab" that will rip up to \$900 or more from unit rate payers (such as me) above the overall rate increase, while the unimproved value portion of Land Taxes have increased by as much as 170%.

According to recent Canberra Times newspaper articles, the number of apartment developments in the ACT is being significantly increased in all suburbs as part of an ACT Government policy to increase housing density near town centres and along transport corridors. Signs of these developments can be seen as 6 storey residential buildings, and as high as 20 storeys, in areas such as Belconnen, Kingston, Barton, Woden, Gungahlin, Dickson, Braddon, Tuggeranong and the new suburbs in Molonglo.

With higher density developments, the ACT Government is making a considerable saving in waste removal and utility costs, roads, footpaths and nature strip infrastructure and from the more efficient use of infrastructure generated by strata developments. By encouraging the elderly to vacate larger houses and building units for younger families, everyday battlers and retirees, the ACT Government then penalizes them with higher rates and taxes.

- Could the ACT Government please explain to me why almost all strata unit owners have their rates and land tax calculated on the highest rating tier factor?
- Are the changes in the calculation method for rates and taxes even legal if people bought into strata on previous rules, which are then changed retrospectively?

As noted in the Canberra Times, the ACT Government's stated objective is to have more than half of Canberra's dwellings in the form of strata developments as a means of reducing infrastructure costs. This policy will vastly increase the ACT's revenue take from rates and land taxes.

I most strongly object to the indiscriminate rise in rates where consideration has not been taken of the inequality of the costs of shared services rendered to units and townhouses in direct proportion to the council services provided to individual homes. This is simply a scandalous attack on people with limited options.

I therefore request the Assembly to prevail upon the Government to return to the 2016/2017 methodology used for determining Rates and Land Tax that applied for strata residences, whereby every individual residential property was entitled to receive the full entitlement to the sliding scale of Rate and Land Tax calculations in determining their individual charges.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,



Frederick Rubly.