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4 March 2018

Subject: IPART Submission

I wish to draw attention to the recent actions of Hawkesbury Council in relation to its behaviour in application of rates to residents in the Oakville area and also the proposed SRV with its further 30% increase in rates.

In the last 12 months Hawkesbury Council has changed the rates assessment by changing my 5 acre property from Rural/residential to Residential. With the method of rate calculation this has meant an increase in rates from \$ [REDACTED] for 2016/2017 to \$ [REDACTED] for 2017/2018. This is an increase of over 100%.

Land values in the Oakville area have actually fallen in the last 6 months following a peak in the spring of 2016. However land values have been further increased by the Valuer General in the most recent assessment. As council rates are tied to this it will mean a further rate increase followed by the additional 30% with the SRV.

One thing is clear. There is now a massive disparity between the annual rates that I as an Oakville resident will be required to pay compared to other residents throughout the Hawkesbury district. In terms of return it is hard to see any of these funds being returned to Oakville given the lack of street lighting and poor road quality which is clearly evident.

Many of the Oakville residents have lived here for decades and are elderly, living on the aged pension. In my case I have lived here for about 30 yrs. Last year I was diagnosed with an aggressive form of bowel cancer and have been given a 40% chance of long term survival. As such I have not worked since March 2017 while my wife continues to work part-time at three days per week. At the present time we are managing but such increases in basic living costs such as power and food and my own uncertainty for the future pose a great stress on our current existence.

The other disturbing issue in this matter has been the lack of effective consultation with regard to this action by the council. Submissions at council meetings have been thrown out by the council and council has pursued an aggressive and very one-sided argument, essentially indicating if it cannot be afforded then the affected resident should just sell and get out! Apparently Oakville is now deemed the 'cash cow' for the district.

At the end of the day if these rate increases with the 30% SRV go through it is unclear how the Oakville residents will benefit. The level of council funds input appears to be unchanged and there

has been no pledge by the council that any of the extra funds collected will be invested into the Oakville community.

The whole issue seems to be one of desperation. While the council may suggest it is financially viable this very one-sided cash grab suggests that it is not. I suspect that the council's financial situation is quite precarious and will be interested to watch what evolves with the passage of time.

Best regards,

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