

VACANT LAND - VALUATION

**825. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development:**

Why are vacant blocks of land allocated a different valuation from built residences, which allows local authorities to strike rates for vacant lots that are significantly higher than those for neighbouring built residences?

**Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I am happy to provide the following response on behalf of the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development -

The Department of Land Information's Valuation Services Branch, formerly known as the Valuer General's Office, provides valuations for local government rates. The Local Government Act 1995 empowers local governments to impose different rates in the dollar according to the zoning or predominant use of the land and whether it is vacant or improved. Many local governments apply differential rates in their districts to spread the rate burden.

I am advised that some local governments apply a higher rate in the dollar on vacant land, compared with improved land, because they consider vacant land valuations to be low. A higher rate is intended to ensure that owners of vacant land make a greater contribution to the rate burden. Other local governments use this strategy to discourage land speculation or encourage the development of vacant land. If the member has a specific question about a particular local government and its rates regime, I would be happy to direct the member's question to the authority concerned.