

SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING	17
19 JUNE 2023	

ADOPTION OF RATES FINANCIAL HARDSHIP POLICY FOR THE 2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR

S Cooper | 63/19/1 | #7134664

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council resolves, pursuant to *section 121(b) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*, to grant rates and charges concessions to those ratepayers experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 by way of extended payment plans and interest waivers through the Financial Hardship Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report seeks to formally adopt the Financial Hardship Policy to continue to aid ratepayers experiencing ongoing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19 by way of extended payment plans and interest waivers.

On 13 May 2020 Council resolved to grant rates and charges concessions to those ratepayers experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID19 by way of extended payments plans and interest waivers through a Financial Hardship Policy.

COMMENT:

Council recognises that some ratepayer's financial circumstances continue to be impacted by the long term impacts of COVID19. The Financial Hardship Policy will therefore remain in place for the 2023/24 financial year.

The only change for the 2023/24 financial year is the change to eligibility which limits support to ratepayers who have accessed support under this policy any time prior to 30 June 2023. All other ratepayers experiencing hardship may apply for assistance via Council's Independent Rate Relief Tribunal Policy.

OPTIONS:

Option 1 (Recommended):

That Council adopts the Financial Hardship Policy.

Or

Option 2:

That Council does not adopt the Financial Hardship Policy and proposes amendments to the policy.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Statutory:

Adoption of the above Rates Concession is in accordance with *section 121(b)* of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Financial Hardship Policy (#6392844v8) – Marked Up
2. Financial Hardship Policy (#6392844v8) - Clean



Steve Cooper
Executive Manager Revenue & Business Support



Lisa Whitton
Chief Financial Officer

Attachment 1: Financial Hardship Policy (#6392844v8) – Marked Up



CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

General Policy

FINANCIAL HARDSHIP POLICY – RATES AND WATER USAGE

Intent To establish a policy for the provision of assistance to ratepayers suffering financial hardship due to the COVID-19 event.

Scope This policy will allow Council to consider assistance for ratepayers with outstanding debt for rates or water usage **and is limited to ratepayers who have received assistance under this policy any time prior to 30 June 2023.**

PROVISIONS

This policy only applies to ratepayers with outstanding debt of rates and charges and water usage charges.

To be eligible for assistance ratepayers must agree to a reasonable repayment plan.

Assistance is provided in the form of waiver of interest charges.

The repayment plan must be maintained as per agreement to continue to receive waiver of interest.

Interest is still applicable where no suitable repayment plan is in place.

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This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.

General Manager Responsible for Review:

Chief Financial Officer

ORIGINALLY ADOPTED: 13/05/2020

CURRENT ADOPTION: 13/05/2020

DUE FOR REVISION: 13/05/2024

REVOKED/SUPERSEDED:

**Mica Martin
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL


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