

1. Policy Statement

This Policy sets out Council's principles for the levying of rates, fees and charges, and the application of eligible concessions.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all aspects of setting, levying, recovering and granting concessions for rates and utility charges, and setting of cost-recovery fees and infrastructure charges for the Council.

3. Responsibility

Council is responsible for the approval of this Policy.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), assisted by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is responsible for the implementation, maintenance and compliance of this Policy.

The Finance Team is responsible for ensuring that revenue transactions are administered in accordance with this Policy.

4. Definitions

Concessions are defined in the Local Government Regulation 2012 as a rebate, deferral or agreement to accept or transfer property, in settlement for whole or part of the rates and charges.

Developer Charges relates to those charges that can be applied by Council on developments as set out in the *Sustainable Planning Act 2009*.

Fees are defined in the *Local Government Act 2009* as a cost recovery mechanism for applications, transaction services, animal management, or other services imposed on the Council under legislation or regulation.

Rates and Charges are defined in the *Local Government Act 2009* as levies that a local government imposes:

- On land; and
- For a service, facility or activity that is supplied or undertaken by the local government or someone on behalf of the local government.

5. Policy

5.1 Principles Used for Levying Rates and Charges

In levying rates and charges, Council seeks to maintain service delivery and remain financially sustainable, while also minimising the impact of Council rates and charges upon the community and distributing the cost of services equitably.

Under general rating guidelines, Council accepts that land valuations are an appropriate basis to achieve the equitable imposition of general rates, with differential rating categories determined by land use, ownership, location and development potential.

When levying the rates and charges, Council will:

- Have regard to its long-term financial forecast;
- Seek to minimise the revenue required to be raised from rates and charges by:
 - Prudently managing income from available grants and subsidies; and
 - Imposing cost-recovery fees in respect of services and activities for which cost recovery is appropriate; and
 - Have regard to the prevailing local economic conditions, and when possible smooth rating increases to avoid significant price escalation in any one year.



- Use simplified methods of charging that reflect a contribution to services provided;
- Provide equity of contribution based on the services and facilities provided;
- Easily identify owners and occupiers of the land that are serviced by Council;
- Demonstrate the provision of service delivery;
- Demonstrate that decisions are made based on the whole of the Council area; and
- Provide transparency in the making of rates and charges.

5.2 Principles Used for Recovering Overdue Rates and Charges

Council will exercise its rate recovery powers to reduce the overall rate burden on ratepayers by:

- Making clear the obligations of ratepayers and the processes used by Council in assisting them meet their financial obligations;
- Making the processes used to recover outstanding rates and utility charges clear, simple to administer and cost effective;
- Considering the capacity to pay in determining appropriate payment arrangements for different sectors of the community;
- Providing equal and fair treatment for ratepayers with similar circumstances; and
- Responding when necessary to changes in the local economy.

5.3 Principles Used in the Granting of Concessions for Rates and Charges

Generally, all ratepayers will meet their obligations to Council, with Council supporting desirable community objectives by providing concessions for certain categories of land owners and properties used for certain purposes.

The purpose of these concessions is to:

- Reduce the financial burden of rates and charges payable by pensioners;
- Support not-for-profit organisations where the land used is considered to contribute to the social, cultural, economic or sporting welfare of the community;
- Support entities that provide assistance or encouragement for arts or cultural development;
- Encourage the preservation, restoration or maintenance of land that is of cultural, environmental, historic, heritage or scientific significance; and
- Provide relief to ratepayers by partially remitting water consumption charges in cases of financial hardship resulting from an undetectable water leak which has occurred on a ratepayer's property.

5.4 Setting of Cost Recovery Fees

Council recognises the validity of imposing the user pays principle for its Cost-Recovery fees under the *Local Government Act 2009*. Cost-Recovery fees set by Council must not be more than the cost to Council of providing the service or taking the action to which, the fee applies.

5.5 Funding of New Development

Council will be guided by the principle of user pays when considering infrastructure charges for new development, to the extent permissible by law. Council will seek to minimise the impact of infrastructure charges on the efficiency of the local economy. Council may choose to subsidise from other sources (e.g. general rate revenue) the charges payable for the development when Council believes that it is in the community's interest to do so.



6. Legal Parameters

- *Local Government Act 2009;*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012*
- *Sustainable Planning Act 2009; and*
- *Land Valuation Act 2010.*

7. Associated Documents

- Financial Hardship Policy;
- Rate Rebate and Concession Policy;
- Rate Recovery Policy;
- Revenue Statement Policy and
- Water Leak Relief Policy.

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