

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER 2016

ECONOMIC AND FINANCE COMMITTEE: INQUIRY INTO LOCAL GOVERNMENT RATE CAPPING POLICIES

Adjourned debate on motion of Mr Odenwalder:

That the 91 st report of the committee, entitled Inquiry into Local Government Rate Capping Policies, be noted.

(Continued from 27 July 2016.)

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:25): I rise to finalise my remarks in regard to the Economic and Finance Committee's 91st report, entitled Inquiry into Local Government Rate Capping Policies. At the end of my recent comments in this house, I was talking about how people who are residents in local government areas are keen to make sure that they get appropriate services for their rates.

I certainly know from living in a country electorate with a country council that people are concerned, especially in regard to the maintenance of their rubble roads, dirt roads or whatever you want to call them. Yes, it does eat up a lot of funds, but councils certainly receive funding from the federal government for some roadworks. The biggest thing that causes angst amongst constituents is when they see that their roads are not being tended to.

Just because of populations, different councils can have far higher rates than others, and it has certainly happened in my electorate in the past. I have had people at the end of one council area who would like to move to another one. I just advised them of the processes they needed to go through and said, 'It's in your hands now.' It did not progress, but they made the point that they wanted their roads serviced more regularly, especially because they were paying very high rates compared to the neighbouring council.

It is all population based, and raising the relevant amount of funds to get the requirements for road funding can be a real issue in council areas with small populations. I have certainly had cause to contact my local council about a road in my council area just behind my property. I use the road quite a bit and I had to tell them that it is in the worst condition I have seen it in my 54 years of living at Coomandook.

Mr Whetstone: Are you really that old?

Mr PEDERICK: Sadly. Thankfully, they got onto it and tended to it within a couple of weeks, but it should not get to that, and that is the issue. There has been a change of management and a change of how they manage it. It appears that there is less grading. I met with the mayor and the CEO and they indicated that it is because of the way the roads were built in the past.

One of the biggest bugbears of people living in rural council areas is making that sure their roads are getting dealt with and that funding is not being dealt with elsewhere, because councils are a far bigger beast than they were. Years ago, you had the town clerks and now you have a lot of staff who have come through the system who have not been brought up in the area. They have an outside view, and sometimes that is a good thing.

Sometimes, it can be a more interesting view of the world as to what happens in your local council area, but people who have lived there all their life have a long memory of how things have worked, what worked in the past, what did not work and certainly of what they would like to see into the future. That is why we have a policy of rate capping in our Liberal policies and will be taking that to the next election.