

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

C938

Question without notice
(of which some notice is given)

Wednesday, 9 September 2015

Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Local Government:

I refer to the media release entitled "Cuts make up shortfall from Ministerial rates decision" put out by the City of Karratha on the 18th of August 2015, and ask:

1. Why did the Minister make the decision to cut the rates for the 2015/16 financial year?

I thank the Hon Member for some notice of this question.

1. The Government has not decided to cut rates for the 2015/16 financial year.

Local governments determine the rates that will be charged to their ratepayers. It is only when a local government wants to set a rate that is more than twice the lowest differential rate that Ministerial approval is required.

In the case of the City of Karratha, this year, the City originally sought to impose a rate on Transient Workforce Accommodation (TWA) mining camps that was more than twice the rate for last year and was four and a half times greater than its lowest proposed rate for this year.

As a result of revaluations of mining properties recently undertaken by the Office of the Valuer General, the rate proposed by the City of Karratha would have meant significant increases in rates imposed on mining camps that have experienced significant decreases in valuations —some as much as halved in valuation.

When presented with an application for the imposition of differential rates, such as those applicable in the City of Karratha, I need to be satisfied that, amongst other things, the proposed rate burden is being fairly and equitably applied to those ratepayers.

In circumstances where I cannot be satisfied, as was the case with Karratha, I am obliged to refuse the application.



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