



## Independent Inquiry into Local Government Rates

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### PRESS RELEASE

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### Local government rates inquiry up and running

The panel chair for the independent Inquiry into Local Government Rates, David Shand, announced today that the Inquiry's work is underway.

"Currently the panel is gathering existing information and planning the consultation process so that we can make rapid progress in the New Year," Mr Shand said.

The Rates Inquiry was announced by the Minister of Local Government, Hon Mark Burton, on 1 November 2006. The other members of the inquiry panel are Graeme Horsley and Dr Christine Cheyne. The task of the Inquiry is to make recommendations to government by 31 July 2007 about the means of enhancing rating and other funding mechanisms for local authorities.

"That means we have a lot of listening, reading and thinking to do in a short time frame," said Mr Shand. "The panel is confident that its shared expertise in local government matters, taxation, economic analysis and public financial management gives it a good start in understanding the issues.

"We will be seeking the views of interested parties in several ways. We will invite written submissions at the end of January 2007, and hold public forums during February and March in a number of locations where people can come and put their concerns and views to us. We will also meet with councils and key sector groups."

Mr Shand said the panel recognises the current importance of this issue and is committed to producing a high quality report based on sound analysis of information and wide consultation.

"In early 2007 a website for the Inquiry will be established at [www.ratesinquiry.govt.nz](http://www.ratesinquiry.govt.nz) and this will be the principal source of information about the Inquiry and a resource for those interested. A background paper providing context to the inquiry is being prepared and will be available at the time public submissions are invited. The Inquiry has established a freephone at 0800 728 373."

"I know there is considerable interest in the Rates Inquiry already and some expectation that the Inquiry will result in lower council expenditure," Mr Shand said. "It is important for people to realise that the objective of the Inquiry is not to find ways to constrain local authorities. Rather, it is to make recommendations to government about enhancing rating and other funding mechanisms covered by the terms of reference so that community needs can be efficiently and equitably met."

An Inquiry Office has been established. Contact details are:

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