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These Pointless Council Projects Just Don't Rate

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It was not that long ago that Australia's local councils just got on with the job of delivering on the three Rs – roads, rates and rubbish.

However, barely a day passes without another example of the new “R” woke councils are obsessed with – righteousness.

An arms race, using your money, is under way between local councils that are going to extreme lengths to show how virtuous they are when it comes to woke ideology, whether ratepayers want it or can afford it.

At a time when the cost of living is a growing concern, the Victorian ombudsman has previously uncovered that many councils charge up to 10 per cent penalty interest on late rates bills, 48 per cent of Victorian councils do not include rate waivers as part of standard hardship policies, and 97 per cent use debt collectors – despite the fact they seemingly have millions of dollars to spend on woke pet projects.

While completely ignoring the needs of ratepayers, no amount of tokenism is off limits.

Just hear them lecture us on nuclear disarmament, Rainbow Tick Accreditation, or trashing Australia Day.

In the mad scramble to deliver the biggest symbolic gesture, here are some of Australia's leading woke councils:

City of Melbourne: While Victoria's capital city is filthy and traders are struggling from the world's longest lockdowns, it seems the No.1 priority for City Hall is to spend ratepayers' money on finding a way to dump Australia Day celebrations on January 26. Never mind that the council has had to sell four properties, in Carlton, Kensington, and the CBD, given its parlous financial state.

City of Darebin: It seems the threat of nuclear war has never been so high in Melbourne's northern suburbs – thankfully, the council averted the Preston Missile Crisis by voting to ban nuclear weapons. Just to be sure, ratepayers forked out to send four councillors to the Australian Local Government Association annual conference in Canberra to lobby parliament for further prohibitions on nuclear weapons.

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council: Down on the coast, the council wants to spend \$1.9m on an expert panel to teach staff about leadership and culture so that its offices are a place where



people “love to work”. Yet, earlier this month it came to light that more than 1000 elderly residents no longer have in-home care because 110 council staff were made redundant.

City of Moreland: A woke triple-threat. Back in 2017, councillor Sue Bolton likened Australia Day to “celebrating the Nazi holocaust”. More recently, Moreland has been focused on changing the council’s name, at a cost of millions of dollars, due to an obscure and contested link to slavery in Jamaica. How is all this and more being paid for, you ask? By taxing small business owners in Coburg out of existence with a new “Special Charge Scheme”.

City of Port Phillip: Not content with losing \$20m in revenue, spending \$13m with VicRoads on poorly designed, dangerous and unnecessary bike lanes, axing 50 staff and councillors, having to be shamed into reversing their position on selling three local childcare centres, the council still managed to find \$200,000 in ratepayers’ money to buy “Rainbow Tick Accreditation” for its services.

City of Hobart: Despite a chronic housing shortage in our southernmost capital, the council’s anti-development stance has prevented 250 new houses from being approved. However, they have found time to obsess over a belief that Hobart has too many statues of racist white men. The council is spending tens of thousands of dollars removing these statues, all the while Hobartians are sleeping rough, couch surfing, and even sleeping in their cars.

Woollahra City Council: Dotted around this suburb in Sydney’s leafy inner-city are 12 “Racism Not Welcome” signs, erected at ratepayers’ expense, despite the fact that not a single racist incident has been reported in the area.

As pointless, tokenistic and expensive as much of this activity has been, it is a mere warm-up act for Australia’s woke-est and whackiest council champions, the City of Yarra.

Councillors there recently erected the Great Wall of Yarra to ensure they were separated from ratepayers at council meetings, and have restricted the right of ratepayers to question their elected officials.

And why wouldn’t they want to ask questions when Yarra’s “Rainbow Advisory Committee” is demanding resources be spent flying several variations of the Pride Flag over council buildings, councillors are fighting on social media and, allegedly, outside nightclubs, all while local business owners have been hit with thousands of dollars of crippling bills for “safety checks” on outdoor furniture.

Ratepayers have had enough of councillors wanting to virtue signal with ratepayers’ money.

Here’s a thought. If councillors want to play woke politics, they should use their own money and leave ratepayers’ hard-earned cash for roads, rates and rubbish.

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