

Revenue Policy

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Responsible Officer	Manager Finance	Date Approved:	19/02/2025
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Author:	Manager Finance	Commencement:	19/02/2025

1. PURPOSE

To identify the principles used by Council for making and levying rates and utility charges, exercising powers to grant rebates and concessions, for recovering unpaid amounts of rates and charges and the setting of miscellaneous fees and charges.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The provisions of the *Local Government Act 2009* (Qld) and *Local Government Regulation 2012* (Qld), requires Council to prepare and adopt this policy as part of Council's budget each year. The policy contains principles that will be used for the development of Council's Budget.

3. PRINCIPLES

3.1 THE MAKING OF RATES AND UTILITY CHARGES

- a) In general, it is Council's policy that a user pays principle applies to all specific services provided to ratepayers and other users in Mareeba Shire Council.
- b) Exceptions to the *user pays principle* include general services to the community as a whole when it is in the community interest to do so.
- c) Council will have regard to the principles of:
 - Transparency in the making of rates and charges;
 - Having in place a rating regime that is as simple and inexpensive as possible;
 - Equity by ensuring the fair and consistent application of lawful rating and charging principles, without bias, taking account of all relevant considerations, and disregarding irrelevancies such as the perceived personal wealth of individual ratepayers or ratepayer classes;
 - Responsibility in achieving the objectives, actions and strategies in Council's Corporate and Operational Plans;
 - Meeting the needs and expectations of the general community; and
 - Flexibility to take account of changes in the local economy.
- d) In pursuing the abovementioned principles Council may avail itself of the following:
 - A system of differential general rating
 - Minimum general rates
 - Utility charges
 - Special rates and charges

- Separate charges
- Limitation of rate increases (rate capping)

3.2 LEVYING OF RATES AND CHARGES

In levying rates Council will apply the principles of:

- making clear what is the Council's and each ratepayer's responsibility to the rating system (Council may allow a discount for prompt payment);
- making the levying system as simple as possible to administer;
- timing the levy of rates where possible to take into account the financial cycle of local economic activity, in order to assist smooth running of the local economy; and
- equity through flexible payment arrangements for ratepayers with a lower capacity to pay.

3.3 CONCESSIONS FOR RATES AND CHARGES

In considering the application of concessions, Council will be guided by the principles of:

- equity,
- the same treatment for ratepayers with similar circumstances;
- transparency by making clear the requirements necessary to receive concessions, and
- flexibility to allow Council to respond to local economic issues

The purposes for granting concessions are to relieve economic hardship and provide rebates to eligible pensioners and not-for-profit community, recreation and sporting groups. In addition, Council may grant concessions on a case-by-case basis if it is satisfied that any one or more of the other criteria in section 120(1) of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (Qld) have been met.

3.4 THE RECOVERY OF RATES AND CHARGES

- a) Council will exercise its rate recovery powers in order to reduce the overall rate burden on ratepayers.
- b) It will be guided by the principles of:
 - transparency 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 charges clear, and as simple to administer and as cost effective as possible (refer to Council's Debt Recovery Policy);
 - capacity to pay in determining appropriate arrangements for different sectors of the community;
 - equity by having regard to providing the same treatment for ratepayers with similar circumstances; and
 - flexibility by responding, where necessary, to changes in the local economy.

3.5 THE SETTING OF COST-RECOVERY FEES AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES CHARGES

Council will be guided by the following principles in the setting of cost-recovery fees on the one hand, and commercial services on the other:

- Fees associated with regulatory services will be set at the full cost of providing the service or taking the action for which, the fee is charged. Council may choose to subsidise the fee from other sources if it is in the community interest to do so.
- Commercial services charges will be set to recover the full cost of providing the service and, if provided by a Business of Council, may include a component for return on Council's investment.

3.6 THE EXTENT TO WHICH PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS FOR A NEW DEVELOPMENT ARE TO BE FUNDED BY CHARGES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT

Developers are required to contribute towards the Council's infrastructure in accordance with the provisions of the *Planning Act 2016* (Qld). Infrastructure charges are required for roadworks, parks, drainage and water and sewerage head works where applicable.

In addition, social infrastructure costs are to be met by grants received from the Government and general revenue sources.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to Mareeba Shire Council and all related business activities.

5. DEFINITIONS

Council refers to Mareeba Shire Council

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

Debt Recovery Policy (MSC)
Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)
Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld)
Planning Act 2016 (Qld)

7. REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Director Corporate & Community Services to monitor the adequacy of this policy and recommend appropriate changes. This policy will be formally reviewed every year or as required by Council.