



MURCHISON REGION ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

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3 March 2017

City of Greater Geraldton
PO Box 101
Geraldton WA 6531

Attention: Ms Jenny Cockram, Finance Officer – Rates

Dear Ms Cockram,

Application for rates exemption

Murchison Region Aboriginal Corporation (**MRAC**) is a member based, not-for-profit dedicated Aboriginal community housing organisation operating in the Mid West and Gascoyne regions of Western Australia.

Fifty-nine of MRAC's properties are located within the City of Greater Geraldton.

MRAC has received rate notices from the City of Greater Geraldton for all of these properties.

MRAC objects to the rate records for all of its properties located within the City of Greater Geraldton under to section 6.76(1)(a)(ii) of the *Local Government Act 1995* (WA) (**LG Act**) on the ground that there is an error in the rate records as these properties do not constitute rateable land.

MRAC is of the view that it's properties located within the City of Greater Geraldton do not constitute rateable land as they satisfy the criteria in section 6.26(2)(g) of the LG Act and MRAC is accordingly applying for a rate exemption under section 6.26(2)(g) of the LG Act with respect to each of its properties located within the City of Greater Geraldton.

Please find enclosed the following documents in support of MRAC's application:

- (a) an application for rates exemption with respect to each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton;
- (b) a title search for each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton;
- (c) the rates notice for each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton;
- (d) any applicable tenancy agreement for each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton;

- (e) a description and photo for each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton. We note that plans for each of the properties have not been provided as MRAC does not possess these and they are too costly to have prepared and have provided a brief description and photo for each property instead;
- (f) a statutory declaration for each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton;
- (g) an extract from the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations for MRAC as at 20 February 2017;
- (h) an extract from the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission's Charity Register for MRAC as at 8 February 2017 evidencing that MRAC is a registered charity;
- (i) a letter from the ATO dated 19 January 2017 confirming MRAC is endorsed for charity tax concessions;
- (j) a letter from the ATO dated 19 January 2017 confirming MRAC is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient;
- (k) a copy of MRAC's rule book dated 2 December 2016;
- (l) a copy of MRAC's financial report for the year ended 30 June 2016;
- (m) a copy of MRAC's housing eligibility criteria dated 15 November 2016; and
- (n) an operational overview of MRAC's activities.

As demonstrated by the enclosed materials:

- (a) MRAC provides safe, secure and affordable housing to:
 - (i) Aboriginal persons, Torres Strait Islander persons, persons who have a partner who is either Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or non-Aboriginal persons with custody of Aboriginal children;
 - (ii) who are resident within the Midwest or Gascoyne region for a period of 6 months;
- (b) All fifty-nine of MRAC's properties located within the City of Greater Geraldton are leased to tenants who meet MRAC's housing eligibility criteria;
- (c) MRAC charges its tenants rent on either a percentage of market rent basis or on a cost recovery basis and any moneys generated through rental revenue is reinvested in upgrading its properties or purchasing additional housing stock to meet the high level of demand for housing; and
- (d) most of MRAC's tenants rely on full or partial benefits from Centrelink and are unable to obtain housing in the private rental market due to a lack of access to suitable employment, their Aboriginality, previous tenancy history, long waiting lists for social housing and the lack of housing in remote areas which are close to their cultural homeland and/or close to other family members.

Accordingly, as:

- (a) MRAC uses all of its properties located within the City of Greater Geraldton for the purpose of improving the economic position, social condition and traditional ties of an Aboriginal community; and
- (b) it is generally accepted that Aboriginal people as a class are in need of protection and assistance, and purposes directed towards the advancement of Aboriginal people are charitable,

MRAC clearly satisfies the requirements of section 6.26(2)(g) of the LG Act and should be granted a rate exemption for each of its properties located within the City of Greater Geraldton.

As MRAC understands it is out of time to make an objection under section 6.76 of the LG Act with respect to the rate record of each of its properties located within the City of Greater Geraldton, MRAC hereby applies to the City of Greater Geraldton for an extension of time in accordance with section 6.76(4) of the LG Act for it to make its objection.

MRAC did not have the resources to make its objection applications within time and has since obtained the assistance of a law firm on a pro bono basis for the purpose of making these applications. Please advise if you need these grounds verified by a statutory declaration or otherwise.

If you require any further information in order to process MRAC's applications, please contact me.

Yours sincerely



Mary Marshall

Chief Executive Officer

Murchison Region Aboriginal Corporation

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Enclosures

- 1 An application for rates exemption with respect to each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton
- 2 A title search for each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton
- 3 The rates notice for each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton
- 4 Any applicable tenancy agreement for each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton
- 5 A description and photo for each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton
- 6 A statutory declaration for each property located with the City of Greater Geraldton
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- 14 An operational overview of MRAC's activities