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Our Ref: E370



Mansfield Shire

5 February 2025

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Dear XX,

Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF)

I am writing to express my concern and enquire about your stance on the impact of the Victorian Government's new Emergency Services Volunteer Fund (ESVF), which comes into effect on 1 July 2025 and must be included on Council Rates Notices across Victoria.

This ESVF is a significant increase over the existing levy (FSPL), particularly in the primary production (farming) areas which could see an increase of around 3 times the existing levy. All ratepayers will incur this tax and in Mansfield Shire alone this could mean an additional \$2 million in property taxes. This is a significant burden for residents and ratepayers on top of their existing rates/rent payments and it is important to note that this new tax is being introduced alongside the recently implemented Vacant Residential Land Tax.

Councils will bear the brunt of this tax, not only in terms of the reputational impact of collecting additional money from ratepayers but there is the resource implication of managing and collecting this tax on behalf of the state government. For smaller councils such as Mansfield Shire the proportion of dedicated resources for rates collection is already high and I strongly believe that the responsibility for collecting the ESVF should lie with the State Revenue Office. This would relieve local councils from an unfair administrative burden and ensure that the collection process is handled by the appropriate state agency which already has the infrastructure and capacity to manage tax collection efficiently.

With this shift in responsibility, councils are being asked to act as tax collectors for the state government. What is your stance on this issue?

Thank you for considering my concerns. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Cr Steve Rabie
Mayor